The city as an assignment

From multiple pasts to a vision of the future

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Introduction[1]

Over the last decade, scientific discourse's epistemic interest in the city, and the role it plays in the economy, local culture, and societal development, has increased tremendously (see Lindner 2003; Massey 2006; Marcuse 2005; Swyngedouw 2004). In a globalized world of homogenization through economic, technical, and cultural networks, leading to alienation from the nation state, cities offer an experience of identification. According to the urban sociologist Martina Löw, this is an experience of cultural specificity, of being in a specific place (Löw 2013, 1). Furthermore, if one assumes that not only the state but also the city is a substantial cause of societal processes,[2] questions related to urban discourses and identities are more relevant than ever. My paper demonstrates the strategies of self-perception of two former royal cities, Dresden and St. Petersburg, whose turbulent pasts left a remarkable legacy, as they are foreign countries not only in a metaphorical sense, as David Lowenthal describes in his work »The Past is a Foreign Country« (1985), but also in a direct sense of the word. An interest in the role of memory, the imaginary, and visions

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1   This article, including its empirical data, is based on the author's PhD thesis, which is concerned with the narrative construction of Dresden and St. Petersburg in public discourse from the 2000s to the early 2010. It is being prepared for submission to the Technical University of Berlin (TU).

2   Even though there have been some critical voices in German sociology against the notion of the sovereignty of the city, which has resulted in a reaction against establishing the city as an epistemologically grounded subject (see Häusermannn 2011), the relevance of the city for sociation (Vergesellschaftung) cannot be underestimated.

of the future in shaping the local and its options for resistance informs the theoretical perspective, which draws on the sociology of knowledge and culture. The central premise of this perspective is that the symbolic, meaningful order of everyday reality must be taken seriously, since our perceptions of day-to-day life have real consequences, which in turn influence social reality (Thomas 1928). Therefore, this perspective particularly foregrounds questions related to the narrative construction of reality and, regarding the city, questions pertaining to the narrative constitution of urban social structures. According to theoretical approaches to the »urban imaginary« (Lindner 2006, 2008) and the »intrinsic logic of cities« (Berking and Löw 2005, 2008; Löw 2008), based on this perspective and outlined below, one of the key issues when conducting research on urban social structures is continuity and the development of narratively constructed self-images of cities and, thereby, the temporal order of urban discourses (Löw 2013; Frank et al. 2014).

The self-images position the cities in the configuration of past, present, and future; inter alia by means of the relations between short and long durations, the selection of actions recognized as relevant events, and the ascription to these events of structural effects or impacts. Therefore, the topic of this issue of *InterDisciplines*, which deals with the relations between events and structures and more generally with the temporal structuring of narratives, is of central interest to this paper, as it explores the cities' strategies for narrating their histories and thereby organizing and arranging its processes.

To summarize, this research aims to trace the modes of reproduction of the urban structures of Dresden and St. Petersburg, drawing on empirical examples of the cities' most dominant narratives. The main research question concerns the construction of these cities' self-images in public discourses with reference to the temporal order and the interplay of events and structures in urban narratives. The article begins with an outline of my theoretical approach to the city, which engages phenomenologically with urban reality, on the basis of common knowledge, and which conceptualizes the city in a relational way as a socio-spatial form that organizes

and regulates urban processes.[3] This approach highlights those elements relevant to understanding how the city »works,« highlighting the key role of the research subjects mentioned above. The implementation of the theoretical framework within the empirical case studies that follows demonstrates the narrative construction of Dresden and St. Petersburg in the mid-2000s. These constructions are built along lines of temporality and difference, in each case manifesting strategies for shaping the idea of the city or, to put it differently, the perception of the city as an entity, a »Gestalt« or as the »whole« (Berking 2012). The final section explicates two arguments. First, it brings the temporal patterns of the narratives of each city, which evolve mostly from the narratives' event/structure constellation, into correlation with the regularities of the city's historical development. It is then able to formulate an answer to the main research question: What are the relevant, historical modes of reproduction of (the narratives of) these cities.[4] Second, the article ends with a summary of the variety of forms of event/structure interplay, applied in this case to the narrative constructions of Dresden and St. Petersburg, showing the potential of this interplay to constitute (urban) identities.

Theoretical positions

The city as research subject

To justify more thoroughly the focus of this research on the self-representations of Dresden and St. Petersburg, and, on, how they are perceived as entities within these narratives, it is necessary to briefly explain why it is important to analyze cities as discrete subjects in their own right, and thereby trace the modes through which they are reproduced.

There are several approaches in urban studies, such as, for instance, Helmuth Berking and Martina Löw's »intrinsic logic of cities« (Berking

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3   These processes are described in the next chapter.

