Siarhei Liubimau*

URBANIZING SOVEREIGNTY.
STATE BORDERS AND SPACE USES[1]

In this article I am working on the epistemology of relations between state borders on the one hand and valorizations of space on the other. In this epistemology borders do not divide space, but make space available. The current regime of state sovereignty implies that this availability works as re-bounding. Thus, growing trans-border contacts and projects do not fundamentally weaken state borders, but complicate state sovereignties. Such complication means the acceleration of production of various spatial units – different from nation-states – in the process of communicating sovereignties via state borders. State borders are the meta-process of bounding space, which produces a complete, limited set of sovereign spatial entities. I discuss a project of re-bounding sovereignties performed in the urban milieu of the German-Polish border town Goerlitz-Zgorzelec within its governance's common attempts to valorize this urban milieu in line with the European Union (EU) scalar regime. In the studied case, the program framework for this scalar regime was the joint application of Goerlitz-Zgorzelec for the status European Capital of Culture 2010 (ECC).

Key words: state border, sovereignty, re-bounding of spatial units, global border regime, valorization

In this article I am questioning how the urban cultural sector is taking part in the process of re-bounding nation-state sovereignties. It is based on the results of my qualitative instrumental case study conducted on the German-Polish (Goerlitz-Zgorzelec) border in spring and summer 2008. Conceptually I look at trans-border urban milieus as consisting of sets of institutional and symbolic media of value creation. I trace the ways in which values – or lasting prioritizations of meanings and practices transforming social life – co-produced and fixed by urban cultural sectors, re-bound and tangle state sovereignty. I have already been discussing that the state border regime has an impact on the strategies to brand and promote specific trans-border spatial units within cultural ventures, in a sense that these strategies presuppose prioritization of certain imageries, meanings and practices of border and trans-border conditions within a more complex socio-geographical order (Liubimau 2009). Programs and projects of the cultural sectors of border towns mobilize different historical perceptions of

---

state borders depending on the scale of self-promotion and on the features inherent to these towns (Liubimau 2009: 225–226).

In the present article the spatial proximity of the studied urban units to state borders is not an essential property of the studied issue, but rather an empirical solution: studied case implies more data corresponding to the chosen issue in relative spatial compactness. In other words, physical adjacency of analyzed units to a state border does not significantly change the question about the role of the urban cultural sector in the wider process of the re-bounding of state sovereignty. Nevertheless, the manifold impacts of state borders – which should not be analytically framed in physical-geographical terms – are the most crucial to this question, since they are crucial for the phenomenon of nation-state sovereignty and for the production of space in general. Basically I am trying to depart as far as possible from the association of border impact with liminality as a distinct spatio-temporal stage and as a distinct action or set of actions with their attributes. There is a danger that the consequence of such understanding of border impact will be the perception of rituals of passage as passage itself. In my argument, we cannot really draw the metric boundaries of liminal conditions or liminal stages, but we should rather say that liminality is boundary as a structuring logic of matter. In geographical terms it will be boundary, which communicates different spatial entities in certain modes. These modes are co-constitutive in relation to the communicated properties of entities and, in this way, to entities themselves. In this perspective spatial entities are dependent on each other and reciprocal. At the same time this co-dependence and reciprocity stem from the possibility of the repetition and compatibility of spatial entities, which are, in their turn, fundamentally enabled by boundary.

The central way to bound social life into entities is nation-state. Then, what is described as liminal stages in relation to the areas neighbouring state-borders are, in my argument, localized clashes of various sovereignty regimes. Such clashes are primarily part and parcel of nationally bounded sovereignties and of their properties, not of a border itself. Borders make the entities of nation states repeat and, hence, equivalently communicated. Such equivalence, or interchangeability, is the essence of state sovereignty and is fundamentally based on the concept of the state border. In other words, nation-state scale sovereignty in the world after the Cold War is the content of such repetition and equivalence. Precisely, equivalence based on repetition makes certain properties of spatial entities significant in relation to others, and in this way changes these entities. So in the case of the entities of nation-states it is precisely their equivalence which changes their sovereignty regimes.

Accordingly I argue that in socio-spatial terms state borders are not analogical to sovereignty, as is usually implied by and exported from research and political agendas. Borders per se are intensive in a sense that their ethos of bounding does not depend on matter they encompass. Essentially they are the basic media of difference, which cannot be analyzed as effects of the matter they differentiate. The accelerating process of global socio-geographical re-bounding is what creates the appearance of borders as extensive ones. Yet under current conditions they are historical – not natural – meta-processes of bounding or scaling space, or the meta-process of the production of spatial entities. On the contrary, sovereignty is extensive or qualitatively performed by the dynamics of matter it encompasses. Its dependence on matter in the light of growing human-made relations between manifold constructed smaller and

larger spatial units[2] suggests that sovereignty is a *regime* of bounded social life, as opposed to a state border, which is a dominating *form* of difference in space. It is justified to regard a state border as regime only when state borders start to operate as a complete and formally stable accumulated global border regime. Transformation of sovereignty regimes is currently possible only within this formal and, in this sense, stable global border regime. An essential aspect of such a way to distinguish between borders and sovereignty is undermining the widespread argument that globalization is the situation when the scale around which social process is organized is no longer on the scale of nation-state. Sovereignty under globalization indeed becomes more complex than the traditionally imagined nation and state, but this complexity is sustained by a complete and undeniable global state border regime.

