JULITA MAKARO
University of Wrocław

On the Domination of the Integration Perspective in Academic Reflections on Polish-German Divided Towns—Selected Aspects

Abstract: From the moment academics began to reflect on the divided towns of the Polish-German border their investigations were directed to such phenomena as cooperation, closer relations, unification, connection, integration, becoming similar, and overcoming barriers, as is clearly observable in the publications that emerged in the 1970s, the period of the first post-war opening of the Polish-German border for passport-free traffic. This article addresses the validity and usefulness of such a perspective on divided towns. Do the researchers not tacitly yield to the conviction that integration is the only reasonable destiny for divided towns and does this conviction not tend to be based on a theory of horizontal Europeanization? Should opposing, or at least slightly different scenarios, not be considered? While searching to answer these questions and attempting to dispel doubts the author makes use of empirical studies conducted in the Polish-German borderland.

Keywords: Polish-German borderland, divided towns, spatial/symbolic/ideological integration, transborderness

Introduction

Towns on the Polish-German border were divided as the result of decisions made at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, which established a new framework for the European order. Poland's borders were shifted to the west, resulting in the demarcation of national borders on the Oder and Neisse rivers. One of the consequences was that parts of previously unified urban organisms found themselves on opposite sides of the border. Since that time, these towns have formed separate and independent urban structures.

The towns created by the shift of territory—Zgorzelec and Görlitz, Gubin and Guben, Słubice and Frankfurt—could be labeled "divided towns" as they are separated by a river, which functions as the national border.[1] Because these locations have undergone similar phases of development, researchers have been encouraged to use the category of integration in describing and analyzing them (for instance, in the title of this article). From the beginning, scholarly reflections on the divided towns of the Polish-German border have focused

---

[1] They have constitutive features that appear significant from our perspective: "(…) in the case of the divided towns, there are two features which play a significant role: the heritage of unity and direct spatial closeness. The first is present in historical memory relating to the period of unity as well as in the remains of infrastructural connections (which have often been disrupted). The second is manifested in the spatial unity of urban organisms. These towns very often do not develop concentrically. (…) These towns neighbor each other; they can be seen from one another. Even the details of the everyday activities of the residents of one town can often be observed by residents of the other without crossing the border" (Jańczak 2012: 33, translation mine).

on phenomena such as collaboration, closeness, unification, connection, cooperation, integration, assimilation, overcoming barriers, and so forth. Such an angle is quite clearly visible in publications from the beginning of the 1990s and in those from the 1970s, the time of the first post-war opening of the Polish-German border to passport-free movement, as well as appearing even earlier, in the first postwar decades. Scholars adopted slightly different approaches to describe the processes occurring in the Polish parts of the towns and in the Western Territories, but the common denominator was integration.

The integration perspective is understood here as if it were a paradigm, a certain tradition whose assumptions, inherent and otherwise, suggest which issues researchers should formulate, what they should study, and how they should define and explain the quiddity of things. The lasting popularity of one perspective in studying a defined space and its related phenomena allows conclusions to be drawn regarding the heterogeneity of phenomena described in regard to that one term. At the same time, the endurance of one perspective may also lead to a certain depletion of its adequacy and the necessity of searching for new proposals for capturing the border reality.

The aim of this article is to trace[2] how the integration perspective is present in sociological thinking about the divided towns of the Polish-German border and to attempt to assess the suitability and accuracy of that perspective in the context of observed phenomena and processes. It is also interesting to note the ideological and postulative elements firmly inscribed in the category. The usefulness of such a perspective on the divided towns is assessed below. Do researchers tacitly agree with the belief that the only reasonable aim for the divided towns is to integrate (a conviction current in connection with the theory of horizontal Europeanization)? In analyzing the divided towns, should we not focus on—or at least consider—opposing or even slightly different scenarios? The results of an empirical study[3] conducted in the Polish-German borderland are used to answer the above questions.

Internal Means of Integration

Scholars began to reflect on the processes occurring in the Polish parts of divided towns not in the 1970s but in the immediate post-war years. These urban areas were analyzed as part of the newly incorporated Western Territories (called the Recovered Territories at the time) in light of the integration issue. It should be emphasized that from the historical perspective,

the phenomenon or problem of intergroup life in the Western Territories that was particularly interesting to sociologists was social integration. Integration signified the merging of the different particles forming the contemporary population of the Western Territories—merging on the level of collective existence but first and foremost in the sphere of social consciousness. The question was to what extent such integration was taking place or had already taken place (Rybicki 1967: 372, translation mine).

---

[2] On the basis of the source literature in the sociology of the Western and Northern Territories, as well as border sociology.

[3] However, most of the empirical findings over several decades are referred to in the text in the form of general conclusions, syntheses, and deductions. We present the results of the newest and the most comprehensive surveys performed in the divided towns, *The Border Situation in the Opinions of the Residents*, in more detail.

After years of studies, numerous scholars decreed the success of integration (Turski 1967: 243), while underlining its peculiarities:

so far, regional differences have not vanished in the process—now finished—of social and cultural integration in the Western Territories. It could be said that they still exist, but in different terms, namely, they are now mere cultural relics of the past, which neither astonish nor irritate anyone in the present. Quite the contrary, they are phenomena giving variety to the life of local societies (Burszta 1967: 177, translation mine).