4   For reasons of space, this article can only provide insight into some relevant reproduction modes in relation to these cities, but it does not claim to outline the logic of reproduction in all its complexity.

and Löw 2008), as well as the approach of the cultural anthropologist Rolf Lindner (2006, 2008). These theorists attribute a capacity to create and impact upon people to the city; this capacity is based on the objectified ideas and the residents' perceptions of the city. If people perceive cities as being variously attractive, tolerant, or worth living in, they will act on the basis of this knowledge and, as a result, this perception will manifest itself through external action. If cities are seen to be a stronghold for certain subcultures or as sites of certain industries, the presence of these subcultures or industries will increase and strengthen over time (Frank et al. 2013, 204). The urban reality thus acts as a social fact (Durkheim 1982 [1895]) in relation to city dwellers, who at the same time produce this reality.

The question of the reproduction of such perceptions—pertaining to everyday knowledge about the city—draws on an understanding of the city from the point of view of spatial theory. According to the intrinsic logic of cities approach, urban space is comprehended as a institutionalized process of social constitution of space. The modern city is, therefore, a space-structuring form of sociation, characterized by densification and the inclusion of heterogeneous elements. Each city thus possesses its own unique modes of organization and regulation of densification and heterogenization, developed over a long period of time. In this reading of the city, local specificity, which is normally traced in urban identity research, is comprehended as a result of these two processes:

> City does not comprise face-to-face, neighborhood, identity, central business district or habitus. All of these content-related ascriptions would be premature, and so would be even a comparative perspective. The local differences between the »city of love« and the »city of music,« let's say between Paris and Vienna, have to be analysed first of all as effects of the internal and in this sense local processes of densification and heterogenization. (Berking 2012, 318)

Thus, cities distinguish themselves through their management of diversity, and each city regulates the coexistence of a great number of different elements in a unique, historically established way. Capturing the modes of this process and thus the »intrinsic logic of the city« is therefore the key to comprehending »how things are done« in a specific city, whether

it concerns political culture, time management, notions of success, relevant urban networks, judgements of taste, behavior in public spaces, or systems of value (Berking and Löw 2008). The proponents of the »intrinsic logic« claim that this approach to the city, in contrast to others (Häußermann and Siebel 1978, 2004), takes local specificities into account, which are intrinsic principles of local urban processes and are crucial for the success of urban development and planning policies such as the implementation of new facilities for public squares, the establishment of a new music festival, the process of greening, the building of a river crossing or transport infrastructure, and so on.

Considering the city from the point of view of densification and heterogenization or, to put it differently, considering collective dispositions for »how things are done,« builds a bridge back to the city as an object of everyday knowledge or to the urban reality that is formed by our perceptions of and ideas about it. According to Lindner, cities are narrative spaces that contain stories about meaningful personalities and relevant events, myths about heroes and scoundrels, as well as parables with burdens to bear and virtues to espouse (2008, 86). Thus historically saturated perceptions, images, and ideas form the imaginary of the city. Individuals experience the city by first of all imagining it on the basis o already existing »templates« in the form of narratives, myths, symbols, and images. These are objectified in local urban culture and accumulate over time. They limit the horizon of possibilities for perceiving and thinking about the city. Verbal as well as non-verbal actions of city dwellers draw upon these templates, to the extent that we act according to what we can or can't imagine in the city. The city can be thus experienced through collective perceptions, which are historically pre-structured and condensed over time in its »urban imaginary« (Lindner 2006, 2008). The »urban imaginary« should be thought of as an organized entity that simultaneously organizes the perception and practice of city dwellers.[5]

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5   The idea that the imagination plays a huge role in shaping the city, and
     that the reality of the city is negotiated by imagining it, has already been
     proposed (see, among others, Strauss 1961; Suttles 1984; Donald 1999).
     Lindner, however, refined it and conceptualized the urban imaginary as a

In terms of the role played by the historically established reading of relevant modes of storytelling, events, and symbols, this approach clearly shares common ground with the tradition of social memory studies. Classical notions within this field, such as Maurice Halbwachs' concept of »collective memory« (1950) or Jan Assman's notion of »cultural memory« (1992), focus on the social contingency of individual memory, the narrative building and symbolic institutionalization of collective visions of the past in society, and claim these visions as a basis for the negotiation of identity. Discussion of the »urban imaginary« is concerned with the ways that city dwellers come to imagine the city as an entity on the basis of »cultural memory.« Such imagining also aims to link structure to practice.

Not only do the imaginary realms of the city and its self-representations have creative effects on reality (and vice versa), but, according to this approach, each of these realms contains implicit principles of »how things are done.« Helmuth Berking, taking up the concept of the urban imaginary, draws an analogy between this effect and the maxim »every teaspoon reflects the entire sun,« concluding that one can discover the structuring principle of the »whole of the city« in each and every (historically established) representation thereof (2011, 21). Every draft of the whole of the city, its every visualization and self-definition in symbolic reality and, in our case, in public media narratives, points to the principles that routinely organize everyday life in the city.[6] Related to Dresden and St.

