Chapter I Borderlands: meanings and techniques

There are different ways of characterizing the vast area occupied by the former Soviet Union. However this remains difficult due to completely opposed categories of classification. Nowadays the region consists of countries with diametrically divergent foreign policies, from those that are fully integrated into the EU and NATO to those having joined the Russian inspired Eurasian Economic Union. Concepts as different as "common neighbourhood", "near abroad", "newly independent states", and "post–Soviet space" semantically compete with each other, which betrays a high volatility of various discourses in this part of the world.

Our analysis is premised on the concept of post–Soviet borderlands, that is countries located at the crossroads of different cultural, ethnic, religious and civilizational systems, with flexible and contested "in-between" identities. They are borderlands not only geographically, but also culturally, socially and politically. *On the one hand*, borderland identities are embedded in a dense fabric of cross-border communication that allows them to adapt to intense multi–cultural dynamics. From a historical viewpoint, borderlands developed as communicators and translators of the exterior into the interior, and were homes to various languages, religions and ethnicities. All this not only enhances cultural pluralism and hybridity, but also constitutes one of the preconditions for democratic practices in borderland countries. Yet *on the other hand*, in spite of this predisposition to accommodate differences and flexibly adjust to culturally variegated environments, the post–Soviet borderlands are also producers of well–accentuated national discourses that contain a meaningful bordering and exclusionary potential. It is this tension between the two sides of the borderland identity storylines, the pressure of inclusivity and exclusivity, welcoming differences and constructing homogenous communities that we highlight as a pivotal point for our analysis and an interesting research puzzle to tackle.

In light of this controversy, our main intention is to problematize nation building discourses and imageries that we consider to be a deeply cultural phenomena. Each collective identity necessitates two essential components, construction and deconstruction of boundaries with multiple Others, and in the meantime the exclusion of certain domestic content from the

representation of the collective Self. This makes cultural forms of national representation not only structurally dependent on the fluid and contingent Self–Other distinction, but also incomplete in the sense of split historical memories and deep ruptures between competing interpretations of national identities.

It is through this prism that we approach cultural forms of nation building as exposed through representations and performative events aimed at constructing national identities and thus to define the collective Self via references to constitutive Others (the EU and its member states, and Russia) and hegemonic discourses (for instance democracy, the Russian world, and post–Soviet nostalgia). It is in borderlands that all the ensuing controversies between external reference points, as well as between practices of nation building and democracy become the most visible and pronounced.

In this chapter we discuss two different, yet in many respects mutually complimentary borderland policy strategies. One is grounded in producing culturally appealing and politically important sets of *meanings*, or semantically loaded messages constitutive of borderland identities.[5] The other strategy pertains to the adoption of Western *techniques* of governance. These include the promotion of countries and cities at international markets of tourism, media communication and hospitality. Both strategies are indispensable for reinforcing borderland subjectivities, but their logics are dissimilar. In the first case what matters is investment in cultural and identity resources, while in the second; the key is specific tools of managing and administering projects of high national value.

Meaning–making strategies are of particular importance due to a long tradition of treating borderlands basically as products and effects of great powers, and as inherently dependent territories with little saliency of their own. Yet the end of the Cold War gave a chance to open up the borderland concept, to re–signifying them as junction points, communicators and cultural translators, and to deploying them in a political domain largely defined by multiple exclusions and inclusions, with successive boundary–making dynamics. Techniques of governance, on the contrary, are largely depoliticized/post–political tools aimed at linking borderlands to the best experiences of place management, based on governance arrangements,

5 *Paasi*, Bounded spaces in a ‘borderless world’: border studies, power and the anatomy of territory, P.213.

technical expertise in spatial planning, and knowledge transfer. [6] These techniques are meant to foster pragmatic and consensual approaches to transferable practices of running projects and administering human and social capital.

From this double perspective of "the power of ideas and consensus", [7] the three cases chosen for empirical analysis look very different. *Estonia*'s song festivals give an example of a series of celebratory events that serve the basic domestic purposes of national consolidation, solidification, yet stay relatively aloof from commodification or commercialization. In the case of EURO 2012 in *Lviv*, we have seen a balanced combination of strong identity momentum and the accentuation of regional cultural specificity, on the one hand, and a well–thought strategy of commercially branding the city as a tourist site, on the other. In *Georgia* the adoption of practices of good governance remains the key component of its pathway to Europeanization, while Georgia's cultural identification with Europe appears selective and less comprehensive.

Of course, the two strategies of meaning–making and adopting techniques of governance can overlap. For many countries and cities, cultural events are opportunities for cultural and (re)branding strategies to find their niches in the global markets. This is why the events study in each of the three cases can be viewed as communicative performances. These are visualized and articulated through imagery and texts, which promote different identities by placing borderland narratives in broader contexts. These concepts are mostly shaped by the mass media and meant for branding and cultural consumption. Some of these identities are the result of social interactions and experience sharing between the collective Self and a variety of external Others, while others are effects of commercial strategies designed by policy consultants and PR specialists.

This chapter consists of three parts. First, we devise a cognitive map for deploying borderland studies in different academic contexts and discuss issues of most pertinence to our three cases, including the Europe-Russia framework. Then we turn to the two strategies of meaning–making and governance–governmentality that we have briefly introduced above.

6 *Faludi*, Place is a no-man's land, P. 10-11.
7 *Diez*, Normative power as hegemony, P. 195.

Boundaries, Borderlands, and Neighbourhoods

Post-Soviet nation building in countries as diverse as Estonia, Ukraine and Georgia plays a constitutive role in the on–going process of constructing and deconstructing borders in a wider Europe. Usually this process is discussed in administrative and institutional categories, whereas on a deeper level of analysis border making/unmaking, or locking/unlocking are cultural and social constructs. They easily turn political due to the complex interplay of exclusion and inclusion, two interrelated practices that are key for borderland identities.

The idea of the borderland is not only about geography, but mainly about cultural, economic, normative, symbolic and performative phenomena [8] that shape mechanisms of identity–making in countries located in–between dominating poles. Therefore, there is always double dynamics in boundary–making. On the one hand, it is nation states that produce boundaries, yet on the other hand, boundaries themselves have their own means of impacting on states and their populations. Thus, boundaries can be discussed not only as products of major actors' policies, but also as producers of borderland subjectivities.

"Borders may be created at the edges of many differentiations".[9] They are social constructs that delineate and engage, involve and marginalize, and in this sense are key for understanding the multifaceted dynamics and mechanisms for producing political subjectivities. There are several types of "border inscriptions",[10] or modalities in which borders are articulated and activated, which are of the utmost importance for shaping these subjectivities.

Legal borders demarcate the jurisdictions of sovereign nation states. Originally nation states were traditionally studied as they represented the core of the Westphalian system of international relations. (Geo)*economic* borders mark distinctions between financial, industrial and economic projects administered by states and corporate actors. These borders always

8 *Parker and Vaughan–Williams*, Critical Border Studies: Broadening and Deepening the "Lines in the Sand" Agenda, P. 729.
9 *Jerrems*, Bordering beyond State Boundaries, P. 7.
10 *Parker and Adler-Nissen*, Picking and Choosing the "Sovereign" Border: A Theory of Changing State Bordering Practices, P. 793.

co–existed with *(geo)political* frontiers[11] as exemplified by spheres of influence of hegemonic powers. The (geo)political content of boundaries can be expressed through the metaphor of "the politics of the line" drawn up by sovereign powers .[12] (Geo)political borders/frontiers are not "natural", but rather negotiated and communicatively constructed. Such issues are epitomized in the discussions about "red lines" as key elements of the politics of deterrence and containment, which have deep roots in the Cold War era.

