Creating transborderness in the public spaces of the divided cities. The case of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice

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Introduction

The exploration of city space has long been the focus of academic research (Thrift 2006; Cronin 2011). Places, information boards, memorial sites become part of the creation of city identity and encourage the circulation of images among societies. This is also a ‘throwntogetherness’ of places that occurs as a result of a negotiation of a here-and-now, a negotiation that includes humans and nonhumans (Massey 2005: 140; Cronin 2011: 364).

In the last decades the interest in investigating spaces has been increasing across various disciplines. Apart from exploring the roles of spaces in the geographical perspective, spatial representations in historical narratives, memory cultures, social relations, religious formations and politics have met with great interest of researchers (Munkelt et al. 2013).

Since the 1980s within the ‘spatial turn’ place/space has become an important paradigm of social and cultural science. Space is no longer interpreted as a container area where people, cultures and traditions are located, but as a result of social relations, an outcome of the processes of construction, delimitation and exclusion (Bachmann-Medick 2010). The spatial turn in social sciences has drawn attention to the constructedness of places as ‘meaningful locations’ (Cresswell 2004: 7). Spaces are results of social production through the creation of material environments and their investments with cultural meaning (Pfoser 2014: 270).

Furthermore, the ‘spatial turn’ has influenced the understanding of history that is not only studied as a sequence of chronologically ordered events, but as history that is engraved in landscapes, cities, maps as well as railway timetables. They have to be read by researchers who should sharpen their senses, widen perspectives and explore historical spaces as well as present landscapes which overlay the natural physical surroundings (Schlögel 2003). Moreover, in places and spaces the memories of ancestors, past events and the spirit of the time are encoded and can be de-
tected. Therefore, landscapes can be read as commemorative topographical texts through which the identity is generated and communicated (Assmann 1999: 38).

The identity of cities is inscribed in cityscapes and created by city images. William J. T. Mitchell argues that the image is no longer only a supplement, something that illustrates knowledge, but rather it constructs, shapes and produces meaning:

Whatever a pictorial turn is, then, it should be clear that it is not a return to naive mimesis, copy, or correspondence theories of representation, or a renewed metaphysics of pictorial ‘presence’: it is rather a postlinguistic, post-semiotic rediscovery of a picture as a complex interplay between visuality, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies, and figurality (Mitchell 1995: 16).

Since the mid-1990s the ‘pictorial/iconic turn’ not only gives attention to the image as a key aspect of our life world, but also analyses the image as a central component of structuring knowledge, aesthetic representation, political power, history and philosophy. Visual culture studies include the analysis of materiality of images, their production and their reception in historical, cultural and societal framework (Maurer 2013: 6).

The aim of this chapter is to explore the city spaces of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice through the camera lens as a process of depicting the city layers and understanding of the narratives of the cities. Setting off with a camera, selected images, information, logos and city messages will be gathered, documented and analysed. I will search for places, symbols and memory patterns which form the current identity of the divided city in the public spaces. Is there a common cross-border narrative readable in the urban spaces? How far do the cities relate to each other? Are there any symbols of commonality to be found?

However, for the purpose of this article I will not discuss all identity-forming images in the city landscapes, but focus only on those with which the cities may create a common transborder identity (Kurcz 2009). In this context, it is necessary to realise that taking pictures is not a fully objective procedure and depends often on subjective attitudes and intentions of a photographer (Sztompka 2005: 77).

Data and conceptual framework

In order to explore the identity of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice created in the city landscape, the ethnographic method will be applied (Agar 1996).
Between November 2015 and April 2016 three one-week stays were organised with the aim of collecting primary data. In ethnographic studies, fieldwork is the main tool to observe and examine all aspects of a cultural system, especially those that could not be explored through laboratory or survey research alone (Whitehead 2005). In particular, I did not observe the inhabitants of the twin city, but tried to behave like a tourist who blends into the landscape and absorbs the local atmosphere. As a result, 124 photographs of selected objects in Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice were taken as a primary source of analysis.

Charles S. Suchar (Suchar 1997: 34) points out:

A photograph is documentary to the extent to which information within it can be argued as putative facts that are answers to particular questions. This process of asking and answering questions – based on field observation or archival research, and engaging in a discovery process – is an essential characteristic of the meaning of documentary.