In small towns, integration processes have led to the formation of local societies where the residents know each other, establish rules for cohabitation, and unanimously identify local authorities. The core of the process is the formation of a community that accepts shared values, norms, and judgments (Makaro 2007: 60). In the case of the divided towns, integration is supposed to mean a merging on the level of the settlers who came from different places into urban or rural society, and also a merging of communities from the Western and Northern Territories with the rest of the country. With time, certain doubts about the latter understanding of integration appeared: "From the very beginning, that is, from 1945, the process of the Recovered Territories' integration with the old territories was an issue in which scholarship encountered other spheres of social activity: politics; administrative, economic, and cultural practices; and journalism" (Kwilecki 1987: 46, translation mine). Back then, the national border was an impenetrable barrier and did not give rise to thoughts about the transborder connection (reintegration) of the divided parts of towns.

Crossborder Means of Integration

The next phase in the development of the divided cities occurred in the 1970s. This phase began with an agreement between the Polish People's Republic and the German Democratic Republic to introduce visa-free and passport-free border movement starting on New Year's Eve in 1972. For the first time since the war, the agreement allowed free movement between the two parts of the settlement areas: border-crossing posts were open on both ends of bridges in the divided towns.[4] The opening of the borders brought various consequences and, even though the resolution was politically motivated, the changes it produced were more than merely superficial.

From the beginning of 1972, parallel processes occurred in the divided towns, with different actors undertaking activities of varying content and form. Institutional cooperation between the divided parts of the towns was initiated by local governments and continued by municipal institutions, schools, cultural institutions, hospitals, fire brigades, workplaces, and even central banks and post offices (which was quite odd yet ideologically desirable, if unjustifiable in terms of exchanges of experience or the encouragement of cooperation).

---

[4] For instance, after the "opening of the border" in 1972 in Gubin, the crossing of the bridge by an official delegation, to move from one part of the town to the other, required facing numerous formalities and acquiring the agreement of the border authorities. There was also the "case of the members of the film society in Gubin, who wanted to pay a visit to their colleagues in Guben. They had to complete all the passport formalities and then travel to the other side of the river by the shortest available road, through Kunowice and Frankfurt. Instead of walking a couple hundred meters, they had to travel around 100 kilometers" (Makaro 2007: 52, translation mine: PK).

These formalized kinds of collaboration began to inspire the city authorities to plan the common development of the urban space, in connection with the historical realities. For example, in Gubin "great significance was attached to the planned promenade, which would be the basis for pedestrian movement but would also have a uniting function" (Makaro 2007: 95, translation mine).

Sociological analyses considered institutional integration to be complementary to the integration taking place on the social level, as reflected in the mass character of direct contacts between Polish and German residents of Zgorzelec and Görlitz, Gubin and Guben, Słubice and Frankfturt. Contacts were established in multiple areas. Apart from official contacts, involving formal and professional roles, daily contacts might be based on visiting the neighboring district in order to go shopping or take a walk. Already at the end of the 1960s, the first Polish people were finding jobs in German workplaces on the border. Conditions were thus created for members of both nations to get to know each other. (The culmination of employment in German workplaces was reached in the 1970s). Furthermore, mention should be made of contacts based on "sentiment," when Germans visited their patrimony left on the other side of the river. What was new in relations between Poles and Germans was the directness of their contact. And even though superficial, shallow, short-time, and business contacts dominated, their high frequency allowed people to get to know each other to a certain degree. It should not be forgotten that on the basis of professional relations, personal affinities developed. The collaboration of institutions also resulted in the creation of informal relations between the participants. Moreover, it was possible for people to spend free time together. [5] Each year a couple or a dozen or so mixed marriages were celebrated (Pantkowski 1983: 231). The category of integration, treated as a phenomenon that accurately described the events taking place on the social and institutional levels in the divided towns, provided the theoretical framework for numerous analyses (Pantkowski 1983; Błaszczyk 1977).

In October 1980, the German Democratic Republic terminated the agreement on passport-free border movement. In the 1980s, most of the processes that had developed in the previous decade in the divided towns were frozen. Scholarly interest in the subject was frozen too (it should be remembered that the decade was a special time in Poland both politically and socially).

Transborder Means of Integration

The reopening of the Polish and German towns and the new openness of the residents to each other took place in the next decade and stimulated theoretical and empirical reflection over this phenomenon on the Polish-German border. The basic difference between the processes occurring in the divided towns in the 1970s and in the last twenty-five years is the change of context. The transformations in both countries after 1989 (and in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe) have not cancelled the influence of politics as a causative factor, but they have brought democratic procedures, changes in decision-making centers, and

---

[5] The results of the studies performed by M. Błaszczyk, identifying a relatively high percentage of private relationships between waiters and waitresses, could be an example (Błaszczyk 1977: 155).

a voice to the citizens. Researchers were again encouraged to use a well-known theoretical framework and to discern the parameters of integration in the phenomena of the divided towns: on different levels, in specific parts of the towns, and between them. [6]