Many scholars claim that the (geo)political bordering, which dominated during the long Nineteenth century, has been replaced by globalisation and gradual transformation of different cultures and civilizations into one homogenous alternative. A globalized world imposes serious constraints on national sovereignties which face structural limitations and competition from non–state actors. Therefore, sovereign powers reshuffle and recalibrate their policy toolkits. In this sense *cultural* boundaries, which are grounded in competing identities (for example civilizational, religious, ethnic and linguistic identities), play the crucial role of "cultural filters".[13] These are imperative for constructing knowledge through the transference of ideas or persuasion. This conceptualization is close to treating borderlands, in the traditions of cultural semiotic of Yuriy Lotman, as cultural membranes that filter certain content and produce new meanings through translating cultural forms from one semiosphere to another. [14]

As soon as it comes to socio-cultural and civilizational dimensions of bordering, a biopolitical reading becomes possible and useful. *Biopolitical* boundaries are based on conflation and interaction of different policies of bio–political regulation, such as governments which take care of ethnic population groups of population (compatriots or culturally akin ethnic groups) who live beyond the borders of a specific nation state. These "geo–biopolitics"[15] might range from distributing passports to residents of foreign countries such as Romania, Hungary, or Russia often do, to

11 *Kramsch*, Along the Borgesian Frontier: Excavating the Neighbourhood of 'Wider Europe, P. 195.

12 *Parker and Adler-Nissen*, Picking and Choosing the "Sovereign" Border: A Theory of Changing State Bordering Practices, P. 774.

13 *Manners*, Assessing the decennial, reassessing the global: Understanding European Union normative power in global politics, P. 318.

14 *North*, Georgia's Stalin museum gives Soviet version of dictator's life story, P. 11-26.

15 *Minca and Vaughan-Williams*, Carl Schmitt and the Concept of the Border, P. 764.

programs of cultural patronage and protection, for example, the Turkey–promoted "Khazar world". Geography thus becomes one of the spheres in which power is manifest through defining a biopolitical belonging to a certain community or entity, which in turn offers protection and care to its members regardless of national borders.[16]

How can this tangled web of interacting borders be studied? Two areas of academic work about borders are of utmost importance for our study. One is *social constructivism*, a theory that contributed to shifting from studying borders as attributes of centralized sovereign powers to rethinking borders as social constructs and institutions of their own. There is a parallel shift from classical geopolitics to cultural geography that asserts the inherent plurality of borderlands and boundaries as symbolic and communicative constructs, with blurring lines between which groups are at the centre and who are limited to the margins. Consequently, ideational factors in border studies (such as norms, identities, discourses) are of the utmost importance for constructivist scholarship.

Post-structuralist literature, which is another influential stream within border studies, adds a number of arguments to constructivist presumptions. Post–structuralist authors emphasize the greater dynamics ("semantic density") of borderlands as producers of their own discourses which differentiate them from central actors. Post–structuralists note a *performative* character of border practices, including rituals and symbols of border–crossing.[17] In their works they introduce a concept of *overdetermination,* arguing that a "national border is not always a border between two states: local borders can also signify global divisions".[18] The idea of borders signifying global divisions can be perceived when analysing members and non-members of international organizations, such as the EU or NATO.

Critical Border Studies, is a relatively new school treating borders as "lines in the sand" that perform important functions of "suturing" and 'knitting' neighbouring territories, as opposed to simply separating them from each other. The concept of suture is an academic metaphor that describes the intricacies of inside–outside interrelations. To quote Slavoj

16 *Minca*, Agamben's Geographies of Modernity, P. 88.
17 *Smith and Burch*, Enacting Identities in the EU – Russia Borderland: an Ethnography of Place and Public Monuments; Pusca, The Aesthetics of Change: Exploring Post-Communist Spaces.
18 *Rumford*, Many Europes: Rethinking Multiplicity, P. 891.

Zizek, suture means that "self–enclosure is a priori impossible, that the excluded externality always leaves its traces within".[19] By the same token, suture denotes "a mode in which the exterior is inscribed in the interior" to the point of erasing substantial differences and forming "a consistent, naturalised, organic whole". The suturing of external reality is always incomplete; thus, "external difference is always an internal one" [20], which demonstrates an inherent impossibility for a borderland "to fully become itself".[21]

Since "the sutures are portrayed as exceptions to the general paradigm of sovereignty",[22] one may approach borderlands as *heterotopian* places that "disturb and resist the hegemonic visions"[23] of Europe and so contribute to a more complex perspective on European boundaries and neighbourhoods. Borderlands which are studied in this book are heterotopias in the sense of their inherent ability to "represent, contest and invert"[24] hegemonic identities, without fully solidarizing with them. That is how the heterotopian outlook of borderlands can question the reductionist claims that Ukraine, as seen previously in the Baltic States adheres to a 'monist' version of national identity, which is ultimately conducive to these countries submission to EU hegemony.[25] Unlike these simplistic statements, we view borderlands as producers of their own identities that can challenge hegemonic discourses, adapt to them, or carve out their own niches in the ideational landscape.

As we see in current academic scholarship boundaries always shape *Self–Other* distinctions. In a hypothetical borderless word no identities are possible, and no politics can exist. There are two types of strategies international actors employ in communicating with each other: a) a border-locking/bordering strategy of exclusion, isolation and estrangement from neighbours, and b) border–unlocking/de–bordering strategy of inclusion and engagement. Boundaries both *include* and *exclude*, or separate and

19 *Zizek*, The Sublime Object of Ideology, P. 50.
20 Zizek, The Fright for Real Tears. Krzysztof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-Theory, P.57.
21 *Zizek*, The Sublime Object of Ideology, P. 58.
22 *Salter*, Theory of the / : The Suture and Critical Border Studies, P. 735.
23 *Boedeltje*, The Other Spaces of Europe: Seeing European Geopolitics Through the Disturbing Eye of Foucault's Heterotopias, P. 5.
24 *Boedeltje*, The Other Spaces of Europe: Seeing European Geopolitics Through the Disturbing Eye of Foucault's Heterotopias, P. 6.
25 *Sakwa*, Ukraine and the post-colonial condition.

unite not only territories, but also people living in close vicinity to each other. In the words of R.B.J. Walker, "the reimagination of contemporary political life especially depends on a willingness to think about boundaries less as sites at which very little happens except the separation of one political community, or state, or condition, from another, than as very active sites, moments and practices that work to produce very specific political possibilities of necessity and possibility on either side".[26]

This argument clearly points to the political significance of boundaries and borderlands, which are closely related to the question of political goals and the instruments that are applied, as opposed to technical instrumentality or the logics of administrative management or legal compliance. Political borders, unlike geographic ones, are intended or unintended products of actors' discourses and policies, and are shaped both by broad issues (such as the state of bilateral or multilateral partnerships) and specific matters (for example, the dynamics of visa regime or contentions over energy market regulations). The adjective "*political*" in this context is connotative with a variety of "Self–Other" distinctions and a plethora of their concomitant identity–driven and border–making effects.

Since borders construct communities,[27] political subjectivity of any international actor is inseparably connected to its border–making and/or border–unmaking potential. Bordering and de–bordering as two political strategies, are grounded in political reasoning in a sense that identity gaps or economic disagreements can be either elevated to the level of insurmountable impediments for communication, or downplayed by making possible the "business as usual" type of interaction. Neither of these two options, bordering and de–bordering, is predetermined by objective factors such as geography or economic development. The probability of each of them depends upon an unstable constellation of political discourses emanating from within nation states and in their communication with each other.

Political borders are always inter–subjective constructs. Their configuration depends on the interactive and inclusive communication of all parties involved. Political borders are changeable and dependent on various structural and agent factors, and are driven mostly by identity–related discourses grounded in a number of (what Ernesto Laclau could

26 *Walker*, After the World, Before the Globe, P. 32.