Furthermore, he emphasises that field workers enter the field with some knowledge about their subject matter that allows them to frame general questions for which they try to find photographic answers and in the next step analyse the photographic data in order to find patterns and start conceptualising (Suchar 1997; Konecki 2011).

As mentioned above, within the pictorial turn visual studies have gained more attention among qualitative researchers. Visual means such as symbols, logos and trademarks have become more and more relevant in defining and communicating identities and social worlds. Photographs, video recordings, paintings, graffiti and video blogs are often employed in order to communicate live experiences (Konecki 2011, 2012).

Krzysztof T. Konecki analyses the implementation of visual data in grounded theory and notices that ‘visual grounded theory relies on visual data for constructing categories, describing properties and generating/constructing theoretical hypotheses, which account for the visual phenomena and visual social processes’ (Konecki 2011: 133). There are many options to adopt visual data in grounded theory to generate categories: firstly, as auxiliary materials, secondly as the main source of empirical materials, thirdly as standalone data for the analysis of actions and interaction, and lastly to use visual data either as an auxiliary or as the main source of empirical evidence, but only in the analysis of the visual dimension of actions and interactions (Konecki 2011: 137-38).

In my article I try to apply the second option of using the photographs as the main source of empirical analysis of the visualisation of transbor-
derness in the twin city. At the beginning of the analysis the photographs will be described and in the second step coded (labels are attached to each description) in order to create core categories and to compare them in the last step and to provide some general conclusions.

Furthermore, secondary data such as existing literature on the topic as well as contents of the city websites will be examined. Making use of the secondary sources provides a reference point for new data and helps to develop some assumptions to be verified in the analytical part.

The concept of transborderness (Kurcz 2009; Sadowski 2007) plays the central role for the analysis of the visualisation of identity in the city landscape of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. Andrzej Sadowski defines transborderness as the institutionally normalised, mass and stable cross-border flow of people, their economic potential, cultural patterns, values as well as activities of neighbouring states and societies to maintain or develop these cross-border contacts (Sadowski 2007: 7).

Furthermore, Zbigniew Kurcz argues that transborderness in border regions proceeds in two stages. In the first stage transborderness manifests itself in the initiatives of local elites and in the mutual openness of the borderlands’ societies. In the second stage of transborderness in border regions a social borderland is growing up that implies mass interpenetration of cultures and people and the importing of lifestyles and customs. The local elites and societies are pursuing the same goals regardless of the border as a dividing line. As a result, a cross-border community is created (Kurcz 2009: 9-15).

The concept of transborderness can be explored in different ways and on the basis of various indicators such as linguistic borrowings, mutual social trust, mixed marriages, local political development strategies and cross-border identifications of citizens. For the purpose of this article the visualisation of transborderness in the city landscape of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice will be examined.

History of the twin city Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. A short overview

Until January 1945 Frankfurt (Oder) remained largely unscathed by the war. Then the city was declared a fortress and some days later the Red Army approached the River Oder. In April the blowing up of the Oder Bridge was ordered and thereafter the Soviet Army bombarded the city. At
the end of the war 65 per cent of the buildings were destroyed (Stribrny, Zäpke 1990).

Even before final decisions regarding new borders were taken at the Potsdam conference in August 1945, the Polish administration tried to pursue the politics of faits accomplis in the territories taken over by the Soviet Army. Polish districts, city and municipality administrations were established with the aim of quickly carrying out settlement actions and rebuilding the economy in the new western territories (Jajeśniak-Quast, Stoklosa 2000). As with other German cities on the rivers Oder and Neisse, Frankfurt (Oder) was split and in the eastern suburb the Polish city Słubice was established. Many of the Germans who had lived on the right bank of the river resettled on the western side of the Oder, which now formed the Polish–German border. New Polish settlers came from different areas. Many of them were displaced from their home regions further east that became part of the Soviet Union. Most of the new neighbours did not have any previous experience with each other. The culture, religion, traditions and languages were strange. For Polish settlers also the new spaces of living, buildings, inscriptions and technical equipment were unfamiliar and had to be ‘domesticated’. The communist propaganda regarding the notion of regained Piast territories was intended to enhance the integration process. Therefore German traces in public space such as monuments, memorial places and street names were removed and replaced by Polish national symbols of identification (Opiłowska 2009). The German past was taboo in public discourses. Instead, the Polish myth of ‘regained Piast territories’ was propagated by state authorities, media, local museums and cultural institutions. However, it was difficult to remove the German past from the public space. In the minutes of the meeting of the Municipal National Council of 24 June 1947 the problem of German signs in Słubice was addressed. The Municipal Council of Słubice appealed to all offices, political organisations and associations to remove definitely and thoroughly from the city landscape of Słubice all German labels by the 5th of July. Otherwise, persons who did not follow the appeal and did not remove the German inscriptions would be called to account and pay the price (Jajeśniak-Quast, Stoklosa 2000: 37).