It has been noted that the concept and the practice of modern state sovereignty has been changing historically along with the transformation of more complex configurations of social forms. Christopher Rudolph portrays the evolution of domestic sovereignty (whose essence was installing authority within the entity of the state), to Westphalian sovereignty (which is about the defense of internal national systems from external players), and, further on, to interdependence sovereignty (it provides a form of the reciprocal recognition of states in the mosaic of broadly understood international relations) (Rudolph 2005: 3). I would add here that the key feature of the latter concept and practice of sovereignty is the assumed, as well as actually practiced and socially utilized equivalence or interchangeability of the nation-states. In such mode of bounding space and setting relations between bounded entities, state borders are the rules of positioning sovereignties toward each other and confronting them via numerous practices. Rudolf in general argues that currently sovereignty is becoming more flexible. He regards it as an institution, a "set of norms and rules that include normative statements regarding authority and international recognition" (Rudolph 2005: 16). In this sense, I argue, sovereignty should not be associated with the realm of will – individual or collective – as it is still practised in the fashion of political mythology. At this historical stage it is rather the basic, dominating regime of socializing spatial entities and their properties. Modern social life is produced due to synchronization of temporalities and commensurability of spatialities. For the latter – but one of course can say, for both – the nation-state is the basic form of enabling such commensurability.

***

It has been discussed and explicitly promoted for the last two decades that the current vigorous competition between different urban units is one of the constituent features of the globalizing world (for instance, Scott 2005). In this way the self-promotion of cities is – and should be – the major goal for municipalities. On the one hand, growing inter-urban competition suggests that the significance of the urban as a form of social life is growing both quantitatively and qualitatively (Sassen 2002). On the other hand, this new mode of competition in modern capitalist societies and the reciprocal change of understanding of what cities are about suggest that the concept of the nation-state under these new conditions should be elaborated anew (Brenner 2004). Finally, in the distinct context of Central and Eastern

---

[2] This process is currently widely understood as re-scaling.

Europe these inter-urban competitions and the necessity of the economic positioning of cities is an element of the more fundamental process of the new modes of socializing space after the end of the Cold War. From this angle, the promotion of a city is not merely a range of attempts to reinforce and represent the competitive advantages of a given location (Young and Kaczmarek 1999). It is also top-down largely uncontested re-valuation and reorganization of the entire concept of space corresponding to the new world order and to the new standards and teleology of urban and national life. In the instance of the urban units adjacent to state borders it is justified to expect that such re-evaluation and reorganization would straightforwardly concern the border as the institution actualizing these or those properties of space.

In comparison to the other twin-towns located on the German-Polish border, Zgorzelec and Goerlitz is a case where the cultural sector proved to be one of the most important factors of trans-border exchanges. This role of cultural production – which has its effects on both the German and Polish sides of the Neisse River – is set primarily by the specificity of the German side, where the density of cultural institutions and short-term projects has a clear architectural basis. The constructed environment of the historical core of Goerlitz in many respects differentiates the strategies of place-promotion employed in this town, the emphasis on tourism and the so-called soft industries. This relatively small town (around 60,000 inhabitants) possesses around 3,600 documented sites of historical architectural heritage. It makes architecture one of the most important currencies of this geographical unit and a catalyst for the urban cultural sector. The practices of continuous valorization of Goerlitz's built environment in the context of the enlarged EU create selective and negotiated enclaves of the unification of two towns (Goerlitz and Zgorzelec). These enclaves give opportunities to social players and institutions to transform the scalar order available to them and by this to transform and continuously actualize their state's sovereignty. The state border (and its historical effects, embodied in sovereignties' regimes) is a fact people working in the cultural sector have to come to terms with. But a border is not an object which can be utilized in this or that way in order to brand and promote a certain trans-border location. It is rather a form of communication, which structures the ventures of such branding and promotion. It mediates two asymmetrically developed sovereignties with their specific properties. In this perspective, it creates a clash of sovereignties, which can be empirically observed in not always commensurable strategies of using culture and its products in the course of urban development.