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    local *Gestalt*, which informs social practices, cultural dispositions, and the
    city's materiality.

6   To identify the historical self-image of a city is, however, to distinguish it
     from an image that is created by the city's marketing campaigns. The
     crucial difference is that the first kind of image establishes itself over a
     long period of time as a result of socio-historical processes and therefore
     cannot easily be manipulated. The city images produced by marketing
     technologies can, in contrast, experiment with different content. But
     there is surely a connection between these two phenomena. It can be
     assumed that marketing experts, since they are under the influence of the
     city and the way it forms the identities of its residents, take up the
     already established key figures, features, models, and ideas in one form
     or another, adjusting them to the relevant context and the zeitgeist. At
     the same time, if new ideas do not correlate with the city's imaginary,

Petersburg, there is a universe of works that capture their mythology, from different areas of study such as sociology, cultural anthropology, and literary studies.[7] These texts seize on the central, but also marginal, myths of these cities, thus revealing the principles of narration that surround them. Here are some of these overarching principles at a glance: Dresden is the cultural city, the baroque city, the royal city, Florence on the Elbe, or the victimized city; St. Petersburg is the royal capital, the cultural capital, the city of the three revolutions, and the city of Fjodor Dostoyevsky and Alexander Pushkin. However, the question of the handling of time in the historical representations and structures of the cities, as well as the question of their narrative constitution through temporalities and event/structure relations has still been insufficiently addressed. Yet, since both cities experienced radical social, political, and economic changes and transitions in the twentieth century, it is reasonable to assert that this issue deserves more attention and will offer interesting results.

How urban studies can profit from the event/structure debate

As previously mentioned, dealing with temporal patterns in urban narratives of past, present, and future—which is one of the crucial points for comprehending how a city »works«—means first dealing with the interplay between short and long durations of time. The analysis is concerned with tracing the way city dwellers distinguish relevant from irrelevant events, inscribe causality in the relations between events and structures, and thus conceptualize their interplay in urban narratives. At this point, the terms »event« and »structure« should be clarified.

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they tend to fail (Frank 2011). It would, however, be wrong to assume that this vision doesn't allow opportunity for innovation in city planning, marketing, and so forth. The core argument is that ideas—innovative or traditional—will be »repelled« by the city and will not last long if they do not align themselves with or are contradictory to significant modes of thinking about the city and practicing it (Frank 2011).

7   To name a few examples, see for Dresden: Löffler (1955), Christmann (2004), Lindner and Moser (2006), and Fuchs (2012); for St. Petersburg: Anziferow (1922), Lotman (1992), Tchuikina (2003), Toporow (2003), and Gladarev (2011), among many others.

The »event« has been a contested term in historical studies for decades. The »1968« discourse in France criticized the domination of structures in the work of Fernand Braudel (1992 [1958]) and in the structural history propounded by the Annales school. In the 1970s, Edgar Morin (1972) and Reinhart Koselleck (1989 [1973]) announced »the comeback of the event,« which has since gained a special place in social history. The social sciences also addressed this issue (most explicitly in the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Niklas Luhmann), but unlike historical discourses, no broader theoretical debate was inspired by the »event/structure« problem, although it certainly is one of the central challenges of social theory, alongside the »practice-structure« problem. It was surely the events of 1989–91 in Eastern Europe that made historians and social scientists revisit these notions and reconceptualize their correlation in the 1990s. Two theoretical discussions, initiated by both historians (Hettling and Suter 2001) and sociologists (Greshoff and Kneer 1999), depict the evolution of the notion of the »event,« as well as the different ways of embedding it in theory of socio-structural change. The authors point out that the differentiating criteria, which produces the event/structure dichotomy, lies in the temporal dimension: events are temporally fixed, whereas structures last. The social scientists and historians, who have their points of divergence in and outside their professional fields, reject the hierarchical position of long durations above short durations, the asymmetry of the event/structure dynamic, and assert instead their complementary relationship.