In the 1990s, the initial theoretical framework that can be identified in connection with ideas about the divided towns is an integration-disintegration opposition. The crucial phenomena and processes that determined such an approach should be indicated. A significant amount of these were official and institutional in nature. At the beginning of the 1990s, agreements on cooperation between towns were signed, foundations were established to facilitate cooperation, and Euroregions were created. The beneficiaries of such activities were mostly the divided towns and their residents. Therefore, the institutional frameworks for initiating common enterprises that would fulfill the different needs expressed by local authorities and residents were created. As a result, collaboration was established in connection with communal services, educational institutions, churches, businesses, associations, and so forth. Some collaboration was also initiated at the grass-roots level, by the residents themselves. These phenomena were also accompanied by other events which could be assigned an opposite vector. Especially in the first years after the opening of the border, there were numerous negative incidents resulting from the more intense cross-border movement (crowds, noise, queues), and these coincided with transformation issues (unemployment, economic decline, population decrease). On the one hand, the development of the markets and the commercial function of the Polish parts of the towns became a sphere for establishing relations, which were not solely material, between the neighbors. On the other hand, the commercial developments were conducive to the development of social pathologies and resulted in criminogenic phenomena. The social order that had previously been maintained in the separate parts of the divided towns was destroyed. A new one began to take shape: one taking into account the presence of the neighbor. In the following years, improvements in contacts between Polish and German actors playing this urban game produced joint enterprises, initiatives, and networks (occasions) in which contacts of a different nature occurred and influenced the closeness and merging of the towns and their residents.

In recent times, relations between the divided parts of Polish-German towns have developed according to a certain geopolitical logic, which should be briefly characterized. The

---

[6] Geopolitical changes in the 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe "awoke" the divided cities and this in turn awoke the interest of researchers. Nonetheless, they did not always conduct research from the integration perspective, even though it was—more or less directly—present in the works of academia. For instance, Pertti Joenniemi and Alexander Sergunin (2009) pay attention to the apparent strong ideological integration of the divided towns, and in another article (2011) they continue the topic of the institutionalization of European integration. Dariusz Gierczak (2017) discusses spatial and European (ideological) integration, recognizing that the divided towns on the Polish-German border reached the highest level of integration after Poland joined the EU. Tamás Hardi and Andrea Uszkai (2017) attempt to distinguish various socio-spatial aspects of the integration of divided towns. Helga Schultz (2002) describes the relations between Polish and German parts of the divided towns as an emanation of the process of European integration, whereas Andrea Székely (2007), in referring to examples of divided towns on the Hungarian border, analyses the structures that determine the progress of spatial integration. Integration is also the central analytical category for Jarosław Jańczak (2012). Another popular category applied in the description of towns divided by a national border is cooperation. A.G. Anischenko and A.A. Sergunin (2012) write about cooperation. Joenniemi and Sergunin (2009) analyze the areas and actors of cooperation in divided towns on the Finnish-Russian border. The issue of the space of divided towns is also addressed, though it is done by exposing the category of identity (Opiłowska 2017) or the environment (Tamáska 2017). Stokłosa (2017) discusses the possibility of creating transborder identities. These latter perspectives, albeit not referring directly to the notion of integration, involve ideas about the unification or merger of divided cities.

views of Poles and Germans on cooperation with their neighbors have been determined by
different circumstances. From the Polish perspective, mention should be made of the lack
of symmetry between the Polish and the German parts of twin towns, especially in terms of
economic inequalities but also in connection with German membership in European Union
structures and with the different pattern of leaving communism. This phenomenon is exem-
plified by the far different approach to the use of EU Phare CBC funds, which were allotted
to support the transborder cooperation of EU countries with candidate countries, and by
different possibilities of crossing borders: the residents of Gorlitz, Guben, and Frankfurt
had a fast lane, while the residents of Zgorzelec, Gubin, and Słubice had to wait in queues.
The difference acquired special symbolic meaning after the introduction in 1992 of local
border traffic, which was supposed to facilitate mutual contacts. In the last decade of the
20th century, the popular phrase "a laboratory for European integration" was coined to de-
scribe the processes taking place in the divided towns. Since then, the inequalities present
in some spheres have been leveled: Poland joined the EU in 2004 and the Schengen Area in
2007, which resulted in the lifting of numerous formal barriers. However, in other fields, the
disproportions still hold or have become even greater: for instance, the strong appeal of the
German language and the increasingly lower appeal of the Polish language have resulted
in the attractiveness of Euroschools and kindergartens in the German parts of the towns
and not the other way round. The last twenty-five years have entitled us to make certain
generalizations: the process of bringing the Polish and German parts of the towns and their
residents closer (in the above-described favorable circumstances) has slowed. Self-regula-
tion in the twin urban structures aims at normalization.

Transborder Integration in the Light of the Empirical Data

In reading the literature on the integration process in divided towns on the Polish-German
border, certain questions should be asked. First, attention should be paid to the fact that
integration may have an economic or political character but also (or perhaps mostly) a social
nature—and it is the latter that sociologists should address. However,

> In public and scientific debate, the European construct seems to be composed of politics and the market but where
> other comparable constructs present a social face, it exhibits all of the features of a nameless void. […] According
> to the asociological, state- and politics-fixated understanding of the European debate (and of research on Europe),
> Europe is an institutional framework for economic transactions and social interactions between national societies
> (Beck, Grande 2007: 96).