27 *Beacroft*, Defining Political Theory: An Arendtian Approach to Difference in the Public Realm.

have called) contested "floating signifiers", such as concepts open to various interpretations.

It is due to the resilience of multiple dichotomies (East–West, liberal–conservative, small states–great powers) that many national identities are constructed through some kind of opposition to the outside, which leads groups to ascribe to outsiders threatening characteristics. These ascriptions can be mythical, since what lies on the opposite side of the border is often culturally marked as "chaotic", "unfriendly", and "infernal".[28] This illustrates that boundaries can be used as political tools for creating or reshaping collective Selves to distinguish one identity from another.

The conflation of these discourses might take different forms, yet what it entails is the deployment of relations of otherness in a specific territorial context. It is different conceptualizations of boundaries that constitute and shape the idea of the political in this specific context. It is only through critically engaging with multiple boundaries to the point of their contestation and remaking, that a genuine political experience becomes possible, as that of resistance to hegemonic narratives or questioning their substance and content. Acceptance of boundaries and ensuing social statuses and roles obliterates political meanings, while experiments with boundaries and engagement with them are conducive to the inevitable emergence of political modalities.

This brings us back to the important paradox of the resilience of borders and boundaries in a globalized world, which is characterized by supranational integration and the seemingly diminishing significance of territoriality as an organizing principle of political relations. Issues of political borders pop up each time discussions on international socialization, for example dynamics of rapprochement and alienation between actors, and the correlation of conflict and cooperation in relationships between them are made. On the one hand, globalization fosters and facilitates the proliferation of trans–border connectivity, de–bordering, and different conceptualizations of non–binary logic. Yet on the other hand, since borders are key components of each social or cultural identity, fuzzy borderlines are tantamount to fuzzy identities. This is why borders and boundaries persist as the main elements of reshaping identities that feel threatened by globalisation forces and thus need to rearticulate themselves. This necessarily presupposes cultural and political delineation from other, competing or

28 *Checkel*, Social constructivisms in global and European politics: a review essay.

menacing identities. In particular, the post–Soviet space is replete with examples that illustrate the search for cultural traditionalism as opposed to the EU–led liberal emancipatory agenda, with exposure to the global milieu having only limited importance and traction for certain social groups.

Therefore, in spite of multiple attempts to do away with the hegemony of bordering narratives and practices through post–modernist deconstructions of the Cold War era East–West divide, binary oppositions demonstrate a significant degree of adaptability and endurance. Post–Cold–War ideas of global networks, cross–border flows, and de-territorialization were supposed to stretch beyond experiences of modernity and "provide margins with possibilities for constitutive action.[29] However, even inclusive policies based on liberal understandings of democracy often emit bordering effects: "discourses on the promotion of democracy and human rights are inevitably productive of two identity categories, a morally superior identity of democratic juxtaposed to the inferior identity of non– (or less) democratic, thereby constructing the very differences that transformation would ostensibly eliminate". [30]

With all the ongoing instability of boundaries, binary structures of conflicting discourses often tend to be self–reproducing, which poses enormous challenges to in–between actors who might face geopolitically divisive choices. The inevitable bordering effects of major global actors' policies are conducive to hierarchical relations between centres of geopolitical and normative order and regions located between them. Liminality as

> "a condition being betwixt and between socially established categories… could also be the condition of being suspended or even trapped between two different sets of role expectations, a condition often leading to impassivity, or even to a social impasse".[31]

The situation in the post–Soviet region, with many countries trapped in security, normative and geopolitical rivalries between Russia and Euro–Atlantic institutions, nicely illustrates this argument.

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29 *Browning and Christou*, The constitutive power of outsiders: The European neighbourhood policy and the eastern dimension, P. 111.

30 *Rumelili*, Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference: Understanding the EU's Mode of Differentiation, P. 37.

31 *Neumann*, Introduction to the Forum on Liminality, P. 474.

Yet the idea of the border does not carry only divisive connotations. It can also be discussed as an opportunity for exchange and cultural enrichment. Border openness entails a possibility to turn geo–territorial and ideational divisions into playgrounds of dialogue and mutual development for communities divided by a border. This appears to be significantly relevant in the light of the current geo–territorial developments that are currently dramatically affecting the European political and cultural space. Borderlands are not necessarily passive and voiceless entities purely submissive to dominating powers. On the contrary, they can "exhibit three surprising types of effects: dynamics peculiar to their marginality; independent scope vis–a–vis the ostensibly dominant centre(s); and/or a potential to impact on the centre(s), perhaps even to the extent of reshaping it".[32] More specifically, marginal territories can obtain loyalty rewards, compete for intermediation rewards, play one centre off against the other, selectively emulate and appropriate norms developed by the centre, and get rent payments for moving in or out of the centre's sphere of influence.

The Great Divide: Europe vs. Russia

In the traditions of critical geopolitics and critical border studies, we posit that interaction dynamics between centres and borderlands ought to be seen as a pivotal element of their identity–making. Therefore, borderland identity-making projects in all three cases have to be deployed within an uneasy framework of Europe–Russia relations. Countries as different as Estonia, Ukraine and Georgia explicitly gravitate to, or have already successfully begun integration with the core principles of the Western normative order and its institutions, including the EU and NATO. By the same token, all of them, to different degrees, are objects of Moscow's policy of contesting their choices, commitments and allegiances, with Georgia and Ukraine having experienced the painful losses of territory to Russia as a result of Moscow–orchestrated force projection.

How do normative collisions between Russia and the EU over the main principles of international society influence borderlands? *Estonia* is a Baltic country that has successfully completed integration into Euro–Atlantic institutions, yet is still vulnerable to potential Russian pressure in

32 *Parker*, A Theoretical Introduction: Spaces, Centers, and Margins, P. 3-4.

economic and security fields, as well as issues pertaining to the Russian minority. *Georgia* is an object of competition between Europe and Russia, in which the EU promotes a model of democratic and secular society, and spreads knowledge about good governance and sustainable development, while Russia supports illiberal and conservative attitudes, including those within the Georgian Orthodox Church. In *Ukraine* we focus on Galicia, the westernmost region of a volatile country that managed to challenge Russia's domination in the EU–Russia common neighbourhood yet depends on Moscow economically and in part for security.

The three cases uncover the importance of grassroots identities in reaching beyond specific territories and appealing to European audiences through a variety of performative events. As such all three can be studied as playgrounds for conveying important symbolic messages pertaining to cultural authenticity on the one hand, and developing cross–border and trans–national narratives, on the other. Sporting mega–events like in Lviv (EURO 2012) and Tbilisi (the European Olympic Youth Festival in 2015) both had a strong cultural background and so coupled with the regular song festivals in Estonia highlight cultural messages and the development of cross–border narratives.

Europe is a key reference point and a hotbed of inspiration for the three countries. Currently, Europe is also a source of good governance practices, with technical, managerial and administrative experiences of transformation at its core. However, specific connotations of "Europe" are dissimilar. *Estonia* is part of Baltic Europe and gravitates towards Nordic Europe, also positioning itself within a "new" US–friendly and open to multilateral security operations Europe. *Ukraine* is not that deeply embedded in European regionalist settings, and is both culturally and politically attached to Poland, while having a more controversial relationship with major EU member states, like Germany and France. *Georgia* often uses cultural arguments for strengthening its EU aspirations, yet it is reluctant to fully embrace European liberal norms of tolerance and minority protection.