Despite the Polonisation actions in Słubice, new residents were feeling foreign in the new space for a long time after WWII. The uncertainty of the German–Polish border, the revisionist objectives of expellees in West Germany as well as the anti-German propaganda of the Polish communist authorities made the integration process of Polish settlers in Słubice and,
in consequence, the identification with the space, difficult. Furthermore, until 1956 the cross-border contacts between local-level authorities and communities were limited. Firstly the policy of detente induced intensive cross-border cooperation. During the 1970s the network of local-level cross-border initiatives became denser and more solidly institutionalised (Chessa 2004: 81).

The fall of the Iron Curtain and the political and economic transformation of the Central and Eastern European Countries marked a turning point in the post-war history of the Polish–German twin town. From the 1990s onwards, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, the collaboration and inter-regional and transnational harmony were emphasised in official discourse. The renaming of streets, the erection of new monuments and the removal of old ones manifest the remaking of symbolic space after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

The striving to join the European Community was the overall objective of Polish national, regional and local stakeholders. Therefore, the European identification was quasi imposed on the border cities, which were considered as places where Europe can be experienced. In reality, the short period of neighbourhood and the communist regime meant that the residents of the border’s two sides had little time to acquire linguistic skills and to overcome historical mistrust and animosity. This is confirmed by the results of a poll taken among residents of Słubice and Frankfurt (Oder) in 1992 regarding attitudes toward one another. Sixty per cent of interviewed residents of Słubice believed that a unified Germany presented a significant threat. Sixty per cent of Frankfurters and 65 per cent of Słubicans did not believe that a reconciliation between Poles and Germans would be possible (Chessa 2004: 91).

Furthermore, the German–Polish border cities lacked a historical and cultural continuity because of many displaced persons on both sides of the border. However, the political elites tried to overcome these problems with European symbols. As a result, a deep gap between local elites and citizens developed. The EU initiatives were perceived by many residents as the projects of mayors and EU actors (Opiłowska 2009). The cross-border initiatives with the aim of improving transnational relations and cultivating an identity for the region were driven by local elites – politicians, administrators and civic leaders. In the early 1990s, a group of local politicians and civic leaders in Frankfurt (Oder) organised a series of discussion circles with leaders from Słubice (Chessa 2004: 94). In 1993 the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina was established. Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice
are part of it. In the bilateral agreement the ensuring of good neighbourly relationships between Poles and Germans and the strengthening of regional identity among Poles and Germans living in the border region through the development of a common development strategy were emphasised.\(^1\) At the beginning of the cooperation between Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice the Euroregion was the major initiator of cross-border projects, political cooperation and economic exchange. However, in the opinion of local stakeholders the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina only plays the function of a ‘custodian of EU funds that local communities are eligible to’. Currently, local actors and private stakeholders think that they act rather independently and perceive themselves as being the agents of local change (Bürkner 2017 in this volume). Interpreting this imaginary in the framework of transborderness, it can be argued that the second stage of transborderness has just started in Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice.

The following section focuses on the question of how the space of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice is used in order to create and promote the cities as twin town or a cross-border city. In the first step the content of the official city websites will be analysed and compared with each other. Next, the photographic materials will be evaluated and put together into main narrative paths. Additionally, other available materials related to the topic such as SWOT and image analysis of the cities will be examined.

**Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice – a twin city without borders?**

Entering the official website of Frankfurt (Oder), the twin city brand ‘Frankfurt (Oder)/Słubice. Ohne Grenzen. Bez granic’ can be seen at first glance in the top-left corner.

