Declining cities/ developing cities: Polish and German perspectives

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Declining Cities / Developing Cities: Polish and German Perspectives

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Declining Cities / Developing Cities: Polish and German Perspectives

Edited by
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Introduction

The City. Polish and German Interpretations

In this book we present the outlines of a range of possible discussions between Polish and German researchers in the area of urban studies. The inspiration for approaching these issues and undertaking such a discussion was the sociological workshop "Declining Cities/Developing Cities"[1]. The keynote of this meeting was the exchange of knowledge and experience, and the development of cooperation between young sociologists from Poland and Germany.

The idea of this workshop arose somewhere between the Institute of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University and the Institute for Western Affairs – both research institutions with long and pertinent traditions in the area of urban studies.

The crux of the idea was to invite researchers who are at a similar stage in their careers in order to facilitate discussion, and to enable the creation of a kind of network that might bring about further research cooperation. We abandoned the typical top-down procedure of establishing contact, and instead directly invited researchers. This is the best place to thank Dr. Jerzy Kaczmarek from the Institute of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University for his great help in inviting German speakers.

When sketching the broad scope of the workshop, we started from the simple statement that for many years urban sociology has been one of the main fields of interest among sociologists, and that this interest

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[1] The "Declining Cities/Developing Cities" workshop took place in Poznań on November 16, 2007, and was coorganized by the Institute for Western Affairs, the Polish Sociological Association (Poznań Department), and the Institute of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University. It was cofunded by the Polish-German Cooperation Foundation and Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

was by no means casual. Rather, this attention has resulted from the conviction that contemporary cities act to focus most of the social processes connected with change in the contemporary world.

These processes have often been analysed in the context of urbanization understood as social modernization, as a part of what we now call "globalization.'' Here urbanization means something better, more open, and granting more chances, more freedom, and a higher quality of life. However this interpretation does not seem to be sufficient; it is one-sided, too general and above all too ideological to elucidate the phenomenon that it attempts to describe. In many cases it fails to explain numerous processes that, for example, have transformed urban centres that until recently flourished into places that are now stigmatized by the degradation and devalorization of the social, economic, and geographical environment, affected by – in Piotr Sztompka's words – a kind of "transformational trauma."

The description of these changes found in, for example, Saskia Sassen's books, as changes strongly correlated with macrosocial and economic processes – also results from the influence of immanent factors such as the level of infrastructural development, cultural conditions, and the character of resources like the wealth of citizens and their qualifications. This last component would seem to be extremely important, especially when we perceive the city as a kind of social platform where innovations are generated. Points of view such as those developed *inter alia* by social geography, give a basis on which grasp the relations between space and social structure, between the informational infrastructure and changes of management and consumption models.

In our opinion those changes which clearly are not linear challenge the modernistic point of view in a certain way. Irregularities of development express themselves in contrasts: in the miserable condition of some roads, contrasted with the width and convenient of others; in the range of communication networks; in the number of freely available nurseries, libraries, and so on in some of cities, contrasted with the limited life possibilities of residents in other cities. Such "systemic conditions" may give access to many resources, but at the same time they may bring sets of disadvantageous conditions. This may result in the "brain drain" and "wallet drain" of worse locations, because it is worth living in those

places where everybody appears to have easy access to information, and – most significantly – where the decisions are being made. These processes are particularly important outside of continental centres, where we can simultaneously observe the signs of development and the symptoms of the "development of underdevelopment."

The possibilities of the urban development – and of the decline – of cites are also connected to the use of the cities' position within the world-system; which is usually, but not always, related to the central location within the region or country. Sociologists' interpretations generally lean in two directions. The first considers the economic position of the city within the region, the country, and in some cases the whole planet. The second approach is based on the subjective feeling of want: where we want to live, where it is worth living, and where we should live in order not to be marginalized.

When we discuss the first interpretation using the concept of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system, it becomes very difficult or almost impossible to imagine how to improve the position of the city, especially in the short- or mid-term.

With the second interpretation, it seems that more and more processes depend on the subjective valorization of space. What we can suggest is that there is a link between (hard) economic factors and the subjective interpretation which affect people's behaviour. This impression of course refers to the Thomas theorem, and to the valorization notion of Florian Znaniecki, who worked in Poznań in the 1920s. This view is closely connected to a phenomenon which – from our point of view – can be described as one of the two major areas of interest: the revitalization of the city.

Revitalization is understood here as a "complex of actions" which aims to eliminate the negative consequences of the breakdown caused by modern industry, the deindustrialization of the 1990s, the selective growth of the industrial sector, and changing of a dominant industry into another.

In the traditional context of "social forces,"[2] revitalization has two faces. The first and more obvious is brought to bear from above by local

[2] In the 1930s, Florian Znaniecki wrote an article on the *Social forces in the Wielkopolska region* (2002, *Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny*, no. 3), in which he analysed the roles of local institutions and the local authorities in improving the quality of life in Wielkopolska.

government or other agents. The second is created from the bottom up – by social activity which aims to change the social environment of its subjects. That is why we ask the rather fundamental question about the condition of urban social activity. Although the answer to the question, "Social activity in the city: is it awakening, stagnating, or falling?" is of course complex, we may try to search for conditions such as the mode of participation, or the requirements of efficiency in decision making, which would help civil society to develop freely.

We believe that the above-outlined assumptions of the workshop have been reflected in both the discussion that occurred during the workshop itself, and in the selection of papers that we are presenting here.

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The most general perspective is presented by Bastian Lange who – using the example of Leipzig – analyses the methods employed to position European cities on the "Declining City – Developing City" continuum. He puts emphasis on the production of knowledge, but this refers not only to knowledge as a resource necessary for further development, but also "knowledge about the city," used as a tool to garner more resources, and to develop the conditions for being competitive alongside other European cities.

Knowledge is a key concept of another text presented here, by Heidi Fichter-Wolf and Thomas Knorr-Siedow, who analyse the Collegium Polonicum in the Polish-German twin towns of Słubice and Frankfurt an den Oder as an example of international university collaboration, with all the opportunities and risks it presents. Their research shows that creating a European knowledge space is a difficult goal which cannot be achieved only by actions undertaken by the state and supranational institutions, but also – and perhaps more importantly – by the process of negotiation between diverse open cultures.

A city outside of the globalized centre, indeed, an "ordinary city" is a term that could easily be applied to Guben/Gubin, here described by Jörg Dürrschmidt. The question of whether opportunities to develop exist for a city located outside of the centre, is in this case given a positive answer. "Nested urbanism" – a concept which describes deeper relations connecting cities with the global, regional, and local

zones – might here prove helpful in showing a third way between metropolis-like development and decline.

A similar problem has been approached, although from a broader perspective, by Katrin Großmann, Annegret Haase, Dieter Rink, and Annett Steinführer who attempt to describe the changes affecting eastern central-European cities, using the concept of "urban shrinkage," instead of more conventional patterns of development. The term "urban shrinkage" was initially employed to describe the process of massive population loss in the cities of East Germany after unification due to job migration and low population growth. The authors expand the applicability of this concept to other postcommunist societies.

The issue of revitalization as part of a region-wide restructuring is the focus of the article by Jarosław Mikołajec. He describes the vicissitudes suffered by the Katowice conurbation during the sequence of massive changes that have affected this industrial area. Deindustrialization seem to be most important challenge for local administration.

Konrad Miciukiewicz also describes the processes of revitalization, but from a different point of view. He sees the transition of Półwiejska Street in Poznań as a metaphor of two interconnected but somehow contradictory processes – revitalization and gentrification. His analysis shows the existence of a kind of hidden social conflict between those excluded from and those included in the mainstream of contemporary urban consumer life.

A more extreme example of revitalization is portrayed by Marcin Tujdowski. He describes the phenomenon of "regained cities" – postgarrison towns in western and northern Poland. The development of new settlements is a unique chance to observe forgotten truths. On one hand, it reminds us how vital and enthusiastic new settlers can be; on other, it illuminates what kind of adversity they can often run into.

The success of the revitalization process depends not only on the efficiency of the administration, but also on the social activity of the residents. For this reason, the final section of the book concerns this issue.

Marek Nowak places this question within the broader perspective of changes affecting civil society in central Europe. Using the concept of "social non-movement" – a crisis of cooperation and a dominance of individual strategies – he attempts to describe social activism in urban contexts. Research conducted in Poznań provides a basis for his analysis.

Social activization as a tool for social inclusion is the focus of Michał Nowosielski's article, which points out that Polish inclusion and revitalization programs seem to be one-dimensional, and for that reason lack efficiency. After analysing several examples of such programs, the author comes to the conclusion that only by taking into consideration the problem of social activization can more positive effects be produced.

Sandra Huning in her article calls up the concept of public space and its political use. The changing role of urban space, used as a particular setting for political deliberation and cultural representation, seems to be an intellectual challenge for those urban researchers who long ago declared the end of place.

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Finally it is worth asking the questions, "What are the Polish and German perspectives on the city?" and, "Are there any significant differences between Polish and German urban sociology?" Of course, the volume we are presenting is not intended to be representative, but it may be to some extent symptomatic. It seems to us that the perspective of analysis assumed by our German colleagues is a bit broader, or rather a bit more universal. This suggests that they tend to see the problems and phenomena they are describing, not only in the local, regional, and national contexts, but above all globally. The Polish authors who prepared papers for this book seem to pay more attention to locality, and not only as the subject of their texts (which is natural in urban sociology), but also as a scope of applicability of their ideas and concepts.

This contrast of universality with particularity – which should not be seen as a difference in quality or expertise – may come from different research experience, different engagement in international research networks, and above all different sociological traditions. The question, "To what point may different perspectives facilitate or impede further cooperation?" remains open. We hope that the "Declining cities/Developing cities" project will contribute to bringing Polish and German perspectives closer together, and to establishing robust relations between scholars and research institutions.

Marek Nowak and Michał Nowosielski

Part One

Global and Local Contexts of the Postcommunist City

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Marek Nowak and Michał Nowosielski (Eds.)
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Reconfiguring Europe: Expert knowledge, EU-projects, and the formation of "creative cities"

Bastian LANGE

Abstract. Understandings of the "decline" and "development" of urban systems will be considered as modernist concepts of "catching up" with recent meta-narratives – such as "creativity" and "knowledge-based" urban developments. They imply economic fields to target, which recently have been most visible by highlighting knowledge- and creativity-based urban approaches. Nowadays cities, especially European ones, compete among each other – not only factually in the fields of innovative talents and financial investments, but also in the field of production of relevant scientifically based knowledge of the city. The task of this article is to ask how cities are negotiated in European research projects these days. The leading question is what kind of methods are established in order to position cities by categorizing and labelling them as "declining" or "developing"?

The production of knowledge about cities is based on expert cultures and their scholarships, which is very often rooted in urban and regional knowledge cultures. It will be critically asked, how can the case structures of cities be regarded as a specific way to deal with the distinct locality within the context of posttraditional knowledge frames? How can a city articulate its singularity?

The article addresses the analytical and methodological problem of dealing with parallel-running (socio-economic and socio-spatial) processes in cities, while overall comparisons of cities in the enlarged EU play a more important role and systematically suppress individual pathways.

1. Participating in the EU – Problems, Questions, and Outlines

1.1 Problems and Questions

The achievement of visibility, recognition, and attention for cities has been based on economic location factors for a long time. In post-traditional knowledge-based European societies, being on the enlarged European map is associated with various forms of self-description, place-making and new forms of positioning (Lange and Stüber, forthcoming): economically, socially, functionally – but more and more knowledge- and creativity-based. The shift from material-based forms of production to immaterial-forms of production especially goes along with opportunities to brand, label, and narrate anew the novelty of a nation, a state, a city, or a region.

To a large extent, new forms of expert-based knowledge play a crucial role in the way that cities describe and position themselves in a rapidly changing European urban environment. But not only local-based self-descriptions play an increasing role, as external knowledge in particular is seen as a growing tool to strategically influence the cities' perspective. In this way, new thematic fields have been applied to large cities, and creative and knowledge-intensive industries are especially seen as new strategic future-based concepts (Cooke 2002). These concepts have played a major role for cities in their phases of transformation, during which a complex process of deindustrialization has been observed to dominate, and new fields of employment have been targeted. Urban and economic decline should be overcome by the invention of new forms of development, mainly creative and knowledge-based industries. This process is not only accompanied by new factual strategies on future-based economic fields, but mainly by the production of new scientific, consultancy and advisory knowledge on the way cities can be understood, and problems identified, operationalized and potentially developed (Howells 2002).

From this perspective the paper asks about the way in which new forms of knowledge are produced and disseminated, and what kind of

methodological formats are established in order to legitimate these kinds of expertise *about* the urban. The process of knowledge production is framed and accompanied by various forms of enabling legitimacy, either by specific methods, scientific networks, or financial, network, and publication resources. Increasingly, it is not only various scholars, but organized project-based research networks, often funded by the EU, that contribute to this production process (Bresnen, Goussevskaia, and Swan 2004). These knowledge networks also work toward legitimacy. They are funded by either state-based universities, private or corporate universities, or in particular the EU. These research programmes have a high degree of public visibility, scientific legitimacy, and policy recognition.

In order to understand these network-based projects as a new form creating knowledge and expertise, it is important to highlight how distinct, transferable knowledge is produced, disseminated, and condensed for policy-makers, stakeholders and the decision making processes.

Looking closer at the way these knowledge forms are consciously produced, disseminated, and distributed into local and regional political arenas, it is first of all important to understand the modes of production and their ways to reach legitimacy. Furthermore, it is important to understand the methodologies that have been applied in order to produce the communicative basis for the formulation of new urban creativity and knowledge-based strategies. Rankings, groupings, and other forms of comparability play a major, if not decisive role, in clustering, positioning, and placing cities on a European map. Creative and knowledge attributes especially are applied in order to promote newly emerged markets, segments, and branches of industry. In this manner, several problems can be addressed.

1.2 Outline

Chapter 2 asks to what extent creative knowledge industries can be seen as an overall narrative in the stimulation of urban development? It will be asked how creative industries and their core creativity-based segments can be considered as unique, place-specific industries, when they are based on distinct logics of their local cultural, historical constitutions? “Creativity”, “creative city policies”, and “creative-knowledge-based

urban developments" are critically presented as new forms of societal development intended to overcome urban decline, and aiming to stimulate transformation and reenable urban evolution. Furthermore, this chapter critically asks the question, how have "creativity and knowledge-based" policies recently served as semantic, discursive, and communicative tools for organizing exit opportunities out of urban economic decline, and stimulating new urban development? Apart from the growing factual knowledge basis of new forms of production (Kunzmann 2004), it is becoming more and more important to understand the interrelation between the creation of knowledge, and the process of its constitution in postindustrial economies. It will be asked, to what extent do various scholars and research networks influence the representative body *about* the present state of the city? What are the analytical indicators, methods of benchmarking, and modes of representation within competing the arenas of European cities nowadays, in which cities struggle to position themselves in first place? When only top-rank positions count – for urban politicians, stakeholders and others – what kind of effect does this "culture of positioning" have on how this "relevant" knowledge is produced?

Chapter 3 will briefly present empirical and insight material from which conclusion to these questions may be drawn. The material stems from an EU comparative project entitled ACRE – Accommodating Creative Knowledge – as well as one of its case studies, the city of Leipzig. This empirical material will serve as a background which can be queried to uncover the applied methods and the methodological approaches, as well as their modes of inventing forms to deal with a substantial paradox: the singularity of a city (such as Leipzig or any other city), in the context of EU-based efforts to compare, rank, classify, and categorize cities under new creativity- and knowledge-driven paradigms?

Chapter 4 deals with communicative resources such as language, knowledge, and scholarly cultures and their effects on structures and the structural power to form relevant and robust knowledge *about* the city.

Apart from these diagnoses, an alternative model of analysing cities will be introduced and briefly presented as a concluding statement in chapter 5. Referring to case-sensitive approaches of distinct pathway analysis, the recently presented concepts of the "city habitus" are

introduced in order to put forward for the singularity of a city as a means to overcome neoliberal formats, such as rankings. The article concludes by asking for a more relational understanding of the urban as a distinct category from which to make conclusions concerning not only the distinct paths that a city follows, but also how it places and positions itself on the European landscape.

2. Creativity and the City

2.1. On the Relation between Creativity, Knowledge, and the City

Talking about the city as a privileged field of creativity seems almost redundant, at a time when creativity is often seen as the decisive human power, and would thus appear in every human action. Still, it is worth looking closer at the relations between the two and the way they are mutually constituted. Apart from celebrating the creative city as a wonderland, a critical perspective is applied in the following in order to deconstruct major narratives of hand-knit, quickly made causalities between them.

The international – mainly anglophone – discussion in the past few years has been dominated by a delirious, imaginative, and self-projected representation of the so-called creative city (Landry 2001). Almost unquestioned, it is supposed to be the solution to all urban problems: economic stagnation, urban shrinkage, social segregation, technological ageing, global competition, and more. New efforts by public-private alliances, real estate managers, and also urban professionals focus on place-marketing, and therefore often tend to work toward establishing the creative city as a future reference model for urban development (Jessop 1998; Drake 2003). Within the framework of the so-called creative city concepts, strategies of place-making refer to it to simultaneously address community building and neighbourhood integration issues (Fürst, Lahner, and Zimmermann 2004). With regard to the contextualization of the production and formulation of place beyond its

geographical fixation that is found within the debate on so-called creative cities, only a few systematic and critical approaches can be named (Jessop 1998). Critical diagnosis of the societal use of "creativity" and its representatives has been presented by Bröckling, Osten, Peck, and Lange (Bröckling 2004, 139-144; Osten 2003; Peck 2005; Lange 2005c, 2007).

The emergence of new creative industries in other European metropolitan regions is accompanied by new entrepreneurial agents in the field of creative and culture production (Lange 2005a, 2005b). Very often, in the context of economic stagnation, failed growth expectation, and fiscal collapse, new cultural entrepreneurs in creative industries – the so-called culturepreneurs – might demonstrate suitable context-sensitive efforts to establish new markets and to construct new professional fields. "Context-sensitivity" takes into account the specificities of place and the particular ways that certain milieus or economic segments are constituted. Yet, from an analytical perspective, these agents are confronted with structural paradoxes that are inscribed in their entrepreneurial practices. As a major focus group of the so-called creative city, they might be seen in the following as representatives of new modes of labour, with their adjacent governance practices in the field of creative industries.

Broadly speaking, creative industries have been to a large extent analytically related to urban development (Hospers 2003), to urban competitiveness (Florida 2005; Youl Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004), as well as to organizational changes within small and medium enterprises (Grabher 2004; Wilson and Stokes 2005; Rae 2004; Scott 2006; Neff, Wissinger, and Zukin 2005), and to other processes; these all take into account the fact that new combinations of innovative "knowledge" restructures anew economy, public administration, entrepreneurship, and its socialities. Gernot Grabher in particular has focused on the inner-organizational dimension of the emergent network-based project ecologies, and their entrepreneurial and socio-spatial practices in these industries (Grabher 2004; DeFillippi, Grabher, and Jones 2007). Rapidly changing project-based constellations within flexible network formations pose some structural constraints, not only on enhancing learning among temporary team members, but also on sustaining what is understood as "traditional," long-standing learning cultures (Cameron and Quinn 1988,

8). Apart from learning processes, several structural paradoxes are closely related to creative industries and their entrepreneurial agents.

Major paradoxes include (a) the need to reconcile tensions between the work ethos and human resource practices in creative and more routinized activities, and (b) the need to balance the advantages of flexible and temporary organizations with the advantages of tight integration. Two paradoxes play a crucial role in the articulation of work practices: the "globalization paradox" and the "identity paradox." The "globalization paradox" addresses the ambivalence of these newly emerged creative milieus and their territorial embedding practices. The ability to operate practically worldwide, socio-spatially integrated "communities of knowledge" has gained increasing importance in providing the necessary embedding ground for these translocal knowledge workers (DeFillippi, Grabher, and Jones 2007). The "identity paradox," on the other hand, addresses the ambivalence between individual or collective careers, identities, and reputations. Inventing static concepts of entrepreneurs is not very productive, because mavericks and outsiders, as well as independent creative artists are the major protagonists in this market (ibid.).

2.2. Places, Spaces, and Place-Making

A specifically geographical reading of the emergence of a flexible workforce in creative industries as a result of socio-economic transformation processes has to bring the spatial dimension to the fore. Central to the understanding of space and place is the seminal work of Doreen Massey. First of all place is to be seen as constituted through human relations and practices, actions repeated in daily routines, or habitualized in everyday life. These everyday spaces of action, do not, for example, take place in a fixed and predetermined empty "container" waiting to be filled, but rather are produced communicatively and constantly contested. Secondly – and this goes far beyond the first point – place, in its turn, influences the social forces that have created it. It is not just a passive product, but becomes a constitutive agent of new social relations. Thirdly, place is seen as "relative and relational" (Massey 2005), rather than as a "bounded" location. It is constituted through

interconnections with, rather than through oppositions to, other places. Finally, place is not seen as stasis, but as a point of negotiation and mutual constitution of space and time. All of the above leads to an understanding of place as the nodal point of interrelations through space and time. This by no means obliterates power relations as a constitutive element of this interrelatedness, but on the contrary enables to examine them.

Based on the conceptual framework of Doreen Massey, the German urban sociologist Löw (2001) has developed new theoretical tools that can be further applied to the empirical analysis of the diverse social formations of new agents and their place-making strategies in an urban system. Here, space is to be understood as the result of an act of synthesis based on the specific strategies and tactics of individual protagonists. The term "spacing" describes the active process by which an individual relationally orders social goods and bodies (Löw 2001, 158). Based on this understanding, space constitutes itself as a process through the synthesis of these social goods and bodies, by means of perception, memory, and feeling. In the postindustrial city, individual strategies of differentiation are symbolically and culturally formulated. The socio-spatial structure expresses itself ever more strongly in local politics, through which the individuals not only create a symbolic difference, but also attempt to arouse attention through positioning tactics anchored in the location. Focusing on the applied practices and action patterns in the field of creative industries, milieu and scholarly models can be highlighted. Seeing the spatial dimension as a conceptual background for understanding urban practices by different agents around the action field of creative industries, urban space can be deconstructed according to the way it is negotiated, coded, divided, and communicated, according to professional demands, administrative logics, as well as milieu-specific demands.

2.3. Knowledge and Space: Experts as Place-Makers

In capitalist industrial societies, according to Gibbons, Nowotny, and Scott, a fundamentally new mode of knowledge production has emerged (Gibbons 1994; Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2001). This mode had

Table 1. *Modes of knowledge production*

	“mode 1”	**“mode 2”**
Characteristics of knowledge	– Bounded to societal subsystems – Long duration – Universal, free of context – Explicit	– Reflexive, connected – Short half-life – Local, bounded, and contextualized – Implicit “tacit knowledge”
Institutional forms	– Working in isolated action settings – Monodisciplinary – Traditional hierarchies – Durable organizations – Separation of science and practice	– Working in networks and project groups – Inter/trans-disciplinary – Flat hierarchies – Temporary organizations – Networking of science and practice

Sources: after Matthiesen and Bürkner (2004); Gibbons (1994); Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons (2001).

been caused by the differentiated ways of knowledge production, as a part of the extension of communication technology and the changes toward communication (or rather information) societies.

According to them, the emergence of a new form of knowledge production is an indicator of a fundamental change in the structure of society (Bender 2004, 149-158). Since the mid-1990s, attempts have been made to describe this process using the terms “mode 1” and “mode 2.” While mode 1 involves being institutionalized in the form of a subsystem separated from the rest of society, and finds the solutions to problems out of this context in a disciplinary way and in organized hierarchy, mode 2 operates specifically, transdisciplinarily, heterarchically, reflexively, and in an application-oriented way. In addition, mode 2 operates using locally oriented definitions of problems. Mode 1 creates spatially clearly defined organizations and institutions, thus representing a traditional form of knowledge production; whereas in the new constellation of mode 2, work products are not primarily communicated and maintained through institutional channels, but by and among individuals. In the context of these limited-in-time organizational forms, highly specialized project teams work under extreme resource pressure. These teams, together with innovative scientists – specialists in particular

technologies – symbolic analysts, economists, consultants, and patent agents, as well as planners and politicians, work to achieve highly competitive forms of development. Thus, being the competent bodies in processes of the mode 2 type, humans represent the main resource of knowledge production (Bender 2004, 151).

With Orlikowski, knowledge is "enacted – every day over time – in people's practices" (Orlikowski 2002, 250). Working in transnational contexts also means that people are confronted with other social and cultural contexts, so they have to "improvise new practices as they invent, slip into or learn new ways of interpreting and experiencing the world," and thus "continually reconstitute their knowing over time and across contexts" (ibid., 253). Knowledge employees – and also urban geographers, among others – who work in international contexts embody geographic and cultural diversity, mentioned by Im and Orlikowski (Im, Yates, and Orlikowski 2005, 254), and they differ not only in expert and product knowledge, but especially in their local milieu and institutional knowledge. This is why Orlikowski points out that there are several boundaries – "temporal, geographic, social, cultural, historical, technical and political" – that international knowledge workers are confronted with (Orlikowski 2002, 255). So international companies and research networks today are anxious to providing their employees with international experiences in order to acquire cultural knowledge, and to learn to cope with these boundaries in their everyday and work lives. From these findings, the materiality of knowledge can be inferred: knowledge is subject to increasingly rapid changes, and is not tangible but personal. "It immigrates or migrates, depending on the carriers of the respective knowledge, and on their networks" (Matthiesen and Bürkner 2004, 75-77).

As a result of the increasing competition for economic locations, in the course of which a pool of highly qualified employees seems to be a guarantor for regional competitiveness, resource "knowledge" is becoming a decisive location factor (Meusberger 2000; Cooke 2002). However, due to the unequal global distribution of knowledge sources, in addition to the question of the number and quality of scientific institutions such as universities, research institutes, technical colleges, and others, the question of access to knowledge and, thus, the question of suitable embedding conditions for experts, into their respective local

context, as well as of their local interaction, is gaining new importance. In this regard Orlikowski (Orlikowski 2002, 256) mentions three practices, "aligning effort, learning by doing, and supporting participation," which describe how people "coordinate on complex projects, knowing how to develop capabilities for doing product development and knowing how to innovate within global operations."

Because they are embedded into local, regional, and global networks, local agents "know how things work on site" (implicit local knowledge). Thus, they know how and with which constellation of agents to address and tackle problems. By exchanging knowledge with others and, ultimately, by using and implementing this experiential knowledge, knowledge spillover occurs. Thus under conditions of mode 2 knowledge production, "on-site" opportunity structures, which serve as points of contact for an intensive face-to-face communication, seem to be indispensable. Skilful agents – forming suitable constellations (such as public-private partnerships) and using network communication – are able to efficiently bridge gaps in the market, to develop innovations, to establish successful forms of marketing, and in the end to keep up with global innovative trends. With the construction of a mission statement, urban planners, consultants, and politicians, as well as employers hope to create a specific urban identity that speeds up the face-to-face communication and cooperation in the city, and within the company.

3. Evaluating "Creative Leipzig"

3.1. Decline and Development of Socio-Economic Fields in Leipzig

As a former major commercial, trade fair, and cultural platform in the heart of Europe, as well as a city that became heavily industrialized in the GDR, the city and region of Leipzig have faced substantial ongoing multilayered transformation processes since 1990. With a current population of approximately half a million inhabitants, the city has had to develop new, future-oriented knowledge-based economies, as well as service industries that have had to be implemented and adapted to meet the needs of the existing regional workforce (Lange et al. 2007).

Parallel to the implementation of the new market system, a rapidly established housing market challenged urban policy from the early 1990s onward. As a result, new urban structures involving large suburban single-family housing areas, as well as newly renovated fin de siècle houses from the turn of nineteenth century in the inner city, and large quantities of derelict industrial plants have led to the description of Leipzig as a structurally "perforated city" (Lütke-Daldrup 2004).

The rapid decline in manufacturing industry, and the loss of more than a hundred thousand jobs in the 1990s could not be compensated for by the new job opportunities arising from the state-subsidized large infrastructural, transportation and modern manufacturing projects; the city's expected demographic and economic growth prospects failed in the late 1990s. High rates of long-term unemployment, social imbalances between the new elites and the less qualified marginalized groups – especially the city's youth – represent the major social problems facing Leipzig today. The brain drain of young and relatively well qualified women, especially in the 1990s, must be seen as a reaction to rare job opportunities in the regional labour market. Over the course of this development, disillusionment with local politics because of disappointed expectations, forced the public administration from the mid-1990s onward to strengthen and to reconsider Leipzig's urban, cultural, and economic potential. Newly defined urban policies and cluster strategies intended to create and extend existing strengths led to ambitious goals (such as the application for the 2012 Olympics, which ran until 2005). Since 2000, a small but steady growth in population has taken place. These positive demographic developments are an exception in eastern Germany, but cannot be explained away by positive developments in the labour market: to this day, approximately 18-20% of the workforce has remained officially unemployed.

3.2. Leipzig and its Representation in the ACRE Project

With regards to Leipzig's part in the ACRE project (Lange et al. 2007), there are two relevant empirical points: Firstly, the city of Leipzig will be presented briefly as a individual case, based on its distinct historical background. Secondly, in respect to quantified data sets that aim to provide a result relating to the degree of creative- and knowledge-based economies, the influence of small creative cells will be

highlighted. These existing creative networks have been so far undetected by the first approach, although they play a decisive role in how the city is recognized worldwide. Apart from the first perspective, a second dimension has to be unfolded: the in which way experts, such as urban scholars and others, produce a scientifically legitimated representation of the degree of "creativity" and "knowledge" in European cities. Therefore, I assume that not only should the methodological and theoretical be seen as fields of negotiation, but also we should include the way in which methods, theories, and expertise cultures are communicatively and interactively established. Distinct forms of performance, modes of negotiation, and modes of communication determine these cultures; in brief, expert systems shape urban representation by their rootedness in scientific scholarship.

The process of producing a creative-knowledge city region in scientific terms is followed by numerous systematic steps: First of all, the degree of creativity and knowledge in the case of Leipzig in the ACRE project was based on the number of occupations in related creative- and knowledge-oriented fields of employment, the number of companies, and the turnover (gross domestic product) of selected industries and segments. These indicators have been applied to "quantify" the individual creative and knowledge potential of a city.

Second, these single indicators have been framed by historical, social, and demographic description that should provide a "thick description" of the path development of the city. The historical position should provide the answer, if the observed potential of the creative and knowledge-based assets nowadays refers to its historical roots, or if they have been applied and invented without having roots and grounds of origin in the city-region. Thirdly, the "thick description" of a single city, a narration so far based on historical indicators, has been integrated in the sample of 12 cities.

3.3. The Current Situation in the Creative- and Knowledge-Intensive Industries in the City Region of Leipzig

In 2005, the city of Leipzig had approximately sixty thousand employees in the creative- and knowledge-intensive industries, and the surrounding counties had slightly more than twelve thousand such

employees. Between 2000 and 2005, more than approximately seven thousand jobs have been created in this field, especially in Leipzig; that is 14.77% more than in 2000. Nevertheless, this growth could not compensate for the loss of 39,660 jobs between 2000 and 2005 in other economic segments of the city-region of Leipzig; the surrounding state of Saxony lost 12.73% of its workforce. Growth in creative industries was taking place in the core area of the city-region – the city centre of Leipzig – while losses were registered in the neighbouring counties of Delitzsch, Muldentalkreis and Leipziger Land (Lange et al. 2007).

3.4. Profile of the City of Leipzig – Official and Hidden Potentials

Although huge federal and state financial investment has been directed into forward-looking fields of knowledge (mainly in mobility, R&D, high-tech infrastructure, and communication technologies), the research effects – such as the number of patents, and the amount of research funding – do not yet fully justify the financial investment. The weak ratio between the number of inhabitants and the number of highly qualified, skilled engineers in comparison to the neighbouring cities of Dresden and Chemnitz, demonstrate in particular that further efforts must be undertaken by public authorities and corporate companies, in order to attract highly qualified, creative human resources into the city of Leipzig. Furthermore, creative industries in general have not yet been identified as a strategic field of action by local government in the city of Leipzig. With respect to the positive factual performance in this field, primarily in the media industry, integrative public-private partnership strategies between educational institutions, R&D facilities, cultural production, and a coherent urban and economic policy have also not yet been registered. In order to position creative industries as a, if not the, potential future economic field, a further integration into Leipzig's cluster policy, as well as into the creation of the metropolitan region known as the "Saxon Triangle," appears to be needed.

Existing creative scenes (core creative producers in the field of design, art, painting, fashion, film, music, architecture, photography, and other) play a crucial, though not very visible role in the everyday life of

the city of Leipzig. Numerous creative agents in Leipzig – despite being internationally renowned – are not yet seen or labelled as "ambassadors" for Leipzig, although they contribute to the attractiveness and quality of the cultural, intellectual, and everyday life in Leipzig. These heterogeneous entrepreneurial scenes and creative milieus can be denominated as diverse cultural urban dimensions, so that they contribute to the attractiveness of the cultural economy in Leipzig. Their precarious socio-economic status reflects the instability, project-orientation, and the flexibility required of this economy.

4. Modes of "Producing" Creative-Knowledge Cities – the Expert Perspective

4.1. Production of Representation; or, It's the Stats, Stupid!

Although historical path developments, regional policy implications, national policy guidelines, and unexpected regional circumstances have been mentioned within the representational body – in this case the reports produced by each research team – the most important sources of information are national and European official statistics. Looking closer at the knowledge resources that play a decisive role in the production of scientific and political legitimacy, it is very obvious that large quantifiable data sets especially serve as an informational background for the comparison of cities. Single-factorial indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), employment and unemployment rates, levels of foreign direct investments, and others provide an "objective" unquestionable ground from which conclusions on city performance can be made. These highly aggregated data, often single indicator-based approaches, serve as analytical tools to group, categorize, and rank cities as pearls on a hierarchical chain. The process of grouping, categorizing, and ranking cities systematically ignores the impact of specific individual path developments, the impact of nondisplaceable local circumstances, unforeseeable political happenings that may have tremendous impacts on the city's evolution, and the level of development or stagnation that led to the

emergence of a singular city profile. The nature of knowledge and creativity are in particular not adequately identified in respect to their influential effects on the performance structure of the city's "Gestalt."

In brief, the methodological approach of single-indicator based comparisons presupposes the possibility to compare variables that have an incomparable ground: the singularity of a city and its distinct differences. In posttraditional knowledge-based societies and urban systems, the value of creativity and knowledge is hardly measurable, and is evaluated on the basis of quantifiable indicators, when taking the specific value and the nature of creativity seriously. Very often so-called hidden champions play a decisive role in defining the profile of a city and its recent potential for identification. In the case of Leipzig, a relatively small number of artists who had silently resided in the Academy of Fine Arts during the socialist period, later transformed an old style of painting to a new leading painting style, recognized worldwide, which is now association with the city as the "New Leipzig School" (*Neue Leipziger Schule*). In the course of this success story, a cluster of supply services, from galleries to material services, emerged – which in themselves have no statistical relevance to employment, gross domestic product, foreign directs investment levels, or other indicators. On the contrary, it has propelled a new image of Leipzig around the globe, and infiltrated an artist- and artist-related-network.