The central and starting point of the data gathering for my research was the unsuccessful attempt of Goerlitz (together with Zgorzelec) to apply for the status of European Capital of Culture 2010. The European Capitals of Culture program is one of the many initiatives to establish, via the cultural sector, a scalar framework adequate for the EU goals and objectives. The phenomenon of the state border lies at the center of this establishing in a sense that it mediates the new modes of the EU grounded cooperation between different units of self-government. The most important aspect of the ECC application by Goerlitz-Zgorzelec[3] was precisely the discursive redefinition of a given border, resulting in an attempt to turn it into an advantage

---

[3] The fundamental aspect of this application was not to present Goerlitz as it is, but together with Zgorzelec and hence 'Goerlitz-Zgorzelec' was always used as a sheaf within both verbal and visual symbolic machinery of the application such as booklets, stickers, and knick-knackery.

of the location. More specifically, German-Polish border was presented as the new center of Europe, a bridge, connecting 'Old Europe' and 'New Europe'. Thereafter Goerlitz-Zgorzelec utilized the status of a 'laboratory of European communal life'. The motto of the application – *From the middle of nowhere to the heart of Europe* – can be hence interpreted as the endeavor to launch a geographically meaningful image, whose underlying theme was the re-bounding of the European space. In addition, this re-bounding was a local project with the prevalent goal to discursively ascribe a new scalar position to Goerlitz together with Zgorzelec. It is still important to underline that the ECC program does not presuppose any EU funding to be utilized by applicants: its budget is usually formed nationally or municipally, or it comes from private investors. This entails variation in strategies employed by city governments to reach their place-specific objectives when working with their place-specific resources. In the most abstract terms, this means variation in the ways of coordination between the EU scale and a particular urban milieu via practices of value creation specific to and operational on the urban scale.

Therefore the application for the ECC status by Goerlitz-Zgorzelec was not an unproblematic mechanical implementation and reproduction of EU objectives. Interesting insights can come to light when looking at this project's motto not only as at discrete end-product, but to analyze the most important milestones of its biography. That is, to analyze the project's overall context performed and interpreted by the strategic individual actors, groups and institutions, and, at the same time, to retain sensitivity to its scalar background. The ECC application project is quite a long-term undertaking, depending on a complex of structural conditions. In this respect the formulation of a scalar stance like "from the middle of nowhere to the heart of Europe", constituent to the project, is the result of a complex process of analysis, negotiations and approbation. This process is grounded in the context-specific orientations and features of the locations, which are to be represented within more complex sovereignty regimes. On the other hand, this grounded cultural imagery has the potential to be sustained and, equally, to be transformed after its direct urgency expires. While border as an institution was the formal source of these negotiations and the driving force of re-scaling or re-bounding German and Polish sovereignties. This application venture also involved the mobilization of urban self-government and the acquirement of more autonomy by urban units in relation to central authorities. Usually central authorities are tacitly equated with nation-state governments. I am arguing that the major form of this autonomy was the increased possibility of valorization of an urban milieu in a form of controlled and uncontrolled sovereignty clashes. In other words, it presupposed a complex process of figuring out what would be the valorization of urban milieus of two towns belonging to two sovereignties, but taken as one urban milieu.

The ECC office was opened in Goerlitz in 2002, and was functioning only until March 2007 in view of the fact that the application turned out to be unsuccessful. In March 2005 Goerlitz-Zgorzelec was successfully nominated by the German national jury as one of only two remaining candidates (together with Essen) for the title. One year later, in March 2006, there was the presentation of the Goerlitz-Zgorzelec ECC project to the international jury. Yet already in April 2006 it was announced that Essen will host the ECC 2010. After that, only two people stayed working in the office (one of them was the entire project's art director). Their main duty was to make documentation of the five major sub-projects, elaborated in the course of the application. I am going to focus here on only one of the sub-projects,

Bridge Park, an explicitly urbanist venture, presented as a so-called 'hard' infrastructural project. Its idea was to connect Goerlitz and Zgorzelec in the form of a new common city center. This common center was planned to be located along the Neisse river right in between two central city bridges (John Paul II Bridge and Old Town Bridge) and to serve as a place for culture, education, and communication[4]. *Bridge Park* project is a particularly interesting story in terms of the coordination of the hard and soft projects and in terms of the perception of this kind of coordination on both sides of the Neisse River.

Bridge Park is a persistent cultural image inherent in the analyzed location, which has a much longer story than the period of the ECC application itself. Urbanist projects connecting two towns already started to appear at the beginning of the 1990s. The idea existed in the form of a rather ungrounded vision of a common cultural space for two towns and two nations, and in concrete infrastructural terms was used rather to frame workshops for architecture students. Moreover, the vision of *Bridge Park* was not forgotten after the ECC application failed but was further revitalized symbolically in various cultural exchange and valorization ventures. In such a light this sub-project is a contextual mobilization of already existing visions of sovereignties' transformations on an urban scale, complying with the scalar transformation brought about by the EU enlargement. As the director of the Institute of Cultural Infrastructure in Goerlitz, V.M., commented on the ECC 2010 application: "It would be completely wrong to say that everything was done for the application process. No. The application process was the part of bringing back to Europe, opening the borders, making communication between Zgorzelec and Goerlitz possible"[5].