Thus, Europe can't be approached as a singular force, since it always comes in diverse political and cultural forms. European identity is a "floating signifier" of a sort, it's always contextual in a sense that it is not "given" but constructed. Due to this multiplicity, Europe "lacks an essence or centre", and can be defined by the lines it draws.[33] This is a crucial

33 *Biebuyck and Rumford*, Many Europes: Rethinking Multiplicity, P.2.

point that unveils a double function of borders in the context of EU neighbourhood policy. *First*, the generality of the EU and how its individual member states in particular deal with borderlands is indicative of the transformations and prospects of the current European project of identity making. The projection of European norms, values and principles of governance beyond EU borders is not peripheral, but on the contrary a crucial element of the EU's self–identification as a source of trans–national and cross–border practices of a global appeal. Therefore, a successful promotion of both European ideas (meanings) and standards (techniques and rules) boosts the EU's ambitions and self–perception as a normative power capable of reaching far beyond its borders. Yet the impediments and hurdles for projecting EU soft power resources make it rethink its ideational, institutional and communicative traction even with its neighbours, which may ultimately be consequential for the EU project itself. Thus, the discursive construction of borderlands has to be studied against the backdrop of "a struggle about the boundaries of the EU as a promoter of liberalism",[34] including the limits of European ideational projections and techniques of governance. These limits are set through constant re–articulation and redefinition of borderlands, margins and peripheries.[35]

Yet in the meantime, EU member states can't ignore security threats coming from some external borderlands. It therefore heavily invests in protecting its external borders. "Against these bleak realities, the EU seems to consciously produce a fuzzy space between inclusion and exclusion. In so doing, it gives way to neo–colonial frontier–like aspirations in defining the border both as a security and buffer zone as well as a zone to ease up and construct the neighbours it desires".[36] This might be called "the soft borders of Europe".[37]

Second, one can claim that European identity can be articulated from Europe's margins. In this vein, Estonia's assistance to Ukraine and Georgia is deeply identitarian, since it implies a re–definition of Estonia as

34 *Diez*, Normative power as hegemony, P.39.
35 *Browning and Christou*, The constitutive power of outsiders: The European neighbourhood policy and the eastern dimension, P. 111.
36 *Boedeltje and van Houtum*, Brussels is Speaking: The Adverse Speech Geopolitics of the European Union Towards its Neighbours, P. 142.
37 *Eder*, Europe's Borders. The Narrative Construction of the Boundaries in Europe, P. 256.

a source of Europeanization for non–EU member states. By the same token, it is not necessary that there is a match between the political and cultural strategies of the European borderlands, for instance, there are strong European accents in Azerbaijani cultural self–representation through the Eurovision Song contest in 2012, or the First European Olympic Games held in Baku in 2015, but they do not translate into a strong interest for institutional association with the EU.[38]

The role of borderlands in constructing Europe can be discussed in the language of arts as well. As Peter Weibel, the creator of "The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds After 1989" project puts it, before 1989 it was Europe and North America that defined who was included in Western–centric spaces and institutions and who was excluded. Yet nowadays the West finds itself in a situation where other actors determine the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. There are forces that challenge Europe itself and for whom Europe has become the Other.[39] Apparently, this point can be explored while researching the variegated processes of region–making at Europe's margins.[40] Intellectual activities in culture and art, along with politics, foster new approaches to the debate that constantly (re)establishes power relations,[41] including the deep political balance of inclusion and exclusion.

As for Russia, it basically appeals to those audiences in each of the three countries that share either the Russian world mythology, or adhere to Eurasianism. Yet despite these attempts, Russia features in all three cases as an external and threatening Other. This othering of Russia is put in a well–pronounced security context. However, the role played by Russia varies from one country to another. In Estonia security dangers emanate from failing to create an Estonian identity incorporating ethnic Russians, while witnessing the exposure of Russian attempts to integrate this group into the Kremlin backed "Russian world" concept, with all its mythology of a presumed community bound by ethnic kinship. In Ukraine the annexation of Crimea and the military insurgency in so–called *Novorossiya* has definitely solidified the collective basis for the Ukrainian political community. However, this solidification of Ukrainian identity is still divided by a

38 *MinvalAz News Agency*, Aliev: Evropa nas ne primet.
39 *Weibel*, Preface. The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds After 1989. September 17, 2011–February 5, 2012, www.global-contemporary.de.
40 *McLean*, The World Art Artworld, P.166.
41 *Strath*, Europe as a Discourse, P.24.

west Ukrainian locus at odds with Kyiv. This partially derives from the distance between western Ukraine (in particular, Lviv) and the national capital and the fact that decisions for west Ukraine are made in Kyiv. In Georgia the Russian factor, despite the legacy of the August 2008 war between the two countries and the subsequent de–facto annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, plays a divisive role fuelling intra–elite conflicts.

It is within this context that the most emotionally charged points of disarray between Russia and the EU should be discussed. The relations between both entities have stretched far beyond more or less conventional conflict of interest situations, which could be analysed through the lens of political realism, and have in turn embraced an important performative symbolic element. The Kremlin widely portrays Europe not only as an economic competitor or political rival, but also as a normatively unacceptable civilization against which Russia needs to undertake measures of political hygiene. Russia's policies are not confined to simply distancing itself from the EU. Moscow wishes to dethrone Europe from its normative pedestal, which is the key driving force for new discord on the continent.

Seen from this perspective, the story of EU–Russia disconnection should include the Brussels–promoted idea that "EU standards are in fact universal, and the partner countries have to undertake certain actions in order to ensure their adherence to these values and norms".[42] The role of the EU as a "civilian power" implies, though tacitly, that "exported norms are deemed to be truly universal".[43] This is exactly where a major political issue unfolds. The presumed universality of the EU's ontological underpinnings

> "entailed an attempt...to turn the pluriverse of international politics into a universe, in which the effects of difference are controlled from a 'meta-governance' site through current attempts to reformulate international law by conferring a special status on liberal democracies... Such a universe has no space for other *Grossraume*, of the sort that Russia suggests should be institutionalized in Europe, and instead a homogenous liberal order is proclaimed."[44]

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42 *Kostadinova*,The Commission, ENP and Construction of Borders, P. 247.

43 *Onar and Nicolaidis*, The Decentring Agenda: Europe as a post-colonial power, P. 284.

44 *Sakwa*, The problem of 'the international' in Russian identity formation, P.323.

Some authors claim that it is the technocratic automatism of Brussels' decision making procedures that turns the EU into a "normative empire". The imperial foundations of the EU's foreign policy "reveal grand politics, a design of hierarchical self–projection towards direct neighbouring countries"[45] and other areas in Africa, the Caribbean and the Asia Pacific.[46] Some scholars draw analogies between current EU enlargement and "earlier rounds of European imperial expansion",[47] leading them to conclude that "those living beyond the border, and therefore not part of the desired collective European identity, are excluded until and unless they refashion themselves in the Union's own image".[48]

This important point might be instrumental in explaining many conflictual issues in EU's relations with its eastern neighbours. Yet it can also be argued that the two parties in this political conflict look alike. Russia too is often portrayed as an imperial state,[49] which since its independence was eager to project itself beyond its borders.[50] There are voices that notice a gradual transfiguration of the EU into a sovereign type of actor,[51] which eventually approximates it to the Russian identity role. Both identities are in flux, both are interested in projecting power beyond their borders, both use family rhetoric to substantiate their integrative projects, and both can be characterized, with pride or sorrow, as empires with implicit or explicit colonial legacies.