In terms of the conceptual frames, this article is especially interested in sociologically relevant ideas, but it is also eager to profit from inter-disciplinary viewpoints. Therefore, the paper turns, first, to an overview of the classic sociological texts[8] for different interpretations of the issue presented in Greshoff and Kneer's volume (1999). If one can make a rough generalization, events and structures can be defined as follows: the event is a social action, interaction, or collaboration with a few actors, on

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8   These include Foucault, Habermas, Bourdieu, Giddens, Schütz, Berger, Luckmann, and Luhmann.

the one hand, or a communication, on the other. Either way, it is collectively perceived and has structurally relevant outcomes. Structure can be seen as a form of expectation: prescriptions, regulations, norms, values, rights, morals, traditions, or alternatively, as long-lasting, repetitive courses of action, procedures, or regular interactions. To sum up, structure is a »long-lasting must« and/or a »regularity« (Greshoff and Kneer 1999). Concerning the question of the benefit the Greshoff/Kneer debate affords the intrinsic logic perspective or, potentially, the other way around, one should start by taking a closer look at the fundamentals of the intrinsic logic approach. Inspired by the idea of the emancipation of the local, it made an epistemological about-turn by overcoming the subordination of the local to the global. Thus it is a cognitive shift, challenging the »good old« epistemological hierarchy that the intrinsic logic approach and the event/structure debate, as I see it, have in common. Even though the shifts have different premises and refer to different dimensions—respectively to spatial and temporal hierarchies with no direct correlation between them—both cases question the asymmetrical relation of the global and the long-lasting versus the local and short-term as the relation between the stable, powerful, and total versus the fragile, powerless, and individual elements of the totality. Both intrinsic logic and the event/structure debate highlight the creativity of elements, which are very often disempowered in discourse, as discussed above. To overcome these spatial and temporal hierarchies, one must consider a greater variety of different possible causalities in the interpretation of social happenings, and a greater variety of different possible readings of social processes and the way individuals can deal with them.

Furthermore, the temporal construction of the city's self-image is one of the crucial aspects of negotiation of identity. The relations between long-lasting and short-term durations, and the causalities that are narratively inscribed in them, are therefore foregrounded in existing research. On this account, the issues that are problematized by the event/structure debate, which contains a variety of views, can therefore be fruitful in making my analysis sensitive to urban »technologies« of ordering temporal elements and creating a vision or an outline of the city.

The aims of this empirical study are to see which of these »technologies,« perspectives, including those provided by the event/structure debate, urban societies take to deal with the ambiguity of historical events and structures and to see which causalities the narration inscribes in memory. It will observe how the narratives of Dresden and St. Petersburg differentiate, by means of temporality, between the socially stable and instable as well as the invariable and variable, and how they thus conceptualize the interplay of events and structures. This focus on interplay shows the way that urban communities envision their cities as entities, as the whole, while signifying at the same time, as mentioned earlier, their modes of reproduction. It can be productive to consider these new potential aspects of temporality in urban narration in terms of the development of event/structure theory.[9]

Guidelines for the empirical analysis

The choice of two cities as the objects of enquiry in this paper aims less to differentiate between their intrinsic logics by means of comparison than to detect the relevant urban structures of the cities by analyzing their narrative constructions. The overlap found in these two cases, despite differences in national context and size, will then be reflected on in conjunction with the particularities of their contrasting historical development.

The focus on the architectural politics of Dresden and St. Petersburg in the case studies is a good choice for pointing out some relevant principles of local distinctiveness, of how things are imagined, dealt with, as

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9   As a side note, to clarify the correlation between the imaginary, texture, and event and structure, one can reformulate the research question in the following way: What kind of the whole of the city do the imaginaries of Dresden and St. Petersburg present if one examines their texture—comprising largely narratives—from the perspective of event and structure relations? It is these relations between long-lasting and short-term durations that depict the figure of cities and point out their modes of reproduction. These relations ultimately form the urban imaginary—conglomeration of ideas and perceptions of cities—to a great extent.

architectural heritage is one of the key areas of identification for residents of both Dresden and St. Petersburg.

Regarding identification, with which the city imaginary is concerned, identity and auto/biography studies have repeatedly highlighted how self-perception, whether by a person or a community, organizes itself narratively along lines of temporality and difference (see Kraus 1996; Lucius-Hoene 2002; Meuter 1995; Widdershoven 1993). In addition, urban research, especially when it is interested in the specific local order of cities, points out the significant role temporality plays in identity constructions, in so far as self-reflection for the most part goes along with locating cities in the nexus of past, present, and future (Frank et al. 2014). At the same time, this urban social memory provides a city with frames of reference through which it can differentiate itself from other cities or subjects in the past, present, or future, but also from itself (Frank et al. 2004).

Consequently, both the temporal order and differences built into narration are the right »locations« for analytical and empirical engagement with the urban imaginary; the question is what kind of temporal order and what forms of differentiation are typical for the two given cities.