Although the idea to create a new common city center for both towns was the core of the application[6], the new construction in the area did not take place. One of the experts from the cultural sector in Goerlitz, M.A., referred to the common view in town that the application failed precisely because the 'hard project' was the major one[7]. In these particular historical border conditions building is an overly delicate issue legally. Interviewed acting architects both from Goerlitz and Zgorzelec were rather skeptical in relation to the project's feasibility, but the difference between these skepticisms is significant and is grounded in the difference between German and Polish sovereignty regimes. The projected adjustment of spatially bounded units – like innovative practice of German-Polish border, which brings two urban units "to the heart of Europe" – is also part of the adjustment and clash of German and Polish sovereignties. Besides, the interpretation of this difference will benefit from juxtaposing its constitutive stances with more tangled – more than just German and Polish states – regimes of bounding space. For, as was already explicated, *Bridge Park* brings into correlation the urban scale of Goerlitz, Zgorzelec and the scale of the recently enlarged EU. The place-specific practice of Europeanization in the manner of selective interpretation of the urban milieu and the concrete representational usages of the built environment on the urban scale are the aspects of the planned, locally articulated scalar change.

---

[4] *Der Brueckenpark. Eine Neue Urbanitaet. Gesampkonzeption.* 2004. Goerlitz: Europa Haus Goerlitz e.V.

[5] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Goerlitz in 2008.

[6] B.P., the artistic director of Goerlitz-Zgorzelec ECC 2010 office confirmed it in a research interview conducted in January 2007.

[7] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Zgorzelec in 2008.

In this light, the most obvious difference in the understandings of what *Bridge Park* is can be observed in the data I acquired from interviews with two experts – one from Goerlitz and one from Zgorzelec. In one semi-structured interview I was asking V.M., the director of the Institute of Cultural Infrastructure in Goerlitz, about the most successful sub-projects of the application and received the reply that all of those projects were realized. When I asked about *Bridge Park*, the answer was:

– *Bridge Park* is nothing, but the name for an existing structure.
– Existing?
– Sure. If you have a river – you have riversides. One – here, one – there. So what Mister Baumgardt[8] has been doing is taking new color, speaking symbolically. He called the two riversides *Bridge Park*. They are many thousands of years old; they are older than mankind, especially here. This is the new word for an old thing, Bridge Park.
– But if you say that it is already existing structure, what has made it exist? When did it start to exist? After 2004? After Schengen enlargement?
– No, the riversides have existed forever. Slavic settlers came here, settled here, and walked through the river... The *Park* is a very, very delicate thing. It was the right word within the application procedure: everything has to be focused for the attention of the media. And the media are very deaf. They only react to 1,000 words, and something like *Bridge Park* is one of these 1,000 words[9].

Remarkably, a few weeks later when I asked a Polish architect, P.P., about the *Bridge Park* in a formally identical semi-structured interview, his answer was:

Take a piece of paper and ask people to write what is *Bridge Park*, let them write it. If some of them know what it is about, you will get an Olympic medal. Everyone says something different. What does it mean – *Bridge Park*? [*I am referring to the explanation of the German expert V.M.*] You said it in a very good way. There is no common city center, but he just invented a new word. Polish people understand it in a very concrete way. Germans are talking, talking, talking, all these soft projects. Our mayor has said that we are building *Bridge Park*. He called me: "P., we are doing *Bridge Park*". I said: "alright". I called architects from Wroclaw. We made a project. Here is the Polish side, here is the German side and here is the border. Here is the main, the most important building, 3-5 floors. Germans are excited, "oh, wunderbar". For two, three months we were talking about it and then they forgot. The end. There is no *Bridge Park*[10].

These data will be more meaningful if they are triangulated with one more professional "sovereignty stance", articulated by K.F., an architect from Goerlitz. In another semi-structured interview he was talking about Goerlitz-Zgorzelec ECC 2010 sub-projects in general:

There were only ideas. There have never been concrete investors, who might have realized these projects. So it was good in terms of cross-border planning cooperation to develop common ideas about the future development. But it is not to say that one can expect that in the next year or in the next five years some of these ideas, some of these projects will be realized. ... But that is not to say that it was bad. It was not realistic[11].

---

[8] Artistic director of Goerlitz-Zgorzelec ECC 2010.
[9] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Goerlitz in 2008.
[10] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Zgorzelec in 2008.
[11] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Goerlitz in 2008.