With all this in mind, one should admit that Moscow and Brussels possess drastically dissimilar foreign policy tools. The EU prioritizes values, coupled with good governance techniques. Through the principles of partnership the EU promotes practices of "network governance" that create "shared spaces" with blurred geopolitical, institutional, transac-

45 *Boedeltje and van Houtum*, Brussels is Speaking: The Adverse Speech Geopolitics of the European Union Towards its Neighbours, P. 139.
46 *Sepos*, Imperial power Europe? The EU's relations with the ACP countries.
47 *Kramsch*, Along the Borgesian Frontier: Excavating the Neighborhood of "Wider Europe", P. 195.
48 *Foster*, Tabula Imperii Europae: A Cartographic Approach to the Current Debate on the European Union as Empire, P. 382.
49 *Krickovic*, Imperial nostalgia or prudent geopolitics? Russia's efforts to reintegrate the post-Soviet space in geopolitical perspective.
50 *Ingram*, Broadening Russia's borders? The nationalist challenge of the Congress of Russian Communities.
51 *Joenniemi*, Can Europe Be Told from the North? Tapping into the EU's Northern Dimension.

tional and cultural boundaries.[52] As for Moscow, it is more interested in accentuating its identity rather than producing its own norms, and does not hide the fact that hard power remains its key foreign policy asset.

This imbrication of similarities and contrarieties constitutes the most fertile ground for politicizing the bilateral relations. What intensified the maturation of the political momentum in the EU–Russia relationship is the dynamics of differentiation in the common and inherently contested neighbourhood where fuzzy political relations are bred. The very idea of surrounding the EU with a "ring of friends" is intrinsically political, as epitomized by Romano Prodi's articulation of the neighbourhood as a political construct based on excluding one element, institutions, from the scope of instruments that the EU can share with adjacent countries.

What inflamed Moscow's irritation is the understanding of the fact that some of Russia's post–Soviet neighbours did much better in negotiating with the EU and obtaining its acceptance as European nations on more beneficial conditions than Russia. The very supposition that Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova are closer to the EU than Russia itself became a political irritant for the Kremlin. Moreover, the ascendance of the political component in EU–Russia relations took an extreme form of securitization.

These comparisons are much more than conceptual constructs, many of them are helpful in explaining the logic behind the EU's and Russia's policies. The EU's ambiguity towards many of its eastern partners stems from the legacy of perceiving them both as diligent devotees of the idea of Europe, on the one hand, and as sources of potential security troubles, on the other. Ukraine and Georgia, who signed Association Agreements with the EU but still struggle for visa facilitation regime, are good examples of the duality inherent in EU policies. Speaking in policy terms, this is exactly what Russia exploits in its attempts to restore its influence through questioning the relevance of the West for the practical needs of post–Soviet countries.

52 *Khasson*, Cross-border cooperation over the Eastern RU border: between assistance and partnership under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership instruments, P. 329.

Meaning–making at borderlands

In this section we address the policy and research perspectives of unpacking different meanings produced and communicated in the post-Soviet borderlands. We assume that "borders do not simply "exist" as lines on maps, but are continually performed into being" through what can be called "a complex choreography of border lines in multiple lived spaces".[53]

Boundaries are indispensable for culturally distinguishing a system from other systems, or within a social environment.[54] Each of the three target countries faces a challenge in identifying themselves as distinct from both Russia and neighbouring (including European) countries. Ukraine struggles to culturally decouple itself from Russia and thus protect its own identity. Estonia differentiates itself from "Baltic states", which necessitates cultural strategies of self–representation and regional positioning, with attempts to brand Estonia as a Nordic country, which is an illuminating proof of this.[55] Georgia builds its identity policy on distancing itself from the South Caucasus with its conflictual reputation, and rebranding itself as a Black Sea country.

In the meantime, the identities of each country are deeply split from the inside. Estonia is intrinsically divided between ethnic Estonian and the Russian speaking communities, with the case of Narva, a border city where about one-third of its residents are Russian citizens – as the most notorious example of this division. Ukraine is split along many lines, such as regional (with the distinction between Western and Eastern provinces being the sharpest), religious (Moscow–controlled and Kyiv–loyal Orthodox Churches, and the Greek Catholic congregation), and political. Georgian identity is split between pro–Western attitudes, on the one hand, and Russia sympathizers, on the other. Politically, Georgia works hard to get out of the Russian sphere of influence, but culturally it gravitates towards the Russian model of conservatism. All these lines of division and distinction take multiple forms and can be analysed from a variety of cultural perspectives.

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53 *Parker and Vaughan-Williams*, Critical Border Studies: Broadening and Deepening the "Lines in the Sand" Agenda, P. 729.

54 *Jacobs and van Assche*, Understanding Empirical Boundaries; A Systems-Theoretical Avenue in Border Studies, P. 188.

55 *Moisio, Stokke et al*., Interventions in Nordic political geographies.

Yet the incompleteness and polyvocality of the representation of borderland politics do not prevent them from developing a strong anti–imperial (and a wider anti–hegemonic) potential. In all three cases the role of civic/social groups is crucial in articulating the key tenets of national discourses, though forms of public engagement significantly vary from one case to another. It is not incidental that Lviv was among the most ardent supporters of mass-scale EuroMaidan popular revolt against the pro-Moscow regime; and Estonia is known for its "singing revolution", a nation-wide movement of peaceful resistance to Soviet rule. Transformations in borderland identities can be conceptualized from the viewpoint of a number of academic disciplines, among which sociology and cultural studies play crucial roles. Cultural events can also be conceptualized from the vantage point of such concepts as cultural diplomacy, soft power, and cross–border communication that unveil competing identity–based narratives and media images as elements of inward and outward strategies to fuel national resurrection. This interdisciplinary blend warrants a variegated and multidimensional research perspective for borderland studies. Political science alone is mainly focused on mechanisms and institutions that key actors utilize for the sake of power maximization, often failing to grasp the changing meanings of power that operates through channels of cultural production. In many respects human behaviour is as important for analysis of specific regions as changes through institutions formed by dominating power holders. From its part, sociological analysis needs to take into account the various political repercussions of identity concepts, cultural narratives and representations, since it is through them that different logics of nation building are effectuated. What lies at the intersection of political and sociological analysis are practices and strategies of nation building, which are actualized in certain contexts that we are going to uncover.

From a methodological viewpoint, our approach is grounded in the key concepts of British cultural studies, combined with constructivist and post-structuralist conceptualizations of identity, discourse, imagery and the politics of representation. It is mainly within post–structuralist literature that the key starting points for our analysis can be articulated.[56] Within

56 *Jabri*, Solidarity and spheres of culture: the cosmopolitan and the postcolonial; *Neumann and Sending*, The "International" as Governmentality; *Rapkin and Braaten*, Conceptualising Hegemonic Legitimacy; *Snochowska-Gonzalez*, Post-colonial Poland–On an Unavoidable Misuse.

post–structuralism the ideas of particular significance for marginal territories are the possession of their own cultural potential that translates into the political dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and the making and unmaking of borders and boundaries, which are of the utmost importance. Concepts of *performance*,[57] *festivalization* and *dysneyization* [58] describe aesthetic logics of this trend in a variety of societies.

Performative events play a constitutive role for the function of meaning making. In this context, the *politics of representation* comprises different practices of production, translation, mediation and transmission of cultural meanings[59] based on the logic of spectacle,[60] as embedded in practices of nation building through which symbols of national distinctiveness are promoted and operationalized in identity–making. Large–scale events constitute discourses and imageries of national identity, in which stories, images, historical events, national symbols and rituals play the most substantial roles for meaning making.[61] All these are indispensable components for comparative research in the sociology of cultural events encompassing politically different, yet scholarly comparable, experiences of countries with a strong sense of nationhood.

By the same token, cultural events may also be sources of such political messages and ideological articulations if they contest already–made, pre–given social models and practices.[62] Those events may spur practices of de–bordering and foster trans–border communication (as demonstrated by the case of Ukraine and Poland co–hosting EURO 2012.[63] In the meantime, cultural narratives and performances can be politically subversive, and transform or disturb existing power relation structures. The Estonian

57 *Alexander*, Performance and Power.
58 *Bryman*, The Disneyization of Society.
59 *Hall*, Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.
60 See *Alexander*, The Performance of Politics: Obama's Victory and The Democratic Struggle for Power; *Alexander*, Performance and Power.
61 *Traganou*, National Narratives in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games; *Gabrielle Rockhill and Watts*, Jacques Ranciere: History, Politics, Aesthetics.
62 *Citton*, Political Agency and the Ambivalence of the Sensible.
63 See *Makarychev and Yatsyk*, Borders, Spaces and Mega-Events in Eastern Europe: the Case of the Euro-2012 in Lviv.