4.2. City-Regional Trajectories

Within the proceeding project, urban regions have been located along four dimensions. Their position can be seen as hypotheses (see figure 2). The economic dimension is here represented by the strong presence of heavy industry, the "societal" dimension is represented by the region's status as a decision-making centre, the third dimension refers to the stability of this decision-making status, as when we compare old and new capital cities.

The key highlighted distinguishing factors separate older, historic cities from others, and distinguish between those whose development has been strongly shaped by policy intervention from those where this has not occurred. Older capital cities also tend to be cultural and educational

Table 2. *Typology of cities with different background conditions for creative and knowledge intensive industries*

Role as a political or economic decision-making centre (national or International nationally known as a hist.-cult. centre / Economic profile: Innovation and technology policy after 1990 ↘		Economic profile by 1990s					
		With heavy industry and/or seaport activities		More mixed industrial economy, specialised in engineering and high-tech		Early srevice profile, diverse industry	
		active	not active	active	not active	active	not active
Acquired before 19th century	yes	Lepzig	Riga	Munich	Budapest Milan	Dublin Amsterdam	
Existing from 19th century	yes					Barcelona	
	no		Sofia				Helsinki
Not a major decision-making centre	no			Toulouse Birmingham			Poznań*

* not active at the state level; more active at the local level

Source: ACRE Report Work package 3, 2007 (S. Mustard, A. Murie, C. Chapain, Z. Kovács)

centres, and to carry forward important traditions in these fields. However they do not have a monopoly on positive attributes or the skills, diversity, and inventiveness associated with successful modern cities, which have often flourished partly because older cities were more closed to new ideas and enterprises. The picture that can be derived from this classification should help to evaluate the starting conditions for the creative- and knowledge-based industries by the early 1990s. Some two thirds of the research's urban regions are decision-making centres. More than a half of the cities are internationally known as historical-cultural centres.

It is symptomatic that heavy industry remains important for the economic profile only in the postsocialist cities (Sofia and Riga), with Budapest and Leipzig already standing one step ahead in industrial restructuring. Those of the western European cities, which have previously been known for their industrial or seaport activities (Birmingham, Barcelona, and Amsterdam) have passed the stage of radical economic restructuring much earlier, and are in the process of leaving this category. Innovation and technological policy after 1990 is the only parameter in this picture which reflects the effort made to achieve restructuring in recent years. The matrix shows that policy efforts (especially those which are successful) are much more evident in the Western cities (with the exceptions of Helsinki and Milan). The question of whether it is success that stimulates efforts for regulation and improvement, or whether, on the contrary, efficient policies provide the conditions for economic success, remains open. Furthermore, the placing of cities in one category does not explain their relationships to the other, less important evaluated categories.

4.3. Knowledge, Power, and Urban Scholarly Cultures in Europe

Apart from the use of official statistics as an objective way to categorize pathways and socio-economic performances of cities, specific forms of knowledge seem to have a great influence on the way cities are relative to each other. While one might assume that these relational positions depend on transparent comparable figures, a rather subtle

process in the way cities are positioned can be detected: Not only do different statistical data sets, and different spatial demarcations (along urban, regional, or city-regional dimensions) lead to different pictures of the research units, but also the way that these differences are verbally, aesthetically, and strategically articulated among project teams lead to various forms of their integration into the body of knowledge, and so into the body of our understanding of European creative cities.

Furthermore, strong differences can be detected in how project teams position themselves and perform within research networks. Cities with positive employment situations, such as Milan, Amsterdam, and Barcelona emphasis a Western type of creative urban dimension, by referring to historical conditions. On the contrary, cities such as Poznań, Riga, and Sofia have developed a rather different urban understanding of performing and practicing "creativity"; especially in socialist times, the label "jazz club" could have been considered a synonym of "officially accepted counter culture," where creative and politically motivated articulation took place. It can be assumed that these silently accepted creative practices were not openly communicated, or in the course of time associated with a specific (not to say non-Western) communicative way of expressing and articulating this style. Looking especially at the articulation of culture and creativity in cities, distinct western and eastern European ways of articulation can be addressed. Especially within liberal capitalist societies, Western cities had early established modes of self-promotion and self-marketing, aimed at improving visibility and attention worldwide.

On the contrary, since the fall of the iron curtain, eastern European cities have been often neglecting the socialist era – its buildings, styles, and values – and refer instead to either the glorious presocialist times, or to a breathtaking super-modernity with sharp socio-economic effects, in order to visually hide the ruptures of the era of transformation (an example of this is Moscow). Highlighting this ambiguity of the post-socialist era, as well as its possible individual trajectory in respect to Western-based understandings of urban development, is a tricky endeavour. It may confront the much stronger Western position (with its scientific networks, and national and international financiers) and its view of urban development, with the less powerful and less influential scientific perspectives of the weaker states – in this case the recently integrated states of eastern Europe.

Research in an enlarged Europe is therefore considered a playground with a hidden power agenda: acceptance in EU-funded (or other) network projects is not only accompanied with an agreement to fulfil its outline, but it is also based on an agreement to "contribute," to "participate," to "network," but not to differentiate or to opt for difference – not to say separation.

Another relationship seems to be important: the socio-economic success of cities such as Milan, Barcelona, and Amsterdam goes along with the emergence of prominent scholars in urban and regional studies who originate from these cities. These scholars have established a body of knowledge of cultures in scientific community worldwide. In particular, the recent trend to brand a prosperous city with the label of "creative city" or "knowledge city," has enabled the scholars of these regions to speak for "their" region, and to participate in the city-regional success.

Some illustrations of this are found in the success of the California School, closely linked with the tremendous socio-economic success of the Silicon Valley area; in the booming film and TV business in and around Los Angeles; or in the rise of the "third Italy" debate – not only connected to specific manner of doing geographical research in north Italy, but also to a wider debate on "regionalism." The formation of a "school" is often based on the factual presence of positive regional economic development. A "school" on the model of the California School cannot be found in cities such as Detroit, Riga, Leipzig or others.

4.4. Does Language Separate or Unite?

The ideology of forming an integrative knowledge body based on EU-funded research networks operates on the basis of a single language: English. Although the EU finances a huge body of translators, in practice it is English that dominates as the working language within research projects. Robert Hassink (2007, 1282) recently summarized a growing debate in spatial studies about how in "recent papers, editorials, and commentaries the growing use of English as the main language of communication in academic human geography" has been discussed critically. Many institutions and their associated journals in many

non-English speaking countries have decided to use English as their only language, in order to become more attractive internationally. This has led to a hegemonic situation, and forced many non-English speaking countries to change their attitude toward this dominance. The perspective that the Anglo-American viewpoint is dominating and thereby narrowing the discipline by suppressing diversity is considered to be poorer and less capable of understanding an increasingly complex world in which diversity matters.

Transferring this briefly diagnosed situation to the work practice in the case of the EU-project ACRE, the use of English seems to be an unquestioned presupposition that everyone agreed to silently, or else has not yet reflected on. One might think differently about this situation, when "fine differences" of urban cultures are verbally articulated in interviews and later analysed or interpreted in qualitative empirical surveys. In a nonessentialist understanding, the contemporary globalized worlds are articulated with their distinct translocal language, style, and habits, thus guaranteeing an empirical access to a deeper understanding of the constitution of the specific variety of "urban." This would require a quasi-ethnographic approach involving participant observation.

On the contrary, one might argue that first of all a common language opens up the opportunity to exchange thoughts, perspectives, and approaches at all. Within such a global or European community, there should be a literary space sufficient to articulate individual perspectives, different approaches, and different outcomes toward leading (Western-based) positions. But access to conferences, research networks, papers, and publications is based on hidden anglophone alliances regulating these approaches. So Hassink (2007) concludes that "geographical discourse has been geographically partial." He refers to Gutierrez and Lopez-Nieva (2001, 67), who indicate that "so-called international journals are to a limited extent truly international, as the lion's share of their authors stem from the UK and the US." They calculated that these two countries account for 73.4% of the authors between 1991 and 1997, whereas Germany and France each have scores of around 0.5%. The dominant use of the English language has thus produced a global human geography which is – on the contrary – still fragmented into national and linguistic communities with their own, from a global point of view, unheard positions and perspectives.

The major argument related to the ACRE project is that this English-speaking research network has not yet established an analytical perspective, and that there is a still unclear relationship between urban cultures, language, and their representation in the scientific products of the research network. In the case of understanding creativity- and knowledge-based urban development, it is obvious that in social networks in particular, tacit and network knowledge becomes more and more important, and thus the value of language increases. To conclude: if you want to understand creativity-driven urban development in, say, Riga, you have to speak the local language, although agents could also operate worldwide and prefer to speak English. To become an insider in the creative milieus thus requires not only the ability to speak the local language, but also to have an insider position within scientific communities in order to guarantee the dissemination of your acquired knowledge. The predominant use of English both unites and separates. A reflective (not to say supervisory) proceeding within research activities might be needed in order to catch the "fine differences," which are articulated between the lines and often get lost when specifics are either translated or squeezed into an predominant concept of, for example, creativity or knowledge. This is especially relevant when looking at urban development and urban decline in the transnational perspective.

5. Critique is not Enough, or a Proposal as a Concluding Statement

This explorative article started with the question of how urban decline and development are negotiated in EU-funded transnational research networks, when analysing the impact of creative- and knowledge-based economies on the degree of urban competitiveness. The question was framed by theoretical concepts such as projects ecologies (Grabher 2004) and mode-2 (Bender 2004, 149-158), in order to reflect on the way that relevant knowledge is produced within research networks. The approach tried to understand the production of knowledge *about* cities and not just *of* cities. This approach opened the opportunity

to critically ask for the relation between the representation of the urban as well as its production by scientific scholars, and the specific local conditions articulated in reports, and in direct verbal interaction. Based on a critical methodological reflection applied in the scientific reports, as well as on language as a means to communicate between project members, the following results can be suggested in conclusion, in reference to the case of Leipzig and the EU project ACRE:

1. By attempting quantitative comparisons in the field of creative and knowledge intensive industries, reasonable indicators for the specific articulation of "creativity" and "knowledge" are rare, and often do not touch upon its specific nature.

2. Referring to the EU-funded project ACRE, it can be observed that creative and knowledge-intensive economies especially have to relate their work performance to specific local contexts, as well as to international standards. The ambiguous situation of local rootedness and global connectivity requires new competences and new forms of network knowledge for entrepreneurial agents, in order to successfully survive in the target market – or even to access the market at all. This is relevant for cultural entrepreneurs as well as for spatial researches. Analytically, it can be stated that cities have produced individual forms of representation of the urban that is implicitly rooted in local and regional research cultures, and their scholarship (for example, the so-called California School).

Epistemologically speaking, it can be concluded that a systematic research outline should have been implemented in European research networks in order to have the chance to supervise this relationship, as well as the impact of scholarship, knowledge cultures and their distinct forms (and traditions), in order to represent the "urban" at all. It is of minor importance to highlight the fact that most of the internationally known leading scholarship is located in growing and developing regions, and not in declining, shrinking, stagnating regions.

3. It can be observed that the use of the English language unites as well as separates transnationally oriented research networks such as the ACRE project. Although each of the participants employs fluent English, the influence of distinct local traditions of expertise and of knowledge resources about the forms of representation in each city (not to say the "product") should not be underestimated in its relevance. Habitual and

verbal everyday cultures, and the use of language to express specific circumstances are factors that have to be taken more strongly into consideration when dealing with less-established economies, such as the newly emerging creative industries. Furthermore it can be concluded that any form of representation is associated with power relations and that – in the case of Leipzig – small informal networks of professional and semiprofessional creative professions in particular do not yet have a common form of representation or institutionalized lobby that promotes these economies.

Finally, and without aiming to raise criticism, it is intended to integrate a new reflexive perspective in transnational project cultures, based on the assumption that national scholarly cultures and their knowledge competences have had, so far, much less problematic influences on the representation of the urban. Knowledge about cities as well as of cities plays an increasing role in the formulation of city marketing and city branding strategies (Lange and Stöber, forthcoming). Furthermore this type of reflexive city knowledge becomes more and more relevant in relating single-city activities to the wider transnational context, as well as to the city networks and their cooperative structures. Nowadays expertise about the urban is required alongside new competences to properly articulate and adequately express urban potentials, in order to be able to highlight the distinct local specifics, as well as the internationally comparable assets. Briefly, one has to understand the local as well as the international language *about* the city, although they might both be the same spoken language.

When addressing the increasing relevance of new knowledge forms of the city as a heterogeneous, but at the same time globalized or homogenous object, recent debates have introduced the concepts of the "habitus of the city" (Lindner 2003; Matthiesen 2005; Berking and Löw 2005, 9-24). For instance, Lindner asks for the emergence of "landscapes of taste" that make distinct locations visible by means of cultural practices and their material products. He concludes that these landscapes of taste are by no means without prerequisite or instantly producible, but are highly influenced and infiltrated by specific local economies and cultural traditions.

Basically, the authors refer to Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu 1982) in order to analyse the local dispositions, norms and prefe-

rences that are inscribed in a city, those which are historically rooted and can be seen as a ensemble of preferences of taste, lifestyles, aesthetic preferences, conventions, and routines, which first of all articulate the singularity of a city. Thinking further about these perspectives, it becomes obvious that the constitution of a city depends also on its reflexive knowledge about its origin. The singularity of a city seems to become more important in globalized and homogenized worlds.

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Transformation Processes and Cross-Border Cultures – a Milieu-Sensitive Approach toward Fractures of Decline and Growth

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Abstract. The article deals with the management of the complexity and dynamics of urban and institutional transformation of cross-border entities. That these are often characterized by parallelism and fractures of shrinkage and growth, by rapid change and stubborn persistence, is seen as an obstacle to the development and social cohesion that the EU sees as a precondition for the competitiveness of places. Based upon research in the twin towns of Frankfurt an der Oder and Słubice, which dealt with cross-border urban development and university cooperation, we suggest in this article that utilizing the heuristic concept of "KnowledgeScapes" allows a better understanding of factors supporting or hindering development. Turning the concept around to actively further context-oriented building of communicative capacities, it could help to enhance opportunities which are particular to border situations. In two case studies, the authors found that "misfits" and barriers existing on an institutional level and between different milieus may be a driving force for learning processes, and could be encouraged by providing institutionalized and milieu-sensitive opportunities for contact and discourse in urban development.

1. Introduction

It was one of the EU's goals in the Lisbon accord of 2000 to speed up the development of the knowledge society as a basis for economic growth and wealth-based social cohesion. Taking up the challenge presented by the different speeds of development that threaten the homogeneity of development, and that would eventually lead to greater disparities in Europe, was among the major targets of this agenda for the future. However, many data indicate that since then, and despite considerable effort, the socio-economic and cultural rifts produced by the different paths and paces of transformation in Europe are deepening, rather than being levelled out. Whereas there exist dynamic centres of excellence and openness toward the adaptation of new knowledge as a basis for social and economic growth, other regions are seemingly driven by parallel developments of growth and decline, leading to a polarization that results in closing out innovations, and these regions falling further behind on the track toward the knowledge society.

The department of the Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (henceforth IRS) researching the "coevolution of knowledge and space" considered that looking at scenarios of rapid transformation, and at locations where extreme socio-spatial and cultural contrasts meet, could lead to an enhanced understanding of the reasons for these differences in adopting knowledge as a driving force. However, as an institute dedicated to practical and governance-oriented basic research, the expectation was also that understanding factors which further and inhibit knowledge based development would lead to results that could be turned into policies, and promising forms of governance.

The paths in the development toward the knowledge-based society are manifold and complex, as the German postunification transformation is showing. It was an early postunification assumption that it would probably take a decade to develop a homogeneous east-west balance with respect to knowledge-based governance. Some even thought that the new eastern states (*Länder*), exposed to rapid institutional modernization and supported by the most up to date infrastructures, might overtake the west and turn out to be the locomotive of knowledge-based change. Two decades later, as shrinking cities (Oswalt 2004) and brain-

-drain (Matthiesen 2004) rather indicate a slow-down of development, especially in the peripheral eastern regions, it has become apparent that this is not the case. Institutional transplantation and good infrastructure are not sufficient to kick-start an enhanced use of knowledge in development. Physical factors, such as distances to centres, or the availability of natural resources are playing a role. But the post-unification experience in Germany shows that openness toward knowledge and innovations is rather based upon a mix of cultural factors. The social history of regions (Fichter, Jähnke, and Knorr-Siedow 2004; Lange, Büttner and Matthiesen 2003; Schmidt 2004) seems to be as important as current specific milieu structures or the connectivity of actors and their milieus within a region, and toward global development. Thus it is not beyond expectation, that despite a concentration of post-unification public investment and consumption subsidies in the east, growth has appeared only in certain spots. Development was much more positive where a culture of knowledge and innovation has embedded development policies; and where reserve and a structural conservatism had remained dominant, innovations have often been fended off.

However, a look at eastern Germany's post-unification development shows more than just regional differences. As transformation takes place, former homogenous milieus are separating into often rather smaller innovative sectors, and those uncoupled from development. There is a close social and spatial proximity between the different speeds of development, and growth and decline. With respect to knowledge as a driving force, Germany has developed into a highly differentiated landscape of high urban hills and mountainous ranges of metropolitan regions (Kujath and Schmidt 2007), and of large plains and deep valleys falling off toward the peripheries. And whereas mountainous knowledge ranges are interlinked across some southern and western borders (such the Basel triangle; Cologne, Aachen, Maastricht and on toward Lille), such peaks of knowledge are rare along the eastern borders, particularly along the German-Polish border. Looking at neighbouring Poland, the indications are the same. As major metropolitan regions and narrow transit corridors are becoming knowledge nodes, peripheral Poland is losing out (Kuklinski 2004).

Border regions are especially prone to becoming uncoupled from knowledge-based development as they are often peripheral from both

countries' perspectives. Whereas in the first postsocialist decade, high transaction barriers impeded cross-border action – despite efforts at building joint Euro-regions – since the lowering of the physical borders, the cultural inhibitions to interchange are becoming more important in determining whether borders are remaining places of division and low activity, or whether they can be turned around into becoming bridges of interculturally enriching communication and of wealth generation based upon a proactive use of knowledge.

This article focuses on two case-studies carried out in the Polish-German twin towns of Słubice and Frankfurt an der Oder, a typical point of interchange for two otherwise rather peripheral regions – eastern Brandenburg and the western Polish border region of Lubusz voivodeship. The thematic focus is on (a) urban development and planning, and (b) an outstanding case of international university collaboration, and the pitfalls and opportunities encountered in enhancing the knowledge cultures "at the border." From our perspective, these cases are of a paradigmatic importance for understanding the different paces of opening up to knowledge-driven development and incorporating the border as a positive element of added value through incorporating difference and proximity. Whereas managing the urban region of Frankfurt an der Oder and Słubice is an opportunity to understand the challenges of postsocialist normality along the border, the Collegium Polonicum is one of the outstanding models for a cross-border knowledge-space developing in Europe.

2. A Border Region in Transition – and Shrinking?

The region of Frankfurt an der Oder and Słubice has been in constant transformation since the end of the Second World War. However, whereas Frankfurt an der Oder soon became one of the fourteen district capitals of the German Democratic Republic and "rose out of the ruins" (as the GDR's national anthem had it) as the proud "City of Semiconductor Works," Słubice, once the smaller "Damm-Vorstadt" across the river, remained more of an underused transit-post until 1990. But from a knowledge perspective, Frankfurt an der Oder also never made it beyond a certain threshold. While its population grew until the

early 1980s, and the town offered housing and all basic amenities for production workers, the knowledge-intensive basic semiconductor research was carried out in the republic's southern centres. With respect to urban life and cultural institutions, "except for a rich musical life, nothing outside of the mainstream happened ... Berlin's attractions probably lay too near." As early as during the mid-1980s, the population of some 87,000, which at one stage was planned to rise to over one 100,000, started to shrink, and since the 1990s the decline has drastically accelerated. The town currently has a population of about 67,000, and estimates for the 2020 population vary between an optimistic 54,000, and a mere 44,000 with a dramatically growing proportion of the elderly.

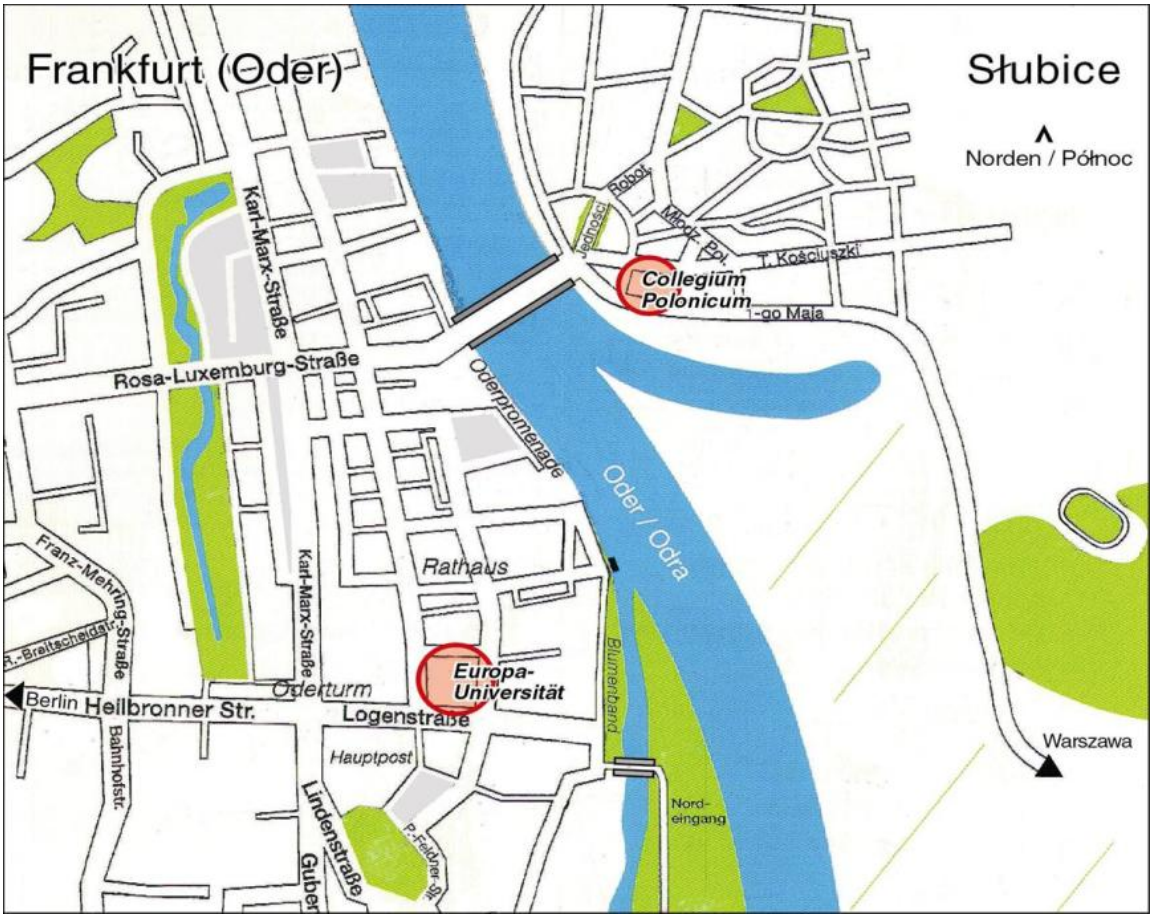

Figure 1. Map of central Frankfurt an der Oder and Słubice.

Source: Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning

After German unification, Frankfurt an der Oder received a heavy blow in the loss of its district capital status and the crashing of its semiconductor industry. Thousands were sent into redundancy and through the rotating doors of no-exit training schemes. Since then the local unemployment rate has remained near 20 percent, although many active technical personnel have left.

2.1. Postunification Hopes for a Turn – Back to the Industrial Future?

The materially well cushioned east German transformation path perpetuated the notion held by many – residents as well as politicians – that possible development had to be centrally induced through government initiative, rather than as a result of civil self-governance. At around the turn of the millennium, the Communicant semiconductor facility promised a turnaround from decline into growth – back to into an industrialist future. When it failed to materialized at a great loss of public funds and private hope in 2003 (O'Brian 2004), it became apparent that the Brandenburg approach of putting the political emphasis on grand single-issue options had led away from other opportunities, and that the milieus that carried these had been partly marginalized (interview 4)[1].

In Frankfurt an der Oder innovative projects to strengthen the development from within the local civil society – owner- and neighbourhood-driven renewal, attempts at bundling smaller-scale investments locally (interviews 1 and 9) – were never embraced by the majority of decision-makers as possible core initiatives for a diversified future. Even the energetic establishment of a university – Viadrina European University – that really took off as an element of growth, inviting young people, academic knowledge, and considerable public and private investment to the region, was for a long time hardly seen by the majority of urban decision makers as a robust stepping stone on the way to turning the town toward a knowledge-oriented future. Thus neither the Collegium Polonicum – a unique and real cross-border collaboration between

[1] Quotations from interviews translated by the authors.

Viadrina and Poznań University – nor the cultural concept of a transnational location, "Slubfurt," promoted by the artist Kurzwelly were seen as more than peripheral options. With their profile (law, economics, humanities, and cultural sciences) these new institutions were neither well enough linked to the past, nor to the neoindustrialist mainstream visions of the town's future.

Developments that lay outside the industrial path and cultural concepts played an astonishingly small role in determining the town's habitus. Considering that for more than a decade, a turn back to an industrialist future had seemed less likely than a postindustrial and knowledge driven future, the response to the concept of a "university and transnational double town" (Stadt Frankfurt an der Oder 2005) remained vague and had almost no urban planning consequences.

2.2. Knowledge Relations across River and Border

During the period of state socialism, "the officially emphasized cross border friendship was restricted to official administrative contact and some folklore" (interview 3), and except for the short period of thaw, the barriers in fact rose, because from the mid-1970s onward, the Poles were officially pronounced "unsafe comrades" in the socialist camp. Also after 1990, Frankfurt an der Oder's relations with Słubice and the rest of the region across the river "have hardly been pursued proactively and with persistence" (interview 1). The same, however, applies for Słubice, which even after 1990 "had much less room for manoeuvre ... due to the centralist government system in Poland, and a feeling that local collaboration was not really encouraged by Warsaw" or by the German side (interview 4). Although there was a general understanding that the future lay in opening the borders, old established reservations and disbelief in possible win-win opportunities of cross-border initiatives have led to official cooperation remaining mostly formal (interviews 1 and 2).

The persistence of the closure against the Polish "other" was not only felt in official contact, but surfaced openly during the so-called "war of buns." The quarrel was whether the cheap but undeniably good Polish bread rolls should be sold across the border in Frankfurt an der

Oder. But although the notion dominated in Frankfurt an der Oder that one should buy German goods so long as Germans were unemployed at such high rates, the cheap Polish market across the bridge, and incidentally near the Collegium Polonicum, boomed with German customers. And indeed, while growth rates in low-income Słubice had steadily risen since 1990 due to informal service initiatives, from car repair to cross-border dentistry, Frankfurt an der Oder's economy remained in a relative stalemate. Informal options either had no basis in the residents' repertoire of action, or else were subdued by formalities and plastered over by public subsidies. Also the rejection of a tram connection across the border bridge, suggested by the mayor, in a 2002 referendum could be interpreted as a signal of harsh closure – or insecurity – in the confrontation with new opportunities. In 2000, Frankfurt an der Oder's harsh milieu structures even made it into widely debated literature (Mendling 2000). The probably over-accentuating documentary *Neuland* (Newland) provided a show of arrogance and "self-protection" – proving most of all that east-west German stereotypes were as heavily grounded in the local milieus as German-Polish resentments – with a continuing threat of self-acceleration.

3. A Milieu-Sensitive Look at Two Different Urban Milieus

3.1. Case Study: Urban Milieus in Policy and Planning

In the first of our two case studies, the focus is on Frankfurt an der Oder and the role that milieus and their specific knowledge play in urban and cross border development. Relating to the debates about evidence-based (Faludi 2006) and milieu-oriented planning, urban actors from policy makers to planners, administrators and researchers, as well as members of civil society were asked what the role of professional and everyday milieus is in filtering expert planners' knowledge to become the foundation of action in the local political realm.

One assumption was that milieu influences and the respective tacit forms of knowledge often beat the logics of professional networks and expert knowledge, regardless of any grounding in evidence, as experts see it. The other assumption was that there are drawbacks as well as identifiable opportunities related to the dominance of milieus which can be utilized in a better grounded and more promising development discourse.

Cross-Border Perception in Policy and Planning

For a long time, urban planning in Frankfurt an der Oder has virtually turned its back on the river and the border. In a striking contrast to the international hype over waterfronts, town planning strangely treated parts of the historic inner city and the waterfront as an urban periphery, while peripheral panel estates were upgraded long after the risks of a shrinking population had become evident. For many years, rehabilitation projects and new developments happened either in a low key fashion or, like the planned new semiconductor factory, located toward the outskirts or along traffic infrastructures – following development concepts of the growth-oriented pre-unification period. Urbanity and vivid mixes in the centre were not on the decision makers' minds, and even "support for those private owners and investors who wanted to bring urban life back to Berisinchen [the nineteenth century city centre extension] was muffled" (interview 4). Many of these decisions have a basis in either "objective" reasons, among them the availability of state rehabilitation funds only for earmarked "programme areas," or external investors' demands. But to an astonishing degree, decisions were taken that seem to contradict evidence, reason, and state-of-the art professional planning knowledge.

"... Germany has a really well established theoretical and practice-oriented system of planning. All types of information are available ... There are the German professional organizations and there is thematic discourse. The problem starts when that is overlaid by local interests, against which we as planners are not able to argue – given the concrete power structures. ... We have for a long time done the wrong things, although we professionals knew better ..." (interview 1).

Besides reflecting the harsh realities of economy, location, and political structures – which are outside of the realm of local politics

– Frankfurt an der Oder's post unification urban development greatly reflects the strengths and weaknesses of different landscapes of local and supralocal milieus that influence the professional debate. On one hand, some of these milieus are the holders of formal and informal power, while others, indeed, are excluded. On the other hand, their influence on development is dependent on the degree of interconnectivity of their respective knowledge-repertoires and their ability to forge coalitions. Controlling different repertoires of knowledge – expert-knowledge, everyday-knowledge and institutional knowledge (Matthiesen 2004) – in a local overlay, they influence the urban development discourse in a way that even well placed and empirically grounded professional arguments only come to bear to a limited degree. But apart from professional knowledge being outplayed by "strong" unitary milieus, it also happens that culturally based concepts – such as those formulated in the "Slub-furt" metaphor of a joint urban region – are outplayed in power games.

Weak Civil Roots

Because Frankfurt an der Oder had been a town of a constant inner German immigration since the end of the war, the local milieus are characterized by "weak roots" (interview 1). More than 90 per cent – calculated from a survey conducted during 1980s – of the residents had come as refugees, or seeking labour. The newcomers "often found it difficult to accommodate themselves ... This may be one possible reason for the persistent inward closure of the various milieus and the juicy intermilieu conflicts ... never solidly established, they were mostly related to the workplace, which then broke away" (interview 1). After the "turn" of 1989 and deindustrialization, despite the material cushion of the German social transfer system, a great many were factually excluded from economic advancement and societal recognition, and even more felt so. While many key positions in the economy were taken over by a new wave of migrants from "the West," a still-limited new middle class arose, leading to a pattern of socially and spatially segregated milieus.

There is only a relatively small group of urban decision makers and people active in the urban discourse: "Less than 100 people, including party activists, some professionals, and a limited number of cultural

actors [*Kulturschaffende*] who often show up ... not many in a city of over fifty thousand." Especially important among them is the so-called semiconductor milieu that has undergone a change from being a defensive and closed milieu, hesitant toward any new development options during the 1990s, to an interestingly persistent and influential group. A third group, and probably the best interconnected, represents the wider cultural and scientific realm, including parts of the research staff of the university, and cultural actors like the Slubfurt initiative in their centre.

"The semiconductor milieu, if it can be called that, has taken a lot of the pre-unification structures to where they are today" (interview 3).

Ironically, after many technical personnel had left, it was the administrational bureaucratic part of the semiconductor milieu – in collaboration with those entrepreneurial specialists who developed small high-tech companies from the bankruptcy assets (Lange and Büttner 2005) – that strongly supported the move for reindustrialization. After having infiltrated the newly established postunification institutions of urban administration, university management, and some innovative start-ups, this milieu for a long time was strong through its informal influence, paired with a formal representation in the administrational, economic, and political networks. After being a blockading factor in many respects for over a decade, this milieu of persistence has partly converted to a new openness to the oncoming concept of the solar city.

Other active urban milieus, especially that of the university, have found it hard to become grounded in the town. Torn between the city which often understood them as antagonistic – racial aggression being only the tip of the iceberg of signals perceived – and the attractions of Berlin, they often succumbed to the "brain-train" (the express to Berlin), and remained part-time residents. Cross border milieus, outside of obligatory planning networks, began to exist after the border physically opened, but are small and usually highly dependent on very active individuals, and not embedded or cross-cutting into any other milieus.

Within the game being of influenced by the struggling "entrepreneurs of power" (interview 3), the everyday knowledge of resident milieus – like those non-organized residents living in the large housing areas – was easily excluded from the urban discourses, except for rare, but crushingly outspoken public debates in periods of planning conflict. They showed up during the debate about the tram link across the bridge

to Słubice, and they featured in the difficulties of communicating about the partial demolition of panel-blocks within the federal programme of urban regeneration (*Stadtumbau*), which was long dominated by the tactic of withholding information from the residents "whose dwellings were to be demolished – out of care that people would be overstressed, or because planning mediation was overpowered by egotist political games." Professional planners' advice about the integrating capacity of participatory practices was neglected in the face professional advice from within the administration and from outside advisors (interview 2).

An Approach Toward Integrated and Communication-Oriented Planning

Time has softened some of the formerly strict milieu-boundaries, with help from the influence of certain individuals' personal engagement – such as the university president, who has engaged in urban debates – and under the influence of methodical changes in the planning procedures, stemming from integrated planning becoming more state-of-the-art in Germany. But at least as important are structuring interventions from outside, which induce learning processes. The federal and state Socially Integrated City programmes – although not wholeheartedly adopted by the urban actors as a programme, which has made funding physical development more difficult – have left their traces in supporting an understanding of the interconnectedness of urban actors by "forcing" them to cooperate in order to acquire subsidies for their projects. The state of Brandenburg's demand for Integrated Urban Development Concepts – under the name of INSEKs – has further encouraged collaboration within the town and across the border, as a long-term vision for the urban region was mandatory for acquiring state funds for urban regeneration. These elements of urban policies have helped to overcome the autistic path dependencies of the various milieus that still are to be found in Frankfurt an der Oder – as they are represented by "eastalgia" (nostalgia for the old system and structures) and cultural dissidence. After over a decade, a new sphere of milieus, partly grounded in the old, but more open toward active encounter than self-defence seems to be slowly emerging.

"Ironically the attempts by the town's upper echelons and fearful power preservationists to keep up their steering capacity by fending off

public debate and experimental innovations as irrelevant, has led to exactly the opposite to their desired results. Today, in an atmosphere of little trust, the politicians and planners find it difficult to control because they are lacking access to other than their own milieus. Not providing space and opportunity for urban discourse has not empowered them, but led to a competition of milieus and new arrangements, that may render knowledge-based urban planning more difficult" (interview 4).