On the one hand, reluctance to decide which aspect of European integration will be
reflected is understandable, as it is not always possible to examine those aspects separately.
On the other hand, the result is a certain unintelligibility and conclusions relating economic
or political aspects to social ones. Moreover, numerous empirical verifications suggest that
the integration process has not taken place with the same intensity and dynamics on all
levels.

Since this article clearly refers to social integration in the context of divided towns,
the issue should be investigated in terms of spatial integration, symbolic integration, and
ideological integration.

S p a t i a l   i n t e g r a t i o n involves the domestication of the space of the other part of the town in such a manner that it is familiar, physically accessible, and consumed to the same (or very similar) degree as the space of residents' own part of the town. Such integration seems to be the least demanding kind, occurring the quickest and most easily. The frequency with which residents of one part of a divided town visit the other part could be an indicator of advances in the process. [7] The results of entering the Schengen Area should be considered to favor transborder mobility. They include the revitalization of border-crossing surroundings (i.e., bridges) in all three towns, the opening of public transportation (which facilitates movement from one part of the city to the other), the introduction of signs in the neighboring language in shops and public spaces, and such improvements as the simplification of border crossings. Currently, the study shows that "eight in ten residents of Zgorzelec and Gubin declare that they visit the German part of the Euro-city. In Słubice the level of positive responses in regard to visiting Frankfurt is even higher—slightly over 90%" (Dolińska, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2016, translation mine). Motivations for visiting the neighboring area are also important. The most common are instrumental aims (shopping in 80–90% of declarations) and autotelic ones (walks in 70–80% of declarations). There are also less frequent activities: meeting with German colleagues in 30–40% of declarations and visiting cultural institutions in 30–50% of declarations (Dolińska, Makaro, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2013). Research performed in Gubin using the method of mental maps of the towns indicates that the domestication of the neighbor's space, even among young people (who are more open and mobile), is not common or obvious. Some naturally move part of their activity to the other side of the river, while for others the area across the border is *terra incognita* (Makaro 2009). Another indicator of spatial integration is a residents' stance on the possibility of living in the German part of the town. In 2000, the residents of Gubin were mostly surprised by the question of the possibility of moving to the other part of the town and provided arguments to substantiate the potential difficulties they could face in the realization of this potential goal. Newer quantitative research indicates that almost half the respondents in the Polish parts of the town would be ready to live in the German parts: in Zgorzelec—15.4% temporarily and 32.3% permanently; in Gubin—11.6% tem-

---

[7] The empirical exemplifications of specific phenomena are illustrated mostly by the results of studies performed in the Polish parts of the divided towns by the Department of the Border Sociology at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Wrocław: *The Border Situation of Zgorzelec in the Opinions of Its Residents* (in Polish: *Pograniczne położenie Zgorzelca w opiniach jego mieszkańców*) (2010); *The Border Situation of Gubin in the Opinions of Its Residents* (in Polish: *Pograniczne położenie Gubina w opiniach jego mieszkańców*) (2012) and *The Border Situation of Słubice in the Opinions of Its Residents* (in Polish: *Pograniczne położenie Słubic w opiniach jego mieszkańców*) (2015). The studies were performed on representative samples, with an assumed statistical significance of 0.05 and an estimation error no higher than 5%. The sample in Zgorzelec contained 382 persons, in Gubin and Słubice—376 persons in each city. Ultimately, 372, 374, and 365 interviews were qualified respectively for analysis, which slightly increased the measurement error, to 5.07% in Zgorzelec, 5.01% in Gubin, and 5.1% in Słubice. The choice of these surveys can be justified by their relative recentness and topicality, and their grasp of the complex nature of the processes being measured. It should also be highlighted that these are the only comparable studies encompassing a wider area of the borderland and a variety of problems typical of society in the Polish parts of the divided towns; hence, they allow certain generalizations to be made. A more complex discussion of the results of the above-mentioned project can be found in the publication "Cud pogranicza? Zgorzelczanie, gubinianie i słubiczanie o życiu w miastach podzielonych" K. Dolińska, J. Makaro, N. Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak, Kraków 2017.

porarily and 36.5% permanently; in Słubice—9.9% temporarily and 37.9% permanently [8] (Dolińska, Makaro, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2017: 121). These indicators do not encourage any conclusions regarding the advancement of a process of spatial integration nor do they support discussing the presence of specific barriers to the process. They show a relatively high level of spatial connection between the two sides of the divided towns, as evidenced by both the consumption of the neighbor's space and the level of domestication of the space lying beyond the national border, which is no longer a barrier to thinking of the other part of the town as a place of residence. This in turn could be described as normality—a state allowing a quite functional and not especially complicated life in a given time and place.