'singing revolution' as the key element of peacefully toppling the Soviet regime in this republic can be an eloquent example of that subversion.[64]

In tackling these issues, we stem from the conception of borderland identities as based on cultural representations: "some of the most interesting works today engage with matters of territories and borders".[65] Apart from political discourse, it is cultural strategies that shape national identities by producing differences through cultural practices, public performances, commemorations, celebrations and festivities, and visual imageries.[66] Constructivist and post–structuralist literatures view these strategies as elements of two systems of representation, conceptual maps and languages of collective expressions; thus they are "different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and establishing complex relations between them".[67]

It is through this prism that we interpret nation–building and identity–making as shared conceptual maps, exposed through representations and performative events aimed at constructing national identities and thus defining the collective Self, via references to constitutive Others and hegemonic discourses. Thus, nations reify themselves through and during performances with peculiar languages of expressing their collective concepts, which provide opportunities to "reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others".[68]

Large–scale public events open perspectives for cities, regions and countries to develop their symbols, and convey different messages to domestic and international audiences. Concomitantly, the sphere of "official politics" often "appears as a theatrical stage rather than as a battlefield",[69] with articulations of different identities resembling acts of

64 *Jõesalu and Kõresaar*, Continuity or Discontinuity: On the Dynamics of Remembering 'Mature Socialism; Waren, Theories of the Singing Revolution: An Historical Analysis of the Role of Music in the Estonian Independence Movement; *Smidchens*, The Power of Songs. Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution.

65 *Ranciere*, Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics, P.49.

66 *Hemple*, Introduction: Forging the Nation through Performance and Ritual, P.4.

67 *Hall*, Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, P.17.

68 McAloon, cited in *Alexander*, Performance and Power, P. 20.

69 *Citton*, Political Agency and the Ambivalence of the Sensible.

"performing and playing…building a stage and sustaining a spectacle".[70] Thus, each cultural event is a blend of entertainment, enjoyment, and celebration of national pride, as embedded in social performances aimed at, as the theory of cultural pragmatics posits, "re–fusion", or imitating this refusion of common values, allowing people to feel belonging to their community within complex modern societies.[71] Systems of collective representation as expressed through social performances can be composed of antique "myths to invented traditions created right on the spot, from oral traditions to scripts prepared by such specialists as playwrights, journalists, and speech writers".[72]

Techniques of governance

There are two approaches that we use for tackling practices of technical adjustment to international normative standards and various forms of policy transfer. First, we dwell upon the concept of post–politics, and then discuss the applicability of the idea of governmentality for borderland studies. Both concepts can be applied to what might be termed "third–order effects"[73] of Europeanization, that is situations in which "local actors loosely draw on EU–type norms and practices and advance them as their own, with no direct involvement by EU actors".[74]

Post-politics on the move

Post–political thinking, widely covered in critical theory in the West,[75] has only rarely been applied to the analysis of borderlands. Accounts of post–political approaches to hosting cultural events are even sparser, especially

70 *Hallward*, Staging Equality: Rancière's Theatocracy and the Limits of Anarchic Equality.
71 *Alexander*, Performance and Power.
72 *Alexander*, Performance and Power, P.28.
73 In accordance with this approach, "first-order effects" are due to the EU's direct influence on decision makers, while "second-order effects" are results of interaction and communication between politicians of EU and non–EU states.
74 *Lenz*, EU normative power and regionalism: Ideational diffusion and its limits, P. 217.
75 See *Sharpe and Boucher*, Zizek and Politics: A Critical Introduction.

when it comes to non–central venues. Yet the logic of borderland authorities is often grounded in post–political thinking, with such core priorities as building consensus, stimulating consumption, providing security, upgrading urban areas, developing investment opportunities and branding and selling the region's competitive advantages on a global scale. Of course, this logic is often contested by groups concerned about environmental protection, preservation of historical areas, financial transparency and accountability, and other matters of public interest.

Our analysis includes the application of the concept of post–politics to the field of borderland studies, as proposed, among others, by Erik Swyngedouw. Post–politics is referred to as a set of technologies of governance and administration aimed at reaching societal consensus on the basis of policy approaches publicly presented as presumably self–evident and necessitating no debate on substantial issues. In this sense, post-politics presupposes a certain degree of populism which is manifest, in particular, in the omnipresent portrayal by authorities of cultural or sporting events allegedly beneficial to all city residents. In turn the mass–scale sporting event provides symbolism and has as part of the overall event, entertainment projects.

It is the late modern "economy of appearance"[76] that determines the "self–conscious making of spectacles necessary for gathering–attracting investment funds" for host cities and regions as an essential capacity to dovetail with imperative imageries of "global", "international", and "world–class" places.[77] Materializing these aspirations, cities transform themselves into attractive, festivalized and safe places designed for '"tourist gaze"[78] in such forms as amusement parks [79] and sterilized and glurbanized "capitals",[80] whose utopian elitist images have no grounding in local meanings.[81] What substantiates these processes is fetishization of

76 *Carter*, International Review for the Sociology of Sport Underpinning the Production of the Spectacle, P. 132.
77 *Carter*, International Review for the Sociology of Sport Underpinning the Production of the Spectacle, P. 133.
78 *Larsen and Urry*, Gazing and Performing.
79 *Bryman*, The Disneyization of Society.
80 *Taylor and Toohey*, Ensuring Safety at Australian Sport Event Precincts: Creating Securitised, Sanitised and Stifling Spaces? P. 77.
81 *Silk*, Towards a Sociological Analysis of London 2012, P. 738.

both "consumer satisfaction" and "controlling space".[82] In terms of urban development and discursive production it means construction of landscapes that include only those meanings that are consonant with the dominant cultural systems, while excluding the other.

In focusing on consensus–making, post–political governance tends to marginalize voices of dissent and forge borderland strategies on more or less unified and even standardized discourses.[83] The transformation of the (urban, regional, or national) community into a site for the "cohabitation of differences" does not constitute a key interest for post–political authorities who care more about policing, normalizing and avoiding disagreement or discussion.[84] Swyngedouw, drawing on Jacques Rancière's distinction between police and politics, argues that "the consolidation of an urban post–political arrangements runs...parallel to the rise of a neoliberal governmentality that has replaced debate, disagreement and dissensus with a series of technologies of governing that fuse around consensus, agreement, accountancy metrics and technocratic environmental management".[85] This explains why post–politics includes strong elements of security and police functions, implying control and supervision for the sake of public safety.[86]

Cultural and sporting events can certainly be viewed through the prism of post–political approaches. For host cities, these events are opportunities to find their niche in global tourist, leisure and entertainment markets. Organizers usually tune their marketing strategies to the global demands of urban development, which are largely shaped by competition between localities, including comparative ratings, and the emulation of cultural and branding strategies. Territorial branding is one of the most common ways of reifying symbols of regional and national distinctiveness, and their operationalization as an indispensable element of competition between states, cities and regions. For host cities cultural and sporting events are communicative performances, grounded in repertoires of signs, symbols, messages and texts that promote what might be dubbed "commercial iden-

82 *Carter*, International Review for the Sociology of Sport Underpinning the Production of the Spectacle, P. 134.
83 *Swyngedouw*, Europe as a Discourse.
84 *van Toorn*,Contesting neoliberal urbanization, P. 5.
85 *Swyngedouw*,The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City: In Search of a Democratic Politics of Environmental Production, P. 604.
86 See thesis 7 in *Rancière*, Ten Thesis on Politics.

tities" through placing local narratives in particular contexts.[87] These are mostly shaped by the mass media and corporate business, and meant for branding, marketing, and consumption. The produced identities are not necessarily results of social interactions and experience sharing between the collective Self and a variety of Others, but rather effects of commercial strategies designed by policy consultants and PR specialists.