For realizing the now-evident opportunities – solar industry and university capacity in a more than just virtual Slubfurt region – new spaces and time allocations should be agreed upon. Learning from across the fence – in this case from university collaboration – should be encouraged on the side of town development. Lateral learning (Bueren, Bougrain, and Knorr-Siedow 2002) in projects of integrated planning should be pursued across milieu barriers in an institutionalized development discourse. If this is to become more than negative coordination (Scharpf 1998), the instruments of integrated and actor-oriented planning should be placed centrally for the development of a cross-border vision of Slubfurt, from its present highly virtual quality to a more down-to-earth reality.

3.2. Case Study: Academic Milieus in Polish-German University Cooperation

With the inauguration of a joint Polish-German university, the "Collegium Polonicum" (CP) in Słubice, its founders aimed to send a special signal in this precarious border situation. Under the specific conditions of the border region, the CP not only functions as a university, it also takes on an important role within the process of Polish-German convergence. In addition to its academic assignment, the CP acts as a centre of contact and communication with a multitude of initiatives[2] that are targeted at the academic realm, as well as at the regional population, to foster cross-cultural understanding in the region.

The Polish-German university is a joint foundation of the Viadrina European University in Frankfurt an der Oder and Adam Mickiewicz

[2] For example, within the EU Interreg programmes.

University in Poznań (AMU). It is situated in Słubice in a privileged location directly visible across the river from Frankfurt an der Oder. The new building was opened in 1998, long after the first joint Polish-German study courses started in 1993 without a space of their own. In running the university, many actions needed to be carried out without much of a legal or institutional basis, and on the grounds of informal agreements based on trust. After a long period of debate concerning the legal status of this cross-border university, finally in 2002, a governmental agreement between the German state of Brandenburg and Poland was signed. As the CP has no legal status of its own, and has no budgeting rights, the joint university is – in principle – fully dependent on its two founding universities, Viadrina and AMU. Everyday affairs are managed by a joint committee consisting of members from both parent universities. The institution has a self-declared target to not only to contribute to academic teaching and research, but to become active on all institutional levels in Polish-German collaboration (see Wojciechowski 2005, 21-22).

It was thus of prior interest to find out what the challenges of practical everyday university cooperation are, and how the set benchmarks of collaboration are met. Because it is here that the different national educational systems and the knowledge culture have to find their interface, and on this level that the differences show themselves. This cooperation shows all the signs of being a "laboratory" (Wojciechowski 2005, 25) that enables research about the cross-cultural institutional learning processes in the realm of the European higher education system – especially with regards to the opportunities and problems involved in establishing a joint collaboration between Polish and German academic institutions. By researching the interactions that are taking place between the different knowledge and learning cultures, universally accepted knowledge can be generated, knowledge which is transferable to other cross-border university collaborations.

Institutional Misfits – Causes of Conflicts and Opportunities for Learning

As with urban development and collaboration across borders and milieu boundaries, cross-border discrepancies between institutions – institutional "misfits" – are central in influencing the collaboration within

Table 1. *Institutional misfits*

Kind of misfit	Example
Misfits within ***formal*** (codified) institutions	National educational system University law Organizational structures Labour law Social security system Curricular arrangements
Misfits within ***informal*** (noncodified) institutions	National and regional knowledge cultures Value systems and norms Administrational routines Work and learning structures Forms of communication Behaviour in conflict situations Mentalities

the university realm, and hindering the emergence of an inclusive knowledge-utilization culture.

Misfits and Institutional Learning in Polish-German University Collaboration – Empirical Findings

As early as the beginning of the cross-border collaboration to set up the joint university, institutional misfits presented a considerable stumbling block, when a joint legal agreement was to be signed as the founding document for the CP. The reason lies in the different forms of responsibility for higher education in Poland and Germany, that is, within the realm of formal institutions. As the responsibilities for universities in Poland lie with the central government and in Germany with the federal states, negotiations had to be arranged between levels of different political and administrative status. Especially on the Polish side, this problem of communication between different levels across borders was perceived as problematic, and the representatives of the state of Brandenburg were not accepted on an equal footing. "For some time, the Polish side requested ... the presence of at least the German foreign minister. But the German side did not concede to this demand ..." (interview 5). This misfit between the formal systems of institutions

considerably prolonged the debates about the final contract. In the end it took over ten years, until finally a governmental agreement could be signed between Poland and the German state of Brandenburg, in which all rights and responsibilities of both sides with respect to the joint university were agreed upon. To the present, this agreement is singular within Polish foreign policy.

But misfits also exist within the everyday practices of the university, because of the different educational systems; it is a constant challenge to find working "solutions in the field of organization, legal regulations, modern communication techniques, labour law, finances, and – last but not least – in the culture of everyday work" (Wojciechowski 2005, 21-22). Thus, long before the official governmental agreement was signed, problems regarding the everyday running of affairs had to be solved. As early as 1997, and outside of any routine practice, wireless data links had to be established across the national border (Fitzner 2005) in order to link up the computers. Also for problems of labour law unconventional solutions were found: German staff working at the CP – on Polish territory, and in an organization under Polish law – are on one hand benefiting from the same status as Polish employees, but also retain the benefits of the German labour and social security systems. A complicated system of income subsidies had to be developed for Polish employees, in order to absorb the drastic income differences between Germany and Poland. During the early years, when certificates permitting employment across the border were almost unheard of, German ABM employees[3], officially working in Frankfurt an der Oder, contributed to the CP by (illegally) crossing the border. "Both administrations knew about this, but kept silent" (Wojciechowski 2005, 24). The actors speak of "passive cooperation," which made things possible long before Poland's accession to the EU (interview 5).

The solutions found in the everyday practices of the CP worked well most of all because a high level of trust between the Polish and German partners. But additional misfits in the informal realm, and in the different knowledge cultures, also contributed to misunderstandings and problems in negotiations. Within the university bodies – such as the standing committee dealing with everyday management – widely dif-

[3] Long term unemloyed working in publicly paid nonprofit jobs.

fering patterns are followed in solving problems by the Polish and the German contingent (interviews 5 and 6). While the German deputies address problems openly at the conference table, this raises eyebrows on the Polish side. According to Polish customs, conflicts are usually not addressed directly in official debates, but first an understanding is sought in informal communication, such as over a coffee in the cafeteria (interviews 5 and 7).

Especially during the early years, neglecting such culturally based differences made many negotiations difficult. It was understood as a necessity to address possible solutions as early as the procedures were developed, in order to minimize the dangers of culturally based conflicts. Thus decisions are only taken by consensus in the standing committee, and not by majority vote. The debate is centred on finding joint solutions, and continues until no further objections are aired. This type of procedure, sensitive to cultural differences and the trust established in the learning processes, has resulted in improvements in the climate of negotiations over the years (interviews 5 and 6).

Different knowledge cultures are also found in academia. The students also have to face the challenges of intercultural difference on a daily basis (Hiller 2006). German teachers and students often notice the reserved behaviour of Polish students in class, while the Germans appear more aggressive and communicative. These differences are understood as rooted in the different educational traditions on either side of the border: while the Polish system is based on learning in a strictly preformatted environment, the German educational system is rather dedicated to reflection and communicative learning. These differences appear as atmospheric factors in the classroom, and also in evaluations of teachers. As a response to these differences, courses on intercultural communication have recently been started for all newcomers to the university.

Learning Processes and Approaches to New Knowledge Cultures

The areas of conflict which derive from the institutional and cultural misfits emerge in the practice of daily collaboration within the university. But at the same time, it becomes obvious that the unconventional and innovative solutions can also only develop in close interaction

between members of different educational systems and knowledge milieus. In order to reach the set objectives, there is a need to devise new solutions, and to engage in joint learning which can also lead to an orientational set of knowledge for other cross-border collaborations among European universities.

An empirical example will be used to illustrate how such an inter-cultural process of convergence – as a hybrid form of different knowledge cultures – can emerge. In this excerpt from an interview, representatives of the CP's management answer the question of how communication is built up in bilateral negotiations, and in joint university courses:

"Well, first there was an attempt to reach multilingual communication. We do have a management strategy at the CP that everybody talks in their mother tongue. That is, we Germans talk German, and the Poles speak Polish. But both sides need to be sure that the other side understands, or if they don't, that the other keeps on requesting clarification until they do understand. And then we thought that this should be a model for teaching, which means that we do not, in the first place, request that everybody speaks Polish perfectly. But students should be able to follow a Polish lecture roughly, and be able to ask questions. That's a passive [capacity to master the other language]" (interview 6).

This solution, which was initiated for practical considerations in order to facilitate intercultural communication by allowing an understanding of matters to grow, sounds plausible, because often a joint lingua franca proves insufficient when not all concerned are highly proficient in this third language.

We here make an attempt to analyse this solution, and to unravel the deeper meaning and the possible qualities of such a strategy. The interviewees' assumption is that such a solution is related to a number of predeliberate learning processes, and that first outlines of a new knowledge culture are emerging, as this bilingual solution implies the following:

1. An *understanding* that communication in an intercultural context is limited when it takes place in a language other than the mother tongue, especially when it comes to discussing culture-related matters.

2. A *recognition* of the differences between and differentiation of cultures, which is best expressed through one's own language. Such

a bilingual strategy also implies sensitivity concerning existing asymmetries between cultures, which may find expression in the form of the dominating language.

3. An *acceptance* of distance and obscurity. This means that it is being accepted that not all aspects of another culture can be fully understood, and that further intercultural communication needs to develop reflexive knowledge and awareness of ones one "cultural lens," by interpreting social actions in this process.

Learning processes which further intercultural creativity in communication design, are connected to the emerging new knowledge cultures in terms of

– the *multitude* of European cultures; this leads toward an intercultural understanding which accepts difference and the opportunities arising out of European cultures;

– the *asymmetries* in bilateral collaboration; access and knowledge are developed about the chances of overcoming existing or perceived assymmetries, and how cultural differences can be made productive;

– *ambiguity*; It is possible to *learn tolerance toward ambiguity*. This means that possible diversions arising from the non-understanding of the other culture can be endured and taken into account for a while, without becoming the basis for stereotypes and prejudices.

This opens up opportunities for innovation and a new connectivity between different cultures. A new way of dealing with difference emerges: the need for homogenization and assimilation is exchanged for an acceptance of diversity and its use as a potential for creativity.

4. Conclusion

During the empirical phase, the relations between the actors and their role in formal communication in targeted and strongly structured networks and – at the same time – in the informality and fluidity of milieus, has been researched and interpreted as a landscape of knowledge and as different configurations of knowledge cultures. This heuristic concept of the "KnowledgeScape" (Matthiesen 2007), leading from

data collection to knowledge and understanding, has – from our perspective – been highly successful in determining the factors explaining the openness and closedness of actors in reaching their professionally set goals. Identifying which role "formalized" professional knowledge and tacit knowledge play in integrating different perceptions of others, or to split off the other from ones own perception in urban development and university collaboration, has also shown that this approach incorporates a strong proactive element as well. It has been shown that overcoming misfits in institutions and cultures requires both – the supporting skeleton of formal institutions, and the courage to allow an openness of weak milieu structures to develop, and the recognition that in both types of organizations observed, the main emphasis should be on allowing the paradox of institutionalizing the weak ties to happen in order to strengthen the rationale of strong ties (Granovetter 1973).

4.1. Cognitions from a Milieu-Sensitive Approach to Urban Development and Cross-Border Transformation

In both case studies, the milieu-based interpretation of cultural codes and the milieu-related interpretations of difference have been found to lead to a wide range of misfits – language, institutions, and routines codes need to be debated in a joint space in order to allow a joint understanding to be developed, which can then lead to a rational interpretation of the differences, and to a joint understanding. This leads to the assumption that a clear understanding of the landscape of milieus together with their cultural grounding is a vital part of the evidence that needs to be considered when developing a rationale of development, or – as others call it – evidence based planning (Faludi 2006). Especially across national borders, and with regards to knowledge as a structuring element of milieus and networks, it becomes evident that the common understanding – or the myth, as it often is – of knowledge as a liberator from stereotypes needs to be re-evaluated.

The findings of both case studies suggest that the development of a milieu-spanning and promising knowledge culture that can become a foundation for institutional development based in different forms of knowledge (Matthiesen 2004) as it is embedded in different milieus, is

rarely a large design, but rather a small-scale and tentative development. It happens in the intermediary spaces and niches between cultural milieus before it reaches the organizations as such, and needs to be given experimental space along with strong network ties. We have found that a socio-spatial (re)construction of the communications between border space and knowledge space happens in small steps, as a coevolutionary and dynamic process between spatial development, the interactions within and between milieus, and the emergence of new knowledge and cultural understanding. These processes, however, rarely develop in a linear and straightforward manner. Instead they are characterized by halting and even backward turns, if they are not supported by strong milieus that have the ability and the backing in local society to let them carry on experimental paths, and spread the knowledge they have found to be of importance to bridge intercultural difference. *New* knowledge cultures contain a refound or newly found combination of knowledge forms, that each have strong roots in the different cultures. And these can be brought to bear as elements of a new quality in cross-border collaboration and urban development in twin-cities with different cultures and milieus. They are manifest in new action routines, habitualizations, and sets of rules, which together contribute to the construction of social and spatial reality. We assume that this development takes place as a coevolutionary process. In figure 2, the "triple helix" represents a tentative attempt to visualize this coevolutionary process, and to describe it from a theoretical and conceptual perspective.

Over time, the following steps can be conceptualized:

1. Borders as socially constructed spatial structures have influence on the interactions and actions in the border space;
2. Interactions and actions reproduce themselves as new modes of action – also isolated within certain milieus;
3. Repetitive actions lead to new milieu-embedded and more generally approved codes of conduct, and routines or habits.
4. During this process, new explicit and implicit knowledge about interrelations between milieu, actions, and space, and the importance of an open culture of knowledge – in other words, an acceptance of and seeing the benefits of other types of knowledge and understanding – emerges and is jointly adopted;

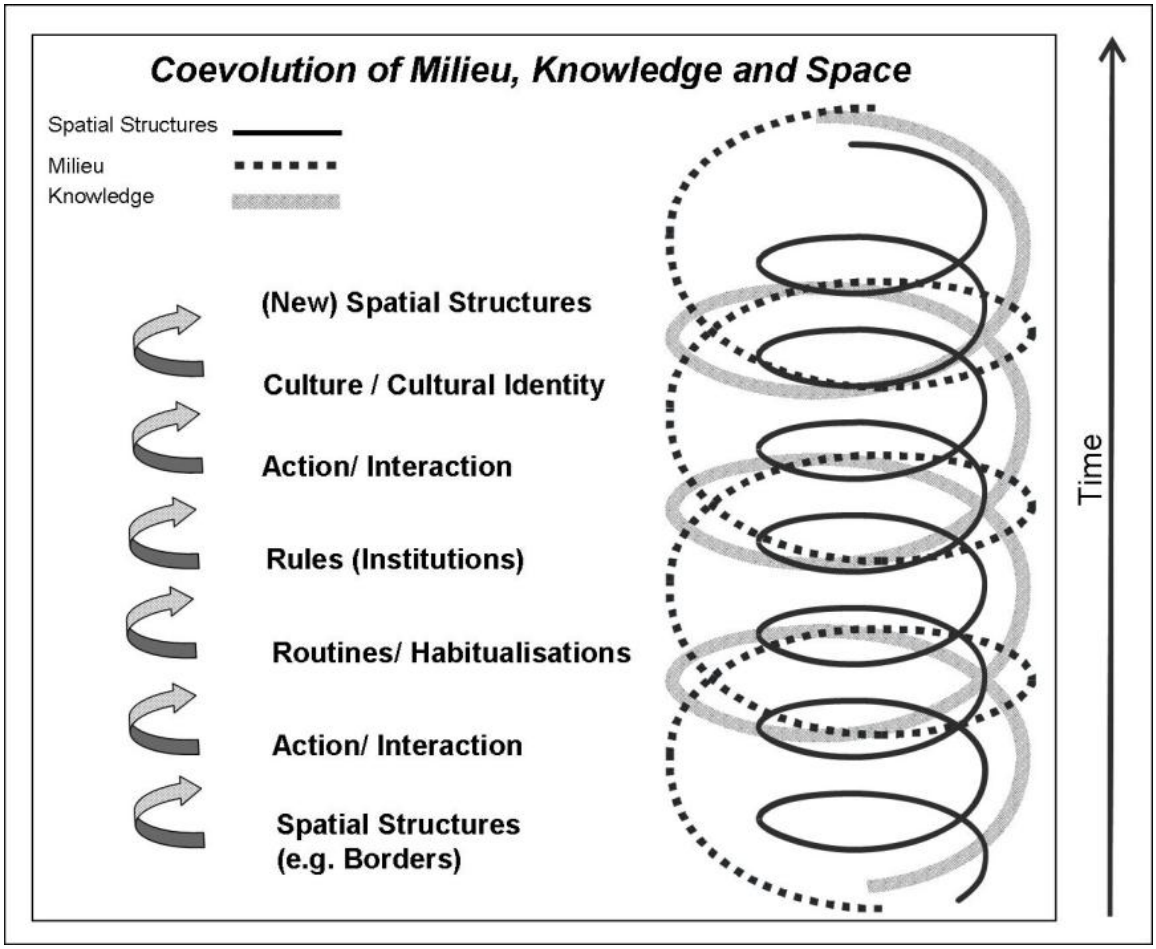

Figure 2. Coevolution of milieu, knowledge, and space.

Source: adapted from Fichter-Wolf (2008)

5. The new routines or habits already incorporate new informal rules (institutionalizations), which can also find their expression in experimental formal and codified institutions – such as plans and regulatory agreements in urban development, or contracts and joint curricula in university life.

6. New informal and formal institutions are established across the boundaries of existing institutions and spatial borders. In urban development, a cross-border understanding of an urban region finds its institutional framework and network structures; and at the same time in cross-national cooperations between universities, new approaches to a new knowledge culture can emerge, which reaches an even wider European level; and borders can change their meaning from social

constructions of division to socio-spatial structures with an especially enriching character.

In the empirical processes of the two case-studies, this concept – far from being understood as normative – served as a methodological tool of reconstructing processes between the formality of networks, and the informality and infinity of milieus. The understanding of steps and actions as they became apparent in the interviews and observations, could be systematically analysed in their relations to the coevolution of space, milieu, and knowledge.

4.2. On the Role of Knowledge in the Process of Socio-Spatial Coevolution

The role of knowledge has a specific value in this conceptualization of coevolutionary processes. Within processes of intercultural interactions, knowledge in its different forms serves as a system of filters (Meusburger 2006, 286ff.), as specific forms of knowledge influence the process of intercultural understanding in different ways. Systematic expert knowledge – for example, professional and often highly sectoral expertise, management knowledge, language capabilities, and so on – is accumulated in often long periods of learning, usually cannot be transferred ad hoc from actor to actor, and comprises an important part of the culture of professional milieus. This preunderstanding functions as a filter because it provides the basis for the understanding of new information that "fits," or the outright rejection of misfits. Another filtering system – often known as symbolic knowledge (s.b.) – refers to, for example, religious or ideological convictions, cultural traditions, socially constructed memories, as well as stereotypes and prejudices. This – mostly implicit – knowledge, which is also often called "tacit knowledge," is acquired during socialization and acts in the form of belief systems (Sabatier 1993) as a filter: the concrete form of these knowledge forms within individuals – and backed up or questioned by their milieu – determines whether new information fits the visions and habitus of the actor, or is emotionally barred. However, it seems to be decisive for the social construction of reality in space that these different filters – and additional ones of a more physical nature, such as a river can easily be

imagined – do not function in isolation. Only through their interdependence, determined by space and milieu, do they influence how "information" (or images) are consciously and unconsciously processed, and evoke mental associations.

It is thus of the utmost importance for intercultural learning and for the balance between the necessary embeddedness one has in ones own milieu, and one's openness toward the other, where (undisclosed) previous knowledge can be accessed in a border situation, that is, how new knowledge can be integrated into one's own knowledge repertoire. The empirical findings have shown that this happens in "soft" processes of arguing and bargaining, and by engaging in conflict regulation rather than in formalized forms of network cooperation through regulatory agreement. Providing the spatial and temporal opportunities for such social processes, between the formal network structures and the informality of milieus, the conscious development of translatory rules and the development of on-going trust, has been found to be especially vital in this context. These processes as a whole determine the dynamics of interaction between the actors across borders, and it becomes obvious that a balance should be kept between integrating the basic milieu knowledge and providing the – often external – expert knowledge necessary to break through the dangers of milieu closures. At best, and over time, the opportunities then develop for hybrid mixed forms of different knowledge cultures and specific institutional arrangements.

As our case studies suggest, these processes can show up in a cross-border "knowledge space" – in urban development as well as in joint university environments. However, it will not be one unitary or homogeneous construct, such as a designed-from-above European knowledge space, but rather the result of a mix of different but open cultures that engage in a coevolutionary process on the grass roots level of different milieus, but supported by the central state and suprastate institutions.

Interviews

1. Group interview with urban planners, town administration, and external advisor, Frankfurt an der Oder, May 2006.
2. Local politician involved in social policy and urban development, January 2007.
3. External planning consultant for the town of Frankfurt an der Oder and the state of Brandenburg, June 2007.
4. Interview with urban planner, area manager in Frankfurt an der Oder after 1990, and member of the teaching staff of the Collegium Polonicum in Słubice.
5. Member of the steering committee, Collegium Polonicum in Słubice, May 19, 2005.
6. Member the management, Viadrina European University in Frankfurt an den Oder, December 15, 2005.
7. Lecturer in a bilateral study course, Collegium Polonicum in Słubice, December 12, 2006.
8. Discussion with a member of the Polish-German management staff during a conference at the Collegium Polonicum in Słubice, February 22-24, 2007.
9. Interview DGB Berlin, Brandenburg.

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Between Europeanization and Marginalization – "Nested Urbanism" in a German-Polish Border Town

Jörg DÜRRSCHMIDT

Abstract. Scepticism toward the claim that globalization has been forcing convergence in social and spatial patterns on a "global city" model has triggered a new interest in the variations, contradictions, and complexities of urban and regional development. This has led to a revitalized interest in the "ordinary city" that is on not centre stage of a networked global society. Rather than transcending their hinterland of national political institutions and regional cultural landscapes (as global cities are supposed to do), ordinary cities are "nested cities," deeply entwined in the complexity of global connectivity, the national developmental model, regional cultural landscape, and local tradition. Border cities along the German-Polish border provide a vivid example of "nested urbanism." A closer ethnographic look at the German/Polish twin city of Guben/Gubin shows that terms such as "shrinking" and "marginalized" city do not sufficiently grasp the trajectory of this "ordinary city."

Introduction

As outlined by the editors of this volume in the introduction, recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in the dynamics of the city and city life. This is perhaps unsurprising given the ambivalence of the contemporary era of social development, and the traditional role that the city has played as indicator of trends in societal transformations. Thus, while urban sociology might have lost the privileged position it once held through the dominance of the Chicago School, it has been argued that at the beginning of the new millennium, "the city is once again emerging as a strategic site for understanding major new trends that are reconfiguring the social order" (Sassen 2000, 143).

While the urban world seems to be omnipresent, and while our world indeed has turned into an "urban planet" (Girardet 2004), an agreed definition of its driving force or trajectory has become increasingly illusive. As Amin and Thrift (2004, 1) point out, "the city is everywhere and in everything," yet at the same time "cities have become extraordinarily intricate, and ... difficult to generalize." Until recently, "globalization" was the umbrella term that was enthusiastically embraced in order to capture the reconfiguration of society along socio-spatial patterns beyond the confines of the nation state container. And similarly, the network of "world cities" or "global cities" served to provide an analytical corset that gave at least some shape to an otherwise supposedly quite anarchic "space of flows" within the new global political economy of "disorganized capitalism" (Lash and Urry 1994).

But as is the case with all immediately insightful formulas, the emphasis on a metageography of global cities tends to occlude as much as it reveals. Not only has it led to oversimplifying generalizations about the spatial and social patterns of these globalizing cities, it also disregarded the diverse and distinctive worlds of what Jennifer Robinson (2004) has termed "the world of ordinary cities." Thus Markusen's (2004) connotation of these cities as "forgotten places" quite fits the gist of the discussion of the 1990s. They were not only perceived as disconnected from the networked logic of global capital, but also off the map of mainstream urban sociology (Lee and Yeoh 2004; Hannemann 2004, 11ff.; McCann 2004).

Ironically, the discourse of "postindustrial" shrinking or "deindustrialization" (Cowie and Heathcott 2003), that provides explicit focus on marginalized cities and regions, is just the other side of the same coin. For it stays largely within the same abstract metalogic of labour, capital, crisis, flows, networks, etc. This terminology, however, tends to be less and less helpful in revealing the social and cultural complexity of particular places and their trajectories as it fades out the social and cultural implications of marginalization.

Thus it is no surprise that now there are strong voices that articulate a "recent turn toward variation, contradiction, and complexity" in urban studies (Hill and Fujita 2003, 207; May and Perry 2005) which resonates with a perspective on global transformations that demands strategies of (re)complexification (Robertson and Khondker 1998, 27). To engage again with the "architecture of complexity" (Simon, cited in Hill 2004, 374) of the contemporary city first of all means to relearn to think in contradictions, as indicated in the introduction to this volume: can it be that a city that is *declining* in socio-economic terms is at the same time seen as *revitalizing* in terms of contributing to an emergent Europeanized society? Return to more complex and contradictory thinking on cities moreover tends to rediscover place as more than just a potential intersection of global flows that needs to make itself attractive to global capital. This in turn suggests to us that we should place our attention on concrete configurations of local actors, and the leeway they might have with regard to influencing the trajectory of their city. Hill and Fujita (2003) have suggested the concept of "nested urbanism" in order to rediscover the complexity of a decentred, diverse, and contradictory urban geography.

Nested Urbanism and Forgotten Places

The concept of nested urbanism was initially introduced within urban studies in order to reclaim the specifics of Southeast Asian urban developments, against the claim that globalization was forcing convergence in social and spatial patterns among the world's metropolises (Hill and Fujita 2003). Instead, emphasis was given to the embeddedness of the city in multilevel spatial and institutional configurations that prevented the urban trajectories of cities like Tokyo or Singapore from converging on the global city model, as presented

by its transatlantic paradigmatic cases of London and New York. Rather than following the "presentism" of the earlier global city debates (Abu-Lughod 1999), the nested city approach highlights the lasting impact of regional history and the complex local configurations of rupture and continuity within the global urban landscape. Following earlier discussions on "rescaling" (Brenner 1998), the national and regional cultural and institutional context here was given added weight in relation to the global. Thus, instead of assuming a fixed hierarchy of institutional reach and cultural embeddedness, nested urbanism highlights the case-specific and complex interplay between "global niche, regional formation, national development model and local historical context" (Hill and Fujita 2003, 212).

It should not come as surprise that the nested urbanism approach has found some resonance in the discourse on marginalization and shrinking cities. If it is now claimed that even global cities did not transcend their hinterland of national institutions, regional cultural landscape, and local tradition, then this should even more so apply to the marginalized ordinary city (Robinson 2004; cf. McCann 2004). Here the emphasis is on recovering "conceptual space in counterpoint to the overwhelming attention given to global cites and major learning or innovative regions" as defining norms of contemporary urban development (Lee and Yeoh 2004, 2295). It is argued that the uneven nature of global urban development cannot be attributed to an anonymous market logic, but that "instead, cities are materially and ideologically nested in a diverse national and regional configuration" in which an active "politics of forgetting" is being played out (ibid., 2297ff.). In other words, the increasing invisibility of some places and regions is (also) the outcome of an active social construction of urban development in social discourse and urban policy. Here we clearly sense an approach that seriously considers the nestedness of marginalization and shrinking in changeable configurations of human action.

This is most clearly argued in Markusen's concept of "forgotten places" (2004, 2304-2305), defined as "communities and ecologies that are deprived of leadership and stewardship by the actions and attitudes of people both present in and absent from these environments." She argues that four sets of actors are involved in generating such forgotten places: "the deployers of money and physical capital, external allocators of public sector moneys and infrastructure, external symbolic analysts

who process understandings and create ideologies about places, and local resource-wielders, decision makers and knowledge workers." On the other hand, there are the local residents who oppose the forgetting of their locality. Next to the return to an approach that highlights active decision making by groups and individuals as crucial for "trajectories of forgetfulness," there are a couple of further aspects noteworthy in Markusen's argument. Firstly, she highlights the role of "ideologies of forgetting" for the cultural reproduction of marginalization. For instance, "individualism" as ideology here refers to the normative modelling of successful biographies, with regard to their successful pursuit of self-interest outside the needs of community and family. Complementary to individualism, we find "out-migration as strategy," especially in times of crisis as a legitimate ideology that favours the destiny of the individual over commitment to community. However, it is due to the unpredictability of actor-centred local configurations that – according to Markusen – there is always hope that trajectories of forgetting are countered by "routes for remembering" (ibid., 2310). Hope here rests with local people that forge coalitions within and beyond community boundaries, in order to revitalize their place.

In sum, what the nested urbanism approach provides us with is a dynamic understanding of place, in the production of which a variety of nested scales are involved, from the global to the regional and local (Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodriguez 2003, 9). Nestedness implies that the various scales are not neatly separated, but intersect and interpenetrate, often in complex ways that in their outcome are not under the control of local actors. Nevertheless, the dynamics of nestedness cannot be understood without reference to the active networking and decision-making (across various scales) of people involved in influencing the trajectory of a locality. In the following section I will indicate these dynamics in more ethnographic detail by drawing on the case of a city in the German-Polish border region.

Guben/Gubin: From "European Model Town" to "Dying City"

The events of 1989 and after have lastingly reshaped the socio-spatial make up of central Europe. Post-Fordist globalization and European enlargement have by no means led to a "Europe without

borders," but rather sharpened our awareness of old and new forms of cultural difference and economic inequality. At the same time they have led to a more fluid intersection of social and cultural spaces that were formerly kept apart by nation state borders.

The immediate encounter of Polish and German society and culture within the border corridor that stretches along the rivers Oder and Neisse should make border cities in this region the ideal seedbed of a European cosmopolitan border culture. The twin city Guben/Gubin would seem to provide the paradigmatic case for this setting: divided by a tiny river, the town is split into two equal halves. You can both see and virtually hear and smell the other side. The locals here have the chance to actively enact "rescaling." While for most Europeans, "Europe" is still a very abstract term of transnational identification, the inhabitants of the borderlands here encounter "Europe as lived place" (Paasi 2001, 10; Meinhof 2002). Accordingly, with Poland's EU accession pending in 2004, during the 1990s there was heightened political attention to the (European) identity-generating power of places like Guben/Gubin. "Fear of failure" of the European project led to the political elite providing an institutional framework especially geared toward cross-border cooperation along the seam (at that time) between "Europe" and "not-yet-Europe." Notably the "Euroregions" that were founded in the 1990s were meant to play a central role in this process. It seems plausible that local and regional councils would jump at this chance of financial support and symbolic enhancement provided by the various EU integration projects. At the height of these developments Guben and Gubin successfully applied in 1998 to be part of the World Expo 2000 as the pioneering "Model Experiment Euro Town Guben/Gubin." However, the identity-generating power of these top-down administered projects has been greatly overestimated. They have rather turned into self-referential projects of symbolic politics, without ever gaining the necessary grass-root support from the everyday cultures on both sides of the border. Thus a huge gap has opened up between programmatic objectives (fostering a transnational civil society) and results (a drift into cultural closure between the neighbouring societies, and further alienation from the political discourse on "Europe") (Bürkner and Matthiesen 2001).

This disjuncture becomes plausible when we look at the wider economic and cultural landscape in which the "Euro Town" is nested.

The German-Polish border region is now right in the middle of a multi-layered process of restructuring European space(s) within a globalized socio-economic landscape. With Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, the EU border has moved further east, leaving the German-Polish border region with less political and symbolic significance. At the same time, the border zone increasingly becomes part and parcel of what Lash and Urry (1994) have described as a new mix of "wild" and "tame zones" within the global political economy of disorganized capitalism. In fact it looks as if here – right in the middle of Europe – one of the "black holes of marginality" (Castells 1996, 379) within the new global division of labour is developing, bypassed by global flows of capital and information, as well as by the transregional corridors of transport (Heidenreich 2003).

The image of a "Model Euro Town" that is supposed to play a pioneering role in the process of European integration thus stands in stark contrast to the lived experience of its people. They see themselves as living in a "dying city" and a "forgotten region," visibly struck by industrial decline, unemployment, demographic loss, and resulting breakdown in civic culture. People therefore tend to develop little enthusiasm for a political rhetoric of glossy Europeanization.

Moreover, its socio-cultural nestedness does not bode well for a revitalizing development of Guben/Gubin. The German-Polish border region very much testifies to the observation that just when a clear-cut state border becomes more porous, complex geographies of difference begin to reveal themselves. It is often forgotten that for most of the time between 1945 and 1989, the border between East Germany and Poland had almost the characteristics of an "iron curtain," despite being a border between two aligned countries. After 1989, the hidden transcript of historical cultural landscapes came to the fore again. There is subtle awareness that the region's socio-cultural make-up still displays a "culture of displacement" that goes back to the resettlement policies during and after the Second World War (Krätke 1999, 638; Janeśniak-Quast and Stokłosa 2000). These ethno-spatial cleavages, kept under closure by nation state politics and socialist ideology, nevertheless lingered on in the collective consciousness on both sides of the border. In consequence, the prevailing "low trust environment" appears to be a serious developmental blockage with regard to sustainable cross border cooperation (Bürkner and Matthiesen 2001; Krätke 1998, 250ff.).

These cultural cleavages are not helped by the fact that bilingual language competence is heavily imbalanced in favour of the Polish side, and that considerable differences in cost of living and income in favour of the German side do not make for a level playing field in terms of enjoying urban everyday culture. The imbalances are further underpinned by the fact that the respective everyday cultures are embedded in rather different "pathways of postsocialist transformation" (Stark and Bruszt 1999). For East Germany this means a "gradualist" transformation with emphasis on softening the restructuring by extensive welfare regulations, while the Polish "big bang" strategy favoured private initiative and restructuring via the market. While otherwise these differences might make for interesting abstract debates in academia, for people in Guben/Gubin they mean head-on confrontation with rather different worlds of postsocialism, within one and the same city.

Thus until recently, the scenery of nested shrinking for a place like Guben/Gubin could well be summarized as follows

> In this way, a vicious circle developed, hanging over the borderland territory as a whole, combining economic, political and cultural processes into a downward spiral, and diminishing local potential and factual learning processes (individual/collective) (Matthiesen 2005, 56).

The Gubin Church Ruin: The Crystalline Structure of Place-Making

Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodriguez (2003, 10-11) claim that even the most complex processes of socio-spatial transformation and rescaling "become worked out and are mediated through the built environment." To the extent that this is true, then the city centre of Guben/Gubin provides the paradigmatic case for the embodiment of "nested shrinking" as described above. Located on the Polish side of town, it is left virtually as an empty space, continuously reminding its inhabitants of the heavy destruction that the inner city suffered at the end of the Second World War. Moreover, the catastrophic picture is completed with the ruin of a church that in its origin dates back to the thirteenth century (Peter 2007). This is not a ruin in the sense of a commodified quotation from past times that has been renovated and

preserved to feed postmodern nostalgia (Cowie and Heathcott 2003). Even more so than the empty space on which it stands, it impacts the onlooker like a crystalline structure that holds the city's complex nestedness in past and present. Deprived of its roofing and church tower, and overgrown with the prevailing life of nature, its walls and columns still carry the scars of heavy inner city fighting, just as if the Second World War had ended yesterday.