In media discourses about Dresden and St. Petersburg, the subject of the analysis in this paper, difference is produced essentially via two modes: the cities are constituted through references to themselves in the past, as well as through interactions with other actors, namely with their own residents. As for the temporal dimension, it is entangled with both of these modes. As a result, I am going to examine the self-perception of the two cities along lines of temporality on the one hand, and in terms of self-referentiality and interaction on the other. Special attention will be paid to the narrative order and functions of events, to ascriptions of meaning and causality, and to events as a system of references that produce structures.[10]

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10   In fact, the construction of the historical narratives of both cities and its correlation to their reproduction modes were explored in an earlier publication by the author (Dingersen 2014). However, a more thorough

The narrative construction of Dresden and St. Petersburg

A brief overview of the case studies[11]

Dresden and St. Petersburg position themselves in public discourses[12] as former royal cities with an immense historical and cultural heritage, including the most popular architectural masterpieces of baroque,

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engagement with their temporal orders is presented in this paper, which is honed by the event/structure discourse. It explicates some of the more relevant patterns of relation between short and long durations and shows the organization of cities' narrative architecture and self-perception in a more systematic manner.

11 Since the details of both cases are not so relevant for the ideas I highlight in this paper, the overview is confined to basic information, in order to save space for more relevant issues. This paper focuses on the narrative strategies of the cities, which refer mostly to the discourses of opponents of the projects but, at the same time, represent the quantitatively dominant parts of the statements from both discourses. All translations from German and Russian into English are by the author.

12 The notion of public discourse is understood from the standpoint of Rainer Keller, who combines the perspective of Michel Foucault with the socio-phenomenological tradition of the sociology of knowledge. Discourse is comprehended as being socially contingent and based on the knowledge of everyday life and its associated routines, historically variable; and, most importantly, capable of constructing reality by imposing rules as to what may or may not be said (Keller 2004).

As far as the question of which interest groups use which strategies to struggle to define these discursive rules and negotiating their meanings, the following should be noted in advance: this paper traces the challenging question of whether there are intrinsically produced regularities, patterns, modes and, therefore, broadly »structural issues« that can be recognized in the shaping of the cities' reality. The focus on this wide-ranging episte-mological perspective, on the other hand, leaves the political dimension out of consideration due to lack of space. For the same reason, the counter-narratives, which present alternative blueprints for Dresden and St. Petersburg, are not considered in this paper. They are surely required for a depiction of the complexity of the cities' imaginaries but are, nevertheless, fairly irrelevant when it comes to sketching the most significant narratives that shape the whole of the cities.

rococo, and neoclassicism from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, which are concentrated in their historical city centers. The renaissance of historicism after the end of the socialist era in Germany and Russia in 1989–90 made these images symbolic of the two cities and, therefore, bound the identification of their residents tightly to them. For more than twenty years, Dresden and St. Petersburg have been arenas for ongoing public conflicts over building projects proposed near historical city sites. My examples of narrative structures and discursive practices, which will demonstrate the constitution and functioning of the self-perception of these cities, are two long-standing, internationally known conflicts that took place in the mid-2000s. They provide the wide range of empirical data, in the form of media content that appeared in the press, on TV, and on the internet. These conflicts concern the Waldschlösschen Bridge in Dresden and the controversy around the Okhta Center or Okhta Skyscraper in St. Petersburg.

The Waldschlösschen Bridge in Dresden was proposed by the city administration and aimed to resolve the lack of transport infrastructure in that part of the city by building a crossing over the Elbe to the north-east of Dresden. However, it led to an eruption of protests from the city's residents and gained attention from national and international actors, all of whom were concerned about the possible damage to the views over the historical center of Dresden, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Completed in August of 2013, despite all the protests, the Waldschlösschen Bridge cost Dresden its status as a World Heritage Site and still remains a very controversial issue among the populace of Dresden. The case of the Okhta Skyscraper has much in common with this story. This business center was planned by the city administration and the oil concern GAZPROM at a location that was close enough to the historic center to damage the panorama as well as to put the city's UNESCO World Heritage Site status at risk. Due to massive protests by St. Petersburg's residents, it was relocated far away from the historical city center and is now in the process of construction.

Temporality and self-referentiality

By drawing on different periods of or events from the cities' biographies, the narratives about Dresden and St. Petersburg, aim only to contextualize the current events historically. Similar to a biographical narration, the discourses of both of these cities compare Dresden and St. Petersburg to their past »selves.« The narrativization of the continuities and ruptures in the visions of the cities constructs their »identity«; for instance, through different ways of claiming the authenticity of the city's present, which is always done with regard to its »proper past.« Thus the temporality or temporal references of Dresden are organized in a way that highlights the existence of a »proper« or »genuine« self-image and its destruction through historical circumstances, but they are also organized in a way that leaves no doubt that the restoration and reproduction of this self-image is needed, as the following statement from a protester implies: »And of course I was often in Dresden during the GDR time. The famous view with the Church of Our Lady [Frauenkirche] was not yet completed, of course.«[13] The narratives of Dresden are saturated with the words »again« or the prefix »re-«: »Dresden has become world class again with the title [of World Heritage Site], after it was forced into provinciality by two dictatorships.«[14] The »real« Dresden was damaged and has not been completed since then, as it is still in need of supplementary elements. The architectural reconstruction of Dresden was concerned with the reparation of its »identity«:

> Art lovers all over the world watched Dresden: 60 years after its terrible devastation through the bombings during war, the Church of Our Lady was revived in October 2005. The image of the old Dresden shined again: the soft swing of the Elbe and the city

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13   Heidrun Hannusch, »Dieser Blick gehört der ganzen Welt,« DNN-Interview mit Wolfgang Thierse, Bundestagspräsident a. D., zum Dresdner Weltkulturerbe-Streit, *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, April 7, 2006, 13.