In post-Soviet countries territorial branding has become one of the focal points for students of cultural geography [88] and marketing practitioners. Those commercial identities pop up at the meeting points of two generically similar post–political discourses that unfold, respectively, at the global and the local levels. Globally, major international sports and cultural organizations function as commercial entities working, by and large, for the world of mass media, branding, entertainment and advertisement markets. Usually they are sceptical about political articulations beyond the domain of their normative universality. Their operational regime seems harmonious to the equally post–political, pragmatic, business–oriented and producing social consensus rather than diversity logic of national and sub–national elites who eagerly get involved in global events. Therefore, the external environment is bereft of strong impulses supportive of democratic participation and deliberation, which in most cases remain a series of vernacular social practices effectuated as acts of resistance. Global post–political sports structures are more concerned with providing security, through systems of surveillance and control, and developing the entertainment industry[89] than with responding to the political demands of local communities which are usually portrayed as too parochial, particular and devoid of a universal appeal.[90]

Three basic characteristics of post–political practices as a set of toolkits of neo–liberal governance and administration might be emphasized. First, a policy of avoiding contestations and reaching societal consensus is key for "urban populism",[91] often applied by authorities for legitimizing the

87 *Kraft and Brummett*, Why sport and games matter. Performative rhetorics in popular culture, P.18.
88 *Zamiatin*, Geokulturniy brending territoriy: kontseptualn'nie osnovy.
89 *Dean*, Change of address. Butler's ethics at sov- ereignty's deadlock, P. 117.
90 *O'Bonsawin*,'No Olympics on Stolen Native Land': contesting Olympic narratives and asserting indigenous rights within the discourse of the 2010 Vancouver Games.
91 *Paddison*, Some reflections on the limitations to public participation in the post-political city, P.1.

role of mega-events as drivers for the public good. The second element addresses place–making and territorial branding based on the operationalization of effective regional distinctiveness for increasing global attention and investments for one city, region, or state.[92] Thirdly, post–political strategies are grounded in security and police functions, implying control, surveillance and supervision for the sake of public safety.[93] These measures range from the regulation of food consumption to military protection against possible terrorist attacks.[94]

What is common in all these practices is the marginalization of voices of dissent and the articulation of urban strategies based on seemingly unified and even standardized discourses,[95] that coincide with the aims of city managers, who are more interested in practices of policing and normalization than in public politics.[96] This only confirms the experiences of many cities across the globe where decision-making processes at the time of events of great visibility were "often non–democratic and lacking in transparency, whilst crucially they tend to be in the interests of global flows rather than local communities".[97] Mega–events prompt the use of public funds to be used for private interests; "the end result is a global form of consumption in which the unified principles of peace, youth and diversity are usurped by the needs of a media–driven conception of global consumption".[98] "Distributional inequalities" and "discriminatory geographies")[99] are among other negative effects of mega–events. Therefore, "the contemporary urban condition is marked by a post-political police order of managing the spatial distribution and circulation of things and people within a consensually agreed neo–liberal arrangement…The polis as a 'political' space is retreating, while social space is increasingly

92 *Parent*, *Eskerud* and *Hanstad*, Brand creation in international recurring sports events; *Xing* and *Chalip*, Effects of Hosting a Sport Event on Destination Brand: A Test of Co-branding and Match-up Models.
93 See thesis 7 in *Rancière*, Ten Thesis on Politics.
94 *Johns* and *Johns*, Surveillance, subjectivism and technologies of power; Sugden, Watched by the games: surveillance and security at the Olympics.
95 *Swyngedouw*, Europe as a Discourse.
96 *van Toorn*,Contesting neoliberal urbanization, P. 5.
97 *Miles*, Spaces for Consumption: Pleasure and Placelessness in the Post-Industrial City, P. 128.
98 *Miles*, Spaces for Consumption: Pleasure and Placelessness in the Post-Industrial City, P. 140.
99 *Soja*, Seeking Spatial Justice, P.47.

colonised or sutured by consensual neo–liberal techno–managerial policies".[100]

These vulnerabilities demonstrate why post–political momentum is far from stable, and is frequently challenged by demands from those social groups that do not fit into the post–political consensus and develop their own alternative discourses.[101] Post–political approaches to borderlands do leave some space for political articulations, though this limited politicization takes different forms, and their practical influence should not be exaggerated. By political articulation we mean contestation of already–made, pre–given administrative models and organizational practices imposed upon urban communities by means of a combination of global and local discourses and institutional measures. Political discourses are subversive and conflictual, and they ultimately transform or disturb existing power relation structures.[102]

Conceptualizing governmentality

The concept of governmentality ought to be understood as part of Michel Foucault's approach to power relations, which is composed of "the variety of tactics, strategies, fields of truth and rationalisations".[103] Foucault distinguished governmentality from the realm of sovereign politics, encompassing national identities and concomitant practices of state–to–state diplomacy. Sovereign power, in his account, is based on unity, centralization, hierarchy and supreme autonomous authority claiming independence from external sources and mechanisms of power. The application of sovereign power can often be grounded in territorial and geopolitical thinking, and is likely to be coercive "power over lives and deaths", and grounded in territorial and geopolitical thinking.[104] Sovereignty thus is closely connotative with national identities and political strategies developed on this basis. In the European context the concept of sovereign

100 *Swyngedouw*, Every Revolution Has its Square': politicising the post-political city, P.23.
101 *Uitermark*, Nicholls and Loopmans, Cities and social movements: theorizing beyond the right to he city.
102 *Chambers* and *Carver*, Judith Butler and Political Theory. P. 9.
103 *Rosenow*, Decentring Global Power: The Merits of a Foucauldian Approach to International Relations.
104 See *Singer* and *Weir*, Politics and Sovereign Power: Considerations on Foucault.

nation state was in many respects challenged by the supranational model of the EU, yet it retains its force as a counter–balance to the allegedly detrimental effects of the renouncement of the nation state as the pivotal source of policy making. Sporting mega–events might be important elements of publicly articulating and exposing the allegiance to nation state symbols, as the FIFA World Cup hosted by Germany in 2006 demonstrated.

As we see, sovereignty can be a matter of political contestation that unveils the deep political nature of the concept. Of course, debates on sovereignty are very contextual and in each country are deployed in different political frameworks. Against this backdrop, governmentality is a different type of power, grounded in administrative and managerial policy toolkits that stretch beyond national borders and embrace global, international and subnational actors too. Governmentality is a largely de–politicized and mostly technological form of power, based on enactment and empowerment, rather than domination and suppression. It denotes a networking type of relations between a gamut of countless actors as diverse as professional and social associations, cultural and lifestyle groups, non–governmental and non–commercial organizations. This model of power is based not upon domination, but rather on expanding communicative spaces, sharing resources, building coalitions, and so forth. Governmentality is not about imposing power from above, but mostly about helping others to constitute subjectivities and abilities to act independently and optimize resources. Promoting rational self–conduct is the kernel of governmentality. The very capacity for rational choice requires a social setting to be constructed through governmentality mechanisms.