In the argument of this article, different ways of applying meaning to the *Bridge Park* ECC sub-project by experts from Goerlitz and from Zgorzelec reveal the practical logic of the asymmetrical exchanges between the two sides of the Neisse River. To say that experts from Goerlitz are better trained in fundraising and hence are more confident about making culture a catalyst of city development also means that they see more scales or layers of funding. This way, they also see more options for place-promotion or valorization of the urban milieu. A persistent motif in my talks with the experts from Zgorzelec was the fact that there is imbalance in the agendas of cooperation between the Polish and German sides of the Neisse River. The fact that Goerlitz's basic infrastructure was already well developed supposed that its governance was oriented rather towards so-called 'soft', cultural projects, whereas in Zgorzelec more 'hard', infrastructural projects were needed. This can be further interpreted that Goerlitz and Zgorzelec as relatively bounded and connected spatial entities are differently articulated within the broader configuration of spatial entities of German and Polish sovereignties and the EU. Therefore such professional interpretations and evaluations of *Bridge Park* show that re-bounding of a trans-border urban milieu by the cultural sector is not merely binary. It depends on a complex disposition of various spatial entities. Adjustments of the prevailing scalar order in the stream of the EU dynamics remain uneven and equally dependent on the dynamics of urban (Goerlitz was revitalized after 1990, while Zgorzelec merely partially) and national (German cultural managers had more time to be trained in using the external funds for the trans-border cooperation) scales.

Symptomatically, I did not manage to find anyone in Zgorzelec who would regularly cooperate with the ECC 2010 office in Goerlitz except those who work for the municipality and according to their duties (which did not concern the application process directly) had to attend some meetings or events related to the application. The Director of Lusatian Museum in Zgorzelec, A.P., mentioned two names, but later added that these people are working in Ireland now[12]. In the overall context people from cultural sectors of both towns when assessing the main hindrances to establishing regular and long-lasting trans-border cultural exchange were noticing that many active young people leave both towns in order to work or to study. Yet Goerlitz with its built heritage and corresponding cultural institutions, designed in order to preserve and valorize this heritage, offers work positions to specialists from outside of town. The overwhelming majority of the employees of the Goerlitz cultural sector I interviewed turned out to not originally be from Goerlitz. Zgorzelec in contrast is deprived of such heritage and hence of such opportunities of valorization. The result is an obvious imbalance between cultural sectors on the Polish and German sides of the agglomeration. As the director of the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure in Goerlitz, V.M., says, within trans-border exchanges for the institute colleagues and institutions from Wrocław and Prague are more crucial partners, because an "academic community does not exist in Zgorzelec".

Accordingly, the very understanding of what the cultural sector is varies in the two towns. As M.A., one of the cultural managers from Goerlitz, says: "In Zgorzelec there are no cultural managers, there are just implementers for the communal money".[13] The point was

---

[12] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Zgorzelec in 2008.
[13] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Zgorzelec in 2008.

that people from Zgorzelec who come up with an interesting idea do not take a step forward and hence such idea remains unrealized. Another way the same manager describes this situation is, "they do not go beyond the city". In my argument, such wording is one of the ways the informant describes the situation where people dealing with culture in Zgorzelec still work almost exclusively within the limits of plans and objectives of the municipality and do not take advantage of the possibilities of funding from the broader and richer (primarily EU) sources. As an employee of the City Cultural Center of Zgorzelec, Z.B., says:

> You know, this is the City Cultural Center. Our aim is to provide cultural education in the City of Zgorzelec. ... Due to the fact that we are a border city, one expects a lot more from us. And so we do more. But as the City Cultural Center we have to concentrate on the work with youth, with children because we are for this – for the education of children, youth, and adults in our city[14].

In May 2008, before conducting this interview, I visited the *Festival of Cultures* organized by the Zgorzelec City Cultural Center (and Z.B. in particular). My prime expectation was to observe the ways German and Polish cultures are represented during this event. Yet it turned out that the cultures represented on the stage in the form of music and on the counters in the form of traditional food were Jewish, Greek, Ukrainian, and Polish. All these cultures evidently have a significant influence on the current cultural milieu of Zgorzelec as a part of Polish history, rigidly legitimated by its sovereignty. Yet the representation of only them in a Polish-German border town does not even pose a question of the neighbor of a different culture just across the river. If to compare such a depiction with the self-description of the work agenda by Z.B., it is possible to point out that it stems from the scales of funding available to those who work in the cultural sector. In brief, adhering to municipal funding exclusively significantly narrows re-bounding projects of the cultural sector and does not really open new venues for the valorization of an urban milieu.