14   Heidrun Hannusch, »UNESCO-Titel: Weltrang nach Provinzialität,« *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, January 13, 2006.

center, over which floats the widely visible light sandstone dome of the church.[15]

The narrative conveys the self-image of Dresden as a long-lasting repetitive process of re-presentation—and therefore as a structure. The idea of the »authentic« self-image is shaped here by emphasizing a certain event: the accomplishment of the restoration. This event forms the structure by signaling its repetitive nature, excluding any capriciousness in this process, but rather—as something that brought balance and harmony—underlying its normativity and regularity. In the narrative of St. Petersburg, which also claims the authenticity of the city's present, temporalities are organized in a different way—namely in a linear fashion, for example, by stressing what appeared first chronologically. The following argument against the Okhta building »weaves« together the city's »identity« out of the events, whose positioning serves as evidence for the existence of a »genuine« core of city images:

> There wasn't so very much that was built in Petersburg during the time of Peter [Tsar Peter I, the founder of the city]. Nevertheless, the plan for the city was so brilliant that it grew somehow from the inside. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the era of Pushkin, the Palace Square and the Alexander Column appeared. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the great Russian Jugendstil appeared. Thus, as a result of leaps across three centuries, Petersburg became Petersburg before it became Petrograd and Leningrad. What are we going to contribute to this city at the beginning of the twenty-first century?[16]

This genesis of the city, as well as the claim for authenticity, is accompanied in both cases by overcoming obstacles. The »in spite of« pattern represents the next city biography strategy that organizes events and historical periods, ruptures and continuities, and brings them together for the production

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15   Alexander Wendt, »Autobahn durchs Paradies,« *FOCUS*, July 12, 2006, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland /weltkulturerbe_aid_111818.html.

16   Andrej Bitov, »Bomby nad gorodom,« Flyer, 2009.

of a self-image. As such, the German art historian Heinrich Magirius has said that »Dresden has so far managed, despite many disasters and not least because of its generous scenic location on the Elbe, to preserve and to recapture its identity,«[17] Here is a similar statement from another author:

> After the war and the dictatorships of the twentieth century, the city managed to regain its past gloss and international attention and to perform a concert along with other European cities.[18]

The demolition of the historic center of Dresden as a result of the airstrikes of the Western Allies from February 13–15, 1945 is the central, albeit not the only, anchor point in the narrativization of Dresden, which constitutes its self-perception as a city that overcomes. Thus it has been emphasized that the current »cultural identity« is an inherent one, which »survived the Nazi regime as well as the GDR time.«[19] This shows, interestingly, that both the short duration of bombardment in February 1945 and the long duration of political regimes are part of the symbolic event architecture of the Dresden narratives.

A similar narrative pattern concerning the process of overcoming—a pattern which also organizes itself, significantly, around the experience of suffering in the Second World War, namely the Siege of Leningrad—can be found in the discourse about St. Petersburg. Along with the blockade disaster, the confrontation with political regimes also plays a crucial role here in the self-understanding of the city as one that overcomes:

> Leningrad experienced terrible pressure from the Bolshevik authorities after the war, as it was insistently turned into a »city of provincial

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17   Susanne Beyer, »Denkmäler: Angriff auf das Unsichtbare,« *Der Spiegel*, July 2, 2007, 157.

18   Reinhard Decker, »Dresdner Appell zum Erhalt des Welterbestatus,« June 15, 2009, accessed September 30, 2015, http://www.welterbe-erhalten .de/unterschriftenliste.