\(^1\) [http://euroregion-viadrina.pl/content/historia](http://euroregion-viadrina.pl/content/historia) (accessed 12 May 2016).
The joint city marketing strategy was developed in 2012 on the basis of the analysis by the advertising agency Runze & Casper GmbH as to how the cities are perceived from the inside and the outside.² From the inside on the basis of talks with experts, Frankfurt is associated with a high standard of living, nature, European University Viadrina and the laboratory of European integration. Słubice has an image of being a dynamic, creative and diverse city of German–Polish cohabitation and as a symbol of European integration. Furthermore, the Collegium Polonicum plays, in the opinion of the interviewed experts, an important role for the creation of a common identity (ibid.). The features that distinguish Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice from other cities are the location on the border, the living neighbourhood and the internationality of education and research. Most of the residents of Frankfurt (Oder) associate their city with the border and the River Oder, whereas the most common connotation of Frankfurt for the residents of Słubice is shopping. Słubice is thought of as a border city for most people in Frankfurt (Oder), but the inhabitants of Słubice them-

selves think primarily of their flat, house and property when thinking of Słubice.

When asking for some public events that are organised in Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice, most of the polled residents of Frankfurt (Oder) mentioned concerts, trade fairs and Kleist days in Frankfurt and German–Polish events, the bridge festival and the Polish market in Słubice, whereas the interviewed citizens of Słubice referred to the German–Polish events in both cities in the first place, followed by concerts and the Hansa Festival in Frankfurt (Oder) and the bridge festival in Słubice (ibid.). The results show that the inhabitants of Słubice perceived Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice above all as being a German–Polish city.

However, in 2012 according to the analysis 51 per cent of interviewed citizens in Frankfurt (Oder) and 81 per cent of polled residents in Słubice could not mention any recognition of the city branding of Frankfurt (Oder) and even more (87 per cent of citizens of Frankfurt (Oder) and 80 per cent of Słubice) were not familiar with any concepts of the promotion of Słubice. However, answering the question as to how the cities could be promoted, ‘border city, European twin towns and university city’ was mentioned most frequently (ibid.). From the outside the cities are perceived as border cities and university cities. Both cities seem to be open and European, but not attractive. Regarding the media image of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice, it was found that they are almost always considered together and the cross-border cooperation is their unique feature. According to the media analysis, reports on Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice focus mainly on current or future topics. Historical issues or any old resentment are not discussed (Analyse deutscher Medien, 2012). The German–Polish cooperation is the most heavily disputed topic.

Taking all the results of the analysis of identification and recognition of the twin city into consideration, the development of a common advertising and city branding strategy seems to be, for both sides, an advantage. Thus, the common city branding was developed in order to enhance the recognition of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice in inter-municipal, national and international relations. Moreover, it is intended to help strengthen the identification of citizens with the twin town and with the Oder region as well as to improve the attractiveness of the city for companies, institutions, stu-

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dents and investors. Therefore, instead of two cities on the Oder, one international city with common goals, a shared culture and problem-solving strategies is displayed and the river itself not as a frontier, but as a symbol of German–Polish cooperation.

However, you will search in vain for the joint city brand and the joint strategy on the website of Słubice.

Fig. 2: Screenshot from the official website of Słubice

There is only a municipal coat of arms visible. Also in contrast to the website of Frankfurt (Oder), where in the background the cityscape with the River Oder and a bridge to Słubice are presented, on the Słubice home page only a view of Jedności Robotniczej Street is shown. Only when the link to the German–Polish Cooperation Centre is clicked does the common brand become visible.

‘Overcoming borders through joint investment in the future’ is the motto of the Polish–German Cooperation Centre. The centre was founded in 2011 on an equal basis between the municipality in Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. Staff members are proportionally from both cities and all bilingual. The website content of the centre is also in both languages, with some basic information in English. The centre focuses on projects in infrastructure, education, tourism and economic development. In 2010 both municipalities developed a joint action plan that was updated in 2014 in regard to the new EU financial period 2014–2020. The cross-border cooperation concentrates on three overall objectives: sustainable, cross-border development; joint economic development, cross-border research and increasing employment and an international educational location.

As demonstrated above, both city municipalities developed elaborate activities and strategies of place marketing to ‘sell’ Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice to different recipients. The development of a common brand is part of the marketing activities that can be defined in the following way (Colomb, 2012: 141):

The intentional and organised process of construction and dissemination of a discourse on, and images of, a city, in order to attract tourists and investors or generate the support of local residents for a particular urban vision. The pro-
cess is ‘spatial’ in the sense that it: seeks to mediate or construct a defined identity for a particular geographical space, and usually makes use of spatial metaphors and of specific architectural symbols characterizing that place in the process. Place marketing activities thus interact with place making activities (architecture, planning, urban design and urban development) and with the cultural politics of collective identity and memory construction through space.