S y m b o l i c   i n t e g r a t i o n takes place after the removal of the most persistent barriers, namely those of consciousness. It seems that these are responsible for the fact that residents of the Polish and German parts of the towns are close but still separate, even though there has been high border permeability for many years now. The borders between the local Polish and the German communities have not vanished; they are still maintained on the level of an us-them opposition or cultivated in semi-maintained stereotypes—even though these differ from national stereotypes (Dębicki, Doliński 2013; Dębicki, Makaro 2016). The distance between the residents of the two parts of the towns has probably shortened but it has not disappeared and perhaps cannot disappear completely: "The neighbor is not one of 'us' and even though he or she may be treated as a 'stranger,' in the sense of being 'other' or 'emotionally distant,' he is not completely 'strange' in the sense of being 'unknown'" (Ziółkowski 1991: 59). In descriptions of this level of integration in the divided towns, the concept of a local community appears to be created by residents of both sides of the towns. Such a category, if applied thoughtfully, should fulfill certain definitional requirements: it should remain in the sphere of the interactions and interrelations that build relationships; there should be a feeling of group and spatial identity; and there should be an ability to solve common problems (Starosta 1995). However, it must be borne in mind that:

> [i]ntegration does not necessarily involve the creation of a local community. In pre-war Poland, we had small towns and villages inhabited by Polish-Ukrainian or Polish-Jewish people. Coexistence worked well: people knew each other, they belonged to the same institutions, they were councilors in the same local governments, they visited each other, their kids went to the same schools, and so forth. At the same time, there was a feeling of separateness between the groups, which was the result of religious or national differences. For instance, marriages between Polish and Ukrainian or the Jewish people did not occur on a larger scale; there was a mutual feeling of strangeness (Nowakowski 1967: 181, translation mine).

This quote underlines that mental borders exist in minds and not solely in institutions such as border crossings or Euroregions. The development of mechanisms and the choice of spheres in which the residents of both nations coexist efficiently in an isolated space—even one defined as a common space—does not mean that there will be no conflict or guarantee the creation of a community with strong ties and a clear identity.

The concept of local community leads us also to "identity," another quite broad theoretical category. Without going into a digression on the definition of the term, it should be asked whether a common identity for the residents of the twin towns (Zgorzelec-Gorlitz,

---

[8] It should be borne in mind that recent years have proven that there are areas of the German borderland where Poles reside eagerly and in considerable numbers: for instance, in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania.

Gubin-Guben, Słubice-Frankfurt) is possible at all. A more precise question would consider the indicators: namely, on the basis of what, in opposition to what, and at the cost of which earlier identities could this identity arise (be created)? How strong would this identity be? The possibilities of changing identity are restricted, even if the new identity is tempting and attractive and the ideological projects promoting it are convincing and ever present. There are the risks of the unknown. It is worth considering another standpoint, presented by Łukowski in an essayistic manner:

> Therefore, I opt for a kind of asceticism, frugality, carefulness; especially in a situation where, as a response to different stimuli, we resign from one affiliation and replace it with another. Or we do not reject the 'old' one but make some space for the new one. It is worth remembering that the emotional and cognitive resources of each of us are restricted. Moreover, the more affiliations we have, the more shallow, ephemeral, and replaceable they become. Hence, we are threatened by sorrow or even depression; or, in the best-case scenario, by superficiality, skin-deep effects, and—let us be blunt—mediocrity (Łukowski 2014: 439, translation mine).

The symbolic borders are sustained, as is reflected in how the neighbor is viewed. The social roles in which the German neighbor is most willingly seen are connected to the market: the role of tourist was accepted by 84.7%, 85%, and 86% of respondents respectively, whereas the role of client by 78.5%, 83.4% and 85.9% (Dolińska, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2016). The Germans are viewed in the roles of friends and neighbors by around 60% of respondents. The percentage could be interpreted as a border line between the groups, but not as an especially thick one. The border is also reflected in the declarations of those residents of Zgorzelec, Gubin and Słubice who do not visit the neighbor. As barriers to visiting the German part of the city they mention such soft factors as "feeling uneasy and alien" (17%, 13.9%, and 18.2% respectively), "unfriendly residents" (10%, 8.1%, and 18.2% respectively), or "lack of knowledge of the other part of the town" (8.2%, 6.8%, and 15.2% respectively). Looking into the future, the respondents do not foresee any revolution, acknowledging the normality of the current situation. Most of them believe that in five years the relations between residents of the Polish and the German parts of the towns will have resulted in mutually beneficial cooperation (56.5%, 52.9%, and 62.7% respectively) and that differences between the towns will be equalized (42.2%, 29.1%, and 28.8% respectively) (Dolińska, Makaro, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2016: 381). A certain closeness emerges in the findings, yet it is accompanied by distinctiveness.