19   Valeria Heintges, »Wenn Dresden stur ist, sind wir es auch,« *Sächsische Zeitung*, May 10, 2008, 9.

fate.« But under these circumstances, despite such pressure, Leningrad managed generally to preserve its historical image.[20]

Particular attention was devoted to the conflicts during the late Perestroika period as the authorities of Leningrad began a partial modernization of the historical center and resolved to demolish some of its historical buildings, including the Angleterre Hotel, which was the formal residence of the famous Russian poet of the beginning of the twentieth century, Sergey Yesenin. The discourse positions the city dwellers' fight for the Angleterre Hotel as the next major, symbolically relevant experience of resistance and defense of the city after the Siege of Leningrad. These wartime and Perestroika events are often used as the benchmark for narrativization of current events, as the following statement evidences: »Only two buildings were ruined on the Nevsky [central avenue in St. Petersburg] during the war, and in the last few years, six buildings have been ruined.«[21] Here is another example from the press:

> Maybe it is way too long ago […] 1987—»Angleterre.« […] So many things have happened since that time, we've lost so much in our city. […] After the gloomy totalitarian regime had collapsed, we were so young and hoped that we could save St. Petersburg, where many generations of our ancestors lived. But we couldn't do it… What have we lost? A few hundred of the unique buildings […] but, most importantly, those buildings that made St. Petersburg St. Petersburg.[22]

The process of overcoming in St. Petersburg spreads out temporally into the past, but also into the future and is accompanied by a permanent state of being in danger. In both cities, the events figure as challenges to the »identity structure,« which construct the latter by challenging it.

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20   Gustav Boguslavskij, »Gazprom-test,« *Novaya Gazeta*, September 6, 2007, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/3699/.

21   Tat'ana Lichanova, »Otkrytoe pis'mo Walentine Matwienko,« *Novaya Gazeta*, July 2, 2007, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru /articles/3294/.

22   Ibid.

At the same time, there are aspects of urban self-representation, such as belonging, whose temporality is structured mostly by events. Narrative coherence is constructed by drawing parallels between past and present events or by recourse to the »initial point« of the current event, as the following statement from the call for a demonstration against the bridge shows:

> The »Call from Dresden« of February 13, 1990 for the reconstruction of the Church of Our Lady already contained the idea of registering [Dresden] in the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. Through our demonstration, we're going to bring these two places to mind: the view over the Waldschlösschen and the city skyline, and their restored and intact beauty. Just as the »Group of Twenty« did in the autumn of 1989, we are suggesting a symbolic donation of 1 euro for the preservation of our heritage.[23]

Bringing together past and present events makes »the identity structure« coherent and attributes new meanings to it. The logic, allowing consideration of the »Call from Dresden« alongside civil protest against damage to the historical image of Dresden, as well as the actions of the »Group of Twenty« alongside contemporary practice of preservation of heritage, creates a self-image of Dresden that outlives political transformations.

Personal biographies and »narrative identities« draw a line between the past and the present particularly convincingly, linking »then« coherently to »now« and creating logical consistency for historical coincidences, as the following example from the St. Petersburg press shows:

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23   Olaf Böhme et al. »Welterbe erhalten: jetzt! Aufruf zu Demonstration am 25. März 2007,« Flyer, März 2007. The »Call from Dresden« aimed to gather financial support for the reconstruction of the Church of Our Lady. The »Group of Twenty« organized itself spontaneously during the demonstrations in Dresden in October 1989 in order to negotiate with the local authorities concerning political issues of the day; it legitimized itself as the representative of Dresden's citizenry by collecting one mark from each of their supporters.

> Not all of those who have seen the bombings of the Second World War, and St. Petersburg in ruins, are in the cemetery. Those who have seen the walls of the Angleterre fall are still alive.[24]

Furthermore, de-rationalization or mystification represents a common method in the discourse about St. Petersburg, in order to build historical parallels and, by doing so, ensure the meaning and coherence of a range of interpretations of the city.

> On September 8, sixty-six years had passed since the beginning of the Siege of Leningrad. On the same day, a city dwellers' demonstration for protecting the historical image of the northern capital[25] is going to take place. It is a good occasion to think about why these events coincided with each other.[26]

In this case, the events of the Siege of Leningrad and the demonstration for protecting historical image serve as a medium that manifests some regularities. These events are a reference to something that transcends the given facts and the explanation for which lies beyond them.

Temporality and interaction

The narrative constitution of the entities Dresden and St. Petersburg occurs not only by reference to selected fragments of their biographies but, as mentioned previously, also by the interplay between the cities and their residents.

It is about social exchange, which is constructed in discourse through different means, such as the short-term here-and-now acts of everyday life (for instance, city dwellers doing something at a particular moment), as well as by general actions that occur in unspecified time (for example, the city generally having an effect on its inhabitants). The discourse is

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24   Lichanova, *Novaya Gazeta*, July 2, 2007.

25   Another common name for St. Petersburg.

26   Boguslavskij, *Novaya Gazeta*, September 6, 2007.

also constructed by long-term actions of an outstanding nature, specifically events.