If, as Sharon Zukin (1995, 259) maintains, public place is the window to a city's soul, then Gubeners and Gubiners "view the catastrophe of their own town" when looking at the city's central place (Hoffmann-Axthelm in Graff 2002, 25). It reflects the embeddedness of the city in lingering cultures of displacement and low trust. Thus, it could be argued, the fact that Guben and Gubin for quite a while after 1989 did not attempt to make efforts toward a joined city centre had as much to do with straight forward communication barriers as with mutual hesitation to impinge on the other side's memoryscapes. Not attempting to deal with the revitalization of the city's core had as much to do with the pressing problems of deindustrialization, as with the different everyday realities of postsocialism and their respective ways of coming to terms with it.

The consequences of this state of affairs cannot be underestimated. Identification with the built environment of one's town is a catalyst for engaging in urban public life and the amenities of urban culture. Civic pride in large part feeds on residents' identification with significant public edifices. Conversely, the city's inner city may function as an architectural expression of a collective commitment to a certain urban trajectory. While a shared city centre is certainly no substitute for lived urban togetherness and everyday solidarity, the latter can certainly not be achieved without some symbolic commitment in the semiotic landscape of the twin city. Thus it is no exaggeration to claim that the downward spiral for Guben/Gubin will have to be tackled from within its core – not just in real, but in symbolic terms. For the visual in this case has a lot to do with vision: the city centre as a model (*Leitbild*) that literally puts an alternative urban trajectory – against the familiar one of "dying city" – into the frame. In summary, Hoffmann-Axthelm (ibid., 24) has aptly captured the situation of Guben/Gubin at the beginning of the new millennium, by saying that both sides of town can certainly

survive to a certain extent within the current state of affairs, but in order to *live* they need a shared vision that focuses on the city centre.

Recent years have seen developments toward revitalization. The twin cities of Guben/Gubin were part of the "Stadt 2030" programme that encouraged cities to develop innovative models of urban revitalization. A redevelopment scheme has been set up that emphasizes an urban corridor connecting the two cities across the river (mainly via the **high street**), rather than focusing on one particular location as the centre. Supported by external governmental funding, (architectural) change is already visible (see www.guben.de and www.guben-gubin-2030.de).

However, alongside these externally induced changes in the architectural landscape, there is now another encouraging development that needs attention with regard to signs of endogenous revitalization. It refers to a cross-border civil initiative that takes the city's soul as its point of departure (to stay with Zukin's metaphor), namely the church ruin located in Gubin. In doing so it faces up to the difficult memoryscape in which the city is embedded, and which needs addressing, if the twin city is to have a chance of true revitalization – one that is sustained by a cross-border civic culture. Dating back to the initial enthusiasm of a Catholic priest on the Polish side of town, the idea to redevelop the church ruin as a Polish-German centre of communication quickly found supporters on the German side too. Since May 2005, there has been a foundation around which the civic initiative has galvanized. At its centre are the two mayors, a few local politicians, and some other exponents of the local citizenry. The foundation in its statutes clearly sets the aim of redeveloping the church ruin as a symbol for the awakening of the city, by facing up to its past and by generating a spirit of tolerance and cultural dialogue. The foundation is supported by donations and actively lobbies for its project in the local and translocal public(s), with some considerable success. Several public forums have managed to turn the project into a hot topic in the town. Meanwhile, there is civic discourse about the concrete shape – both in architecture and intention – of the communication centre, and a considerable amount of money has been raised. The most visible success so far is the reinstalling of the restored church tower in June 2007. Thus this civic initiative has managed to bridge the gap between the two everyday

cultures within the twin city, but also to set a visible marker into the symbolic landscape of the city that announces, "the civic spirit of this – supposedly dying – city is alive" (see www.stadtkirchegubin.de).

The Difference a Few Years can Make

As a long time participating observer to the development of Guben/Gubin, one is naturally sceptical to any new project that announces cooperation between the halves of the city, and that attempts to change the trajectory of the "dying city." Too fresh is the memory of other projects that attempted to foster European society within a revitalizing city, but were met with grumbling discontent by the local public on both sides of the border. So why should it be different this time? Why has this pro-European project of local revitalization met with considerable enthusiasm, when only a couple of years ago the mayor of Guben was voted out of office due to his attempt to give life to the idea of a "European Model Town"?

Taking up again the idea of nested urbanism, we can get some clues to the prospects of this local civic initiative by looking at its embeddedness in more general social processes and their intersection.

The first point of reference concerns the general phenomenological framing of everyday life. One could argue that when people start taking issue with the centre of their locality or community, this does indeed reflect a sense of "centeredness," or a calmness as borne in the meaning of the Greek *sophrosyne* (Schroer 2005, 335). Perhaps for the first time since 1989, people are experiencing what could be called a "sedimentation of relevances" in their life world. After years of upheaval, accompanied by reorientation in all spheres of life, and characterized by hypermobility as far as relocation and learning are concerned, people in the transformation societies of eastern central Europe might now enter a period where things are calmer. Efforts now seem more concentrated, and options are perceived as less complex and unpredictable. In more substantive terms, we could say that people have just come out of what Vobruba (2005, 39) has called a "double ditch." By this he refers to the sequence of two periods of radical change that have affected people in eastern

central Europe: the postsocialist transformation and the integration into Europe, both coming with demanding consequences in terms of institutional restructuring and cultural adaptation.

Europe and European integration under these circumstances were perceived as an additional large scale supranational institutional process that is imposed from above. This helps to explain the discontent toward externally imposed institutional structures such as "Euroregions" and the "Euro Model Town." Only now that the official enlargement procedure has moved further east, can a sort of "inner cosmopolitanization" (Beck 2002) of the European project take hold of the German-Polish borderlands. This inner cosmopolitanization here implies that the nation state is opened up at its fringes, and that Europeanization is perceived as an inner quality of everyday life, rather than an institutional frame that imposes itself from outside. Moreover, one could argue that within a rather small town like Guben/Gubin this process is supported by the "inescapability of small places." This, in contrast to the lofty cosmopolitan variety of the metropolis, pushes people toward accepting "banal cosmopolitanism" (ibid., 28) as a normal feature of everyday life. The "banality" of inner cosmopolitanization is, in such a local setting, more strongly felt than elsewhere. Take, for example, the accession of Poland to the Schengen treaty in December 2007. For people in Guben/Gubin this implies the final abolishment of border control within the city. This will immensely enhance the "walkability" (du Toit et al. 2007) of their city. If there is indeed a link between flâneuring the city and developing a sense of community based on a sense of place, then this link should further enhance for Gubeners and Gubiners the feeling of indeed living in "Gubien," as the city is now already affectionately called among some of its more cosmopolitanly inclined citizens. To call Guben/Gubin by the name of "Gubien," thereby symbolically summarizing the name into a country, suggests indeed a horizontal perspective on Europeanization that sees being part of the society of a city as just as important as belonging to a nation state.

In addition – and this might sound ironic – the very process of shrinking might also contribute to further enhancing a cosmopolitan sense of place in Guben/Gubin. Namely, still following Beck's argument (2000, 80), in so far as people start realizing that shrinking is a process that is largely "indifferent to national boundaries." The crucial

insight here would be that the decisive frame of reference for countering marginalization is not the nation state but the translocal society of "Gubien," that has to transcend nation state boundaries in the attempt to mobilize its full potential.

These tendencies toward postnational society within a city should finally also be reflected in its memoryscape. It is well known that collective memory is essential for stabilizing national communities. This is especially the case in times of crisis when its narrative maintains a reference point of solidarity within the group, and affirms a sense of difference to other communities. However, what if people's everyday milieus no longer coincide with the national space, as is the case in "Gubien" and other border cities? They might become paradigmatic cases for what Levy and Sznaider (2002, 89) have described as the "decoupling of collective memory and national history." This does not imply the straightforward replacement of "national memory" by "cosmopolitan memory"; however, it does mean the relativization of the privileged position of national history as discursive frame of collective memory and identity (ibid., 89ff.). It moreover implies mutual recognition of the history of the other and future-oriented dialogue over a shared past (ibid., 102-103). Inner cosmopolitanization thus has its time dimension in the uncoupling of the quasi-natural link place – identity – national memory. It is increasingly replaced by "staged landscapes of memory that can only be deciphered transnationally" (Beck 2000, 99). The envisaged communication centre within the redeveloped church ruin in Gubin could provide such a stage for transnational dialogue, within a difficult landscape of memories of war and displacement.

Two processes could further contribute to this being a realistic scenario for "Gubien." Levy and Sznaider (2002, 91, 96) highlight a generational shift with regard to the traumatic events of the Second World War. They argue that there is a transition taking place from "social memory" (carried by those generations that have personal experience of the war and its atrocities) toward "historical memory" (carried by those who only have mediated experiences of these events, and who are more open to reflexive engagement about the complexities of the past). Postsocialist developments might further stabilize a move toward cosmopolitan memory. Misztal (2004) draws the rather interesting distinction between "closed and frozen memories," on one hand,

and "open ended and often shared along group lines memories," on the other. While the first mode of memory is typical for unsettled times when people tend to freeze their identity to the world and toward others, the latter is typical for open societies and democratic community. While the immediate time after 1989 might have favoured the revitalization of a nationalist past and closed memory, the postsocialist differentiation of lifestyles and milieus meanwhile seems to favour a fragmentation of collective memory along the line of reflexive "memory groups" (ibid., 68, 74). Thus the argument here is by no means one of neglecting a traumatic and nationalist past, but one of engaging in dialogue beyond nationalistic myth and propaganda (Misztal 2005, 1331).

Finally, all this ties in with the complex and sometimes unpredictable "socioscapes" (Albrow 1997; Appadurai 1990) in which a locality such as Guben/Gubin is embedded. The shrinking city is by no means a place clearly divided by stayers or leavers. The landscapes of mobility and attachment that have evolved after 1989, here turn out to be more sophisticated than that. There are of course those who commute in various cycles of presence and absence. But more surprisingly perhaps, it is returnees of different age groups who are pushing the civic initiative around the church ruin. What is surprising here is that people with the human capital they have acquired elsewhere in the world – and who are therefore enabled to be anywhere in the world – should return to the shrinking city. Perhaps what we see here is linked to the first point made earlier: these returnees might indicate a beginning of a sedimentation of socioscapes, following a period of hypermobility after the sudden eruption of socioscapes in postsocialist society, in the wake of 1989. It might just be that the reflective migrant realizes that in his or her continuous relationship to the world, "place matters" (Markusen 2004, 2310). But whatever the concrete reasons for their return, it is obvious that these returnees are likely to embody what Beck (2002, 36) has called "rooted cosmopolitanism." Such rooted cosmopolitans, unlike local parochialists, are not inclined to give in to short sighted localism, but instead tend to "defend their place as one open to the world" – in this case also implying openness to the other side of the town and its lived experience. A great asset that these returnees bring to the shrinking city is a relativization of the destiny of their city. They have seen much better and much worse places, and thus reflect the town's faith in a larger perspective.

Moreover, they do not feel overburdened by the task at hand. As one of them summed up their attitude, "We are building Europe here, but so what? This is Europe in a big wide world." What they bring back to the locality is thus an active rescaling in life world terms, that is the reevaluation of local embeddedness in the light of global and European experience. In practice, this means they can rather eloquently mediate between the local community and the translocal networks. In other words, due to their familiarity with both the local and the transnational world, these returnees are capable of (local) "politics of scale" (McCann 2004). This, for instance, showed very effectively in the role they played in the difficult process of obtaining from the Polish state the leasehold for the land on which the church ruin stands. In effect this clearly indicates nested urbanism as being not just a constellation of intersecting and overlapping macrosocial processes, but just as much as a "kairos" situation: the right people meeting at the right place at the right time, and accessing the relevant scales of power (Matthiesen 2005, 59). The "nestedness" of projects of urban renewal from this perspective, then appears as largely resulting from active networking across various levels of interaction, power, and influence – rather than suggesting passive local embeddedness in various large-scale socio-spatial dynamics.

Summary: Guben/Gubin or "Gubien"?

What we are left with is a feeling of ambivalence. Is the Guben/Gubin church project indeed the beginning of a development toward a transnational "Gubien," deeply embedded in real existing cosmopolitanism? Or is it just another playing field for cosmopolitan elites who always have the option to leave the place to which they are supposedly committed? In all likelihood, the project to turn the church ruin into the Polish-German communication centre of a new "Gubien" is not going to generate many, if any, new jobs for Guben/Gubin. So can it be more than yet another act of – however laudable – symbolic politics, this time not imposed from outside, but generated from within the locality by a group of rooted cosmopolitans with enough local "street cred"? We do not know yet, as this project of civic reempowerment is still very young indeed.

However, even if it was another attempt in symbolic politics, Guben/Gubin would be in good company, as it is observed that urban regeneration via pushing "emblematic projects" (Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodriguez 2003a, 248) is a common strategy within postmetropolitan regions. Still, the point here is not so much to reveal the parallels to common governance strategies and tactics of "actually occurring regeneration" (Henderson, Bowlby, and Raco 2007, 1445), but to stress the symbolic revitalization of the "dying city." It is against the assumption that the open city – one that is "not ridden by debilitating spatial and social barriers" (Amin and Graham 1997, 422) – is a precondition for any economic revitalization, that the church ruin project has to be cast. To rediscover the city's soul in Zukin's sense would here mean more than just revitalizing public space as an arena of civility, tact and trust. It would imply generating a symbolic centre that has the capacity to hold the twin city together amid the turbulences of postsocialist and postindustrial redevelopment.

Consequently, that a cross-border civic initiative should identify the church ruin as such an anchor of cosmopolitan community, seems to stand for more than just naive and self-absorbed soul searching. This rather suggests awareness in certain segments of translocal civil society with regard to the fact that openness of place intrinsically involves the overcoming of temporal closure via overdue dialogue about conjunctive collective memories. In other words, Guben/Gubin could be a trendsetter in realizing that the real existing cosmopolitanisms of "Gubien" can only be turned into a revitalizing element if it is deepened by real existing "chronopolitanism" (Cwerner 2000). In this way "Gubien" might eventually manage to break out of dominant feelings of apathy and distrust. In turn this civic recovery of place could then even contribute to economic recovery. For as Amin and Graham (1997, 427; Markusen 2004, 2308) maintain, "a sense of place and belonging taps into hidden potential and the sources of social confidence that lie at the core of risk-taking entrepreneurial activity."

While the civic initiative evolving around the "Gubien" church ruin could well be seen as an exercise in "recovering place," Markusen (2004) reminds us that to oppose processes of marginalization does not just require people who actively preserve and champion their locality, but also needs a change of discourse by (us) symbolic analysts. In the

first instance that could mean breaking away from the currently almost normative discourse of "shrinking" in terms of crisis and collapse. Instead it would require us to be "more open to positive interpretations of change" (Amin and Graham 1997, 413) as they might indicate themselves; for instance, with the church ruin project in "Gubien." This in turn implies that we should be attentive to the simultaneity of shrinking and revitalizing tendencies not just *between* various localities and regions but *within* them (Matthiesen 2005, 53). As the "Gubien" case study suggests, it would seem that "a scale perspective on the nonglobal city" (McCann 2004, 2317) can help us in recovering some conceptual space beyond the dominating paradigm of shrinkage. By investigating the concrete civic networks involved in "nesting" a project like the "Gubien" church ruin, we abstain from abstract logics of global capital, spatial restructuring, or urban crisis. This is not to deny the power of the large-scale dynamics of shrinkage, but to reemphasize the dynamics of civic action and local policy making which are also involved in it.

In that sense then we might conclude with Entrikin's (1999, 270) observation concerning the intrinsic link between civic (re)empowerment and "good place": if, as he maintains, "good places are constructed through civil society," then the twin city Guben/Gubin has not suddenly turned from a "bad" ("declining") into a "good" ("developing") place, but the "Gubien" church project might announce that, unexpectedly for many observers, it is perhaps on the way to becoming a "better" place. And for a "dying city," that says a lot.

Internet links:

www.guben.de
www.guben-gubien-2030.de
www.stadtkirchegubin.de

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Urban Shrinkage in East Central Europe? Benefits and Limits of a Cross-National Transfer of Research Approaches

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Abstract. This article intended as a position paper reflecting on concept--building discusses the question of how far the term and concept of urban shrinkage apply to postsocialist cities in East Central Europe. In addressing this issue, it touches on the more general topic of the benefits and limitations of the transferability of scientific terms and concepts. Urban shrinkage, as it has evolved from the eastern German context, is introduced and discussed in light of the British and North American debates. The second part of the paper applies this concept to the urban context of postsocialist East Central Europe (ECE), using Polish and Czech cities as examples. In our concluding remarks, we argue (among other points) that it makes sense to work on a good, robust, and clearly focused conceptualization of urban shrinkage as a transferable concept for different frameworks, but to be careful and specific with its application to any concept not only in the ECE context. We suggest differentiating between process, causes, and consequences of urban shrinkage.

Introduction and Objectives

During recent decades, cities in East Central Europe have been associated mainly with post-socialist transition and catch-up modernization toward Western structures. Urban change was, accordingly, supposed to go along with continuous growth in terms of population, economic power, commercial function, and the improvement of infrastructure and amenities. In this vein, post-socialist urban development had been assigned to the "special case" category, and was considered to be hardly comparable with the "rest of Europe." Throughout the 1990s, it became more and more obvious that the neoliberal assumptions of a simple replacement of institutions and mentalities, and of a simple convergence toward Western-style, post-Fordist modernization were not sufficient to adequately interpret the transition and post-transition processes (Grabher and Stark 1997; Bridger and Pine 1998, 3-7; Burawoy 1999, 303; Hann 2002; Bradshaw and Stenning 2003, 12-14). In our article we argue, therefore, that such a perspective is no longer up to date. Recently observed demographic trends that apply to cities throughout Europe have led to urban shrinkage, a new pathway of urban development that is shared by cities throughout the whole continent and beyond (European Commission 2007; United Nations 2006; Oswalt and Rieniets 2006).

Up to the present, research has been focused on capital cities that more or less show the above-mentioned developmental trends (Kostinskiy 2001; Altrock et al. 2005; Stanilov 2007). Other urban pathways in East Central Europe have remained out of sight. This is especially true for second-order cities that find themselves confronted with developments beyond growth. Rather they are characterized by demographic features such as population losses, ageing and out-migration. Set against overall European development, this trajectory is by no means unique. Recent research has identified 40% of all European cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants as shrinking or losing population over short-, medium- and even long-term periods (Turok and Mykhnenko 2007). Accordingly, post-socialist Europe forms a new "pole of shrinkage" with three out of four cities showing population losses (Mykhnenko and Turok 2007, 47).

Most terms and theoretical concepts in urban research these days originate in the Anglo-American debate. Yet urban shrinkage took root in the eastern German context, where it became prominent after 2000. The term describes the massive post-reunification population losses of the cities and towns in eastern Germany, due to job migration, sub-urbanization, and negative population growth. This has led to structural housing vacancies, and has forced ageing and oversupply of infrastructure (for an overview see Großmann 2007a; Kabisch 2006; Bürkner, Kuder, and Kühn 2005). The term has only very recently entered the international debate, through the work of German researchers and architects, such as the "Shrinking cities" project (Oswalt 2005, 2006). Turok and Mykhnenko (2007) used it in a cross-European study on the long-term population development of big cities. The results of both endeavours clearly show that shrinkage has become an "ordinary" pathway of urban development in Europe. As we will argue, "urban shrinkage" qualifies better for the international debate than terms such as "decline" or "decay," which relate rather to economic downward processes with their spatial and social consequences. The result of the eastern German experience is the discovery of demographic influences on urban development, leading to proactive approaches in both research and planning, whereas the Anglo-American debate was dominated by the desire to turn decline around back into growth (Großmann 2007b; Pallagst 2005).

Set against this background, this article discusses the question of how far urban shrinkage applies to cities in East Central Europe. Does the shared socialist past and current post-socialist reality allow for a transfer of this concept to explain what is going on here today? In addressing these questions, the article touches on the more general issue of the benefits and limitations of the transferability of scientific terms and concepts. It is first of all intended as a position paper, reflecting on concept building and on selected empirical findings, such as the situation of Polish and Czech cities. To avoid the trap of producing a simple textbook transfer, our aim is also to sharpen the concept itself, by discussing the specifics of urban shrinkage in Germany, the Anglo--American context, and East Central Europe.

The article is organized as follows: the first section expands on the transferability of scientific terms and concepts in a more general way.

Then the term and concept of urban shrinkage, as it has evolved from the eastern German context, is introduced. A third section brings in the British and North American experiences for a first transfer of the concept; and section four reconsiders the eastern German experience. A fifth section applies the concept to cities in East Central Europe, using Polish and Czech cities as examples. Finally, we discuss to what extent urban shrinkage can be transferred, and what conclusions can be drawn concerning the concept itself.

Transferability of Concepts – Ambitions, Prospects, and Constraints

To answer the question of to what extent the concept of urban shrinkage as it evolved in the eastern German context can help to explain recent processes of population loss in East Central European cities, some reflections about the transferability of scientific concepts in general should be made.

In urban studies, as in any realm of research, concepts and terms are usually developed against the background of a specific empirical context. Certain observed phenomena call for explanation, and thereby encourage the evolution of new terms or theoretical concepts. Whether it is Simmel's observation of the *Blasiertheit* (blasé attitude) as being a certain attitude that he considered typical of the *Großstädter* (city slicker), the inner city "zones of transition" defined by the Chicago School, or whether it is the observation that similar processes of upgrading inner city areas coincide with an exchange of residents that leads to the concept of the invasion-succession cycle, or later the concept of *gentrification* – it is important to underline that all of these concepts emerged from specific empirical contexts.

Once these concepts prove to explain phenomena in the context of their origin, they start to travel around the academic world, where they are tested in other empirical contexts. The main challenges of transferability are those of applicability, appropriateness, and a common language of measurement (Mossberger and Stoker 2001, 814; Steinführer 2004, 106-116). This is especially true in cross-national research. As Johnson (1998, 1) points out: "In perhaps no other subfield of social

science and research are issues of methodology and measurement as open to challenge and criticism as when they are applied in cross-cultural and cross-national settings." When comparing different national or regional case studies, the question is, are we really comparing equal things, and are we transferring concepts to relevant cases? (Burawoy 1999, 305; Steinführer 2005).

According to Sartori (1991), there are four problems of transferring knowledge, terms and concepts: the problems of parochialism, misclassification, degreeism and concept stretching (Mossberger and Stoker 2001, 814-815). *Parochialism* refers to the tendency to continuously invent new terms, or to use existing ones in an unintended way. *Misclassification* applies when important differences between processes are ignored. Degreeism means that qualitative differences between cases are denied; instead they are all presented in a merely quantitative manner – as matters of degree, and not of quality. *Concept stretching* involves removing aspects of the original meaning of the concept, so that it can accommodate more cases.

For instance, the concept of *gentrification* originated in North America, where it was described for the first time by Ruth Glass in 1954, but it has since then been applied to many European cities. These days, it is still a prominent concept in researching and explaining the socio-spatial changes in post-socialist cities. This example meets some of the challenges mentioned above, specifically avoiding the pitfalls of misclassification and concept stretching (Skora 2005; Standl and Krupickaite 2004; Atkinson and Bridge 2005; Bernt and Holm 2005).

In addition, cross-cultural research does not simply mean a one-way transfer of knowledge; it always involves improving the original terms and concepts, and providing feedback even to their context of origin (Steinführer 2005, 95-96; Mossberger and Stoker 2001). Reflecting on the shifts of *urban regime theory*, a concept transferred from the Canadian to the European context, Stoker (1995, 66) claims that, "Studies need to move from theory through empirical application and then back to theory." In doing so, theoretic concepts either show their limits or prove to be able to explain phenomena in different contexts. Most commonly they experience shifts and changes caused by the specifics of the context that were incorporated in the concepts in the first place. According to Stoker, this reconfiguration of theoretic concepts and

redefinition of terms during their adaptation to other empirical contexts is an essential part of conceptual work. The aim of this work is to develop robust and flexible frameworks for further research.

In short, when we apply it to these other empirical contexts, transferability raises questions such as, to what extent is the "old" concept appropriate to explain the "new" phenomena? Where are the significant differences? Should the concept be reformulated to match the context it is applied to? We will come back to these questions in the discussion.

Urban Shrinkage: A Newly Evolving Concept?

Urban shrinkage is a term that began to spread round the world starting – for a change – in East Germany. First coined during the West German discourse of the late 1970s (Göb 1977; and later and most prominently Häußermann and Siebel 1988), it attempts to describe a type of city that, following its economic decline, faces population loss, and therefore provides a new subject to urban sociology (see also van den Berg et al. 1982, 44). This claim was based on the empirical context of old industrial regions in Germany such as the Ruhr area. Yet the opportunity to undertake scientific discussion on this topic was ignored by the broader research community until new hotspots of "shrinking cities" appeared about a decade later in the eastern part of Germany.

The empirically observed emergence of vast numbers of housing vacancies all over eastern German cities in the late 1990s, accompanied by a sudden drop in housing prices, provoked a political and scientific discussion that is best characterized as an intense niche debate, since it was at first treated as a dramatic but specifically eastern German phenomenon that does not apply to cities in other places. After years of no progress, a report from a state commission initiated the public discourse in 2000 (Pfeiffer, Simons, and Porsch 2000), by suggesting a state-sponsored demolition programme to reduce vacancies. What had happened? After decades of housing shortages, there was suddenly a massive oversupply of flats in all kinds of structures: in the old housing stock – whether refurbished or not – in pre- and post-war estates, as well as in large housing estates from the socialist period.

Examining the causes of these vacancies, three main sources were discussed: out-migration because of economic breakdown in a large number of formerly industrialized cities, an overall decline in birth rates to below-mortality rates, and suburbanization (Lang and Tenz 2003; Hannemann 2003; Bürkner, Kuder, and Kühn 2005). Hannemann (2003, 18-19) emphasized the processed involved by exaggeration, speaking of "Deökonomisierung" (the erosion of the economic base), "Depopulation" and "Deurbanisierung" (disurbanization) – three trajectories of a downward spiral which led to shrinking cities. A trend not found in most definitions, but contributing significantly to the evolving housing vacancies, was the state-sponsored building and refurbishment activities during the 1990s. After the revolution, 420,000 flats in the old neglected housing stock were vacant because there were technically uninhabitable. By 2000, about one million flats had become vacant. (Pfeiffer, Simons, and Porsch 2000, 10, 17).

A huge part of the discussion focused on the effects of shrinkage, which were perceived differently depending on the interests and perspectives of the commentators. The *political and administrative* actors concentrated on the consequences of population decline: oversized infrastructure – such as one million vacant flats, unnecessarily large sewer systems, underused schools, kindergartens, and public transport system – and shrinking municipal budgets. *Planners* discussed the appropriateness of planning instruments and discussed a shift in planning paradigms. Under the conditions of urban shrinkage, planning would no longer steer growth by guiding and restricting investment. Now, one needed to manage shrinkage, to reduce the city in a planned way, instead (Weidner 2005). For the first time, existing housing stock is demolished with the only purpose being to reduce housing oversupply, and not to rebuild the stock according to new plans and purposes. Vacant plots and areas are left behind, usually turned into various kind of green space. At the same time, land consumption went on at the outskirts of the cities, although recently it has shown some signs of slowing down (Köppen 2005; Nuissl, Rink, and Steuer 2005).

The *media* focused on job-related migration as the source of these vacancies. National media especially often reduced the phenomenon to households moving to places where they could find work, leaving behind empty prefabricated blocks in declining cities and regions (Großmann

2005; Wiest 2006). The *real estate actors* spoke about a cyclic decline in the housing market that sooner or later will cycle up again. *Politicians and administrations* faced in their work far-reaching questions and decisions: Where do vacancies occur? On what parts of the city should investment be focused? What parts can be given up on in the long run? By whom and with what instruments can the city be reduced in a planned way? Can it be shrunk from the outside in, at all? Until now, cities have rather experienced a perforation of the city structure, rather than a governed contraction (Lütke Daldrup 2001). Demolition efforts go on but they are not likely to turn around housing markets. Instead the cities and their housing markets start to differentiate into areas of investment and areas of disinvestment – sometimes next to each other. This is accompanied by intensifying residential segregation, in particular of low-income groups, even if these trends are far from a polarization of socio-spatial structures. Vacancies and rising segregation have opened discussions about downward-spiralling neighbourhoods.

The innovation of the debate about shrinking cities in eastern Germany, however, is the discovery that demographic trends which have gone on for years had been simply overlooked until vacancies became an issue of public and professional interest. After centuries of urban growth and the resulting one-sided patterns of perception and interpretation, demographic forecasts assume nowadays that population decline in the cities will continue on account of changes in fertility. The average age of inhabitants will rise continuously; urban populations are ageing more or less rapidly (Bürkner et al. 2007). What differs significantly from debates in other contexts is the notion that this is not just a short-term phenomenon, but a future trend for a lot of cities, especially in developed countries. Today, dealing with the effects of urban shrinkage has become a daily business for many cities and towns (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2003, 2004). Unlike experiences with population decline in the US or the UK, questions of coping with or adapting to urban shrinkage dominate the discussions today in both research and in practice, rather than the search for a silver bullet to turn around cities' fortunes. This is due first of all to the strong focus on demographic processes that – in either scenario – suggest that the population decline will continue.

Besides talking about problems and difficulties, another path of the debate discusses the positive effects and opportunities for the cities. Arts projects have celebrated kinds of newly evolving "spaces of possibilities" (Oswalt 2005 and 2006; Schröer 2002). Whether or not one agrees with these positive notions, this kind of debate has departed greatly from the assumption that the only acceptable kind of city development is urban growth. Even contributions that evaluate shrinkage in a negative way have, nevertheless, accepted that it is very likely to happen to a considerable number of cities, and therefore needs to be managed.

The demographic turn in scientific and in planning approaches led to an initial transfer of experiences and planning approaches from eastern to western German cities. Ironically, this has meant that the debate has returned to those old industrialized cities in western Germany, where the term "shrinking cities" originated from in the classic texts of Häußermann and Siebel of the late 1980s. In Germany, urban shrinkage has lost the status of being a specifically eastern German phenomenon. Rather, it is assumed that cities in the West will sooner or later face similar developmental trends (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2004).

Transferring the Concept of Urban Shrinkage – Diversifying the Debate

German researchers took the initiative in introducing the debate on urban shrinkage to other contexts. Their search for comparable cases of shrinkage has led to a re-examination of phenomena described as "urban decline" or "urban decay" in Western Europe and North America (Beauregard 1995). In those places, old industrialized cities – such as Sheffield, Manchester, or Liverpool in the United Kingdom, and Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore in the US – have lost population due to economic restructuring, after the breakdown of traditional industries like coal mining and steel production. On top of industrial decline, suburbanization has reinforced these trends, which started approximately in the 1960s.

The "Shrinking Cities" project (www.shrinkingcities.com) was the first large-scale international arts and research project to transfer the

term “urban shrinkage” to other empirical contexts. Case studies were conducted in Detroit, the Manchester-Liverpool region, the Halle-Leipzig region, and in Ivanovo in Russia – this last an example of socialist industrialization that left behind emptiness after the transformation to a market economy. The outcomes of this project were both academic and artistic: books, conferences, art projects, workshops, and an exhibition that still tours around the globe. The project initiative was German, the coordination was based in Germany, and the project also was funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation. No wonder then that the term “urban shrinkage” was applied to all the cases in this study.

In 2006, an international symposium on Shrinking Cities was held in Dresden, discussing case studies from France, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Australia and Mexico. This symposium was followed, in 2007, by another at the University of Berkeley (Shrinking Cities International Research Network 2007), where an international group of researchers discussed various case studies from Japan, the US and around the globe.

The discussion of the British and American cases in their national contexts – which has seen contributions over the course of a few decades – uses a different terminology and has its own specific foci. Similar to western Germany in the 1980s, the debate concentrated on economic issues and strategies intended to economically revive the cities. The more or less explicit goal was to turn around population loss, the decay of neighbourhoods, and declining municipal budgets. “Urban decline” and “urban decay” became terms dominating this discourse. There the negative, emotional impact is even higher than in relation to the term “urban shrinkage.” The emergence of the physical decay of neighbourhoods was automatically linked in discourse to issues of race and poverty (Lang 2005; Pallagst 2005; Großmann 2007b).

In the US, attention was especially paid to the population loss caused by suburbanization. The case of Detroit became a significant example of the so-called doughnut effect. Waves of suburbanization left behind decay, blighted areas, and even vast, empty fields in former inner-city neighbourhoods. Burned-down buildings, houses in the later stages of decay, empty overgrown fields, and single still-occupied streets or houses dominate the picture. At the administrative borders between the

suburbs and the city, this picture changes, and vibrant and well kept communities appear (Gallagher 2004, 242-248). In cases like Pittsburgh, suburbanization hit the administrative city not as heavily. Blight and decay occur only in certain areas, usually in the black and poor neighbourhoods first. Pittsburgh is also an example of a city where urban shrinkage and suburban growth has led to conflicts in issues of governance. Problems of equity in tax revenue, and infrastructural expenses have remained unsolved for years, leading to an almost bankrupt state of the city's budget (Miller 2002). In these American contexts, population decline due to low fertility rates did not play an important role, since both Detroit and Pittsburgh are immigration destinations, with most immigrant families showing higher birth rates.

Reconsidering the Term "Urban Shrinkage" and the Eastern German Experience

The comparison with American cases points to one decisive difference: the influence of demographic trends on urban development. In eastern Germany, demographic "discoveries" clearly showed that urban shrinkage is not a dependent on only economic development. This is, in our point of view, the main difference between the concepts of urban decline as it was discussed in Western countries in the 1970s and 1980s, and the eastern German experience. Decay and decline are not analytically suitable names for this pathway of urban development, since they involve even stronger negative notions than shrinkage. Therefore, rather than transferring these more negative terms to other, international contexts, from our point of view the term urban shrinkage has applicability in the international context.

Nevertheless, population decline seems to be a kind of focal point of the development of shrinking cities, no matter what processes caused it. Many of the problems discussed in context arise from shrinking populations: housing vacancies, decay and blight, underutilization of the technical infrastructure, and correspondingly rising maintenance costs, at a time when municipal budgets are shrinking. The extent to which these problems occur is directly related to the extent of population decline.

After looking at these international cases, the specifics of the eastern German experience become more obvious. Eastern German urban shrinkage represents a special case of post-socialist transformation characterized by an overlapping of simultaneous processes. Deindustrialization and subsequent out-migration, as well as suburbanization contributed to a negative migration balance. At the same time, massive drops in birth rates after the reunification of Germany led to a negative natural population development. Together with the simultaneous heavy investments in housing stock and technical infrastructure that was encouraged by high tax revenues, the overall population decline led to significant housing vacancies that then became the starting point of the "shrinkage" debate. Economic decline, suburbanization, population decline, and disurbanization are not parallel characteristics of shrinking cities: they are interlinked processes, one being a consequence of the other. In the cases considered, shrinkage is a multidimensional development with different pathways. Migration processes due to deindustrialization and suburbanization are elements of all the Western European cases. Demographic change is becoming more important all over Europe, but it is not yet as relevant for cities in those countries that are destinations of migration (United Nations 2006).