In this vein the fact that the cultural sector in Zgorzelec is more bounded by the municipality because its employees are less accustomed to looking for funds in alternative sources, as opposed to ones in Goerlitz, renders the scales of cultural production (and valorizations on urban scale) within the two cities desynchronized. The trans-border condition of the towns pushes cultural managers to follow the general EU trend of creating a common European space and to cooperate with the trans-border counterpart, but the described asymmetries channel actual cooperation. Moreover, in these particular circumstances, the people on the German side, better trained in fund raising, are more likely to mediate these asymmetries or to co-ordinate various scales of funding for their contextual purposes. This uneven availability of scales or layers of funding for culture might create an effect of hostility between the two sides of the border. People from Zgorzelec are likely to think that Goerlitz is much richer in terms of investments, while people from Goerlitz could say that this is a myth. In this respect the very interpretation of cultural production within broader urban development agendas significantly varies on the both sides of the river. Experts from Zgorzelec were usually saying or implying that the ECC project was a rather missed opportunity for urban development. Experts from

---

[14] I recorded this semi-structured interview in Zgorzelec in 2008.

Goerlitz were emphasizing that it was a clearly successful venture and precisely in terms of the town's self-promotion. Benefits emphasized by experts in Goerlitz can be subsumed in the following way. First, it caused public discussions and hence made the population more active and aware. Although some of these discussions were also critical: people were questioning this project and insisting on using the funds for welfare and not for cultural regeneration. And second, more importantly, it made Goerlitz a known location on the scale of Germany, as the very fact that the city applied for the ECC 2010 status made national and international media cover the news from the city. As K.F, one of the architects from Goerlitz said, "we got promotion for free" and later, "maybe it is even better that we did not get this status. We already got what we wanted – now everyone in Germany has heard about Goerlitz and its advantages".[15] As the director of the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure, V.M., from the first steps involved into the ECC 2010 application process says, the application brought positive attention to the city (earlier it had been usually associated with forced migration and current demographical problems), while the previous restoration of its built heritage was the most crucial infrastructural presupposition for the application.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In the studied case the scalar framework of the EU, being a part of global relations of competition for valorization of different geographical locations, makes culture (concerts, exhibitions, theatres, festivals, nightlife, etc.) a medium of competitiveness. I would note that the 'medium of competitiveness' in these circumstances should also mean 'medium of urbanity', for the most characteristic valorizations of social life on the urban scale are inherent to and perform urban scale. Various ratings of cities – in the same fashion as with nation-states – have the straightforward effect of setting the equivalence and, hence, relative uniformity of urban milieus. Such equivalence or interchangeability presupposes a degree of continuity among infrastructures, governance and urban experience. Infrastructural, governmental and mental continuity of the EU urban cultural sectors, therefore, produces niches for a repetitive set of valorizations of urban social process. Currently it can be observed that in terms of their functions cities with a well-developed cultural sector tend to become primarily lifestyle machines and the key sites of lifestyle production simultaneously. The diversity and openness of lifestyles becomes one of the major properties of urbanity, because urbanity is not merely an effect of socialized spatial form, but a formal possibility of valorization of habitat, which does not deviate from the prevalent wider complex of valorizations. Increasing rivalry between urban governance establishes an interchangeability of different urban milieus and by this singles out various modes of governance as related to various configurations of compatible structural conditions of valorization. Competition in this case is the centralized process of grounding these more complex structural conditions of valorization on the urban scale in order for the urban process to meet the requirements of these structural conditions. The usage of already implemented forms of valorization of urban units in a competitive context shows

---

[15]   I recorded this semi-structured interview in Goerlitz in 2008.

that competition and, hence, competitive advantages, is a form of equivalence, interchange-ability, and continuity between urban milieus.

In the EU, as a scalar formation discussed in this article, lifestyle is currently central to this process of creating continuity via competition between urban units because it is the practical source for dealing with the problem of de- and re-industrialization and with reconfiguration of labor markets and economic relations, which obviously varies according to socio-geographical regularities. In this vein, place promotion becomes basically lifestyle promotion, where lifestyle is sustained by the usages of urban fabric. In this sense it becomes possible to talk about lifestyle as one of the aspects of sovereignty dynamics or sovereignty regime. More precisely, urban settings provide the range of the possibilities to open up sovereignty dynamics via the valorization of one form of habitat while rendering other forms obsolete. This trend can be observed, for instance, in the discussion of the colonial import of practices to newer members of the EU. Remarkably, here in contrast to the colonialism and post-colonialism debates, colonization is as a rule seen not in a teleological or an ethical light, but in the light of dominance of one form of valorization over others, where former ones irreversibly change latter ones.