Another aspect of integration has already appeared above: i d e o l o g i c a l i n t e g r a t i o n. The Euro-city Gubin/Guben was proclaimed in 1996 and the Euro-city Zgorzelec-Gorlitz was established in 1998. The name "Słubfort" is used, artistically, to describe Słubice and Frankfort. These names are not solely attractive signs and handy tools in the realization of different institutional initiatives; mostly they are ideological slogans, which impose a certain way of thinking about the towns. As we discuss the eventual union of two nationally distinctive communities, we should bear in mind that nationality may be social and ideological in nature and that relations between the societies residing on two sides of a river may be divided into ordinary and ideological neighborhoods. The latter kind is defined by Kurcz as "a set of beliefs, assessments, aims, and expectations resulting from the interests of at least one side, determined by national government, formulated by the political class, developed and propagated by the institutions dependent on the authorities and by the bodies of opinion close to the authorities" (2007: 88, translation mine). The ide-

ological neighborhood and institutional undertakings create conditions in which relations on the lowest social level—between individuals—can be realized (but do not have to be). The residents' belief in the unity of their twin towns shows how ideological neighborhood is achieved in the divided towns. Around half the respondents are convinced that the two parts are or can become one town (12.9%, 12.6%, and 11% respectively believe that they are one city, whereas 43.5%, 37.4%, 32.3% respectively claim that they are not one town but they could be). The other half claims the opposite (40%, 42%, and 53% respectively think they are not and never will be one city). Furthermore, noticing the priority of instrumental benefits over autotelic ones in cooperation between Polish and the German centers suggests a certain daily pragmatism and resistance to ideology. It could be also interpreted as a sign of "departing" in different ways from the processes taking place on common and ideological levels. The respondents were asked about the kind of initiatives that should be undertaken jointly by the two parts of the towns: they considered infrastructure projects to be most important, while sports, entertainment, and cultural events, which allow the citizens to get to know each other better, were considered least important (Dolińska, Makaro, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2016: 377–378). The primacy of ideological integration over social integration has been noticed by numerous scholars. At the same time, many researchers have not paid attention to the issue at all and have considered empirically verifiable integration on levels other than the social one to be sufficient.

The shaping of identity, especially an urban identity (including in the divided towns), may be subject to ideological persuasion. In contemporary thought about the transformation of cities, the issue of urban identity becomes crucial. In the light of disappearing traditional functions, it is a city's special identity that distinguishes it from other cities and guarantees its development and success. "The perspective in which identity is a product resulting from the discursive game of interests played by local social actors reveals a significant political aspect of identity (one, however, that is usually overlooked in discussions of the phenomenon). This aspect reveals itself twice: first as identity politicality, and then as identity politics" (Błaszczyk 2015: 38, translation mine).

In the case of the divided towns, it is possible to speak, categorically, of identity politics. (However, the issue of the identity's attractiveness to Polish and German elites should be more closely investigated). The results of the empirical study indicate that even though part of the residents has interiorized the idea of joining the divided cities as attractive, there is insufficient evidence to state that the political identity of the divided towns has been shaped.

Conclusions

At the beginning of their article, Dębicki and Tamáska (2014) raise the question whether there are separate but adjacent wholes or united urban structures on the European borders. In their conclusions, they voice doubts if the residents of the divided towns need the integration at all, which appears to be more accurate. In order to support those doubts and to attempt at concluding the above topic, I would like to propose the following: scholars dealing with the issue of social integration should reflect on whether social integration is necessary or inevitable and on what, precisely, it consists in the case of divided towns in-

volving two nations. The observations made in the Polish parts of the divided towns incline me to call the present state normalized rather than integrated. Among numerous expressions proposed to the respondents to characterize relations between the two parts of the town the ones they considered most accurate were "acceptance of close presence" and "normality" for 72.2% and 71.9% of Zgorzelec residents, 74.1% and 72.7% of Gubin residents, and 76.4% and 79.6% of Słubice residents respectively (the answers "definitely" and "rather yes" were joined) (Dolińska, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2016).

Looking at Polish-German borderland phenomena through the prism of everyday life, as I propose—in terms of normality and commonality, without either admiration or lament for perfect development or too slow integration—would enable thorough investigation and recording of what is occurring in the borderland and in the divided towns. This would obviate the risk of quietly accepting the assumption that the integration of divided towns has a specific vector and is a constantly developing process. It is not clear what conditions support the claim that the process is taking place. Open borders and openness toward the neighbor are not given once and for all and the situation may deteriorate; a changed or even reversed situation is possible (as proven by Brexit, for instance). The coexistence of towns on both sides of the border and of the societies living there is not guaranteed by any unknown forces. The processes taking place do not have a sole direction, a fixed dynamics, or a shape. Viewing them as a geometric sequence, or even arithmetic progression, seems common, yet unsuitable. Neighbors need not constantly become closer or like each other more and more. Sometimes it may be enough if they improve their knowledge of their neighbor's culture. Their mutual perception could well be described by the phrase "warm indifference" (Dębicki, Doliński 2013). It is true that in the last three decades, when in the divided towns on the Polish-German border numerous things happened simultaneously and intensively—or more often and more intensively than in areas away from the border— use of the metaphor "a laboratory of European integration" was justified. However, every experiment ends at some point and the situation "normalizes."

Today the twin cities on the Polish-German border are kinds of microcosms, where transborder activities occur massively, are permanent in nature, and fulfill everyday needs. Making paths through the borders does not take place in a vacuum but with the participation of the neighbors. Some practices are directly oriented toward such contact and motivated by the need to meet one another and sustain social relationships. The paths are made from both sides. In the locality—hence in a specific place—there are transborder spaces founded on a network of relationships. The process is allowed and supported by the institutional context, with a barrier-free border and actors undertaking cooperation on the supra-individual level. It is this very context and these actors that create the miracle of normality in the divided towns (Dolińska, Makaro, Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2018: 211).