As far as the transborderness approach is considered, the activities of local authorities can be interpreted as being the second stage of transborderness. Is the common brand also visible in the urban landscape of the twin city?

Starting the walk in Ślubice from the border bridge, just behind the Oder on the link site an information board with a map of both cities and a list of tourist attractions can be found. The colours of the board refer to the official colours of the twin town, which, according to the poll, were also mostly associated by the inhabitants – green and blue. The common brand is displayed in the top-left corner the board.

*Fig. 4: Information board with map of the twin town in Ślubice*
The brand is also placed in enlarged format on a special board in Jedności Robotniczej Street, opposite the Collegium Polonicum.

Fig. 5: The common brand board in Słubice, opposite the Collegium Polonicum

At the same place, the common brand is displayed on the information board regarding the renovation of Bolfras House in Frankfurt (Oder), which will be the location of the German–Polish Cooperation Centre, and regarding preparations for the reconstruction of the Kleist Tower in Słubice as a ‘trans-border landmark bound to boost the touristic marketing of the two regions, Słubice and Frankfurt (Oder)’. The project is financed by the European Regional Development Fund.7

Walking further to the city centre of Słubice I was unable to find the common marketing brand in any other places. In front of the city hall stands a figure of a cock – a symbol of the coat of arms of Słubice that refers to the history of Frankfurt (Oder).

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How is the common brand promoted on the other side of the River Oder? Just behind the border bridge we can see the same stand as in Słubice that refers to the common brand of the twin town.

The same symbol is repeated as graffiti on the wall of the landfill site in Frankfurt (Oder). This seems to be an initiative from below.
Moreover, the brand is displayed on the banner that supports the maintenance of the status of Frankfurt as a district-free city that hangs on the city hall and also on the project’s information board in front of Bolfras House.

There are some other symbols in the urban landscape of Frankfurt (Oder) that refer to its Polish part. If you go from the border towards the university, you can find inscribed on the pavement in blue and green colours part of a German–Polish dictionary.
The selection of words seems to be accidental, because there are words such as please, bread, there, but also elfin forest, sea of flowers or cockchafer. I was unable to find out who was the author of these epigraphs. Probably they were some local promoters of the Polish–German cooperation.

The examples presented above demonstrate that in both city landscapes the common brand ‘without borders’ is promoted. However, the managers of Frankfurt (Oder) use it more consistently, and display it on the official website and on advertising material. There are no sources available that would provide information as to how the common brand is recognised and evaluated by the inhabitants of the twin city.

The Kleist Route

The other project that aims to span the two sides of the border of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice is the Kleist Route. The idea goes back to Roland Totzauer, a committed citizen of Frankfurt (Oder). The route commemo-
rates Heinrich von Kleist, a famous German poet, dramatist and novelist who was born in Frankfurt (Oder) in 1777, and his great uncle Ewald Christian von Kleist (a German poet and Prussian officer).

Today the Kleist family is the most important symbol in the memory culture of the inhabitants of Frankfurt (Oder). According to the study by the agency Runze & Casper GmbH analysed above, 30.5 per cent of interviewed residents of Frankfurt (Oder) (1st rank) but only 1.5 per cent of polled residents of Słubice (2nd rank after ‘Slubfurt’ 13.1%), when asked for the label of city marketing, mentioned ‘Kleist city’. 8

The Kleist Route was developed as a joint initiative of inhabitants of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. It is 20 km long and you can follow it on foot or by bike. The tour goes through parts of the city, as well as through parks, where a tourist can encounter monuments and places which commemorate Heinrich von Kleist and his uncle. In Frankfurt (Oder) there are five stations – the Kleist Museum located on Faber Street, the birth house of Kleist, which was destroyed during WWII, the park at St. Gertraud church, where the monuments of Heinrich von Kleist and Ewald Christian von Kleist are located, the Kleist Park and the concert hall of Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach, which previously was a church where Heinrich von Kleist was baptised and had his confirmation. 9