A first systematization of urban shrinkage would therefore involve distinguishing between causes, process, and consequences. Global trends with local consequences lead to population decline, which is at the core of the process of urban shrinkage. Population decline can be driven by migration as well as natural population development. It then – together with further building activity – leads to a mismatch of the cities' capacities with their respective densities of usage and demand. The consequences can vary significantly. Cities with clear social differentiation and residential segregation show selective neighbourhood decline, while others might become perforated across the entire city.

Post-socialist cities share a lot of the features discussed, for example the demographic "shock" after 1989 (indicated e.g. by "lowest-low" fertility rates dropping below a total fertility rate of 1.3 children per woman; Kohler, Billari, and Ortega 2002), economic restructuring and decline, in some cases out-migration due to rising urban unemployment, and ongoing suburbanization. The next section will investigate whether in East Central Europe there are cities that, according to the outline developed so far, would qualify as shrinking cities.

Urban Shrinkage Meets Post-socialist Transition – Applying the Concept to East Central European Cities

A recent study at the University of Glasgow concluded that three out of four cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants in the post-socialist countries are shrinking. The authors summarize the situation thus: "the absolute and relative position of cities has deteriorated sharply since the fall of state socialism. Shrinkage rather than growth or recovery has become the dominant trajectory" (Mykhnenko and Turok 2007, 2).

But the perception of scholars and officials is rather different. Since housing prices are skyrocketing in Poland and the Czech Republic at the moment, and the construction of new housing estates is booming, the common perception of city development is far away from the idea of shrinking developments. When discussing the eastern German experience, it is usually treated as an exceptional case, not comparable to others. "We don't have these problems that you have in eastern Germany" is a statement we have come across a number of times in our field work. Sensitized by the eastern German experience to demographic development, we suggest a different point of view (see also Haase et al. 2008).

Eastern German and East Central European cities share a socialist past and the experience of post-socialist transition with its far-reaching economic restructuring. Just as in eastern Germany, the revolution in the political and economic systems resulted in a massive and sudden decline in birth rates. At the same time, the mortality rate stagnated and even increased. After the fall of state socialism, fertility rates dropped dramatically, due to rises in childlessness and postponements of marriage and childbearing. Vaishar (2006) showed for the Ostrava region trends very similar to those of eastern German cities. Additionally, there is an increasing impact of migration in different forms and directions, including a strong suburbanization trend (Sýkora and Ouředníček 2006). This has led to a drop in population, and to ageing city societies.

As in all the contexts discussed here, old industrialized regions are hot spots of population decline. These cities lose population due to job-related, age- and gender-selective out-migration; but also, the natural population decrease is larger than elsewhere as a result of the increasing death surplus. Łódź, for instance, between 1990 und 2005 lost 11% of its inhabitants; Katowice, 16%; Sosnowiec, 15% (see table 1). Also, Czech

Table 1: *Population decline in selected Polish and Czech cities*

City	Population development 1990-2005		Causes of population decline
	absolute	relative	
Poland			
Łódź	−81,000	−11%	Death surplus, out-migration, intraregional migration
Katowice	−50,000	−16%	Out-migration, death surplus, intraregional migration
Sosnowiec	−33,000	−15%	Death surplus, intraregional migration, out-migration
Bytom	−26,000	−11%	Out-migration, death surplus, intraregional migration
Poznań	−22,000	−4%	Death surplus, suburbanization
Gliwice	−15,000	−7%	Out-migration, death surplus, interregional migration
Bydgoszcz	−15,000	−4%	Suburbanization, death surplus
Czech Republic			
Brno	−26,000	−7%	Suburbanization, death surplus
Plzeň	−12,000	−8%	Suburbanization, death surplus
Ostrava	−21,000	−7%	Out-migration, death surplus
Olomouc	−7,000	−7%	Suburbanization, death surplus

Sources: GUS [Główny Urząd Statystyczny]: Ludność. Stan i struktura w przekroju terytorialnym. Warsaw, various years; ČSÚ [Český statistický úřád]: Vývoj základních demografických ukazatelů ve vybraných městech. Prague 2006.

cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants lost about 7-8% in the same period. Population losses are stronger within the administrative boundaries of cities, while suburbs continue to grow; this affects both infrastructure and municipal budgets. However, particularly in recent years, the population decline in the bigger Czech cities has slowed down; currently one could rather speak of – in absolute quantitative terms – a "stagnating" number of inhabitants

Urban shrinkage is not in fact a new phenomenon in East Central European cities, and has not only arisen in the post-socialist transition. Since the end of the 1970s, old industrial cities in Poland like Łódź, and cities in the Upper Silesian industrial area have been experiencing population decline. This was then reinforced by structural changes after 1989, when new engines of population decline, like suburbanization and job migration, appeared in cities such as Brno, Ostrava, Poznań, Cracow and Bydgoszcz (Haase et al. 2007).

Shrinkage is not only part of the present for most eastern European cities; it might well be their future too. According to the prognoses of national statistical offices, the population of cities – especially in Poland – will fall dramatically (see table 2). The population prognosis of the Polish national statistical office (GUS) claims that populations will further decline until 2030; in some Polish cities rather dramatically (up to 30%), and in some Czech cities rather steadily (approximately 5%). Independent of the necessary methodological discussion about the reliability of these forecasts, urban shrinkage is a fact, not fiction in East Central Europe.

In the long run this will affect labour and housing markets, the use of social and technical infrastructure, budgets and the socio-spatial patterns of the cities. Since the populations of East Central European cities are not expected to reproduce themselves, possible growth can only arise from new waves of in-migration and – as a qualitatively new phenomenon – (foreign) immigration. At the same time, the further spread of rampant suburbanization needs to be counteracted. In different contexts, the quantity of population loss and its consequences might be more or less dramatic. The future development will show what types of cities are affected, and to what scope (Haase, Kabisch, and Steinführer 2006).

But there are also important differences between Polish and Czech cities in comparison with shrinking cities in eastern Germany. The main difference is that housing vacancies are not yet an issue, nor is infrastructure oversupplied. The housing markets are still rather tight, and so the real estate markets and new construction projects in the bigger cities are booming. The housing markets continue to differentiate, with suburban districts growing, and spot-gentrification occurring in parts of the inner city. There is a tendency to restructure older built-up areas. Large housing estates differentiate into better and worse addresses, depending on the age of the estates – the older the better – and on their images, which depends on the quality of their surrounding landscape and in great part on their ownership structures and related resources for restructuring and maintenance (Murie, Knorr-Siedow, and van Kempen 2003).

Finally, there are neighbourhoods in the cities that have been neglected for quite a long time – areas that are stigmatized as “problem places home to problem people.” In the Czech Republic this applies mostly to

Table 2. *Population in selected Polish cities (2002), with prognoses to 2030*

City	Population (2002) in thousands	Population forecast until 2030
Katowice	325.0	−28%
Sosnowiec	231.5	−25%
Gliwice	202.6	−25%
Częstochowa	250.9	−23%
Gdańsk	461.7	−21%
Bydgoszcz	372.1	−21%
Łódź	785.1	−21%
Kielce	211.8	−21%

Source: GUS. Prognoza ludności na lata 2003-2030 (www.stat.gov.pl/dane_spol-gosp/ludnosc/prognoza_ludnosci/index.htm; access date: 19.2.2007)

districts with a high concentration of Roma people, in Poland to inner city districts that are home to what officials call the "pathology."

When talking about the influence of population decline on a city to present, experts mention a catch-up to Western norms of average housing space. Households of three generations that were once forced to live in one flat may now satisfy their "hunger for housing." Since only better-off households are mobile, we suppose that under conditions of population loss, further spatial and social fragmentation might occur in these cities, leading to pockets of growth and simultaneously to pockets of decline.

Discussion and Outlook

The application of concept of urban shrinkage fosters awareness of demographic issues, and the possible futures of East Central European cities. It thereby proves an initial explanatory power across contexts. The consideration of migration patterns and demographic shifts bring a certain set of cities into the focus of research on urban shrinkage: those larger cities that are not capitals, that are – or were – older industrial centres, and share the experience of a breakdown in their industrial economic base. As long as the focus of research that compares cities internationally remains on capitals and "catch-up" modernization in

post-socialist societies and cities, developmental trends which depart from the growth paradigm stay out of the spotlight. Yet there are already some works which talk about "demographic stagnation" (Andrle 2001) or "depopulation" (Parysek 2005, 99, 104; who euphemistically also calls this "qualitative growth"), but the quantitative growth paradigm still forms the most important frame for urban development.

Reconsidering the pitfalls involved in transferring concepts from one context to the other, we summarize:

Concerning *parochialism* – the tendency to continuously invent new terms or to use existing ones in an unintended way – it would bring international comparative research on urban development forward to focus on just one term, instead of using "decline" and "decay" in the English-speaking context, "shrinkage" in the German context, and "stagnation" or "depopulation" in the eastern European context. We suggest working on a good, robust conceptualization of urban shrinkage. Out of all the terms, it is the least stigmatizing, yet still clearly names the phenomena: the opposite of city expansion. Thus, the "invention" of yet more terms to describe the population losses in East Central European cities leads no further. Instead of separating out all pathways of shrinkage according to their different causes and consequences – for example, "weak market cities" or "perforated cities" (Brophy and Burnett 2003; Doehler 2003) – we instead suggest developing a qualitative typology based on those clusters of shrinking cities which have a similar complex of causes and consequences. The core dimension of urban shrinkage should therefore be the factor at the heart of all these processes: a rather long-term loss of population.

But not all losses of population automatically qualify as urban shrinkage. It would be *misclassification*, to apply the concept of urban shrinkage to all cities in East Central Europe that lost some population in whatever small timeframe. If a city loses population, but does not show any of the characteristic consequences of urban shrinkage, it is not at this moment a shrinking city. So it is not yet clear whether it will be meaningful to apply the concept to the larger Czech cities at any future point in time. A recent analysis of the case of Brno demonstrated that, in spite of some population losses between 1991 and 2005, the city cannot be classified as "shrinking" (Maas 2007). If demographic prognoses suggest a future drop in population numbers, as in most Polish cases,

then these cities are likely to become shrinking cities – but we have argued that the significant difference between processes of shrinkage and other pathways of urban development is the question of whether a decline in population numbers leads to a mismatch between usage and physical urban structures. To call this kind of urban development something like a "slight shrinkage" would be a case of *degreeism*, denying important qualitative differences.

Urban shrinkage should, however, not be confused with regional shrinkage. Shrinking cities do not only occur in regions that lose population as a whole. They might also occur in growing regions, or in growing metropolitan areas. The most impressive example of this type of shrinkage is the case of Detroit. Since suburbanization is one of the predominant development trajectories of cities in East Central Europe, this route should be carefully observed, especially in cases where the national population does not reproduce itself. Applying the concept of urban shrinkage to just one particular neighbourhood in a region would be case of *concept stretching*.

The transfer of the concept of urban shrinkage into research on eastern European cities shows, in our point of view, clear benefits. First of all, the concept might challenge "business as usual," the strong research focus on capital cities that dominates international debates. The transfer leads to new questions that integrate the demographic dimension in classic fields of research such as residential segregation, neighbourhood development, housing research, and so forth. Processes that have been overlooked and ignored for a long time in eastern Germany might get early attention and informed policy responses in East Central European cities.

Also the concept of urban shrinkage benefits from the transfer. The population development so far seems to qualify as a core indicator to describe the process of urban shrinkage independently of the actual causes. The eastern German debate mixes the description of the process with causes and consequences. Also the description of urban shrinkage as a downward spiral is too narrow, and hinders international debates about shrinking cities.

We suggest a differentiation between process (at the core), and causes and consequences (in the frame) of urban shrinkage. So far, economic restructuring seems to be one major cause worldwide, affec-

ting cities that have or had their economic base in the fading industries. Also, falling fertility rates prove to be a common source of urban shrinkage in most countries and cities of Western Europe and North America. Looking at the consequences, these cities seem to develop inner-city peripheries: areas of disinvestment – whether in the form of industrial brownfields, neighbourhoods in decay, or clusters of vacant houses. The social and technical infrastructure becomes underused. First, kindergartens, and then schools close down. Planning strategies need to shift from steering or limiting growth, to the management of shrinkage.

Still, one needs to carefully look at the differences between cities and national contexts. One of the challenging questions in conceptualizing urban shrinkage is, at what point can a city be classified as a shrinking city? What size population loss in what time period is significant, and what phenomena are core to shrinking cities? Due to historic and other context specific factors, the socio-spatial patterns in shrinking cities are different. For instance, the presence or absence of minority populations might make all the difference for neighbourhood pathways that share many common features otherwise. The performance of the national economy, the state of regulation of housing markets, the property ownership structures, and so forth – are all very decisive in steering the development of a specific shrinking city. Also, similar findings in different contexts do not necessarily need to have the same causes, for instance when interpreting housing vacancies.

A lot of research still needs to be done. More case studies might shed light on the phenomena and causes of urban shrinkage. We appeal for the combination of large-scale socio-statistical analyses with qualitative micro-scale research in order to understand the specific pathways and to qualify the concept. Cross-national cooperation will be beneficial in detecting blind spots in research perspectives, and raise innovative questions.

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Declining Cities/Developing Cities: Polish and German Perspectives
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Spatial Restructuring of the Katowice Conurbation

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Abstract. The Katowice conurbation is a classic mining conurbation, like many others which emerged in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its restructuring and revitalization process in large measure involves changes in its spatial order. Since a conurbation is not a single city, but rather a complex of cities, changes of the spatial order comprise changes of relations between its components – namely cities and industrial estates. In terms of restructuring, the Katowice conurbation is backward compared to analogous industrial areas in western Europe, and for this reason it can take advantage of their experience.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the most important factor determining urbanization was industrialization. So close a correlation between urbanization and industrialization has never occurred before or since. Never had so many new cities and city complexes of purely industrial origin emerged, and the growth of old cities had never before been so dependent on industrial development. Those new forms of spatial order which are characteristic of the capitalistic economy of the century, namely the coal conurbations, were developed at that time.

In modern times, mining has been one of the most important reasons for urbanization. In the case of coal conurbations, the mining industry was the direct reason for the urbanization process. When mining was not the direct reason for the urbanization, it sometimes – in an indirect way – contributed to the development of cities. A good example of this might be the very fast growth of the San Francisco population in the middle of the nineteenth century, which was directly caused by the California Gold Rush (1848-1855), for which the city had administrative and service functions (Korcelli 1969, 36).

The extraction of mineral resources, coal, and metal ores, and the development of the processing industry were accompanied by the progressive enlargement of settlements in the Katowice conurbation. This was followed by real changes in the life of societies, a consequence of both the accumulation of people and the character of their settlements. They were industrial settlements which depended on the development of industry, but the communities of workers' estates did not have urban features.

It seems that the period of very close correlation between industrialization and urbanization is gone for ever. Modern urbanization is not always connected with industrialization. Rapid urbanization of developing countries – which has led to the creation of monstrous cities with millions of inhabitants – is an example of the superiority of the urbanization process over industrialization, whereas modern technopolies are an example of the opposite dependence (Jałowiecki 1978, 103). The restructuring of the Katowice conurbation has to be connected with the reformulation of traditional relations between urbanization and industrialization. The disappearance and restructuring of old industry must have some consequences in the urbanization processes.

Because the Katowice conurbation is not a single city, but a complex of cities, the restructuring and revitalization processes are not identical to the restructuring and revitalization of a single city, and the problems of structural changes to the whole region have to be taken into consideration. So next to the restructuring and revitalization of a single element of conurbation, there is the problem of restructuring and revitalizing the whole conurbation. Because the relations between the cities and estates of the conurbation are in the majority of cases spatial ones, the restructuring of the Katowice conurbation must come down to the restructuring of its spatial order.

Shaping the new, postindustrial spatial order – that is, the attempt to overcome the old polycentric order of a conurbation – can consist of:

– deglomeration of a conurbation;

– reduction of the polycentric order via the creation of several new centres;

– transformation of a conurbation into a monocentric agglomeration;

– transformation of each element of an agglomeration while preserving its polycentric character.

It is worth noticing that these four processes include phenomena on different spatial scales. The first and third concern the whole conurbation, the second concerns parts of it, and the fourth concerns particular settlement elements which constitute the conurbation.

These processes do not happen independently, but act together and are closely related. The history of the Katowice conurbation shows that each of these phenomena, to some degree, took place at the very beginning of the conurbation's existence. The formation of the conurbation was a process always linked to its deglomeration, but in different periods one or the other dominated. Similarly, the process of industrialization was always accompanied by the phenomenon of disappearance of industrial activity which happened, for example, because of the development of new deposits of mineral resources, and the end of exploitation of the old ones. The problem of transformation of the conurbation's spatial order has always existed, and we can say that it has been an immanent problem in its history. Nowadays, during the conurbation's rapid restructuring, the problem has merely accelerated.

Let us now look into the four processes of transformation of the spatial order of the Katowice conurbation.

The first such process is deglomeration – the opposite to agglomeration – which can be a spontaneous, unplanned phenomenon, but can also be planned and artificially accelerated. The two most important historic deglomeration plans for the Katowice conurbation – one Polish and one German – were created during periods when the whole agglomeration was part of, respectively the Polish or the German political organization.

The first deglomeration plan concerned with organizing the space of the Katowice conurbation was one of German origin from the time of the Second World War. This plan intended to reduce the population of the central part of the agglomeration by spreading the cities' population around the Upper Silesian Industrial Region – known by the abbreviation "GOP". It was planned to create a city of 200,000 inhabitants to the northeast of Dąbrowa Górnicza, to enlarge the population of Tychy to 150,000 people, to expand Łabędy, Tarnowskie Góry, Pyskowice, and other centres, and to develop roads and highways (Gwosdz 2004, 132).

In 1953 the GOP regional plan was created; it was also known as the "Pieńkowski Plan," after its main architect. Deglomeration was to consist of the relocation from the heart of the agglomeration (the so-called zone A) of a large number of inhabitants and a major part of the industry, to the periphery of the conurbation, away from the zone of coal exploitation. The realization of this plan resulted in the transformation of Tychy into a satellite of Katowice, for which it fulfilled the housing functions. But the deglomeration of the heart of the agglomeration was not entirely successful (Kotela 1995, 11-27).

The contemporary process of deglomeration is, however, a spontaneous one and it has assumed a demographic character. Since the end of the 1980s, the population of the Katowice conurbation has been decreasing, because of both the negative birth rate and the negative migration balance. We can take the year 1979 to be the year of maximum development of industry in the Katowice conurbation; at this date, the extraction of coal in Poland exceeded 200 million tons annually, and since then it has been decreasing.

The time variation of the Katowice conurbation population curve is similar to that of analogous coal-mining regions in western Europe, for example the Ruhr area in North Rhine-Westphalia, where the cities

attained their maximum population during the 1960s. The variations were more drastic in western American mining settlements during the gold rush, when the population drastically increased for a year or two, and then drastically declined; after a few years these settlements began to disappear, creating ghost towns typical of the Wild West. Considering the decline of population that occurred in the Katowice area, the plans for the artificial deglomeration of the conurbation – which consisted of creating new cities and settlements on its peripheries, to be populated by surplus inhabitants from the centre – were abandoned.

A second potential transformation process in the Katowice conurbation polycentric order could be the creation of a number of zones with their own local centres. One of the main features of the Katowice conurbation is the lack of a natural centre, a city which would be well qualified to hold the central position. Katowice, situated on the southeastern edge of the conurbation, holds a dominant position in the conurbation mostly by accident (Rajman 1997, 41).

During the history of the conurbation, Bytom, Gliwice and Chorzów have all aspired to the role of its main centre. For a long time Bytom was the largest city in the region. Gliwice is the only port city and lies in the western part of the mining zone; it had the advantage of being connected to the western part of Germany, and so it fulfilled the function of the conurbation's "gate." Chorzów's advantage was its central position, but between the two World Wars it lost this, because of the creation of the new Polish-German border through the centre of the conurbation, changing it from the central city to a peripheral one.

Yet it is not out of the question that during the further evolution of the conurbation's spatial order that these cities might regain the position of local centres around which the neighbouring cities would be assembled. Most often Gliwice is appointed to this role, because it is the academic and scientific centre from which it was attempted to create a modern technopolis, with modern industry and a free trade zone. Gliwice could become the second important centre after Katowice, which would give the conurbation a bipolar character. To this list should be added Sosnowiec, the centre of the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie region, whose history is slightly different from the rest of the conurbation.

The third possible mode of evolution might be a transformation of the polycentric conurbation into a monocentric agglomeration. The

Katowice conurbation is the biggest urban complex in Poland; yet its biggest city, Katowice, in 2006 had only 317,000 inhabitants – no more than 15% of the conurbation's population. This fact itself is evidence that Katowice could not be the natural centre toward which the other cities of the conurbation would gravitate.

But if the cities of the Katowice agglomeration were joined together in one urban organism, the resulting city would have more than two million inhabitants, and would become not only the most populated Polish city, but also the second central European metropolis after Berlin. The most frequently proposed name for the potential new city is "Silesia" (the Latin name of the region), but there are also other propositions, such as "Katowice" or "the Katowice Agglomeration" (Aglomeracja Katowicka).

The character of the future city is controversial. Would it be one city with a central administration, or a complex of cities which would form a kind of federation or confederation? First of all, the creation of the city of Silesia would make one central city of the Silesian voivodeship dominate the other parts. The population of the city of Silesia would be ten times greater than that of the next two biggest cities of the voivodeship, Częstochowa and Bielsko-Biała.

In the second case, the polycentric spatial structure and the conflicts of interests between the different cities could be a cause of centrifugal movements. Unsuccessful examples of the creation of new cities through the merging of the smaller centres of a conurbation – such as the Rybnik Coal Region (*Rybnicki Okręg Węglowy*) adjacent to the Katowice conurbation in the south – make scepticism a frequent attitude toward the possibility of total integration. In the Ruhr area in western Germany, despite the creation of an urban complex – the *Regionalverband Ruhr* – originating in the nineteenth century, total integration has never happened, and today there is no plan of creating a single integrated city.

I would like to recount here the story of the historic attempt to create a single administrative unit from the western part of the conurbation – the German tricity, formed from Gliwice, Zabrze and Bytom. At the end of the 1920s there was the idea of joining these cities into one body with a joint administration, but the plan was never realized. Under this scheme, three cities together with three attached neighbouring communities were to constitute a main administrative unit with a slightly

strange name, the *Bezirks-Zweckverband*. The joining-together of these three cities was to be accompanied by their thorough reconstruction, creating new green and recreation areas, and new communication lines, including a highway joining the German part of the conurbation with the rest of the country (Szczypka-Gwiazda 2003). Because the project was utopian and very expensive to implement, it was never realized.

The fourth possible path of evolution is a change in the character of each urban unit of the conurbation, while preserving its polycentric character. The question of what is the fundamental unit should be considered here; it seems that the fundamental settlement units in the Katowice agglomeration are the workers' estates – very often miners' estates – rather than the cities themselves. This arises directly from the origin of the agglomeration: the settlement units which emerged as a consequence of the development of the mining and processing industries were workers' estates.

The development of the city centre was often a secondary phenomenon, and did not always catch up with the development of the estates. Hardly ever has the city centre emerged spontaneously, as it did in Gliwice where there is a market square and a thoroughfare, Zwycięstwa Street, which leads from the square to the railway station. More often city centres have been created deliberately – frequently by revitalizing and reconstructing some part of the city (this is true in the cases of Katowice, Chorzów, and Sosnowiec). Similar phenomena could be observed in the cities of the Rybnik Coal Region, such as Jastrzębie Zdrój and Żory, where the old city centres lost importance because of the creation of new miners' housing estates.

An analysis of the distribution of its population shows that the Katowice agglomeration is in great part a system composed of many types of workers' estates, and therefore of many different types of building. Among them there are the so-called familoki estates (characteristic multifamily housing blocks for the families of industrial employees, from the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century), the estates of blocks of flats from the period of real socialism – of which the best example is the Tysiąclecia estate (known as "Tauzen") in Katowice – but also more sophisticated settlement units, whose building character differs from the standards of the period. For example, we can mention some workers' estates in Katowice which were created at the

beginning of the twentieth century, before the First World War, such as Giszowiec (German Gieschwald), built between 1907 and 1910, and which resembles Ebenezer Howard's garden cities; and Nikiszowiec (Nikischschacht), built between 1908 and 1911, which resembles Fourier's Phalanstere; or the estate of Finnish houses in Bieliszowice, Ruda Śląska.

Workers' estates are the most typical settlement units in the Katowice conurbation. Very often, cities in Upper Silesia are mechanical conglomerates of several independent estates. A classic example is Ruda Śląska, which is itself a conurbation composed of several elements – the estates of Ruda, Bykowina, Bielszowice, Nowy Bytom, Godula, Halemba, and Kochłowice. Sometimes the affiliation of estates peripheral to a given city is a matter of convention, and sometimes it is even accidental. A good example is Sośnica, which belongs to Gliwice, but which traditionally gravitates toward Zabrze.

Mining estates located near mines, or even near a single mineshaft, were inhabited by communities whose life was closely connected with the mine. The creation of mining communities in which it is difficult to see urban features, and which on the contrary rather resemble the preindustrial Gemeinschaft, was made possible by specific circumstances. In his classic work concerning British mining communities, Bulmer (1975) identifies the ideal type of local mining community, which consists of such elements as spatial isolation from other estates; the economic dominance of mining, together with homogeneity of professions; specificity of the work of the miners, which necessitates solidarity especially in extreme situations such as accidents; a distinct division within the family between male and female roles, even in free time; and class solidarity in conflicts with the employer (ibid.)

A good example of a mining estate community that was destroyed by new socioeconomic conditions is Murcki, the estate analysed before the Second World War by Chałasiński (1935) and more recently by Nawrocki (1998). Murcki was initially a mining estate, then an independent city, and finally a peripheral southern district of Katowice. The analysis of Murcki shows that when such a conurbation is structurally transformed by a limitation of coal-mining activity, traditional communities based around mining estates can disappear.

It should be considered whether or not the process of restructuring conurbations should be limited to the transformation of the estates composing it, and whether the question of creating one or several centres should be abandoned. Is there any point in creating bigger administrative units? The polycentrism of the conurbation does not need to be considered an obstacle in the way of its development, but rather a value of which advantage could be taken. The specialization of each city and estate could facilitate the economic development of the region, and at the same time help resolve the problem of unemployment.

But the majority of the mining estates must be revitalized and restructured – and this costs a lot. What has to be revitalized is space, both the material space and the social space related to it. Revitalization is not simply "renovation," but rather a composite transformation of the whole space, giving it new sense while, at the same time, preserving its traditional values.

The Katowice conurbation, as a typical coal conurbation, has been trying throughout its history to get rid of its original chaos and fortuity. This disorder affects not only the conurbation as a whole, but also each element of its parts, including even the smallest mining estates. There are two different ways of conforming the spatial order to the changing society: either can it be completely rebuilt, or new sense can be given to the existing spatial order. A real evolution of the spatial order of the mining estate would be found somewhere between these two different possibilities.

The revitalization of a mining estate could consist of using post-industrial objects for new purposes, such as gastronomy, commerce, or apartments – but we should not ignore their historical value, either. Even run-down elements of the natural environment may be adapted to recreational purposes, or may become an integral part of the landscape. Reservoirs and clay pits situated near mines, which in some places create specific "micro-lake districts," can become recreation districts; mining slag heaps may be afforested or even become ski routes. So the revitalization of mining estates is a complex task (Gasidło 1998).

The Katowice conurbation is one of many similar coal regions which emerged and evolved, both in Europe and on other continents – their origin was similar everywhere. Compared to similar regions in western Europe, the Katowice conurbation is backward; it emerged later and it

was also restructured later. This was because of its geographic location and historical circumstances: it was situated on the semiperipheries of the developing world economic system. Now it is in its developing stage, which the restructured western European conurbations experienced many years ago. It seems that the restructuring experiences of the western European conurbations may be useful for the further evolution of the Katowice conurbation.

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Part Two

The City in Transition
Gentrification, Revitalization, Activization

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Półwiejska Street in Transition: Gentrification or Revitalization?

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Abstract. This paper focuses on identifying and interpreting the ongoing processes of spatial and social transformation that have recently been happening on Półwiejska Street in Poznań. Półwiejska Street, known to the wider public for the Old Brewery shopping centre and the minority demonstration called "the Equality March," has become the leading example of ongoing urban change in Polish cities. This paper reports on the empirical findings from press analysis and in-depth interviews, commenting both on socio-spatial transformations and on their cognitive mappings. The case of Półwiejska Street is described in the light of two interpretative grids used for understanding urban change in social theory: (1) gentrification, and (2) revitalization. The empirical study identifies traces of both gentrification and revitalization practices, which overlap in the process of urban change occurring on Półwiejska Street. The author argues that these two notions not only describe the processes of urban renewal, but are also employed to construe discourses on urban change.

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Introduction

Urban space has always been one of the most crucial conditions for the arising and expression of social change. For philosophers and anthropologists, the figure of the city, the rhetoric of its local and global discourses and practices, has become a metaphor for experiencing the world in contemporary European societies. The spatial forms produced by human action express and perform power relationships between the city, the state, the European Union, and the universe. On one hand, the planning of urban space, and inhabiting it, should be emphasized as a key to mapping collective imaginations; on the other hand, one should also think about political, cultural, and scientific narratives as factors shaping the social understanding of spatial transformations. Under the conditions of postmodernity, politicians, urban practitioners, and ordinary urban dwellers employ various discursive strategies to make sense of the distinctive modes of urban change. The local governments, together with urban planners, seek legitimization for proposed spatial transformations, while at the grassroots level, new forms of social and political struggle involving minorities, races, immigrants, women, and community-based coalitions attempt to find successful ways of creating the counterspaces of politics, cultural practice, and everyday life.

Discourse on urban change reflects the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion, growth and shrinkage, planning and practice, reality and imagination, localness and globalness, places and flows, and so forth. Scientific knowledge, together with political narratives and common sense, take part in translating urban transformations for the wider public. One of the types of spatial transition which draws the attention of social scientists and socially investigative journalists is inner city renewal. This paper comments on the two main notions used in relation to the renewal of historic districts – revitalization and gentrification (Miles 2000a; Smith 2002; Ley 2002; Lees 2002). The author argues that these notions not only address the processes of spatial and social transformation, but also are employed to construe political discourses on urban change: the discourse of revival and the discourse of exclusion.

The paper, however, is not an attempt to theorize on the similarities between scientific discourses, but to describe the problems of urban space production in Poland. Although ever since the breakdown of the

Figure 1. People on Półwiejska Street

communist system in 1989 Polish cities have been participating in the same globalized processes of change as those in Western Europe and America, the modes and social outcomes of these transformations are often significantly different. This article comments on the problems of structuring and restructuring urban spaces in Poland by focusing on the case of the transformation of Półwiejska Street in Poznań. The original idea of the empirical research was to look at the ongoing spatial and social transformations with particular reference to discourses on revitalization and gentrification, as well as to the site-specific consequences of urban developments on networks of human interaction. Has Półwiejska Street been revitalized or gentrified? What are and will be the social outcomes of this spatial transformation? How are the changes experienced by ordinary city dwellers? These questions are to be answered on the basis of empirical findings from press analysis and field work on Półwiejska Street, where 30 in-depth interviews have been conducted.

Figure 2. The Old Brewery

Uncertainties over the revitalization of Półwiejska Street

Półwiejska Street has gone through some major spatial, social, and cultural transformations described by the local government and media as the most spectacular and successful revitalization in Poznań. In recent years on Półwiejska Street, the Old Brewery – a huge shopping, cultural, and business centre – has been built by the richest woman in Poland, and in the years following its construction it has won prestigious competitions to find the best shopping centre in Europe and in the world. The public sector has been involved in the spatial transformation,

funding the new surface of the street, new street lighting, and the most popular monument in the city. The landlords have started renovation works in the historic tenement houses. Półwiejska Street has changed: The Old Brewery – with its hundreds of shops, restaurants, cinemas, clubs, and galleries – has become an icon of Poznań, and the most crowded place in the city. Półwiejska Street is full of people at most times of the day. The newspapers and local authorities have announced the success of the inner city revitalization. There are, however, some uncertainties which question the image of the revitalization.

The revitalization process, in its narrow and distinctive sense, should be understood not only as the social practice which effects the renewal of spatial infrastructure and the functional revival of transformed space, but also fulfils the condition of preserving the intentions of town planning, with regard to the community inhabiting the space in question. This mode of urban change is realized mostly within special revitalization programmes, which have been common in western Europe since the 1970s. Revitalization in this sense is one of the procommunity actions of the welfare state (Heller 2005; Billert 2005; Billert 2006; Guździoł 2005).

Although the socio-spatial transformation of Półwiejska Street seems similar to the changes realized within complex revitalization programmes, it is significantly different with regard to some important issues. Firstly, the spatial change consisted of a number of independent transformation processes, which were not coordinated within a broader framework. Despite their complimentary character, the actors responsible for each transformation – the Kulczyk family constructing the Old Brewery, the municipality laying down the new street surface, and various landlords renovating their tenement houses – each decided on their actions and work schedule independently from the others. Secondly, the local community was not involved in the decision making, and so the spatial transformation did not fulfil the condition of communicative planning. The local authorities attempted to consult the local community on their ideas by launching an advisory body called the Półwiejska Street Association, but these attempts did not prove to be successful (Swianiewicz, Klimska, and Mielczarek 2004).