One can observe attempts to study trans-border cultural sectors compatible to Goerlitz-Zgorzelec in the light of repetitive valorizations of urban settings, facilitated by more complex scalar dynamics, which ascribes to urban units the role of competing entities. Juraj Buzalka for instance strives to show that EU-25 as a specific scalar configuration causes commodifica-tion of a certain ethnic group, Ukrainians in Przemysl, in the Polish-Ukrainian border area. He describes it as a part of 'multicultural development project' – which does not necessar-ily entail unification – and supposes that multiculturalism is staged and forms a discursive framework for tourist marketing. For him 'staged' means marketed and commodified within the newly established EU-25 regulation regime, as opposed to the perceptions of the Polish nation as homogenous from 1945 to the beginning of the 2000s. In his terms, "ethnicity is re-scaled from an everyday form of social practice, observable among the neighbors and at the bazaar, into a politically dominant group identification that is supposed to attract tourism and investment into Southeast Poland" (p. 382). While driving forces of re-scaling ethnicity are both the ideology of multiculturalism and the commercialization of the urban environment from the perspective of the tourist industry. In Buzalka's terms, "ethnicity is an experience and perspective on the world constantly re-scaled through the production, distribution and consumption of culture shaped by the historically-changing position of a particular region in the global economy" (Buzalka 2009: 377).

However it is possible to say that author's operationalization of the concept of 're-scaling' is not sensitive enough and, sometimes, it just substitutes the broader term of so-cial change, adding to it a shade of growing commercialization of social life. For instance, one of the author's interim attempts to conclude is formulated as: "[t]he peasant past of the Ukrainian minority is turned into an image of authenticity, re-scaled by market forces, that is in line with the demands of the EU and nation-state policies on cultural heritage and preservation" (Buzalka 2009: 384). At the same time Buzalka does not go further in scruti-nizing the geographical aspects of multiculturalist staging of ethnicity. What I try to show

in the present article is how scalar dispositions – or, complex modes of bounding space into units of different size and quality – shape the staging of a built environment and influence the interpretation of staged properties with the aim of valorization. When Buzalka looks at re-scaling as commercialization, the latter term is implicitly seen as the rules of the game imposed on Przemysl's settings from the outside. I would rather see commercialization as the resource for development, which is enhanced by the re-bounding of sovereignties within the accumulated global border regime. That is why I use the term 'valorization' instead of 'commercialization' or 'commodification', which are often associated with a narrow understanding of values as financial values. In such a view, the trend of the prioritization of an urban form of governance is the attempt to regulate diverse practices of investing values into spatial configurations on city scale.

From this angle cultural ventures valorize urban settings also because they become a major part of the machinery of sovereignty. The growing orientation towards state- or sovereignty-mediated urban projects is the tendency, which reveals the shift of the political mode of spatiality, from 'parliament' to 'creative city'. Today the regulationist approach to the urban economy as a 'new' or 'creative' economy is the most common way both in academia and beyond to make sense of the growing modes of commodification of urban culture. In this approach – where the concept of 'commodification' from political economy is preferred to the more general term of 'valorization' – politics or governance would be the activity regulating chaotic economic activity of manifold actors (Van Heur 2010). I would add that by regulating economic processes, 'up to date' urban governance is also in a position to display and control sovereignty-making on urban scale. It would not be an exaggeration to say that effective urban governance succeeds in grounding sovereignty in different valorizations of urban lifestyles. The phrase 'selling [national] culture [in cities] as a development strategy' is now commonly used. Using older terms it is possible to phrase it so that the urban lifestyle becomes the source of value creation also for [national] 'political' culture. Such a culturally 'politicized' lifestyle is certainly based on the historical development of given national sovereignties and urban fabric. What makes it distinct today is its growing variations, sustained by the forms of the valorization of different properties of urban scale. Yet these forms of valorization of urban milieu via proliferation of lifestyles suppose interchangeability or equivalence of the properties of different cities. Such interchangeability and competition – which suppose continuity between different cities – is a part of fundamental re-bounding of space because it is the structural condition which significantly changes the ethos of urban development in relation to the dynamics of other spatial entities. By discussing this case study I am trying to show how sovereignty is enacted on an urban scale and to what extent this enactment depends on bounding space or scaling, different from the state border, but still significantly dependent on it.

***

As a rule in social science the term "border" is juxtaposed with the terms "valorization" and "commodification" via the term "flows". In this article I argue that the rhetoric of 'flows' as erasing some outdated spatial structures and creating new sets of values does not make

much sense[16]. Primarily it is so because flows themselves are the effect of the global border regime and therefore are fundamentally based on the repetition of boundaries worldwide. In other words, all kinds of 'flows' or 'scapes' are possible only in the bounded world, where state borders not merely symbolize, but also perform the difference and unevenness between and within spatial units of the nation-states. 'Scapes' consist of actors and structures that transgress certain state borders because state borders exist and provide actors, groups and enterprises with the opportunity to adjust to different sovereignties. In such a light state borders have not disappeared, but on the contrary are more and more broadly used for the creation of values in the process of communication or mediation of different sovereignties and for the regulation of this process respectively. Significantly the difference between spatial units of the nation-states is based on their equivalence or interchangeability. Such equivalence is socially grounded in the concept and practice of state sovereignty. Then what is called flow is one of the instruments of the creation of value out of or due to specific bounded geographical configurations. This instrument's attributes are spatial mobility – or, spatial transfer – and the transcendence of boundary.