The intensity of the European ideology and the relatively long time in which it has been promulgated gives rise to the idea that what was supposed to happen on the social level in relations between the Polish and the German residents of the divided towns has already happened. However, the process is probably not yet finished. The residents use the urban space on the other side of the river when they feel the need to do so. Perhaps it is enough to state that parts of the towns may be complementary to other parts within the current geographical, political, and social borders (or slightly modified ones). There is thus

a normal, "common neighborhood [...] contacts and relations between individual members of the two nations are possible due to the openness and permeability of borders and happen as a way of satisfying needs and realizing private individual interests in everyday contacts" (Kurcz 2007: 88, translation mine).

Use of the category of normality is justified precisely because the specificity—the bi-nationality—of the daily life of residents in the divided towns is not a particular issue. "On the level of daily life in modern Western societies, national borders are porous and discontinuous in time and space. In my opinion, the continuity in an individual's experience is characterized by speech, shopping, walks, work, and family life, and there are no clear references to the nation" (Wojakowski 2014: 273, translation mine). Perhaps, the extant borders, both physical and symbolic, do not have to be lifted. It is enough that they are permeable, that daily life in the divided towns runs similarly to life in nationally homogenous locations, and that no social engineering that opposes the needs of residents will change the situation.

References

A n i s c h e n k o, A., and S e r g u n i n, A. 2012. Twin cities: a new form of cross-border cooperation in the baltic sea region, *Baltic Region / Baltijskij Region*: 19–27.

B ł a s z c z y k, M. 2015. O politycznej naturze tożsamości lokalnej, in: M. Malikowski, M. Palak, & J. Halik (ed.), *Społeczne i ekonomiczne aspekty urbanizacji i metropolizacji*. Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, pp. 33–43.

B ł a s z c z y k, M. 1977. Współżycie ludności polskiej i niemieckiej na pograniczu Polski i NRD. Poznań, manuscript.

B e c k, U., and G r a n d e, E. 2007. *Cosmopolitan Europe*. Cambridge: Polity.

B u r s z t a, J. 1967. Kategorie ludności i ich typ kulturowy, in: J. Kłoczowski (ed.), *Przemiany społeczne na Ziemiach Zachodnich*. Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, pp. 132–177.

C i o k, S. 1993. Polska granica zachodnia. Zmiana funkcji granicy, in: Zbigniew Kurcz (ed.), *Problemy społeczno-gospodarcze miast pogranicza polsko-niemieckiego*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 9–21.

D ę b i c k i, M., and D o l i ń s k i, W. 2013. "Sympatia" i "ciepła obojętność" jako kategorie analityczne stosunku zgorzelczan do mieszkańców Görlitz, *Opuscula Sociologica* 2: 7–30.

D ę b i c k i, M., and M a k a r o, J. 2016. The Inhabitants of Guben in the eyes of their neighbours from Gubin. An analysis of stereotypes in the Polish-German twin towns, in: E. Opiłowska, Z. Kurcz, J. Roose (eds), *Quo vadis, borderland studies?* Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.

D ę b i c k i, M., T a m á s k a, M. 2014. Laboratories of Integration: Divided Twin Towns at River Borders in the Visegrad Countries and Germany, *The Online Journal of the Institute for Sociology*, Center for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

D o l i ń s k a, K., M a k a r o, J., and N i e d ź w i e c k a - I w a ń c z a k, N. 2013. Instrumentalność "versus" autoteliczność praktyk transgranicznych mieszkańców Zgorzelca i Gubina, *Opuscula Sociologica* 2: 31–46.

D o l i ń s k a, K., M a k a r o, J., and N i e d ź w i e c k a - I w a ń c z a k, N. 2016. Od miast przygranicznych do miast pogranicza? Wybrane miasta pogranicza zachodniego w świetle analiz socjologicznych, in: G. Skąpska, M.S. Szczepański, Ż. Stasieniuk, *Co po kryzysie?*. Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Socjologiczne, pp. 361–382.

D o l i ń s k a, K., M a k a r o, J., and N i e d ź w i e c k a - I w a ń c z a k, N. (eds.). 2018. *Cud pogranicza? Zgorzelczanie, gubinianie i słubiczanie o życiu w miastach podzielonych*. Kraków: Nomos.

D o l i ń s k a, K., and N i e d ź w i e c k a - I w a ń c z a k, N. 2016. Mieszkańcy pogranicza zachodniego o niemieckich sąsiadach a Polacy o Niemcach, *Pogranicze. Studia Społeczne* 27 (2): 223–245.

G i e r c z a k, D. 2017. Town Pairs, Divided Border Towns and Places of Integration: The Case of Görlitz/Zgorzelec, *Sociální Studia / Social Studies* 14: 55–70.

H a r d i, T., and U s z k a i, A. 2017. Theoretical Models of Cross-border Integration, *Sociální studia / Social Studies* 14: 9–30.