In Słubice there are three stations of the Kleist Route. The first is the project of the rebuilding of the Kleist Tower, which was built in 1892 in memory of Ewald Christian von Kleist, who fell during the Battle of Kunowice. The tower was 20 metres high and had an observation platform. In 1945 retreating German troops blew up the tower. The restoration of the tower is part of the strategy of the ‘creation of historically significant buildings which the inhabitants of Słubice and Frankfurt could equally identify and use together’. 10

The second memorial site in Słubice (station 8 on the Kleist Route) is a small boulder that was set in 1999 in the probable place where the wounded major Ewald von Kleist was found after the battle at Kunowice.
The last station of the Kleist Route is the statue of Kätchen von Heilbronn. It is a plastic sculpture made by Polish artist Mirosław Górski that was placed in Freedom Place (Plac Wolności) in 2008 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the city partnership between Słubice and Heilbronn. ‘Katie of Heilbronn or The Trial by Fire’ is a historical knightly play by Heinrich von Kleist.

The bilingual city

The results of the Eurobarometer have demonstrated that for 82 per cent of respondents who live in the German/Brandenburg–Poland region, language difference poses a major problem for cross-border cooperation.\textsuperscript{12} The lack of language proficiency and the limited intercultural skills are reasons preventing the stakeholders from developing more complex forms of cooperation. Still, translation is an important tool in implementing transborder projects (Kozak, Zillmer 2013).

Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice try to respond to this weakness. In both cities German–Polish kindergartens are operating. The kindergarten in Słubice was built within the framework of the project ‘Education without borders’. It offers places for 135 Polish and 40 German children. However there is still an asymmetry of interests. Whereas in Słubice 69 per cent of pupils learn German, only ten per cent of pupils in Frankfurt (Oder) learn Polish.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Cross-border cooperation in the EU. Report, Flash Euroborometer, 2015.
Is bilingualism promoted in the city landscape? In Frankfurt (Oder) you will find street signs in three languages – German, English and Polish. Moreover, some shops such as H&M have information boards in Polish as well.

Fig. 13: Street signs in Frankfurt (Oder)

When crossing the border and arriving in Słubice you will immediately notice that Germans are daily visitors here. There are currency exchanges, cigarette shops, neon lights, bars and restaurants that welcome you in German.
In almost every restaurant there is also a menu in German. It can be surprising for a tourist that in Słubice there are so many hairdressing salons and dental surgeries.

Fig. 15: Hairdresser and cosmetic salon in Słubice
The entrepreneurs of Slubice seem to know how to use the border location and the price differentials between Poland and Germany. However, the whole city is covered by advertisements, neon lights and inscriptions telling you to come over here and buy or use something. In this way it looks like a big bazaar.
Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the border cities Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice relate to each other in the city landscape and through their website presentations. Analysing the official websites of both towns it was found that whereas Frankfurt (Oder) promotes the common brand ‘city without borders’ on its website, Słubice doesn’t even display the brand name. There is only a link to the website of the common cooperation centre (www.frankfurt-slubice.eu) that can be interpreted as a real proponent of the sense of the common bond. Here the narrative, development strategy and reports on joint events refer explicitly to the vision of a common, united city.

The small survey conducted by the advertising agency has proven that the outstanding features both for Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice are their location on the border, cross-border cooperation and their universities. Therefore daily international relations should be perceived as an important resource of the twin city.
What symbols of identity can be found in the urban landscape? In both cities the common brand is visible in the public space, especially near to the border. Furthermore, that the Kleist Route includes attractions on both sides of the border and provides information in both languages can be interpreted as a connecting element.

However, what cannot be overlooked is that Frankfurt (Oder) is a city, which remains full of void spaces and Slubice is a vibrant city and plenty of exchange offices, hairdressing salons and cigarette stores. Because there are so many advertising hoardings, which do not seem to be controlled by anyone, the city gives the impression of chaos and ugliness. Through bilingual street signs and information boards the transborderness is striking in the urban landscape.

Urban spaces are subject to dynamic changes and are created by various actors like urban planners, architects and monument conservators as well as by entrepreneurs, city activists and ordinary residents. Therefore the analysis, as conducted in this chapter, can only capture the current situation. In order to provide more complex research outcomes on transborderness in the public space of Frankfurt (Oder) and Slubice, all potential reference objects in the city landscape (of national, local and cross-border nature) as well as the motivation of their initiators and their reception of citizens should be examined. However, this approach goes beyond the scope of this contribution.

References