Figure 3. Laundry

Figure 4. Bar on Półwiejska Street

Figure 5. “Ink refilling”

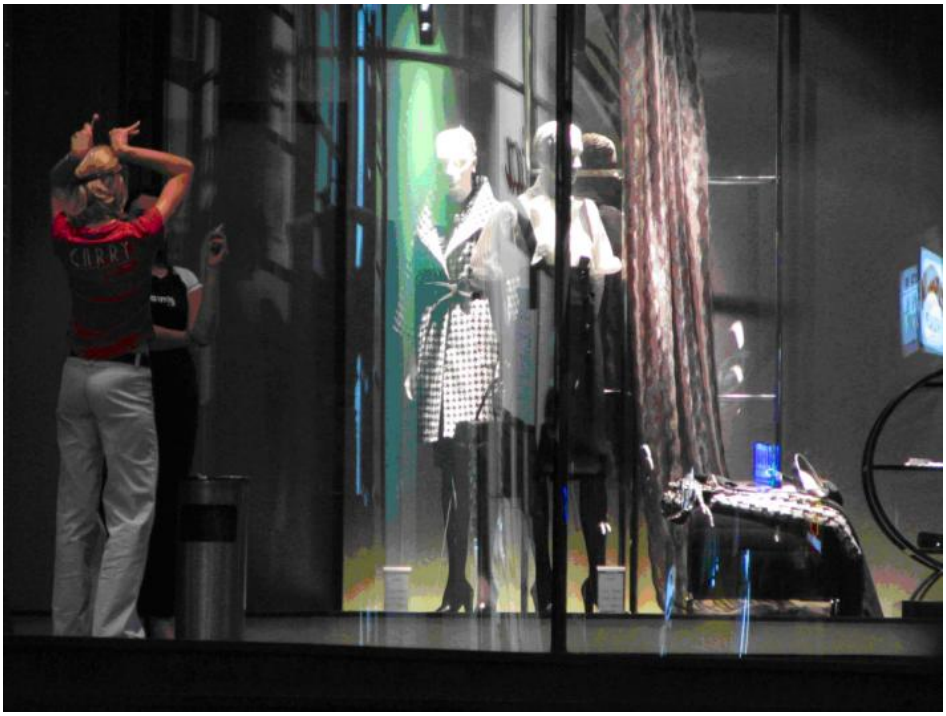

Figure 6. A cigarette break

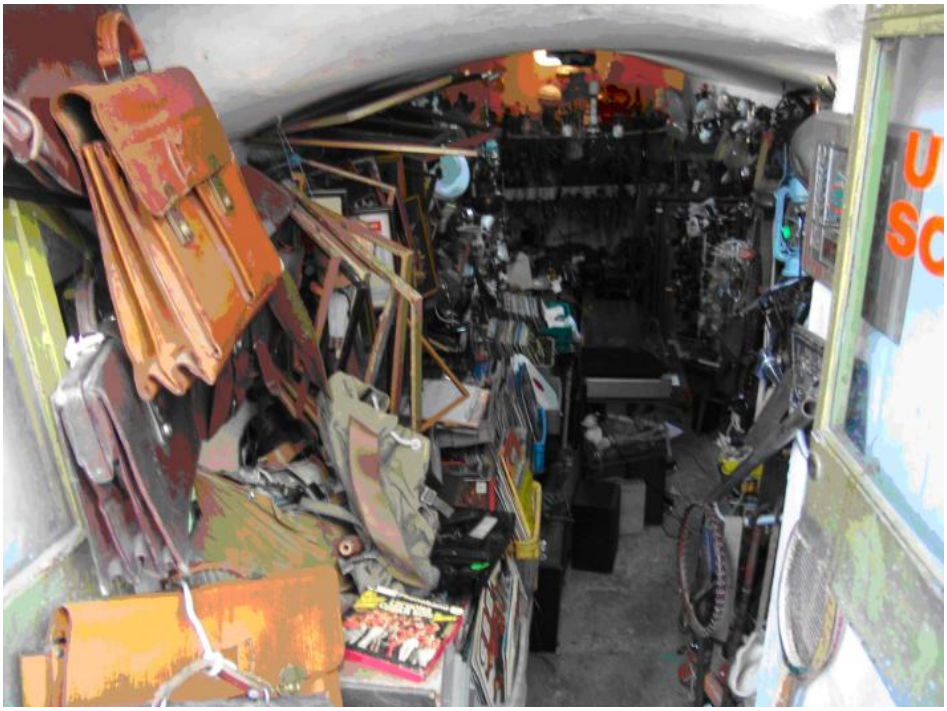

Figure 7. Leather goods

Figure 8. “Retro,” in the Old Brewery

Figure 9. “Diamond,” domestic goods

Figure 10. Museified house behind glass

Thirdly, the renewal of the old housing infrastructure has been so far superficial. In most cases, landlords have renovated only the façades of the buildings, while the interior spaces have remained dilapidated. As a consequence, Półwiejska Street is still the site of major spatial, functional, and social discontinuities: between the Old Brewery and the little shops, between the interior and the exterior, between multinational and local commerce, between the old and the young, between the rich and the poor, and between the dominant and the marginalized (Ley 2004; Castells 2001). The street has become a containing space for contradictory aesthetics: the poor, sketchy landscape of the local population, and in contrast, the new luxury world of the shopping mall. Finally, and connected to the previous point, the socio-spatial changes have not caused the preservation, empowerment, or revival of the local community. The consequences of the spatial transformation for the local community seem to be rather the opposite. The poor people who have inhabited the inner city district for many years are now multidimensionally excluded from their living space. Hence, the urban change on Półwiejska Street is often described and experienced by the poor urban dwellers there as gentrification.

Is Półwiejska Street gentrified?

The concept of gentrification introduces the second discourse on urban change involved in discussing urban renewal – the discourse of exclusion. This refers to processes in which poor working class communities are pushed away from the inner city by the middle classes, as a consequence of the renovation of the historical centre. Contrary to the discourse of revival found in writings on revitalization, authors who analyse the process of gentrification focus mostly on the negative consequences of urban renewal for local populations (Atkinson 2002; Blomley 2002). Critical leftwing thinkers usually understand urban renewal as one of the processes of public space privatization. Gentrification in this sense – together with the commodification, aesthetization, and militarization of the city – is seen as the destruction of urban public space (Zukin 1995; Sassen 2000; Harvey 1973; Jałowiecki 1988). In the first phase, as a consequence of the rising prices of services and the

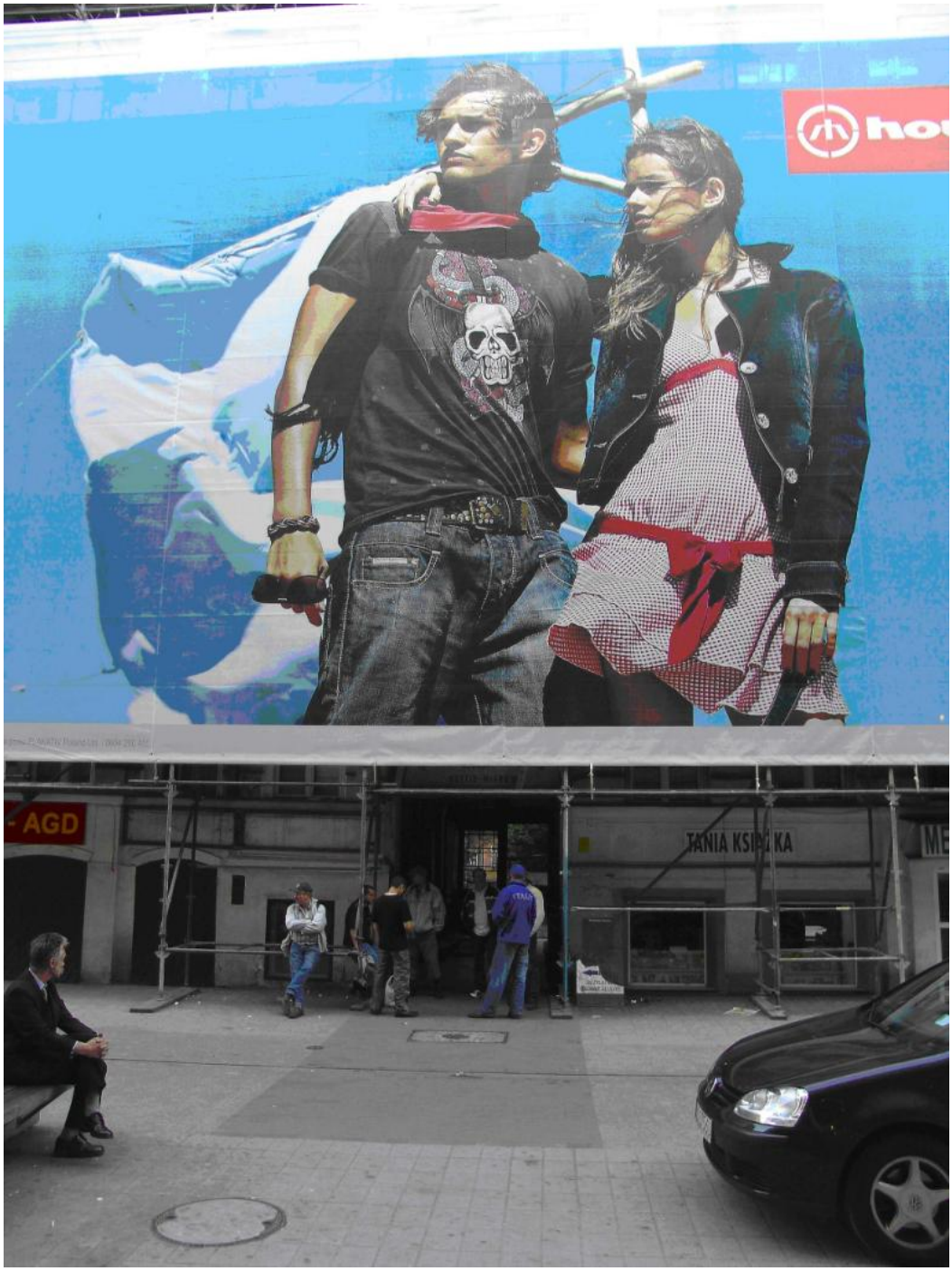

Figure 11. Whose is Półwiejska Street?

procession of new lifestyles in the renovated districts, poor populations are pushed away from the public spaces to their homes. In the second phase, they cannot afford the rising rents, forcing them to leave their homes and move from the city centre. In a practical sense, this mode of urban renewal, which has become common in American cities, is understood here as an application of the "user pays" philosophy to urban space and public services, and as a practice of appropriation of the city by business and middle classes.

In many aspects the socio-spatial transformation of Półwiejska Street fits into the above-mentioned analysis of urban renewal. Furthermore, urban change in Poznań might seem to be one of the leading examples of so-called big-investment driven processes of gentrification. It was in fact the construction of the shopping and cultural centre which stimulated the further spatial changes. Both rents and the price of services in the area are significantly higher than five years ago, and the street is populated by more powerful consumers. There is also, however, a major problem with describing this socio-spatial transformation as gentrification: the middle classes are not interested in living in Półwiejska Street. Why? There are at least four points which call into doubt the description of the process as gentrification.

First of all, urban trends in Poland are fifty years behind the trends which brought the drive for the inner city to America in the 1980s. The spatial mentality of postcommunist societies seems to be similar to the postwar mentality in America. After many years of the domination of multifamily housing units, Poles do not aspire to move into old historic tenement houses in the centre, but rather to live in detached houses with gardens on the outskirts of a big city (Andrusz, Harloe, and Szelenyi 1996; Lorens 2005; Parysek 2005). Second, there is no cultural consumption ethos among the Polish middle classes. The city centre with its clubs, bars, galleries, and theatres attracts mostly single and retired people who want to have fun in public spaces. Polish society is still family- and house-oriented. Third, the drive for the inner city usually manifests most strongly in culturally rich metropolitan areas inhabited by multinational corporate personnel, but Poznań not only does not have corporate headquarters, but also has the poorest cultural infrastructure and nightlife of the larger Polish cities (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2007; Podemski and Ziółkowski 2004; Ziółkowski 2001). Fourth, Półwiejska

Figure 12. “Erotic dreams”

Street itself is not a place which is likely to attract the middle classes. Rather, it is a provincial street surrounded by ordinary and unimpressive nineteenth-century architecture, which through a historical paradox has recently become one of the most important spaces in the city. Although it is very attractive to consumers and tourists, it is not likely to seduce potential middle-class inhabitants.

The local paradox: evictions without gentrification

Despite the unwillingness of the middle classes to move to Półwiejska Street, the old inhabitants express strong fear of eviction. Rents are constantly rising; the structure of local commerce has changed. This commerce is addressed to young yuppie consumers, while most inhabitants are old and poor. The research conducted shows that the

majority of them already have problems in affording rent, or expect to face this difficulty in the near future. In personal statements they express feelings of exclusion and marginalization. The street is no longer theirs. The everyday world in which they used to live is rapidly disappearing. Public space has been increasingly colonized by young visitors who have brought a different rhythm and ambience to the place.

The conflict being fought between Półwiejska's inhabitants and consumers over the symbolic appropriation of space is not the most important one. Far more crucial are the growing conflicts between the inhabitants and the owners. The landlords are simply not interested in leasing the flats to them any more. Although the middle classes are not eager to move to Półwiejska Street, the landlords, seduced by promises of future gains, would like to get rid of the troublesome old tenants. They usually hope to sell the parcels for a high profit, or convert them into offices or hotels. Although such imaginations about the future development of the street might often sound unrealistic, the landlords are ready to take the risk of not having tenants or buyers for the flats. In the worst case, they could rent the apartments temporarily to students, which would generate higher income and eliminate potential problems with evictions in the future.

Conclusions

The socio-spatial transformations of Półwiejska Street differ significantly from the processes described by the revitalization and gentrification theorists. Although the spatial changes fit both of the concepts, their current social implications and future directions are left unclear. The discourses of revitalization and gentrification cannot allow complete interpretation of the concrete processes of urban change; however, they are very important in shaping the political drives of social change. These concepts, which are rooted in various socio-cultural demands shaped in an era of postindustrial confusion and uncertainty about urban management, are important not only for the multidimensional analysis of urban life, but also in shaping the actions of practitioners in space. They are significant also as a part of today's urban imagery, referring as they do to our mental or cognitive mappings of urban reality, and to the interpretative grids with which we think about places, spaces, and the communities we live in.

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Regained Cities. The Renewal of Postgarrison Towns in Poland

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Abstract. This article concerns the settlement of postgarrison towns in western and northern Poland, focusing on three such settlements: Legnica, Kęszyca Leśna, and Podczele. There were many Soviet military bases in Poland that came into being after the Second World War, and which formed part of the Soviet hegemony system in central Europe. These bases were self-reliant, and around some of them small towns were established for Russian personnel and their families. After the collapse of communism, Soviet troops were compelled to withdraw. Deserted cities were settled by Polish inhabitants, who had to establish their own towns from scratch.

1.1. Historical Outline

The Soviet army bases in Poland were a part of the Northern Group of Forces. Soviet garrisons came into being quite early, in June 1945 – just after the end of the Second World War. The presence of these troops was for Poland a clear loss of sovereignty, and the Russian side did not attempt keep up any appearances. In July 1945, the Russians choose Legnica as their main headquarters for the Northern Group of Forces. This was conscious choice, because Legnica (earlier known as the German city of Leignitz) had been planned to be a fortress city. Army buildings and military facilities were strategically built along the all routes into city. Both urban planning and architecture were subordinated to military function.

Legnica was not destroyed during the military offensive in 1945. The city was taken untouched by destruction, and with all the infrastructure in excellent condition – including factories, workshops, the water delivery system, the city facilities, etc. The main damage was caused by the Russians just after war, including the burning of the old city and castle in May 1945. These arsons were called "victory torches" by the Russians, who began the burning on May 1, Workers' Day, and on May 9, Victory Day in Eastern Europe.

Overall, the Soviet Army had fifty-nine garrisons in Poland, referred to as the Northern Group of Soviet Forces in Poland (*Północna Grupa Wojsk Radzieckich w Polsce*). During 1945 and later, the Soviets mainly took previously German garrison towns in western and northern Poland, on account of their well preserved military infrastructure, often including barracks, exercise areas, workshops, airfields, and hangars. Another important factor was the fact that this region was near to the Soviet bases in the German Democratic Republic, which also quartered Soviet troops.

Under international law the bases were considered exterritorial areas, and so were exempt from Polish jurisdiction and excluded from Polish oversight.

Poland was additionally obliged to maintain some elements of the infrastructure used by the Soviet troops, such as routes, bridges, train tracks, and so on. These independent garrisons were called by the

Russian acronym ZATOs, for "closed administrative-territorial units."[1] Closed cities were known to exist in the Soviet Union, kept secret because of their connection to intelligence services, the military, space technology, or nuclear and military industry.

Most of the Soviet garrison towns in Poland passed into Polish management only in 1992.[2] On the date of the handover, the territory of Poland increased by 70,500 hectares. Some of these postgarrison towns, such as Pstrąże, were not permitted to transform into civil settlements. The town of Pstrąże – previously known by the German name of Neuhammer, and later Pstransee – was a garrison town that had been occupied by the Russians in 1945 and then isolated by the destruction of the only bridge leading to the town. After that, Pstrąże became the largest closed Russian garrison town in Poland, serving ten thousand soldiers and their families. In the 1990s, it was reacquired by the Polish army, but was not transformed into civil town, and remains an urban training ground for Polish troops.

The town of Borne Sulinowo is the best known of such postgarrison towns in Poland. It has been well described and thoroughly researched, so I would like to focus on less known towns, such as Kęszyca Leśna and Podczele.[3] Both of these postgarrison towns are within the scope of the Institute for Western Affairs' research activity.

Kęszyca Leśna lies in western Poland, near the town of Międzyrzecz. In the 1930s it was a German troop base. After 1945 it was occupied by Soviet troops, who enlarged the base area so that it became a settlement with cinema, shops, sport facilities, and a few new apartment buildings in the characteristic Soviet style. However, the base was well guarded, and surrounded by vast pine forests.

Podczele is situated near the Polish health resort of Kołobrzeg, on the Baltic Sea. Nowadays Podczele is formally a part of Kołobrzeg, although it lies ten kilometres from the city outskirts, and lacks a real

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[1] *Zakrytyje administrativno-territorial'nyje obrazovanija*.

[2] The garrison in Nowa Sól was the first to be left by Russian troops, in March 1991 (Północna Grupa Wojsk Radzieckich w Polsce, Kalendarium wyjazdu wojsk radzieckich z Polski).

[3] Podczele lies within the formal borders of the city of Kołobrzeg, and is also known under the names Bagicz and Bagicz-Podczele.

connection to it. Before 1992 it was a completely isolated garrison with an airfield, surrounded by woods and moors, and with access to the sea. This garrison town was built and developed as a German airbase between 1935 and 1945. After the Second World War, Podczele became a Russian airbase, quartering fighter and helicopter squadrons. Beside its various other military functions, Podczele had an additional purpose – to control the airspace above the Baltic Sea, and particularly to intercept Eastern Bloc planes heading for the Danish island of Bornholm or the Swedish coast.[4] The Russians left the garrison on May 28, 1992 (Północna Grupa Wojsk Radzieckich w Polsce). In 2002, a local newspaper noted on that date the tenth anniversary of "the annexation of Podczele to Poland" (Dziemba 2002).

1.2. Specification and Settlement Process

Former garrison towns were differentiated from other towns by specific features:

1. For years they were closed areas, secret and isolated. As military bases, they were external territories, excluded from local jurisdiction.

2. Garrison towns were settled by foreigners (with regard to the surrounding region). In those towns lived not only soldiers, but also staff, family members, and others; and that – in conjunction with the isolation factor – established a specific local community.

3. When, in accordance with bilateral treaties, the Soviet personnel of the garrisons were expelled and transferred to the former Soviet Union, the result was a complete exchange of the entire community. There was no mutual social contact; one group of inhabitants simply replaced the previous group. Newcomers found bare buildings, empty flats, left-behind artefacts, symbols, and remains of the previous "civilization." Contact with the previous population was indirect, through the medium of the town's infrastructure and symbols.

4. Garrison towns did not come into being as result of long historical processes. These are relatively young towns, built from the begin-

[4] This function became more important after 1953, when a few Polish fighters managed to escape to Bornholm.

ning in order to be military bases. In effect their infrastructure, spatial order, city landscape, etc., were unfamiliar to new settlers because they did not look like traditionally formed towns. Contrary to normal settlements, postgarrison towns lacked what would traditionally be regarded as a centre in the form of a market square with town hall and concentric streets; and there were no churches towers either. They basically lacked the elements of the urban landscape that are familiar in the European tradition.

Former garrison towns were not suitable for immediate settlement. Usually these towns were left in a terrible condition, with their infrastructure demolished and with soil polluted by oil, gasoline, and other pollutants. In addition there was the threat of explosives. In 1995, the Polish government established a Strategic Government Programme to redevelop the properties that the Russian forces left behind. This programme was aimed at assisting all the land recovery processes using budget subsidies. Since 2001, a further programme has been in operation for recovering and additionally detoxifying terrain polluted by Russian forces.

Robert Park, cofounder of the Chicago School of sociology, attached importance to homogeneous societies, which in his opinion acted as a catalyst for harmonic social or neighbourhood interactions (Kotus 2005). Such homogeneity becomes established as a result of the long-lasting inhabitation of the place by its population, the development of later generations, and the transformation of the space. The creation of similar localities was derived by Park from ecological processes; that is, similar ecological factors are held to exert pressure on given places, and result in similar localities with congenial social profiles.

In case of postgarrison towns there is the question of whether there was ever a chance to shape such a similar relationship in the early stages of settlement. It should be remembered that those localities were established relatively quickly and artificially, without the very long-lasting processes typical in the formation of historically established human settlements. In postgarrison towns, settlers arrived over a short period of time from various parts of Poland and became neighbours. This could lead to social tensions and a variety of resulting processes, such as conflict or cooperation.

Also worth examining is the divide between monofunctional and multifunctional settlements; Postmilitary towns are a special case because they are monofunctional in both phases of their development. From the beginning they were planned and built to be first and foremost military bases, though with an extended part for civilian inhabitants, possibly including shops, kindergartens, schools and the like. Despite that civilian part, the military function was primary. Yet when postmilitary bases had been transformed to civilian settlements, it might be expected that they would in a short time develop into fully operational multifunctional towns; but this did not occur in any of the postgarrison settlements. In this respect, the particular towns differ from one another.

Kęszyca Leśna is, from a formal or legal point of view, a rural settlement. Yet there is no evidence of village life present:

– there are neither farmers nor agricultural terrain.

– the town has neither the elements of a rural society, nor a rural style of life.

– the architecture is also atypical for a rural region – for example, postmilitary barracks adapted as apartment buildings.

– the structure of the property is also atypical for the countryside: some flats belongs to municipal housing cooperatives.

– there are two main social stratas: people who work outside of the settlement and pensioners. Such a structure is more typical of a suburban area than of a rural area. In addition there is also a third group – part-time inhabitants, who have flats there but spend only vacation time in the area.

Kęszyca Leśna is essentially a monofunctional settlement, performing a mere handful of roles: It acts as a dormitory town for nearby Międzyrzecz; it also has a recreational role as a resort surrounded by woods and lakes. There is no kindergarten, no school, and no employers.

Podczele is in practice a kind of exclave. Formally, Podczele is a part of the city of Kołobrzeg, but lies ten kilometres from the city's outskirts, and is geographically separated from the main city.

Podczele has its own self-governing body, an estate council (*rada osiedla*), which operates within Kołobrzeg's municipal government. Podczele has limited functionality, and contains a school, shops, a post

office, and a church, but no significant employers beyond the small local businesses.

The previously mentioned **Legnica** represents another type of locality. Russian troops for years occupied a part of the city, contained within Polish Legnica. The Russian part – known as "the Square" or "Little Moscow" – was separated from the Polish part by a well guarded concrete wall. After the Russian departure, this whole Russian "inner city" was incorporated into Legnica itself, without any special conditions or distinctions.

Borne Sulinowo is best known postgarrison town in Poland. This town is the seat of the local government and the locality is multifunctional, though with a limited labour market. In Borne Sulinowo there are schools of different levels, a church and a cemetery, but there is a lack of business opportunities which would guarantee employment for the inhabitants.

All the localities mentioned here, in spite of the different official forms they take, have some common features:

– they have only recently come under Polish jurisdiction.

– they have an atmosphere of historical secrecy and special status.

– they are geographically isolated (with the exception of the formerly Russian part of Legnica), far from other localities, surrounded by woods, and far from industrial areas ...

– ... and so they have potential as tourist and recreational areas.

2.1. Growing in Established Space

The main problem which the settlers faced was the problem of transforming the entire urban space. With regard to their former military functions, those localities were strictly monofunctional, that is, subordinated to the army. Because of that, the first inhabitants had to deal with rebuilding the full functionality of the former bases. This ran in three stages (see figure 1):

(a) spatial and architectural solutions, though functional from the military point of view (figure 1, "Function")...

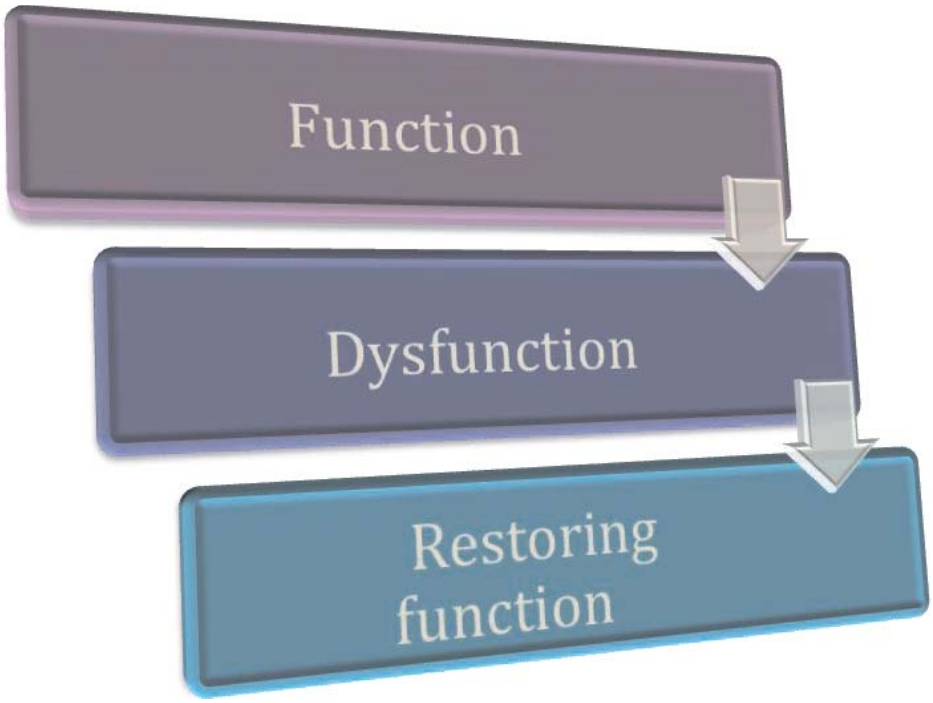

Figure 1. Sequence of stages

(b) ... were identified as dysfunctional from the civilian settlers' point of view (figure 1, "Dysfunction")...

(c) ... so the settlers made an effort to restore full functionality (figure 1, "Restoring function").

One can consider the story of the main entrance to Podczele as example of such a sequence.

Initial functional stage: There was a well guarded gate with guardhouse and two bridge systems. The bridges maintained a route into the garrison town through the moors. Such a system helped the Russians to better keep the garrison town isolated from the Polish surroundings. The whole garrison town area was surrounded by a concrete wall, supplemented with barbed wire.

Dysfunctional stage: For the Polish civilian inhabitants, this security system was quite burdensome – this was the only route into the town.

Restoring function stage: The entrance was rebuilt, the guardhouses were removed, and the route was enlarged, subsequently becoming the main communication artery leading to the town.

Figure 2. Podczele. Three layers of settlement can be seen: in the foreground, a new Polish apartment block is visible; behind that, a typical Soviet concrete block; and in the distant background, a German building.

Similarly, the location of the settlement can be considered from the same three points of view.

Initial functional stage: Isolation was a highly desirable feature from the military point of view. It was suitable for keeping garrison towns secret. It is worth mentioning that these localities were removed from maps and tourist guides. For example, Borne Sulinowo – although inhabited by about fifteen thousand Russians – was completely removed from canoe guidebooks, and its location marked as "an inhospitable, marshy lake shore, unsuitable for camping."

Dysfunctional stage: Isolation meant obstacles to transportation, and some psychological problems also occurred; to the initial civilian settlers, the town seemed like a truly isolated and forgotten place. For

Figure 3. An everyday paradox: people in their leisure time walking toward the beach across a dangerous area. The warning on the sign reads, ”Dangerous area. Entering may be hazardous to health.”

example, during sociological research in Kęszyca Leśna, local authorities described problems with young families who did not want to live in the postgarrison town because they felt isolated and “far from anything.”

Restoring function stage: All these postgarrison towns took advantage of their isolated location, and turned it into a tourist attraction.

One can see a specific side effect that arises from these localities – a kind of dualism: On one hand there are bucolic circumstances, such as the sea, lakes, woods, and a peaceful atmosphere. Postgarrison localities are advertised as ideal places for relaxation. On the other hand, there is a constant threat from explosives and pollution. The landscape is filled with abandoned military installations, like bunkers and hangars.

Figure 4. A historical mélange in Borne Sulinowo: a building stylized as a guardhouse, but commemorating both German and Soviet armies. It is noteworthy that the German soldier, despite the carved date, comes from the First World War era. A Wehrmacht soldier might be considered neo-Nazi propaganda. [Photo credit: Z. Mazur]

2.2. Technoscape

I use term "technoscape," following John Urry, as an abbreviation for "technical landscape." Some authors add "posthuman technoscape," but I will not go so far.

Here "technoscape" means the remains of a prior civilization – the technological landscape left behind by those who were here before us.

The first months after the resettlement of the former military bases was a time of euphoric removal and destruction of the entire previous technoscape, which was considered the remains of the Soviet occupation. For this reason, many facilities were demolished with full social licence.

But after the passage of some time, the technoscape became more and more often considered to be a kind of heritage which deserved to be preserved.

Figure 5. Podczele technoscape: old Russian radios found in a base.

2.3. Adaptation of the Symbolic Sphere

The sociologist Florian Zieliński took notice of the so-called urban ideological vesture – namely, memorials, monuments, and street names. This comparison is reasonable, because the city can under some circumstances change its "vesture" – that is, the city can change its whole symbolic matrix, if the situation warrants it (Zieliński 2005).

In case of the three postgarrison towns described here, we deal with a triple change of "ideological vesture." First there was saturation with German military features, when the garrison towns were built. Second, there was the exchange of German for Soviet garrisons in 1945, and another vesture change which brought in Soviet symbols. The Russians created their own symbolic reality in these garrisons, they built up own memorials, and they painted their own murals. The third change of vesture ensued during the era of Polonization,

from 1992 onward. Polish settlers built their own chapels and renamed the streets. Especially interesting are the street names in Podczele, because they refer to names of the cities which were lost by Poland after 1945. Thus the street names commemorate Polish cities which were incorporated into the Soviet Union.

2.4. Symbolic Reality

Here we investigate how a single object in Podczele completely changed its symbolic vesture over time.

As commented on previously, postgarrison towns looked strange and hostile to people who were accustomed to traditionally formed cities.

Figure 6. A neopagan Germanic “algiz” rune, with oak leaves. This rune was carved by Germans at the time when the garrison belonged to the German Luftwaffe. Its presence is related to Germanic symbolism, which was reused by the National Socialist regime in the Third Reich. Semantically, the sign would have been unintelligible to those not affiliated with Nazi ideology, although that entire semantic sphere was officially supported by German regime. The oak leaves function in Germanic symbolism as a sign of strength.

Figure 7. A Soviet mural glorifying the Soviet air forces, found in the same building as the carvings in figure 6, but from the time of Russian management. The mural presents a heroic pilot and his war machine, marked with red star – a typical example of the symbolism of the Soviet Army and its hero cult. The Soviet Union was a totalitarian regime, so the symbolism used in social language was aimed at mass mobilization. This mural also carried another message – it illustrated a desirable career path.

New landscape needed to be appropriated. Because of the obligatory state-imposed atheism in the Soviet Union, the Russian-controlled garrison towns entirely lacked chapels, crosses, and churches. Even their graveyards were different from those familiar in Christian culture. For this reason, cult restitution was one of the first social requirements in the new towns.

The role of the religious cult in spatial studies is often underestimated, but quite important, especially in Poland. Three approaches to this aspect can be distinguished (Hervieu-Leger 2002):

Figure 8. The same building, but as a Polish church for the local society. When the town was left by the Russians, Polish settlers adapted this building as a church. Although the crucifix is now in the most prominent position, the Soviet mural was not destroyed, but rather intentionally renovated. This sequence of three photographs presents the complete exchange of the symbolic vesture of the same building. It is noteworthy that previous symbols were not removed or destroyed, but rather new ones were added, and so all the symbolic layers remain individually stratified.

– The territorial modalities of the communalization of religion: this approach considers how the religious community refers to the space in which it was established.

– The geopolitics of the religion: this approach refers more to the hard aspects, such as religious conquest and the power balance between religious groups.

– The religious symbolizations of the space: One can ask, how religious activity refers to the landscape, or how it comprises the relationship between the religious world and the shape of the space.

Hervieu-Leger also distinguished "church-type communalization," especially in Catholic countries. This refers to the "parish civilization," to the way that the Catholic parish embodies part of the administrative form in Catholic localities. In case of the above-mentioned postgarrison towns, things followed the "parish civilization" pattern. Because of the lack of administrative power, and the kind of deprivation present locally, the parish in part took over some of the process of local self-governing. Here churches or chapels are not just places for accessing the spiritual mystery, but also centres for local activity.

Symbolic accustomization can proceed by many means. It is especially visible in examples of monuments. In Kęszyca Leśna, the Russians left a monument which is both monumental and controversial in its aesthetics. It shows a Russian signaller pulling cables through a front line. Until the 1990s, there was also a relief showing a battlefield filled with tanks, planes, and explosions, but with the passage of time all these details were painted over. The monument is regularly renovated by local society, but with every renovation the military significance becomes more blurred. Starting from a depiction of a Soviet Army soldier, the monument was turned into a commemoration of a solider of an unspecified army. A chronicle of the settlement was carved onto a marble table, and so the monument came to embody the local symbolic vesture. It has even been incorporated into Roman Catholic rituals – during Corpus Christi, the monument serves as one of the few Catholic altars.

In 2007, the Polish government passed an act concerning Soviet monuments in Poland. According to that document, such monuments are to be relocated and eventually destroyed. In Kęszyca Leśna this prospect has united the locality, and people were ready to defend "their" monument. Local adolescents intended to put up some guards "just in case" (Brożek 2007).

In Podczele, the Russians had left a monument to Lenin, but it was decapitated by Poles. In a local hotel, volunteers spontaneously created a kind of amateur museum, based on a random collection of objects such as books, clothes, and specifically Soviet ornamentation that represented the long-lasting Soviet stay in the base, and which also contained some German exhibits.

Figure 9. The Soviet monument in Kęszyca Leśna. As an example of a typical Soviet monument declaring the glory of the Soviet Army, it was undoubtedly an important point on the symbolic map of the Russian garrison town.

Localities in postgarrison towns face many obstacles, which often create problems in the formation of the community bond. For example, in Kęszyca Leśna an ill-considered decision to build a bitumen factory was made. Because of the difficult production process involved, such a plan usually raises the voices of dissatisfied inhabitants.[5] However, in Kęszyca Leśna that did not happen. One can suppose that presence of social movements comes only after social consciousness. There are a few examples, such as NIMBY ("Not In My Back Yard," with its derivatives NIMD, NIMFOS, and others); LULU ("Locally

[5] Such protests have occurred in other Polish towns, including Konstancin, Klęczany, Tenczynek, and Zabagnie. In each of these towns, people established social committees, and demanded research and expert advice.

Figure 10. The same monument, ten years after the Russian departure. It is an irony of history that the monument of an atheistic regime becomes a field altar each Corpus Christi. [Photo credit: Kęszyca Leśna Women's Society].

Unwanted/Undesired Land Use"); and QUIMBY ("Quit Urbanizing In My Back Yard") – typical attitudes in areas where people settle to escape from the cities; they want to live in a beautiful rural area, but at the same time do not want to abandon the city lifestyle.