J a ń c z a k, J. 2012. Integracja europejska w mikroperspektywie. Graniczne miasta bliźniacze w Europie Zachod- niej i Środkowo-Wschodniej, *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne* 4: 27–45.

J o e n n i e m i, P., and S e r g u n i n, A. 2011. Another Face of Integration: City Twinning in Europe, *Research Journal of International Studies* 22: 120–131.

J o e n n i e m i, P., and S e r g u n i n, A. 2009. When Two Aspire to Become One: City-Twinning in Northern Europe, *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 26: 231–242.

K u r c z, Z. 2007. O sąsiedztwie ideologicznym i powszednim : racjonalność i pragmatyzm mieszkańców pogra- nicza polsko-niemieckiego, in: R.B. Woźniak, Ż. Stasieniuk, *Społeczeństwo pogranicza polsko-niemiec- kiego: wyzwania i dylematy*. Szczecin: Economicus, pp. 88–98.

K w i l e c k i, A. 1987. Procesy integracji Ziem Zachodnich z macierzą. Przegląd problematyki, in: E. Wnuk-Lipiń- ski, *VII Ogólnopolski Zjazd Socjologiczny. Materiały*. Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Socjologiczne, pp. 46–72.

Ł u k o w s k i, W. 2014. Smutek tożsamości, radość przynależności in: P. Binder (ed.), *Lokalne, narodowe i inne… Księga dla Profesor Joanny Kurczewskiej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, pp. 437–444.

M a k a r o, J. 2009. Euromiasto: atrakcyjny szyld czy urzeczywistnienie się idei transgraniczności?, in: Z. Kurcz, A. Sakson, *Polskie transgranicza*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 71–88.

M a k a r o, J. 2007. *Gubin-miasto graniczne. Studium socjologiczne*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wro- cławskiego.

N o w a k o w s k i, S. 1967. Procesy adaptacji i integracji w środowisku wiejskim i miejskim Ziem Zachodnich, in: W. Markiewicz and P. Rybicki, *Przemiany społeczne na Ziemiach Zachodnich*. Poznań: Instytut Zachod- ni, pp. 178–214.

O p i ł o w s k a, E. 2017. Creating transborderness in the public spaces of the divided cities. The case of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice, in: E. Opiłowska, Z. Kurcz, J. Roose (eds.), *Advances in European Borderlands Studies*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, pp. 317–343.

P a n t k o w s k i, R. 1983. Przemiany w świadomości mieszkańców pogranicza PRL-NRD na przykładzie miasta Gubina, manuscript in University of Wrocław Archives.

R y b i c k i, P. 1967. Ziemie zachodnie ze stanowiska teorii socjologicznej, in: W. Markiewicz and P. Rybicki, *Przemiany społeczne na Ziemiach Zachodnich*. Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, pp. 338–384.

S t a r o s t a, P. 1995. *Poza metropolią. Wiejskie i małomiasteczkowe zbiorowości lokalne a wzory porządku ma- krospołecznego*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

S c h u l t z, H. 2002. *Twin Towns on the Border as Laboratories of European Integration*. Frakfurt (Oder): Frank- furter Institut für Transformationsstudien.

S t o k ł o s a, K. 2017. Twin towns in Eastern Europe: On the way from bordering to the cross-border identity?, in: E. Opiłowska, Z. Kurcz, J. Roose (eds.), *Advances in European Borderlands Studies*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, pp. 307–315.

S z é k e l y, A. 2007. Cross-border agglomerations, *A Dunaújvárosi Főiskola Közleményei* XXIX/3.

T a m á s k a, M. 2017, Divided twin towns in heads: Milieus of urban spaces. Case study of Český Těšín / Cieszyn, in: E. Opiłowska, Z. Kurcz, J. Roose (eds.), *Advances in European Borderlands Studies*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, pp. 371–398.

T u r s k i, R. 1967. Procesy urbanizacyjne Ziem Zachodnich, in: W. Markiewicz and P. Rybicki, *Przemiany spo- łeczne na Ziemiach Zachodnich*. Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, pp. 215–245.

W o j a k o w s k i, D. 2014. Granice narodu w czasach transnarodowych powiązań, in: P. Binder (ed.), *Lokalne, na- rodowe i inne… Księga dla Profesor Joanny Kurczewskiej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, pp. 263– 275.

Z i ó ł k o w s k i, M. 1991. Wspólnota przestrzeni i odmienność tradycji — sąsiedzkie kultury etniczne, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 4: 59–69.

Biographical note: Julita Makaro, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of the Sociology of Borderlands in the Institute of Sociology at the University of Wrocław. Her research interests are ethnic issues, borderlands, social communication, and the methodology of the social sciences. Recent publications: *Gubin-miasto graniczne. Studium socjologiczne*, Wrocław 2007; *O wielokulturowości monokulturowego Wrocławia*, Wrocław 2013 (with K. Dolińska); *Postawy wobec Litwy i Litwinów na przykładzie wrocławian*, Kraków 2016 (with M. Dębicki); *Cud pogranicza? Zgorzelczanie, gubinianie i słubiczanie o życiu w miastach podzielonych*, Kraków 2018 (with K. Dolińska, N. Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak).

E-mail: julita.makaro@uwr.edu.pl