The fact that movements are currently accelerating does not mean that the world is becoming less bounded (thinkers like Zygmunt Bauman or John Urry argue so). It is rather bounded in a different way. Globalization is the accumulated global state border regime, which is the meta-form for the social production of space. To stress it, globalization must not imply the weakening of state borders, but vice versa: the spread of the global border regime as a meta-form of the production of space. In this vein it would be more appropriate to interpret the current process of creation and attribution of values to certain spatial configurations as the process resulting from human production and transcendence of bounded units within the accumulated global state border regime. This transcendence is immanent to the accumulated global state border regime, and, that is why it is happening "within" it (we cannot talk then about the transcendence "of" borders). Usually borders are seen as dividing space. *In the epistemology I am trying to elaborate here, borders are space.* It is usually noted that borders articulate the relations between two sides of the border. The term global state border regime helps to nuance it, since it is not just two sides and it is not quite an articulation. Accumulated global border regime is a very complex, but still limited (via legal forms, economic relations, political history, etc.), set of regularities of space uses. Then state bordering is the process, which upholds and is upheld by manifold space bounding ventures for the sake of spatializing values. From this perspective I would regard metaphors of border – for instance, a membrane or a wall – as proto-analytical, because state borders are not containers for space, but space itself. It was more justified to treat state borders as containers during the Cold War, when they were constructed and managed in binary and, hence, kinetic fashion. Since the end of the Cold War global border regime has been grounded in a very diverse accumulation process. Borders as media for communication between sovereign spatial entities of nation-states are more and more significant driving forces in creation of spatial units. Re-scaling or re-bounding then is the major instrument within this process of the production of space by global border regime.

---

[16]   General critique of this rhetoric compatible to the arguments of this article can be found in Anna Tsing (2000).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brenner, Neil. 2004. *New State Spaces. Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*, Oxford UK: Oxford University Press.

Buzalka, Juraj. 2009. *Scale and Ethnicity in Southeast Poland: Tourism in the European Periphery*, "Etnografica" 2: 373–393.

Liubimau, Siarhei. 2009. *Place-Promotion and Scalar Restructurings in Urban Agglomerations on Internal EU Borders: The Case of Goerlitz-Zgorzelec*, "Polish Sociological Review" 2: 213–229.

Rudolph, Christopher. 2005. *Sovereignty and Territorial Borders in a Global Age*, "International Studies Review" 1: 1–20.

Sassen, Saskia. 2002. *Locating Cities on Global Circuits*, in: Saskia Sassen (ed.), *Global Networks. Linked Cities*, New York: Routledge.

Scott, Allen J. 2005. *Regions and the World Economy. The Coming Shape of Global Production, Competition and Political Order*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tsing, Anna. 2000. *The Global Situation*, "Cultural Anthropology" 3: 327–360.

Van Heur, Bas. 2010. *Creative Networks and the City*, New Brunswick: Transcript.

Young, Craig and Sylwia Kaczmarek. 1999. *Changing the Perception of the Post-Socialist City: Place Promotion and Imagery in Lodz, Poland*, "The Geographical Journal" 2: 183–191.

SUWERENNOŚĆ W SKALI MIEJSKIEJ. GRANICE PAŃSTWOWE I UŻYTKOWANIE PRZESTRZENI

W artykule omawiam stosunki zachodzące między granicami państwowymi a waloryzacjami przestrzeni. W takiej epistemologii granice nie dzielą, lecz udostępniają przestrzeń. Takie udostępnienie funkcjonuje jako „przeograniczanie" (ponowne ograniczanie; *re-bounding*) przestrzeni. Kontakty i projekty transgraniczne zasadniczo nie osłabiają w takim ujęciu granic państwowych, aczkolwiek komplikują kwestię suwerenności państw narodowych. Granice państwowe ograniczają przestrzeń, prowadząc do powstania skończonego, limitowanego zbioru suwerennych jednostek przestrzennych. W artykule przedstawiam projekt przeograniczania suwerenności w środowisku niemiecko-polskiego granicznego miasta Goerlitz-Zgorzelec na przykładzie wniosku obu miast o nadanie im statusu Europejskiej Stolicy Kultury 2010.

Słowa kluczowe: granica państwowa, suwerenność, przeograniczanie jednostek przestrzennych, globalny reżim graniczny, waloryzacja