Such attitudes come to light whenever localities face undesired investment, and they serve as a source for social activities. Yet in Kęszyca Leśna, things did not happen that way. That may show a lack of social engagement, and its sequel, a lack of mature community bond. It is quite possible that because of the high unemployment rate in the region, such anti-investment activity was not socially acceptable.[6]

[6] In the "Farmutil case" which occurred near Piła in Wielkopolska, the most troublesome factory in the region is also the biggest employer. The result is that every act of protest against the factory is repelled by the aggressive inhabitants.

Social support is really crucial in case of neighbourhood and settlement. Such support can be defined as "supportive, interpersonal relations" (Al-Homoud and Tassinary 2004).

There are three main aspects to social support:

– personal (emotional) support;
– instrumental (functional) support;
– informational support.

As one can see, aspects of social support refer more or less to attitude. Personal support helps to break feelings of desolation and to strengthen the feeling of social belonging. According to interviews with the first settlers, personal support was quite strong at the beginning of the settlement, but has weakened over time.

Instrumental support refers to the willingness to engage in cooperative behaviour, like the exchange of tools or services with other neighbours. A change in its incidence has also been seen to occur among postgarrison town populations, decreasing from a high initial rate to weak cooperation.

Informational support is related to the circulation of information, issuing local newspapers, and similar. There was a local newspaper in Podczele, but it has been discontinued.

In the 1990s the huge enthusiasm and hope about making their own place united all the settlers. But as time has gone on, some obstacles have caused stratification. Apart from problems related purely to infrastructure, some social tensions arose: unemployment, low levels of social bonding, and the lack of a clear and comprehensible direction of development. In the case of local labour markets, it very quickly became obvious that isolation – which had seems to promise bucolic circumstances for the settlement – ensures that such localities are far from employers.

There is no investment in Borne Sulinowo or Kęszyca Leśna, and commuting takes a significant part of the domestic budget. In addition, Borne Sulinowo lies in a region of high unemployment, so one must travel really far from the town to find a job; adjacent towns are insufficient to fill the gap in the local labour market.

3.1. The Future

The main challenge is to preserve future prospects for local society. Every one of the discussed locations has similar problems:

1. A lack of local political subjectivity: although these postgarrison towns are quite different from other settlements, as localities they have no distinct status. Except in the case of Borne Sulinowo, none of the postgarrison localities has its own administration, although they are positioned far from any other towns. Flats in Kęszyca Leśna are just a part of the house administration system in the larger town of Międzyrzecz, and all the infrastructural costs are the same as, or higher than, in the bigger town – yet Kęszyca Leśna has no employment prospects.

Podczele, with an approximate population of five thousand, is a district of Kołobrzeg – a town with forty-six thousand inhabitants. Yet Podczele lies ten kilometres away from the larger city, and is much more closely connected to adjacent smaller communes. Consequently, it has no chance of being treated as well as others districts within the city. Podczele, as a mere city district, and in spite of its specific needs as a former garrison town, cannot be the subject of European Community aid programmes. During sociological research performed in the town, inhabitants expressed a feeling of deprivation on account of mistaken local government policies.

2. Disastrous and inconsistent settlement policy: in the beginning, in the 1990s, these isolated settlements were intended to be a place for the underclass. The authorities in Kołobrzeg and Międzyrzecz planned to remove "unwanted" social groups from the cities and settle them in these post-Soviet forest garrisons. But such decisions were reversed halfway, at a stage when some houses had already been settled by such people. The strategy was changed, and the rest of the houses were earmarked for tourist and dormitory purposes. This was a crucial failing. The underclass inhabitants had demolished some buildings, and became a source of problems for the other inhabitants – stealing and engaging in antisocial behaviour. Other inhabitants, on account of such troublesome neighbourhoods, refused to settle in postgarrison towns, just as tourists did not want to spend vacations there. The main shortcoming was the lack of consistency which led to an unacceptable mixing of functions. The same settlement was to be a city dormitory, a tourist resort, and

Figure 11. Graffiti in Kęszyca Leśna: “No prospects.”

a kind of underclass ghetto. In effect it became none of these three, although those first two intentions did not interfere with each other.

3. Limited functionality: at beginning of their settlement, it had been acceptable that the postgarrison towns were monofunctional. But as time passed, successive local authorities came up with no plans for further development. Urban processes were halted halfway. The towns may have limited functionality: first of all as dormitories for other towns; and they provide some basic shopping facilities. But at the same time, there are no employers, a limited range of school levels (such as having a primary school, but no kindergarten), and no further subsidies.

There is in Poland one postgarrison town, which was inhabited so unsuccessfully that it was nearly destroyed. During the Russians’ stay, Kłomino had a population estimated at as many as fifteen to twenty-five thousand inhabitants, consisting of Russian soldiers, personnel, staff, and

Fig. 12 Kłomino, northern Poland: a desolated city.

Figure 13. Deserted flat complex in Kłomino.

Figure 14. Empty space in Kłomino: as recently as 1991, this was a town with up to 25,000 inhabitants.

families.[7] After the Russians left, Kłomino was never inhabited on such a scale again. The whole town fell into ruins, and nowadays only about forty or fifty people live there; the infrastructure decays further with each passing year. It is a rare example of the decay of an entire city.

3.2. The Social Challenge

Social interactions in postgarrison towns have passed through two stages:[8]

1. At the beginning of the settlement process, an atmosphere of enthusiasm was typical; there was a very high level of cooperation, and

[7] Information about the Russian population varies, because the base had secret status, and no information was conveyed to Poles.

[8] According to interviews conducted in Podczele and Kęszyca Leśna.

the inhabitants willingly helped each other; sometimes there was common rebuilding of houses.

2. When the first stage of settlement had ended and the towns had been established, the readiness to cooperate drastically decreased, and individualism prevailed.

Currently a third stage is arising, as some local opinion makers – priests, hotel owners, local councillors, village leaders – try to unite the inhabitants around common projects such as the anniversary of settlement. They attempt to establish a common "founding myth," from which community feeling might spring.

Specific stratification might be an explanation. There are three main groups of inhabitants: those who live in postgarrison towns but work and study outside of the locality; pensioners who live in the settlement, but do not participate in local activity; and weekend inhabitants, owners of flats who only visit the towns on weekends or in summer – and they do not want to participate in the overall infrastructure costs, because they use the flats for only a part of the year. These three groups have little or no common ground.

All of the above-mentioned issues have prevented the processes of urbanization and social development from completing. There is also a rare opportunity for sociologists to grasp such local communities in the act of developing. The main question which comes to mind is, whether or not new generations – people who have been born or have grown up in postgarrison towns – will ensure the demographic future. Nowadays there is still only one generation which has chosen these postgarrison town as a living place, but the key question is whether young people will continue to stay in these towns, even if it becomes economically unprofitable.

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Declining Cities/Developing Cities: Polish and German Perspectives
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Postcommunist Citizenship? A Generational View of Social Microactivism Based on Surveys Conducted in Poznań

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Abstract. The problem of civil activism is analysed in the context of the evolution of central European civil society. This evolution can be described as a cyclic process of loss and gain of social identity. Such a way of tackling the problem of citizenship seems to contrast the central European view of civil society – as a subjectivity gained through mass activism of a revolutionary character – with a view that is common in Western democracies (Marshall 1992). Contemporary sociological research in Poland shows that a "social non-movement" is one of the consequences of the transformation project that has been going on for several years. To describe: this social non -movement is to be understood as a crisis of cooperation and a proliferation of individualistic strategies, together with lack of trust, not only in relations between individuals, but also in relations toward most social institutions. This phenomenon can also be clearly seen at a "microsocial" level in neighbourly relations, and in the attitude toward collectively consumed goods. The problem seems to be far-reaching, and should be seen from a historical perspective. We suggest three types of cultural patterns which belong to the past, but which still direct people's behaviour.

These behavioral patterns we describe are found to vary with the age of the respondents, which may indicate a change in perception of social microactivism over the last few years. The elements of a suggested diagnosis will be illustrated with the results of quantitative and qualitative research projects which were carried out among the citizens of Poznań in 2003 and 2006. We show several results from these projects.

Theoretical Frame of Analysis

The issue of social activity seems to be one that differentiates historically distinct societies. This thesis refers to some variant of historical sociology and carries a number of metatheoretical assumptions – for example, the assumption that societies develop as a consequence of the influence of some inner factors. However, it is obvious from the point of view accepted here that the developmental model of central Europe deserves, as a specific and separate space of societal modernization, specific interpretations. The term *postcommunism* is understood as a type of order that is characterized by some ontological autonomy which can be a subject of historical analysis. How far these differences go, and where they come from, are the main questions of investigators of Polish civil society.

Historical Assumptions of Central European Activism

In the point of view accepted here, we refer to the concept of *longue durée* postulated by Fernand Braudel (Braudel 1999, 152ff.). We can indicate three sources of the specific character of "mitteleuropean social activism." The first refers to the model of growing differences between the eastern and the western parts of Europe which was outlined by, among others, Immanuel Wallerstein (1988). The main content of this model is related to the historical processes of society-building, and involves considerations connected with the process of "world system" development from the sixteenth century onward.[1]

The second source is connected to the development of a "national community" in the modern sense, which became real when the political sovereignty of central European countries was regained after the First World War.

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[1] According to Wallerstein (1988, 89-106), the factors which decide on position in the world system are geographical discoveries and the tendencies toward specialization in production that results from them. In addition, contrary to Wallerstein's interpretation, certain observations of various inner factors which are understood to be elements of accumulating specificity are also decisive (Brzechczyn 1998).

The third source is related to a regional variant of egalitarianization and "communitization" which was a part of the project of "real socialism." In looking for the conceptual basis of the above viewpoint, it is worth taking as a starting point the narration of Thomas H. Marshall (Marshall and Bottomore 1992, 8), who in the 1950s indicated three main stages of the development of the concept of citizenship in the West.

The first stage – **civil citizenship** – is connected with the acknowledgement of individual rights on the basis of a natural law. In the central European experience, examples of civil citizenship occur in regional political solutions such as the so-called Nobles' Democracy in the First Polish Republic during the eighteenth century. This stage covers one of the earliest, prerevolutionary ways to find a formula to change a traditional and hierarchical society into a modern national community (in French, *le peuple*).

The second stage – **political citizenship** – refers to the acknowledgement and gradual propagation of political rights. In the central European context, this stage referred to the temporary development of a model of social participation based mainly on an attitude toward the so-called national issue. The crux of this tactic of politicization involves the consequences which arise from the weakening of the economic position of the landed aristocracy and nobility, who until then had been culturally predominant. Such consequences influenced the development of the central European public sphere among developing towns with diverse ethnic structures and significant social conflict.

The third stage – **social citizenship** – refers, according to Marshall, to the concept of the *welfare state*. In central Europe, social citizenship meant the realization of a communist utopia as a result of the political consequences of the Second World War. However, both "communism" (1949-55) and later "real socialism" (1956-1989) sanctioned and consolidated far-reaching changes in social structure, and changed Polish society from a peasant society into an industrial society. Special importance is attached to towns, which function as centres of industry and places of mass social advancement. This fact indicates that there are some aspects of "rusticity" in the model of town life, especially in those towns where the process of urbanization proceeded very quickly.

In our opinion the model of "socialistic social activism," which arose during the Polish People's Republic (1946-89), and which of course made reference to historical sources, seems of great importance. Its traces are visible in the materials we gathered during our research, and elsewhere.

All three types of historic considerations can be thought of as overlapping but distinct features which are each specific cultural sources of modern forms of central European activism. It seems possible to treat such historical types of "civic activism" in general as a "toolkit" used to build biographies of particular activists. This is to say that people's typical actions – and their ways of thinking – reflect what is inherit from the past (as cultural inheritance), as well as "habits of the heart" or the atmosphere of the epoch (as the impact of the present). In a particular era, a particular action may be more, or less, common. More importantly, this variation could be measured.

What is social activism? Let us try to operationalize this term to a quantitative point of view, by looking at the result of the quantitative research (2004 data).[2]

When we asked respondents the open question, "What does 'being socially active' mean to you?" they answered in three ways:

1. Most frequently, being socially active meant "being active for society," but "society" in this sense should be understand as something closer to the local community, than to general society in the political sense (44.06%) what will be discussed later.

2. "Doing something for others," a response close in meaning to "doing social work" (35.62%).

3. "Working for an organization" (34.30%).

When we suggested possible answers to the same question, the most common answer was "taking part in formal deliberation," to which 86% of respondents answered "yes, I think so." This next most common answers were "signing petitions" addressed to government or local authorities (85%), and "responding when somebody needs help" (81%). Significantly less often did respondents consider that "being active"

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[2] We interviewed 401 inhabitants of Poznań, selected by quota sample. The basic criteria for selection were sex, age, and city district. Some problems were found in achieving a representative sample. This can be seen in table 2.

Table 1. *Selected answers to the question, "What does 'being socially active' mean to you?"*

Somebody is socially active, when they:	Yes, I think so*	I don't know	I don't think so*	%
take part in formal deliberations (formal meetings)	86%	6.5%	7.5%	100%
sign petitions addressed to government or local authorities	85%	6.5%	8.5%	100%
respond when somebody needs help	81.6%	7.5%	10.9%	100%
give money to those who need help (participate in remedial charity action)	76.5%	10.5%	13%	100%
help neighbours	74%	13%	13%	100%
run as candidates for local or national power	71.7%	12.3%	16%	100%
participate in democratic elections	68.5%	9%	22.5%	100%
care about local environs	56.5%	15%	28.5%	100%
publicly present their own opinion on various subjects	52%	20%	28%	100%
participate in a political party	47%	15%	38%	100%
take part in discussions between neighbours	40.6%	21%	38.4%	100%
have a positive attitude toward the institutions of state democracy	33.4%	22%	44.6%	100%
regularly go to church	22.5%	16.5%	61%	100%

* These heading summarize the responses "I definitely agree" and "I rather agree" on one hand, and "I definitely disagree" and "I rather disagree" on the other.

means publicly discussing different topics relevant to society (52%), or – surprisingly – "being involved in political parties" (47%). One in three respondents agree that "being active" means "having a positive attitude and orientation toward the institutions of state democracy'' (the Sejm, the Senat and the President). Maybe the most significant aspect for us is the attitude to "political parties." We can diagnose that Polish people don't trust politics, although it may reflect something more basic.

In our investigation, the most important point is the correlation between age and attitudes toward being active. It should be emphasized

that there are correlations between the age of the respondent and their way of answering the question, "What does 'being socially active' mean to you?" In particular, younger respondents more often indicated formal affiliation then older respondents. For older people, being active more often meant being personally helpful to others, or to society in general. Let us now examine how people in different age groups answered the question, "Is participation in political parties a form of social activity?" Comparing the oldest and the youngest respondents, we see a significant difference: young respondents seem to agree that participating in political party is kind of social activism.

Table 2. *"Is participation in political parties a form of social activity?" (by cohort)*

Is participation in political parties a form of social activity?	Cohort					
	>1985	1972-84	1959-71	1946-58	<1945	Row total
Definitely yes	44.0%	19.4%	27.9%	15.5%	24.4%	22.3%
Rather yes	16.0%	40.8%	25.6%	18.6%	18.9%	25.7%
Neither yes nor no	12.0%	12.6%	7.0%	20.6%	14.4%	14.5%
Rather disagree	20.0%	18.4%	16.3%	27.8%	25.6%	22.6%
Definitely disagree	8.0%	8.7%	23.3%	17.5%	16.7%	14.8%
Column total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In answer to the earlier questions concerning the nature of social activism, older respondents had much less precise opinions, but more often answered that this consisted of "reacting when somebody needs help" (Spearman rho coefficient 0.230), "taking part in deliberation in the neighbourhood" (Spearman rho coefficient 0.204), "caring about the local environs" (Spearman rho coefficient 0.262), and "helping neighbours" (Spearman rho coefficient 0.268).

Generally, the answers of older respondents more often addressed the community – understood as charity work, work for the local environs, and so on. Here, "social activity" means reacting when somebody needs help – we help them because we know them – or ensuring cooperation

between close neighbours. Why does this occur? Perhaps because of feelings of mutuality which arise in shared living spaces.

We can find here the so-called traditional or conservative attitude, which is more common among the older generation, but nevertheless still exist in the younger – see table 3.

Table 3. *Correlation between cohorts and selected answers to the question, "What does 'being socially active' mean to you?"*

Spearman rho coefficient		By cohort	Somebody is socially active when they			
			give money to those who need help	respond when somebody needs help	help neighbours	give money to those who need help (participate in remedial charity action)
By cohort	Correlation	1.000	0.123*	0.230**	0.268**	0.133*
	N	*376*	*370*	*371*	*368*	*370*
give money to those who need help	Correlation	0.123*	1.000	0.331**	0.371**	0.538**
	N	*370*	*375*	*371*	*368*	*371*
respond when somebody needs help	Correlation	0.230**	0.331**	1.000	0.413**	0.371**
	N	*371*	*371*	*376*	*370*	*371*
help neighbours	Correlation	0.268**	0.371**	0.413**	1.000	0.356**
	N	*368*	*368*	*370*	*373*	*368*
give money to those who need help (participate in remedial charity action)	Correlation	0.133*	0.538**	0.371**	0.356**	1.000
	N	*370*	*371*	*371*	*368*	*375*

* Significance level 0.05 (two sided).
** Significance level 0.01 (two sided).

It should be pointed out that there might also be traditional remnants of "peasant culture" within this urban culture. The main generational difference is that the older groups have a much more traditional definition of activism, sometimes even using the premodern sense of activism as work for the local community.

When we investigate the relationship of "civic activism" in relation to social protest (in the legal sense), older people – those above sixty – are much less likely to mention this kind of action than are younger people. This, in our opinion, describes a common generational experience. We can find, for example, correlations between age and the experiences of civil activism, such as "putting up posters," or "taking part in demonstrations."

Answer to enquiries about participation in hunger strikes and sit-down protest reveals a similar situation. Respondents between the ages of 37 and 59 more often answer "Yes I did," when asked if they have ever participated in such action. Asking why they undertook such behaviour shows that it was correlated with the "Solidarity revolution" at the beginning of the 1980s, and the wave of strikes in at the beginning of the period of transformation (1987-90). Generally the 1980s seems to have been a much more fruitful time for gaining experience in opposing the state, or gaining "power" generally, than do the 1990s. This regularity can be clearly seen in the collected qualitative data.

The above-mentioned results serve as an introduction to the qualitative analysis of generational differences in attitude toward "being active" among citizens of Poznań. Now we will describe three important assumptions for such analyses.

Assumptions for Qualitative Generational Analysis

First Assumption

Here we understand "urban activism" as to refer to human actions – based on communication, and on dyadic or triadic social interaction – oriented toward the community. This model of activism is understood in the context of potential spatial contact, which is typical of towns. A feature of this activism in the limited range of action connected with,

for example, places of living, working, and so on, and with solving problems typical of urban life. Ethical motivations, though to varying extents, are one of the most significant types of motivation.

This way of understanding activism does not reach beyond the local community. It is, however, the most widespread such understanding, so it is worth special attention.

Second Assumption

Now we introduce the next stipulation: the model of postcommunist urban activism in a town differs between generations. This means that the above-mentioned "toolkits" are used differently by people from different generations. We can express this by indicating the contrast between generational visions of activism. To this end, we will use the term "exit generation" to refer to people above 60, "peak generation" to refer to those between 29 and 59, and "entry generation" for those under 29.

The crux of these differences concerns two dimensions. First, the "cohort dimension" refers to the perception of differences that result from a respondent's age and individual experiences in growing, maturing, and aging. The second dimension refers to the "generational concept" of Karl Mannheim or Helmut Shelsky: a generation's self-image has historical sources. A similar point of departure can be found in studies of emigrants families, gerontological, and educational studies. For example, from English-language studies of Russian society: "A social portrait of age cohorts in post-Soviet Russia" (Beliaeva 2006), or "The next generation: Pragmatic perfectionists or romantics of consumption" (Lisauskene 2007). The latter describes the cultural consequences of transformation using Piotr Sztomka's sociological interpretation of "trauma." The young generation, in this sense, has a chance of differentiating itself from the older generation, other than simply by age. The empirical question is, "How different are they?"

Third Assumption

The last assumption refers to the perception of a second type of difference – the appearance of a generation in Shelsky's sense – among

people in their twenties. We can verify the hypothesis which refers to the significant generational difference which resulted from the transformation of the system in the 1990s.

What is "activity" in terms of generational perspective?

Exit Generation

Let us start the analysis with the oldest of our three generations. The first noteworthy feature is the respondents' rejection of a mercantile attitude toward social activism: social activism is procommunity action, undertaken out of concern for others' interests. The contents of this activity can be divided into two main areas. The first of these can be described using the most traditional interpretation of "being a citizen" in a conservative, traditional society.

According to one respondent (W54M/66), "... in my opinion social activism means just acting out of concern for others' interests, not asking for money, but simply following human and patriotic principles," and an active person is understood as "... one who desires to act out of concern for others' interests from the bottom of their heart, and who doesn't ask for any money for their action." This understanding arises from being involved in creation of the Solidarity social movement at the beginning of the eighties, and the activity of the sightseeing movement (PTTK, the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Agency).

Another response (W49K/62): "In my opinion, being active means being sensitive, seeing someone as human, whether they are a new-born child or an old person passing away." This is a reflex of the Christian ethic, in the traditional way. Both varieties of "social affiliation" (that is, relations with the political events which occurred from the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies to the "Solidarity" period) involve opposition to the state, and a strongly accented ethical subject. Helping others is a condition of being more human. We can call it the "traditional" or "conservative" type of social affiliation.

The second area we examine in relation to the exit generation's response involves that equation of social activity with action in formal, centralized organizations. We often observe references to certain or-

ganizations that were subordinate to the state. Such references are a widespread regularity, typical of the Polish People's Republic. We can describe such responses as the "substitutive type."[3] An activist is a person who (W50M/75) "... does socially useful work [or work useful to the state]." Such work may refer to biographical experiences from the fifties: "At that time the trade unions created different committees (...) for example ... [a committee concerned with] the lack of bread being baked. They were searching for stores of floor in bakeries, and I participated in those committees," or a later involvement as a juror in court. There are further examples available, such as activism concerning work in labour councils, youth organizations, or the units of the Polish United Workers' Party.

We should add that membership in parties which are supervised by the state can be treated as one of the sources of "civic competence," in the case of at least some of the examined activists. This certainly affects the notion of organized activity.

Peak Generation

Understandings of activity among the peak generation depend mainly on the respondent's profession. Reference to the "missionary" character of actions is rare.

The following response, from a teacher (M/56), may seem to be symptomatic of a certain type of activity: "Social activity is an after-work activity in fields that are not connected to professional work. I think social activism includes all our activities which influence society. So, social activism may include both all our after-work activities, as well as our tasks at work. Of course, it all depends on your profession." Thus, a socially active person is one who "wants to take up various activities connected with society," and the opposite of activity is "... being insensitive to what surrounds us."

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[3] "Substitutive type" in this sense means being a substitute for a natural process such as the "creation" of a social group or civil institution by the state. Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński uses this word to describe the strategy of government under "real socialism" (Wnuk-Lipiński 1991). From another point of view, a "substitutive institution" is one built in opposition to the state, or simply in substitution for the state (Burton 2004).

We can call this type a "professional type." Like the above-mentioned teacher, we can find here several managers of community centres for the elderly and housing-estate administration workers. Here the active focus is on the development of professional activity via new subjects which result from a current situation – perhaps a current necessity – or from an ethical motivation, for example, work for the benefit of poor children (in the case of a teacher), or a work in the administration of a housing estate.

The second type – important in the case of the peak generation – can be called the "community type." The issues are as follows:

(1) on one hand, the activity which benefits society is not considered to necessarily involve putting aside personal interests. So the activity may include drawing a salary. The activity is regarded as a professional activity producing goods that are consumed collectively;

(2) on the other hand, often the same kind of work which a respondent equates with social activity is also as a way of living. In other words, there are a number of strategies involving taking part in works that are undertaken by others, and which include elements of collective action. The choice of strategies always, or almost always, includes constructing an external context which is defined as "social welfare" or "work for the benefit of the others." To repeat, as far as the subtext is concerned, this type of activity includes a collective interest and an individual interest overlapping in some way. Here we may speak about a liberal collective context that appears as a separate sphere from professional work, and as an element of life strategy chosen by the person. A fifty-six-year-old female respondent (W34/K56) describes activity as follows: "[Social activity] simply means taking part in everything you can manage, for the benefits of society and your close and distant relatives. It means helping people solve problems which they can't solve themselves. It means helping the state and individuals. It also means acting to improve things. Sometimes, your help should be unpaid, but sometimes it should be paid, because then the help can be done properly." She added, "As far as I am concerned, there are hardly any personal benefits [to such activity], material or otherwise ... there are no material benefits. What's more, you have to devote your own time. So, it all depends on your ambitions ... That's why I keep at it." The respondent said that she was a milk bar owner – so, not someone professionally connected with administration or local authorities.

Entry Generation

With this generation, we are again considering social activity in the context of affiliation – the perception of activism as operating within the scope of a legal entity. One of the younger respondents, a law student, states, "I think that [social activity] means acting in an organized group, for example, neighbourly communities, political parties, associations, or foundations." Comparing with the substitute participation of institutions we have seen earlier, a difference is that here we are concerning with rank-and-file initiatives. In other words, the difference includes the appearance and development of the third sector in Poland. The above respondent's experiences concerned free services provided within the framework of acquiring professional competence. The formal status is of great importance here. Provision of such services is treated as a component of professional biography, which develops naturally from voluntary work to employment, and which it is especially important in the case of lawyers. We will refer to this as the "voluntary type" of action.

Broadly interpreted, what we are dealing with here is a change of status in social activity, starting from the ethos of activity for the good of our country, through activities performed outside working hours and for the benefit of the community to which we belong, and ending with social activity as a particular stage of professional work.

This process of change can be seen as an element of a linear pattern of modernization, which starting from a communal form, and develops via individual activities, and ends with professional practice that is based on the structures of third sector associations. Yet it is hard to imagine these stages as stages of development of an activist's biography. Instead, we can speak here of a break, rather than a continuity, in the cases of both the exit generation and the peak generation.

It should be emphasized that respondents' answers also include more traditional ways of understanding social activity. These ways refer directly to the substitutive type of action: a twenty-four-year-old respondent (M30/24) replies "To be socially active? It means, well ... when somebody takes part in activities for the benefit of society, and they undertake work that isn't directly connected with their everyday professional responsibilities, study, research, or family duties. And in their spare time outside working hours, they act for others' benefit, for the

benefit of society." We can also observe the inconsistency of opinions and the lack of order in understanding social activity. A twenty-two-year-old female (K31/23) respondent adds, "To be socially active means working for the benefit of others, including people we know – for example helping a neighbour – and strangers, like taking part in charity work and other social actions." Participation in elections is also included.

Finally, we can add that the types of social action that refer to all three generations are those that concern activities resulting from religion and from widely relevant politics. Here the motivations are of a more universal character. However, this kind of activity was of little interest to us, due to its character.

Summary

In general, the phrase "postcommunist microactivism" refers to

(1) the diagnosis of a crisis of social engagement which we have described for the moment as "social non-movement" (Nowak 2005). This crisis concerns the generational structures we have analysed. The research we have conducted leads to the next point;

(2) the collapse of forms of communal activism (in the traditional sense), which results from the period of Solidarity, and previous to that, from the conservative ethics of the intelligentsia of central Europe. A good illustration of this tendency is the quasi-experiment we used in our quantitative research (Nowosielski 2007);

(3) Communal activism is replaced by different forms of activity which we describe as "community type" activity. The status of these types is illustrated by the process of privatization. Activism is an individual choice and individual strategy. We should add that this understanding of activism involves both performing social activity alongside normal professional work, and combining ethical elements, such as helping weaker people, with the pursuit of interests which the subject may regard as being both to his own advantage and also for the benefit of others;

(4) The young generation add to this tendency a formula of voluntary work, which is both (a) treated as a way of helping others, and (b)

an element of the professional portfolio or a part of an individual's curriculum vitae;

(5) A general tendency typical of the postcommunist model of microactivism is (a) an eclectic selection of form and content of contributions, indicating a constant initial stage in the development of the standard of social participation, and (b) an overlap of different forms deriving from separate cultural sources. As far as the youngest generation is concerned, the problem is evidenced by semantic chaos. We can observe here, at the same time, those terms which are typical of a "substitutive" understanding of activity in a monocentric state, and political citizenship – such as participation in an election, or in the work of a political party – and the elements of the model which Thomas Marshall connects with the development of social citizenship in western Europe.

Significantly, the "roles" of microactivism are constantly evolving, and at this moment it seems impossible to find one dominant model. Perhaps this is exactly what we mean by "postcommunism."

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Activization – a Tool for Social Inclusion in the Context of Polish Cities?

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Abstract. This paper describes the link between social inclusion and activization in the urban context. After presenting a theoretical discussion on social exclusion and the possible contribution of activization to fight inequalities, it focuses on describing a community approach toward inclusion and activization. Such an approach aims at emphasizing collective, shared aspects of social problems that affect people's lives, and at helping members of communities to band together using specific programmes designed to solve these problems. Some German and Polish examples of activization programmes and their role in social inclusion will be described. However, it seems that in the context of Polish cities, activization is still underestimated as a tool of social inclusion.

Contemporary cities are the scene of a peculiar struggle – the struggle for the engagement and participation of their residents in the life of their neighbourhoods and districts. The great passive masses who merely wait for changes to happen in their lives are sometimes perceived as only a kind of ballast that prevents urban development. In most cases, the passivity of the residents is connected with their economic, racial, educational, and sometimes political exclusion. Inactivity is often a result of social inequalities, which manifest themselves in an especially strikingly manner in the urban context.

The aim of this paper is to describe a possible approach to fighting social passivity as a part of more complex inclusion programmes. The struggle for social engagement in such an approach is only a part of a broader programme of district or neighbourhood revitalization, which includes improvement of economic status, the rebirth of communities, the development of infrastructure, and so on. First of all, a set of theoretical assumptions on social inequalities, exclusion, and their relation to passivity in the urban context will be discussed. Second, the idea of a community or district approach toward inclusion and activization in the urban context will be introduced. Third, a positive example of a complex programme of inclusion and activization – the German *Soziale Stadt* programme – will be described. Fourth, three parallel Polish programmes will be critically described.

Inequality is an inherent feature of every society that exceeds a basic level of development. In the history of humanity, only the simplest social formations have been characterized by the minimal degree of inequality. Yet the growing differentiation of societies shows that a lack of equality is an immanent feature of every society. Inequality has various sources – Malcolm Hamilton and Maria Hirszowicz (Hamilton and Hirszowicz 1995, 6-7) state that there are three basic features which differentiate individuals and give a basis for social assessment. These are privileges, prestige, and power. Each of these features can be analysed separately, but we should remember that the character of this distinction is mostly analytical. Both social deprivation and privileges usually consist of a scarcity or excess of possibilities in one's hands – the possibility to satisfy one's needs, to evoke social respect, to influence one's life, and so on. In other words, social inequality in one of the dimensions usually entails inequality in other dimensions.

To describe this phenomenon of concentration of life possibilities, sociologists use different categories: deprivation, marginalization, and exclusion. The concept of deprivation, especially relative deprivation, relates to the psychological feelings of an individual who perceives that they possess far less socially desirable goods than other similar people.[1] It seems that the terms "marginalization" and "exclusion" are more useful in the analysis of social inequalities. However, as Wnuk-Lipiński (2005, 271) puts it, these terms are not equivalent: "The idea of marginalization relates more to the location of an individual *at the peripheries* of important parts of public life, while social exclusion is far more sharp and relates to a *lack of the possibility* of taking part in those important parts of public life." Also, "socially excluded people are those who want to participate in the mainstream of social life and in the division of national income – but either they don't know how, or they experience some serious obstacles which they can't independently overcome. Marginalized people are those who sometimes participate and sometimes don't, and their temporary participation can't be transformed, without external help, into more permanent forms of participation in the mainstream of public life" (Wnuk-Lipiński 2005, 272). For such reasons, it seems that for the purposes of this text the term social exclusion is more suitable.

In the cited work, Wnuk-Lipiński emphasizes exclusion from public life and the public sphere, ideas which will be especially important in our further analyses. Of course, we should also keep in mind that there are other meanings and interpretations of this term. Anthony Giddens (2004, 347) proposed a four-dimensional model of social exclusion: the first dimension – the economic – is caused by unemployment; the second dimension (which is in fact a consequence of the first one) is scarcity in the sphere of consumption; the third is political; and the fourth, social – meaning the inability to participate in social networks, and a lack of contact with others. We may complete this list with other sorts of exclusion, such as cultural and spatial exclusion (this latter referring to exclusion from particular spaces, which is visible especially in the case of districts reserved for people with the appropriate social status).

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[1] Relative deprivation is a concept well described in a book edited by John C. Masters and William P. Smith (1987).

Marshall Wolfe (1995, 82) has proposed six other dimensions of exclusion, namely exclusion from

1. earning a livelihood;
2. social services, welfare, and security networks;
3. consumer culture;
4. political choice;
5. the bases of popular organization and solidarity;
6. obtaining an understanding of what is happening to society and to oneself.

Among the features that can be treated as both a stimulus of and a reinforcement of social exclusion are poverty, disability, race, sex, age, and place of residence (Lister 2007, 72-93). These specific characteristics of social exclusion – being handicapped in a few dimensions, combined with the tendency toward gradual accumulation of different social problems – are sometimes said to constitute a "spiral of poverty," and together they make exclusion one of the most important social issues of the contemporary world. It is an issue with which modern society is not able to cope, and yet at the same time is not willing to accept (Bauman 1998, 4-10). Among those social groups that don't experience social exclusion, there is a natural tendency to push aside the irritating sight of the poor. As Bauman (ibid., 12) observes, "Unneeded, unwanted, pushed away ... so where is their place? First of all, as far away as possible, and out of sight. The most important thing is to remove them from the streets and other public places used by the decent citizens of the consumer world. Not to let them to settle in a respectable neighbourhood."

Contemporary urban agglomerations furnish a particular example of such practices. Such places are sometimes described using the metaphor of "divided cities,"[2] which accurately indicates two interconnected issues. The first issue is related to the division or "ramification" of distinct life trajectories of the excluded and other members of society (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 1998, 38). The second issue is related to the fact that the spatial aspect of the urban exclusion is coming more and more into prominence – the poor are becoming concentrated in specific

[2] See the works edited by Richard Scholar (2006), and by Susan Fainstein, Ian Gordon, and Michael Harloe (1992).

places or districts, resulting in ghettoization. Such places are described by colloquial expressions as being "dodgy" or "dangerous" districts, but sociologists call them "enclaves of poverty" (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Grotowska-Leder, and Krzyszkowski 2002, 135) or "impoverished neighbourhoods" (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 1998, 45).

Such places are typified by the accumulation of bad conditions: economically, infrastructurally, ecologically, and socially. People living in enclaves of poverty are unemployed or earn sufficiently little to benefit from social welfare. The residences they live in are dilapidated and undeveloped – they may lack basic facilities (such as hot water, heating, and sewage systems), as well as equipment such as furniture. Usually such places are overcrowded. Their environs may also be undeveloped – there may be a lack of basic (or nondefective) infrastructure, with roads and pavements in bad condition; the area might be lacking in public spaces which could serve for recreation, such as children's playgrounds, parks, and sports grounds; and the commercial infrastructure may be poorly developed. The residents' sense of security may be relatively low. Often one can observe the disintegration of social bonds among people living in enclaves of poverty.