Governmentality is grounded in tactics of "good governance at a distance", and thus it is trans–territorial, and aimed at rationally managing and regulating populations (not elites) on the basis of gradually emerging common rules.[105] The governmentality approach embraces institutional practices and normative discourses that target the population by shaping people's conduct on the basis of respect for their rights and autonomy. Unlike sovereignty, governmentality aims at stimulating an individual's free conduct and self-awareness to act rationally and responsibly. Yet "in

105 See *Selby*, Engaging Foucault: Discourse, Liberal Governance and the Limits of Foucauldian IR.

order to act freely, the subject must first be shaped, guided and moulded into one capable of responsibly exercising that freedom",[106] which explains why governments invest so much effort in creating structural preconditions for positive change. "Instead of direct governance, the state steps back and encourages people to become more active, enterprising and responsible for their own decisions" and life choices.[107] The concept of sports for development is harmonious with the governmentality approach in exerting a positive influence on socialization, public health, social inclusion of the disadvantaged, economic development of regions, and fostering intercultural exchanges.[108]

Against this backdrop, civil society and local groups are viewed as the most important agents of change. The power of governmentality lies in the ability to mobilize and strengthen these agents through "technologies of enactment". Their "implementation requires both shaping the personal conduct of individuals so that they become civil and productive members of society, and regulating macrostructures such as the economy so that they improve the life and capabilities of the population".[109] The norms of good governance that governmentality is based on "are not imposed but are applied using a complex process of assessment, compliance",[110] such as monitoring, regulation, classification and benchmarking.

Among major actors of governmentality are foundations (private and public), banks, professional associations, consultancy companies and educational institutions. Their toolkits include best practice transfer, benchmarking, codes of conduct, marketing, audit, application of different indicators and indices. Governmentality is referred to as a type of power that is embedded in projects, programs and "styles of thinking",[111] which clearly point to its cognitive background. Therefore, rational knowledge is seen, in accordance with this logic, as an alternative to sovereign power, and simultaneously as a means of constructing new subjectivities through

106 See *Weidner*, Governmentality, Capitalism, and Subjectivity.
107 *Joseph*, Jacques Ranciere: An Introduction. Philosophy, Politics, Aesthetics, P. 415.
108 *Lyras* and *Peachey*, Integrating sport-for-development theory and praxis.
109 *Merlingen*, Foucault and World Politics: Promises and Challenges of Extending Governmentality Theory to the European and Beyond, P. 183.
110 *Merlingen*, Foucault and World Politics: Promises and Challenges of Extending Governmentality Theory to the European and Beyond, P. 422.
111 *Merlingen*, Foucault and World Politics: Promises and Challenges of Extending Governmentality Theory to the European and Beyond.

policy transfer and sharing best experiences that transcend national borders. Governmentality is a power based on rational calculus "insofar as it derived its principles from the nature of what was to be governed rather than the fleeting interests of the sovereign prince or the divine order of the world".[112] By the same token, governmentality as an indirect type of power "operates through state and non–state institutions and discourses that are legitimized neither by direct elections nor through established authority. Marked by a diffuse set of strategies and tactics, governmentality gains its meaning and purpose from no single source, no unified sovereign subject.[113]

Along Foucauldian lines, the subject of neoliberal governmentality "not only exercises capacity for rational choice, but this choice is made within a social setting where she alone is responsible for, and bears the consequences of, the outcomes of that decision".[114] Thus, governmentality seeks to enhance capacities of the targeted group "to govern themselves" and trigger "emancipatory transformations".[115] This is "a distinct logic of power" that aims at "governing through freedom";[116] in other words, its purpose is the shaping of "autonomous and responsible individuals through the "conduct of conduct" and the ensemble of governmental techniques...It operates through distant social relations to set up standards for what is appropriate, effective and legitimate...It's a power that works to structure the possible field of actions of others".[117]

Governmentality can be characterized as a *post–political* type of power. As we have mentioned above, post–politics includes strong elements of security and police functions, implying control and supervision for the sake of public safety. The EU, in particular, mostly adheres to "the logic of routine" that tackles security issues as a process of everyday practices of governance.[118]

At the same time, governmentality is a *post–sovereign* type of power implying transition to dispersed forms of sovereignty that is no longer

112 *Ibid*.
113 *Butler*, *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence.*
114 *Weidner* , Governmentality, Capitalism, and Subjectivity.
115 *Merlingen*, Foucault and World Politics: Promises and Challenges of Extending Governmentality Theory to the European and Beyond.
116 *Neumann and Sending*, The International' as Governmentality.
117 *Ibid*.
118 *Bourbeau*, Moving Forward Together: Logics of the Securitization Process.

indivisible or absolute. While it opens more spaces for cross–border institutions and practices, nation states lose their monopoly on policy changes. This raises the question of whether governmentality is necessarily a direct opposition to political power; or can they rather co–exist and reinforce each other, and how the post–political states reinvent themselves on the basis of adopting, co–opting, appropriating, borrowing and modifying techniques of governance practices? We deem that non-sovereign forms of power, including governmentality, are not necessarily direct opposites to sovereign strategies. They might not only co–exist, but mutually condition and reinforce each other: "sovereign power is very much tied to the conditions necessary for the establishment of governance".[119] The state reinvents itself by adapting techniques and practices of governing: "in a way the state co–opts them. It might be the question of state officials wilfully appropriating them, copying them, borrowing them or modifying them by making them universal".[120]

What is more interesting is the *conflation of post–colonial and neo–imperial discourses* that accompany the practices of neoliberal governmentality. Arguably, in regions like Central and Eastern Europe indirect governance operates through national governments and international institutions (UEFA) and projects (EURO 2012) "that assist, advise and constrain the conduct of postcolonial states".[121] In a rather innovative actualization of the English school vocabulary, some authors have recently claimed that sports can form a platform for "a post–colonial international society".[122] Along similar lines we might hypothesize that a growing number of sporting mega–events in countries hegemonized by local varieties of post–colonial discourses might be an important element of their international socialization, which includes finding a balance between cosmopolitan and postcolonial articulations of their identities.[123]

Thus, governmentality as a set of neoliberal practices of transferring knowledge and sharing expertise, and their spill–over effects beyond the West, can be analysed within three discursive frames. *First*, key elements

119 *Singer and Weir*, Politics and Sovereign Power: Considerations on Foucault, P. 458.
120 See *Tellmann*, Foucault and the invisible economy.
121 *Neumann and Sending*, The International' as Governmentality, P. 699.
122 *Holden*, World Cricket as a Postcolonial International Society: IR Meets the History of Sport.
123 *Jabri*, Solidarity and spheres of culture: the cosmopolitan and the postcolonial.

of this policy are territorial branding, consensus–making and security provision. *Second*, a substantial part of European governmentality is grounded in the logic of biopolitics, with strategies of inclusion and exclusion at its core. *Third*, governmentality in non–western countries might be characterized by different types of conflation of post–colonial and neo–imperial discourses.

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We would like to wrap up this chapter by pointing to different political articulations inherent in the aspects of borderland studies that we have elucidated. We agree that "struggle about meanings are struggles about power".[124] Yet power–related connotation of course, in their different modalities, can also be discerned in seemingly depoliticized techniques and practices of governance based on the idea of calculability.[125] "The places of materiality"[126] (urban landscapes, stadiums, and human bodies) can evince a political force of their own, which explains their importance for studying experiences of cultural and sporting celebrations. In this sense practices of governmentality, with their material grounding, represent a different facet of power relations, which in many cases is inseparable from the politics of representation expressed either through discourse or imagery.

124 *Jacobsen*, Duelling constructivisms: a post-mortem on the ideas debate in mainstream IR / IPE, P. 48.

125 *Barder and Levine*, "The World Is Too Much with Us": Reification and the Depoliticising if Via Media Constructivist IR.

126 *Lundberg* and *Nick-Williams*, New Materialisms, discourse analysis, and International Relations: a radical intertextual approach.