Apart from these objective constraints, the position of excluded individuals within the social and political systems tends to be peripheral, despite the fact that most of them may possess the full set of formal rights associated with citizenship. Both the levels of traditional political participation (for example, voting, party membership, and similar) and the intensity of involvement in the activities of civil society (such as NGO membership, engagement in protest activities, etc.) seem to be lower (Verba et al. 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Therefore, there seems to be a strict correlation between economic deficits, participation, and influence deficits, which can lead to further worsening of the position of the economically disadvantaged and, on the other hand, to a crisis of legitimacy of public institutions in the eyes of these individuals. In other words, far from being a merely economic issue, the participation levels of the economically excluded constitute a vital social problem from the perspective of the functioning of the political and social systems. These participation deficits seem to stem from four major sources:

– Practical constraints: insufficient means for fulfilling basic needs on an everyday basis, and low social capital levels do not allow individuals to go beyond the mundane activities of labour (Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Gilliatt 2001).

– Cognitive boundaries: poverty and exclusion lead to the reduction of self-esteem and social aspirations, thus reducing the motivation for activity and social mobility (Hoggett 2001; Kincaid 1973).

– Identity boundaries: poverty leads to a negative stigmatization and does not constitute a positive basis for creating social identification (Cohen 1997). Apart from that, it is a strongly heterogeneous category that does not allow easily for the development of "we" thinking (Jenkins 1996).

– Political boundaries: The political system and the public authorities treat the poor as objects rather than as the active agent of politics (Rademacher and Patel 2002).

This tendency toward self-removal from the social and political system is visible even at the district and neighbourhood level.

Despite the weakness of the social bonds involved, exclusion should be interpreted as a phenomenon experienced socially, rather than individually. Enclaves of poverty with their specific accumulation of economic, social, and political barriers affect entire communities. This is why the fight against exclusion should be more focused on its collective aspects. However such practices are rather rare.

Looking at specific programmes aiming at social inclusion – at least those which involve the active contribution of the excluded – it is clear that the individualistic approach is dominant. This is a "liberal" model of social inclusion which consists of stimulating individuals into taking up different kinds of activity, with the aim of uprooting them from the social margin. Most activization programmes teach people strategies for surviving in an unfriendly environment, and for changing it. Nonetheless, it is still the individual who is responsible for making this effort, and it is this individual who can potentially benefit from the success of the programme. Yet the community remains excluded. One might even say that the community becomes more impoverished, in the sense that it loses the social capital of the neighbourhood or district. Individual strategies of social inclusion "rob" communities of their most active individuals. Those who remain are powerless, and unable to effect any kind of social change.

The solution to this problem might be strategies of activization which connect both the affected individuals and their communities. This means making communities (neighbourhoods, housing estates, and districts) the subject of social welfare and social work. The idea of district social work (*Stadtteilbezogener Sozialer Arbeit*) developed by the Institute for District Social Work and Counselling (*Institut für Stadtteilbezogene Soziale Arbeit und Beratung*) in Essen is a fine example of such a strategy. It focuses on paying attention to the collective, shared aspects of social problems that affect people's lives, and on helping members of the communities to band together using programmes aimed at solving these problems. The basic means to achieve this goal are the strengthening of neighbourly bonds, and mobilization of the local potential for action. This can be accomplished by making communication between neighbours more effective, and by improving organization – especially self-organization – which can accelerate the mobilization of people and other resources (Hinte, 1998).

Maria Lüttringhaus notes that the strategy of district social work should be founded upon six basic rules:

1. Wants-orientation: asking members of excluded communities the question, "What do you want?" instead of "What do you need?"
2. Activization: Asking what contribution members of the excluded community can make toward obtaining the goals that they themselves have defined.
3. The use of resources that are available in the district or neighbourhood.
4. The integration of action and resources at all levels of activity.
5. The creation of networks of important social actors, projects, and resources.
6. Improving the infrastructure of the neighbourhood.

The strategy of district social work is in fact a combination of social work, activization, and revitalization. However, activization in this context has a double meaning: The first meaning is the typical one, and implies employing individual strategies of reintegration to the labour market. The second, and more interesting from our point of view, sense of social activization is the revitalization of communities. This requires engaging individuals and communities in deepening social and political participation, as well as increasing self-organization and

the development of social bonds and a sense of community with other residents.

Such a complex strategy of social inclusion of city residents is rather uncommon. One of the few examples of such a strategy is the Socially Integrated City programme (*Soziale Stadt*) introduced in Germany at the end of the 1990s.[3] The basic principle of the programme is to combine the traditional approach to revitalization with the idea of social activization. An intended consequence of the programme was to be the integration of the residents from the so-called districts with special developmental needs (*Stadtteilen mit besonderem Erneuerungsbedarf*) into society, by first reviving the social bonds within them, and then the bonds between them and the rest of society. Multilevel actions (at the federal, state, city, district, and neighbourhood level) were employed by the programme to improve

– the economic situation of the residents, and their quality of life;
– the infrastructure of the districts;
– social engagement and participation;
– social bonds among residents;
– the economy of the districts.

From our point of view, the most important of these aims is the activization and increasing participation of residents. The programme used two sets of techniques – direct and indirect – that were intended to help the redevelopment of social engagement. Direct techniques were those such as

– activization surveys;
– social help;
– counselling;
– formal and informal meetings, and discussions among the residents;
– streetwork;
– creation and development of social networks;
– organization of parties, picnics, parades, and other events;
– mediation and conflict resolution.

Some indirect techniques were also employed:

– publishing district newspapers, posters, leaflets, and websites;

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[3] Where not otherwise indicated, information on the Socially Integrated City Programme is from the *Soziale Stadt* web page, http://www.sozialestadt.de/.

– preparation of press releases for local media;

– creation of logos and slogans for both the whole programme and its parts.

A very important role in making residents more engaged was played by the District management system (*Quartiersmanagement*) (Franke and Löhr 2001), whose main role was to create a network of communication and agreement. The social proximity of management personnel to the residents, along with the fact that they were embedded in the local context, were crucial factors in achieving success. Apart from that, their role involved including residents in planning and realizing specific actions. Accepting responsibility for specific tasks was especially important in increasing the participation of individuals and communities.

However, an analysis of the prevailing outcomes of the programme thus far shows that its ambitious aims have proven difficult to fulfil. The revitalization of the infrastructure and outlook of the district was the easiest part of the project. The other changes were much harder to accomplish. The authors of the process themselves say that although there is a distinct improvement in social activity among residents, it was achieved by cooperation with those who objectively were least affected by social exclusion. Those who most needed help failed to identify themselves with the aims and actions of the programme.

Nevertheless the *Soziale Stadt* programme may be treated as a positive example of the broad, complex approach toward social inclusion and activization. The combination of the improvement in economic status, the rebirth of the community, and the development of the infrastructure with activization is especially interesting and stimulating. Looking at Polish programmes of inclusion in the urban context, it is easy to notice that there are really no programmes with such a broad and complex approach. Usually the approach of programmes that are involved in changing urban reality is conventional, and their scope is limited to the revitalization of districts, neighbourhood, or single streets. This means that their emphasis is placed on changing the look and infrastructure of the urban space. Such tendencies are visible in most Polish cities. Rarely do municipal officials pay attention to other aspects of making urban life more tolerable.[4] Where programmes have other objectives, they are

[4] A reaction to such an approach can be seen in the title of an article by Tomasz Tosza, describing the revitalization programme in Jaworzno: "Revitalize people, not stones" (Tosza 2004, 162-174).

usually aimed at another target, having been developed to fight against poverty and the economic dimension of exclusion. This lack of complexity results from a one-sided approach to the problem of social exclusion. It seems that social activization – understood as an increase in social participation and engagement, and the development of self-organization and a sense of community with other residents – is usually underestimated as a tool used for social inclusion. Taking that into consideration, it is worth looking closer at some selected activization programmes which have been implemented in Poland.

The first is the "Sun on Wschodnia Street" programme (Słońce na Wschodniej).[5] The aim of this project, run by the White Crows Foundation (Fundacja Białe Gawrony), is the social and cultural revitalization of Wschodnia Street in Łódź. There are two basic goals: The first to emphasize the beauty and exceptionality of Wschodnia Street, which is sometimes called "Piotrkowska Street's ugly sister." It is an untidy and vandalized neighbourhood, typical of tenement house districts. The place appears unfriendly to visitors, passers-by, and residents. Its social image is very poor. Yet it has great potential – the houses are dilapidated, but beautiful. As the authors of the project put it, "Our street has also more cultural facets: Reymont lived opposite this gateway during the time he spent gathering materials for "The Land of Promise" (*Ziemia obiecana*); nearby Agnieszka Osiecka wrote her lyrics (...) But the culture on Wschodnia Street is not just history. There are still a few important cultural institutions (...). When you take a closer look at Wschodnia Street, you notice that it is a kind of microcosm, a complete ecological system. You can buy anything here: American and Swedish clothes, cheap TVs; you can eat a cake, unlock your SIM card, and drink a beer. (...) We have two teahouses, where you can talk your head off all day long. Every year Wschodnia Street is visited by a Gypsy band." But the beauty and the potential of Wschodnia Street needs to be uncovered. The visitors and passers-by need to experience its exceptionality, and the residents need to appreciate it.

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[5] Where not otherwise indicated, information on the "Sun on Wschodnia Street" programme is from the White Crows Foundation web page, http://www.bialegawrony.org/.

The second goal is to fight against the social and economic exclusion of the residents by increasing their participation in the life of the street. A series of workshops called „Mutual Help'' was introduced to show residents possible ways of helping each other. This help could involve exchanging different resources – like skills, time (using a time bank system), and things that are no longer needed. Encouraging neighbours to be more active and, more importantly, creating networks of co-operation is a way of "bolstering their courage and power to undertake their own ventures, and to show them some goals that are possible to reach."

Although its main stress is on culture, the Sun on Wschodnia Street is an interesting example of combining a few targets – revitalization, activization, and inclusion. Of course the scope of actions is rather limited, but it helps to grasp its urban character and emphasis on neighbourly relations and bonds.

A second example of Polish activization ideas is the Dialogue project, run by the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (Fundacja Rozwoju Demokacji Lokalnej).[6] Although its geographic range is wider than that of the Sun of Wschodnia Street – it is being implemented in four Polish cities (Białystok, Kielce, Opole, and Rzeszów) – its goals are more limited. It is intended mainly to increase the participation of citizens in local public matters and the public sphere, and to develop dialogue between citizens, nongovernmental organizations, and local government. However, this is impossible without creating lively communities, so the project aims also to develop better relations and co-operation between neighbours.

The tools and techniques used by the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy are in fact imported from America, and adopted to the Polish context. The first and most important technique is dialogue – meetings and brainstorming sessions that are intended to produce an exchange of ideas or concepts. "As a result of the exchange of arguments, our opinions are changing. When we take other points of view into consideration, we have an opportunity to look more broadly at various matters. We get to know each other better. A real, authentic social bond

[6] Where not otherwise indicated, information on the "Dialogue" project is from the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy web page, http://www.frdl.org.pl/.

is coming into being between diverse people who previously were not familiar with each other" (Krzemionka-Brózda).

This dialogue technique helps to make the communication between different social actors (individuals, social groups, organizations, and local government) more successful. The effective flow of information helps to solve and avoid social conflicts. As a further result, strong and lasting social relations are developed.

Two other and more specific actions implemented by the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy are the training of local leaders – especially the young (by means of the Youth Leader Academy and Volunteer Centres) – and the initiation of specific community development programmes. This latter is especially important from our point of view because of its local, urban character. It consists of implementing an American-style "neighbourhood watch" in selected neighbourhoods. Common actions undertaken by individuals to make their neighbourhood safer means a deepening of social integration. Apart from that, setting up the neighbourhood watch programme required establishing cooperation between neighbour groups and other actors, like the police or city guard.

The last programme analysed here is the CAL or Local Activity Centres association (Centra Aktywności Lokalnej),[7] which is the first Polish community development programme that was designed to stimulate the growth of local and neighbourhood communities. The general aims of the programme are

– "creating a community of action and spirit – locally, regionally and nationally";

– encouraging activity on the parts of the residents and the animators;

– self-organization – helping others to help themselves;

– participation, and giving a sense of real influence to participants

– "to give this to the participants in our programmes, and they should give it on to their partners and the people with whom they work";

– "solidarity and integration – social networks, associations between people, and building a supportive community."

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[7] Where not otherwise indicated, information on and quotations from the "Local Activity Centres" project is from the CAL web page, http://www.cal.org.pl/.

However, achieving such goals needs a special approach which is more complex than the approach found in other activization projects.

There are three basic assumptions which seem to be the foundations of the programme: The first is to employ a holistic approach – when preparing a strategy to resolving diverse social problems, CAL ought to take into consideration all of the important factors that may affect the community. A broader context of analysis (extending to culture, poverty, ecology, economy, education, safety, and so on) and of actions may bring better results to a community which is constantly affected by those factors. This of course means that before undertaking specific actions, a diagnosis of the local community's condition needs to be carried out. The aim of such a diagnosis would be the identification of problems and needs that are important in the specific social environment.

The second is a social-ecological approach, which means emphasizing the significance of social space. The existence of a space which is open for both residents and the agents of diverse social institutions, and in which they are equal partners, is crucial for the realization of the project. This space may be the office of some social organization, a community cultural centre (*dom kultury*), a social help centre, or a school – the most important point is to have a real, permanent location for regular meetings.

The third assumption, however, is the most important: CAL should aim at making not only individuals, but rather whole communities – and their social environment – more socially active. This community approach brings a broader perspective of social activity, understood not only as actions taken by individuals interested in improving their environment, but first and foremost as cooperation within the community.

Although the CAL project exists nationwide, it has a network structure. As Paweł Jordan states, "Building a network organization is an extremely efficient way of spreading verified solutions, using developed methods of action, without repeating the same mistakes, while sharing diverse valuable experience. Creating diverse types of cooperation network and connection may be the future of social development in Poland, yet it is still underestimated" (Jordan).

Every CAL centre has its own programme and specific aims. The centres provide mediation between the institutional structures of the state and local government, and the formal (NGO) and informal (community group) structures of local civil society.

In accordance with its credo "Help others to help themselves," CAL was designed to supply local communities with know-how, rather than with other material resources.

The main specific technique used by CAL is informal education: teaching local leaders and animators, and stimulating free exchange of experiences and discussion between participants. Local leaders and animators are, in a way, local agents of social change. Their actions are used to prompt other residents to participate in the life of their neighbourhood.

The CAL project is exceptional not only because of its complexity, but also because of its self-conscious character. It involves elements of social research, such as diagnosis and, even more importantly, evaluation (Skrzypczak 2006, 171-172). The main outcomes of the project have been the development of a very efficient programme of local leader training, and a quite active network of local CAL centres. Still other outcomes, especially at the local level, were differentiated, and in many cases hard to measure.

The Polish programmes of social inclusion and activization which have been presented here are of course only examples, but they have been chosen to show a general tendency. Their analysis clearly shows that Polish programmes of social activization in urban contexts are poorly developed, and they have several important shortcomings that need to be emphasized.

First of all they are fragmentary – they are usually focused on one dimension of social exclusion. One can hardly ever find more complex approaches toward the problems of socially excluded people, approaches that would combine activization with other ways of changing neighbours, districts, and the lives of their residents.

In most cases they are fragmentary and limited to a relatively small range, such as street, neighbourhood, or district. There is a lack of broader projects that – like CAL – would be designed as tools for changing urban reality in different cities and towns. There are many interesting and successful programmes, such as the Sun on Wschodnia Street, but it should be emphasized that they don't give the opportunity to propose standardized methods and techniques of social activization and inclusion. They have been planned and implemented as specific programmes for specific needs and problems that affect some of the

urban spaces and social environments. Such approach is in fact self-limiting, and gives no opportunity to developing more universal tools.

This shortcoming is even reinforced by the fact that in most of the cases, the activization strategies are not based on solid research into the state of Polish social urban activity and its peculiarities. Sometimes they are based on Western experiences, but most commonly they are planned on the basis of the creativity and the imagination of the authors of the project. In both cases, the result may the application of incongruous means for specific aims. The danger of such inaccuracy is even greater when we take into consideration the fact that most of the programmes do not use any kind of evaluation of either specific techniques or of the overall approach.

Rarely is there cooperation between social activists who aim to develop social activity, and academia. The lack of such cooperation seems to result from a reciprocal distrust and a lack of communication between activists and scholars.

The last shortcoming is the fact that the state, as well as most of the local governments, do not have any strategies for social activization and social inclusion. The activists are implementing their programmes in kind of institutional void. Of course in many cases there is cooperation between NGOs implementing inclusion programmes and municipal government, but this is a relatively rare situation, which usually results from the initiative of the NGOs.

It seems that the latter shortcoming may be the source of the whole problem. The fact that it is the NGOs that are main actors of activation and the stimulation of inclusion, and not the agendas of the state and municipal governments, is a crucial one, which causes a deepening of fragmentation in approaches toward these important social problems. Only cooperation between the state, local government, NGOs, and the communities has a chance of succeeding in bringing about the dialogue that is necessary for developing more sophisticated programmes which aim to change urban reality in Poland. Without such a dialogue, without cooperation at different levels, and without a broader perspective, no change is possible. Only changes implemented from above in cooperation with those from below, and only changes which affect all the spheres of life important to the excluded, will bring positive effects.

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Political Activity in Public Spaces: Awakening, Stagnation, or Fall?

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Abstract. This paper draws on concepts of modernity and postmodernity, and related spatial orderings in order to understand recent transformations of the political use of public spaces. It argues that political activities are more and more organized as deliberative, open processes in which new media play a crucial role. Participants share situations rather than an identity, and creative interventions such as culture jamming question the legitimacy of power as manifested in urban space. The paper concludes that in spite of the translocal and ahistorical references which both new architecture and an increasing number of city users tend to be showing in urban space, political activities are adapted to local conditions, contradicting scholars who have declared the end of place.

During the 1990s, an intense debate went on among urban planners and sociologists in Germany about "public space" (*öffentlicher Raum*) in cities; Selle (2002) provides a summary. Many researchers claimed that urban public spaces had lost important functions which are essential for a well functioning and integrative society, for example Feldtkeller (1995). There were basically two arguments. On the one hand, it was stated that increases in graffiti, vandalism, petty crime, and nonconforming behaviour – such as groups of people drinking alcohol or begging – had led to insecurity among passers-by in urban spaces (Witte 2002). On the other hand, scholars argued that the privatization and regulation of urban spaces, such as through CCTV systems or private security in places such as shopping malls, would – in combination with the observable trend toward the commercialization of public spaces – necessarily be accompanied by the exclusion from certain places of certain social groups suspected of nonconforming behaviour, and/or a lack purchasing power, for example groups of young male adults, or homeless people. Underlying both arguments was the fear that public spaces were becoming more and more dysfunctional.

However, at the same time that these debates were taking place, the forms of appropriation and use of public spaces seemed to be constantly diversifying, and some German planners today even complain about the overuse of public space. This paper focuses on the political use of public space and how it has been transformed in recent years. Due to a lack of empirical data, it is difficult to quantify changes – but several trends can be observed which seem to make a closer look worthwhile, rather than focusing solely on the perspective of loss and decline. In the following, after narrowing the understanding of public space to the scope addressed by this paper, the way that the planning of public spaces has changed in an era of what has been labelled as "postmodernity" is sketched. Then the paper outlines new trends in the political use and appropriation of public space in cities. The conclusions will discuss the relationship between both. This paper is not intended to deliver any final results. Rather it aims to take some initial steps toward a framework for a more comprehensive discussion, and toward naming issues which need to be considered.

In German urban studies, there are several definitions of public spaces, none of them uncontested. Discourses in political and social

theory about the public, the public realm, or the public space have been inspired by political philosophers and sociologists such as Hannah Arendt (1967) and Jürgen Habermas (1969). Urban sociology has been enriched by the works of, for example, Hans Paul Bahrdt (1983), and more recently Christine Weiske (2003), and Walter Siebel (2000). Planners, architects, and urban designers – such as Andreas Feldtkeller (2002), Rob Krier (2003), and Klaus Selle (2004) – also deal with public space with regard to its material form. All of these authors have also been influenced by international scholars, taking into account definitions in other national or regional contexts beyond the German debate, especially the works of Jane Jacobs (1993) and Richard Sennett (2000).

For the purpose of this paper, the focus is on urban places which are – at least in general – accessible to anyone at any time of day: streets, public parks, and squares, as well as some public transportation hubs; but excluding shopping malls, parliaments, and sports stadiums. Of course, this claimed "accessibility" is debatable: roads are typically off-limits to pedestrians at all times of the day, and squares may be closed to car traffic. However, in principle, no one can be excluded from the use of these places; they are potentially available for unlimited private and public use and appropriation. For this reason, they have the potential to be "loose spaces" (Franck and Stevens 2007).

The Concept of Postmodernity in Urban Planning

The idea of postmodernity has been frequently subject to debate. Precisely speaking, already the concept of modernity is questionable. Its definitions are manifold. They agree, more or less, that an instrumental rationale is characteristic of modern society (even though they might be contradictory in their details, and fully acknowledge that functional differentiation already started in the medieval period). Spatial orderings, which are strongly linked to social formations and activity patterns, have been produced to create modernity – or the feeling of it – in the form of certain places and urban settings, as a common framework for individual and social experience. In this context, planning has tended to be functionalist and technical. Only slowly has the political dimension of urban planning become more fully understood, as it became a common sense

notion that designing space is not only, and not even foremost, a functional problem, but also one of social and economic relations in a city, of cultural and symbolic values, and of aesthetic sensation. Obviously, the process of "reflexive modernization" (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1996) has gone far beyond a transformation in the planning profession. The so-called condition of postmodernity – as far as this concept can be usefully employed as specific historical-geographical condition (Harvey 1990) – has captured all sectors of Western societies.

> "Among the shared key-themes of many accounts of the postmodern condition are included a new radical scepticism about the role of scientific knowledge; a new concern with aesthetics rather than morality; enhanced reflexivity on the part of individuals about their identity and the grounds for their conduct; a magnified importance for mass media in the framing of everyday life; an intensification of consumerism, the demise of socialist politics and its replacement by the local and personal politics of new social movements" (Savage and Warde 1993, 138).

Postmodernism in architecture has been discussed primarily as an aesthetic project (Hajer 1995). Architecture now claims "to celebrate multivalence (many meanings) over univalence (one meaning), and to promote a fresh aesthetic borrowing from different architectural styles from various historical periods" (Savage and Warde 1993, 139). The urban fabric is seen as "necessarily fragmented" (Harvey 1990, 66). Interchangeable new urban spaces, such as out-of-town hypermarkets and shopping malls, have emerged, and during the 1990s were discussed as "nonplaces" (Augé 1994). Such "nonplaces" – in contrast to places – are accused by their critics of an indifference toward local context, and characterized by the fact that they more or less playfully combine motives from different historical and cultural backgrounds. Planning nonplaces has been called "imagineering" (Hassenpflug 1998), to point out that this kind of planning does not overcome the (modern) instrumental rationale, but that it adds another facet to it: aesthetization is not an end in itself, but is seen as a means to symbolize a city's status, and to create a setting for social or individual experience which evokes feelings of comfort and emotionality; this is true for public as well as for private producers of space, who compete for innovative and ever-new kinds of temporary and extraordinary urban sceneries.

> "Whereas the modernists see space as something to be shaped for social purposes and therefore always subservient to the construction of a social project, the postmodernists see space as something independent and autonomous, to be shaped according to aesthetic aims and principles which have nothing necessarily to do with any overarching social objective, save, perhaps, the achievement of timeless and 'disinterested' beauty as an objective in itself" (Harvey 1990, 66).

As a consequence, urban entertainment destinations have been very successful in the 1990s (Roost 2000, 2003; Tessin 2003) both as elements of urban development strategies in inner cities and as magnets for attracting visitors. Moreover, the inner city has been seen as a city's business card, symbolically displaying the economic power of the companies within the city (and thereby of the city as an economic headquarters), or showing off its built and cultural heritage (Kuklinski 2003). In a global perspective, a homogenization of planning and design strategies can be observed in the sense that similar ideas – such as the construction of spectacular architecture ("starchitecture"), or city marketing innovations such as city "branding" – are applied in many large cities, although they certainly lead to quite different outcomes at the local level. Critics argue that the addressees of these planning measures are not local residents as citizens, but rather large businesses and tourists, with the notion of international competition as ideological backbone to these approaches. The criticism is that these places invite citizens to act as tourists and to merely consume the city, but not to act as responsible individuals. Liveable places (it is claimed) need citizens, not spectators. However, recent changes in the appropriation of public spaces show that these have by no means been reduced to a consumerist function, but are increasingly also strategically used for certain kinds of political communication, information, and protest by new social movements, arts projects, and local initiatives.

Political Action in Public Spaces

Although there is hardly any comprehensive data available, there is no doubt that creative new forms of political mobilization can be observed. For a long time, the main political uses of public space were demonstrations and manifestations. During the French Revolution,

people reconquered urban public spaces for their own unplanned and independent political action, and a political "street public" (*Straßenöffentlichkeit*; Kaschuba 1991) demonstrated against the representative public and festival culture of royal anniversaries. While earlier bourgeois emancipation figures had been strongly related to deliberative settings in certain places (the agora, or later, city squares and town halls) and to a specific kind of civic attitude, the politics of the streets became the tradition of non-bourgeois population groups as physical movements in space which were accompanied by new means of communication and representation. In response to the fact that the workers' protest movements had only very restricted formal political influence, communication was less logical-deliberative, than emotional-affective. Demonstrations were ritualized, and collective representations in language (slogans, speeches), appearance, and ritual symbols supported the activities as symbolic actions (Korff 1991). A political message would be transported through a number of participants, walking formations, clothing, posters, buttons, flags, acoustics, gestures, interaction with the audience and the police, as well as the treatment of spaces and objects. The German Third Reich made instrumental use of the labour movement tradition, and initiated pseudopolitical mass events in public space, aiming to unite the people with strict choreographies for the affirmation of Nazi politics (Ehls 1997). After the Second World War, the tradition of demonstrations and political protest in the street was continued in West Germany, for example by student protests in the late 1960s, and new social movements in the 1970s and 1980s; and in the GDR by government-led affirmative demonstrations in urban space, which was specifically designed for this purpose – see, for example, the Leipzig demonstration plan (Topfstedt 1994). Demonstrations here and there were in their different ways affirmative and oriented toward creating collective identities.

The global justice movement has extended this pattern by combining elements of both the democratic agora and the revolutionary "street public" in its strategy to protest against current globalization politics. In many countries the movement has contributed to the reappropriation of public spaces in cities for political purposes, not only as symbolic mass action toward one goal, clearly defined by a central agency such as a party or a trade union. Rather, political activities are more and more

organized as a deliberative, open process. This new type of social movement is characterized by the way that it "break[s] with "we-ness" and collective identity," and its members share a situation or an experience, rather than an identity (McDonald 2004, 583, 589). It is organized as a network, and cooperates on the basis of common goals which are agreed upon by its members, but it does not represent its members in the traditional sense.

Not only the self-perception of the global justice movement differs from that of its predecessors: its strategy in using public spaces also shows new concepts. The 2001 G8 countersummit in Genoa, for example, was organized by members of different initiatives and groups who were part of the international global justice movement and came together only for the purpose of preparing the countersummit (Huning 2006). Thousands of people travelled from all over the world to assemble in the spot where political leaders were meeting. The countersummit consisted of a three-day Public Forum for discussion and communication, two large demonstrations, and one day of "thematic squares" (*piazze tematiche*) including a symbolic attack on the red zone (*zona rossa* – the area surrounding the G8 venue, which was closed to the public). The organizers stressed the importance of the Public Forum because they considered a demonstration without constructive debate as inefficient. The demonstrations were accompanied by players, clowns, orchestras, and bands, but also by violent protests and destructive actions, from the so-called black bloc. The thematic squares spread around the red zone. Each square was occupied by associations who pursued similar goals and agreed on similar forms of protest. This spatial dispersal of the movement was supposed to symbolize and represent the different streams within the movement; plurality was not suppressed, but supported. Starting from the thematic squares, a "virtual and political" siege of the red zone was started in the afternoon by using balloons, paper aeroplanes, music, speeches, and other devices, with the intention of overcoming the barriers (Klein 2001). The countersummit involved both assemblies for deliberation, and protest movements in the streets, to aim at the recovery of civil rights and political influence.

Of great importance for this (international) cooperation – which has undergone a kind of homogenization since its beginning in the mid-to-late 1990s – are new media, such as the Internet and mobile telephones. These have also been a crucial factor in the emergence of

another phenomenon of political mobilization, the so-called smart mob. "A smart mob is a group that, contrary to the usual connotations of a mob, behaves intelligently or efficiently because of its exponentially increasing network links. This network enables people to connect to information and others, allowing a form of social coordination." (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smart_mob, 5 November, 2007). One early example was the organization of spontaneous raves in illegal or secret places, but smart mobs can obviously be also key to political action. A specific type is called a "flash mob," in which people appear suddenly in a public space, undertake a common action for a short period of time, and then disperse again. They do not necessarily have to assemble: the important characteristic is that they show up in one defined space, at a certain time. For example, the NGO *attac* has called on its members to participate in flash mobs at the central station of Berlin and other cities: to show up at a certain hour – say, three minutes past twelve – hold up a sign with a random number (e.g. 147) for exactly three minutes, and then disappear again. This was meant to raise people's awareness of and draw their attention to the plans for the privatization of Deutsche Bahn.

Within the *reclaim the streets* movement, carnival elements are applied during "anti-capitalist action days" (Brünzels 2000), and these creative interventions intend to question the legitimacy of power as manifested in urban space. Parties, concerts and playful staging of criticism – sometimes even as a parody – confront the normality of a central business district or a pedestrian zone. Synchronic activities take place in several cities, which make single temporary events part of a global agenda. This concept is more frequently applied in combined political-cultural events, such as Earth Day and Live Aid, but is also found in Social Forums and other kinds of international and national protest activities. The Internet and other means of communication make this parallel action possible, and mass media enable others, who cannot participate in person, to share the experience in front of the TV or the radio.

Many characteristics of political activities in public space are shared by other new cultural forms of appropriation: carnival elements, the switch from spectator to activist, and the temporality of activities. One form has been called "culture jamming" (Carducci 2006). Here well

known symbols and brands are altered and used to send a critical message, generally contesting the idea of consumer society and advocating change. Facilitated by software and the Internet, commercial messages are imitated and satirized in order to raise consumers' awareness of illegal or ecologically alarming practices. For example, a logo of a company is slightly altered and printed on bags containing material about the social, ecological, or other failures of the company, which are then distributed in the street to passers-by, who – supposing that it contains promotion material – only realize upon taking a closer look that this bag is meant to challenge their attention. This approach is supposed to be part of a "postmodern consumer culture" which emerged in the 1960s when consumers started to realize that consumption could be a means of autonomous identity formation. Brands which claimed "authenticity" of their products were favoured. "Culture jamming" has been interpreted as a form of conflict between consumers and brands (Carducci 2006, 122), as brand veneers have started to crumble and the "backstage" of a brand has been questioned. Culture jamming takes place in public space, but also in the media and in commercial settings. One example is the case of an Austrian artists' project, which in 2003 published the news that the Karlsplatz in Vienna was to be renamed "Nike Square," and had been sold to Nike. They erected a Nike monument and an information centre called the "Nike Info Box." The media coverage of this activity induced strong opposition to the supposed acquisition. The fact that many people took this message seriously and reacted to it, highlights people's increased awareness of the commercialization of public space. Many citizens and initiatives were mobilized to protest against the apparent sell-out of the Karlsplatz (Löw, Steets, and Stoetzer 2007, 133f). Only days later, Nike disclaimed the news.

To sum up: Political demonstrations and manifestations today are not primarily built upon collective identities, but also focus on individual creativity and engagement. The results are open, and they aim at regaining democratic space for citizens, rather than strengthening one representative organization. Playful elements are integrated into the activities, and anyone can participate or make the change from spectator to actor; and anyone who passes by is addressed. Places in the city that can be appropriated to this purpose are the same places that were used

for more traditional demonstrations (which of course still take place also): central streets, squares, and pedestrian zones. Their accessibility is comparably high, which produces a high number of passers-by; it is easy to generate visibility. Membership is not a precondition for participation, nor is agreement on a certain political goal; rather, the willingness to reflect upon current political and economic issues is essential.

Discussion: A "Postmodern" Use of Public Space?

Ever since the 1990s, very big events and smaller temporary settings seem to have become more important in the use of public spaces. They transform spaces such as central squares and streets, parking lots, and train stations into extraordinary urban scenes, which are constituted by a specifically designed physical framework – whether meaningful in itself, or adapted to or rearranged for the situation – and the participants who, intentionally or involuntarily, become part of the setting. Some events take place on a regular basis, some only once; some activities would be considered as private, and some as public; some are local events, while others parallel worldwide happenings.

Something else that these events have in common is that they introduce new forms of participation. Quite frequently, people – be they group members or passers-by – are not only addressed as consumers, but are invited to take an active part in the event. They are free to exchange the role of the spectator for the role of an active player, or the other way around. The self-orientation of the kind which has been claimed to be a central characteristic of postmodern societies (Schulze 2003), has got rid of context – in the sense that it allows immediate points of contact without paying attention to conventions, knowledge, or tradition. The codes used are easily understood, and rapid decoding lowers barriers to access and participation. These rather "situationist" approaches reflect postmodernists' rejection of meta-narratives (Harvey 1990, 9), and do not attempt to transcend the "ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and the chaotic" (Harvey 1990, 44). Just as "imagery is created and can be manipulated" and "local authorities try to present their own area as appealing," (Savage and Warde 1993, 146), so new social movements and cultural projects also employ public spaces as stage and scenery for their claims.

Although there are certainly no causal relations between the design of public spaces and the activities that take place here, correlations between the meanings attributed to public space by planners and city users can be observed. This paper described changes in the planning and appropriation of public space which tend to point toward more playful approaches, and to the emergence of translocal references on both sides. In a globalized era, local urban space tends to gain importance as a setting for political deliberation and cultural representation, which both challenge actual conditions, power relations, and national and international policies. In spite of the translocal and ahistorical references which both new architecture and an increasing number of city users tend to be showing, these are adapted to local conditions and contradict scholars who declare the end of place.

Conclusion

An evaluation of recent developments in public space depends very much on one's own normative contention, but also on the context in which the development takes place. The question whether the transformations described above can be seen as an "awakening," as a "stagnation," or as a "fall" of public space cannot be positively answered here. One reason for this is the lack of data. Another one is the complexity of the question. This paper provided a first explorative framework for analysis, suggesting that it would be better to speak of a transformation of the use and appropriation of public spaces – which implies both risks and chances for future developments – than of awakening, stagnation, or fall. The trends described above give only a general overview and do not take into account specific historical, economic, cultural, social, political, or even ecological circumstances that might relate to cities; The combination of these factor is likely to significantly influence the local outcome of recent trends. But only an empirical in-depth study will be able to generate a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of public spaces today for political action.

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