In the discourse about Dresden, an exchange of gift and action is the common element. The city's residents are positioned as recipients of the gift: »the Dresdeners was gifted the scenery that historical buildings are embedded in.«[27] Due to the embedding of Dresden's historical center in the Elbe Valley, and the beneficial combination of the natural and the artificial in the landscape, Dresden »has inspired artists and poets over the centuries.«[28] The effect or influence of the city is, however, not only about creating inspiration but also about raising awareness or educating, as the Dresden writer Thomas Rosenlöcher declares:

> The main path where we [Dresdeners] acknowledge each other lies along the Elbe meadows, stretching out across the city. Walking here, a Dresdener becomes aware of the fact that a built environment can also be determined by beauty—he can feel the harmony of the triad of city skyline, river scenery, and mountains lying further away.[29]

As a result, a Dresdener gets to know the beauty of the built environment which, combined with the refined scenic attributes, defines quality of life in the city. This phenomenon evokes something subtle and barely measurable, which is, nevertheless, relevant enough for residents of Dresden to fight for it during the Waldschlösschen Bridge conflict: »They feel that not only the landscape has been ruined here. Something invisible has been seized: a feeling.«[30] The discourse shows an invisible, emotionally charged relation between Dresdeners and their city. The fact that the refined beauty of Dresden causes a »feeling of happiness« rhetorically reinforces the emotionalization of the relation.

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27   Landeshauptstadt Dresden, 2005, Bürgerentscheid Waldschlösschenbrücke, 6.

28   Andrea Pals, op-ed, *Elbtal-Kurier*, December 12, 2005, 6.

29   Thomas Rosenlöcher, »Ihr zersägt Eure Enkel! Warum wir Dresdner uns noch immer gegen die Waldschlösschenbrücke wehren,« *Die Zeit*, February 7, 2008, 39.

30   Beyer, *Der Spiegel*, July 2, 2007, 157.

For residents of St. Petersburg, it is important to pass the city on intact to their children, so that they can experience the city as previous generations did, namely as the city that educated them. It is not only symbolic meaning that is ascribed to this aspect of education, as living in St. Petersburg is not only about the aesthetic plane or acquiring taste, but also about general socialization as the following statement from a preservationist from St. Petersburg shows: »This city has its own will, its own mentality, and it brings people up; we are to some extent a product of this city, its servants.«[31]

In light of these statements, the following narrative pattern concerning the role of both cities in the lives of their residents can be recognized: dwellers of Dresden and St. Petersburg are favored with lots of gifts, but they are also educated and socialized by their cities. The relationship is, however, not asymmetrical: taking requires giving and so the gifts from these cities require preservation efforts or action from their residents, speaking in terms of the »gift versus action« exchange. This part of the exchange, exemplified by the civic engagement narratives, is dominated by events.

The histories of both cities are characterized by numerous precedents for civic engagement concerning the architectural heritage of the cities. It was representatives of the educated bourgeoisie (*Bildungsbürgertum*) (however controversial their political position in German history since the time of Augustus II the Strong may be regarded),[32] whose culture, way of life, and attitude were significantly marked by their opposition to the political regime in the GDR. Drastically restricted civic engagement could, however, develop relatively freely in the field of heritage preservation,

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31 Tat'ana Lichanova, »Boi za oboronu Peterburga,« *Novaya Gazeta*, August 20, 2009, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles /5229/.

32 In relation to different perceptions of the notion of Bildungsbürgertum in Dresden, see Knebel (2007).

which was less constrained by ideological pressures and state control.[33] This was, for example, the case in civil protests against the demolition of the baroque building by the architect Daniel Pöppelmann between 1981 and 1982, or later in the efforts of the civil society group *IG Äußere Neustadt*, which argued for a historically sensitive renovation (Anders 2009, 34) and protested against the wrecking of the buildings in Neustadt, the city district on the right bank of the Elbe.

The preservation movement and the traditions of »city activism« or »city protection,« as they call it in St. Petersburg can, according to the sociologist Boris Gladarev, be seen as a reaction to extensive social transformations in the city and dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century, when the first capitalist rebuilding of the urban space took place. The next waves of activism unfolded at the time of the revolution, and the civil war that erupted afterwards in the 1920s, as well as during the Perestroika period (Gladarev 2011). This last wave of engagement is of special interest, as it shaped not only St. Petersburg's history of heritage preservation but also contributed to the political history of the city. The preservationists of Leningrad built the first »bottom-up« movement in Soviet Russia, whose public demonstrations and protest campaigns in the mid-1980s affected the politics of the authorities. They avoided political rhetoric, but caused changes through their unusual and, therefore, symbolic presence in the public space of Leningrad alone (Gladarev 2011).

The end of the 1980s marks a milestone in both city biographies, and this period is also referenced in current discourses. Thus the Dresdener standing in front of the Church of Our Lady, who demonstrated against the bridge in March 2007, reminded Thomas Rosenlöcher of the crowd that stood in the same place in December 1989. This time it was about preserving beauty:

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33   For more about the so-called culture of retreating (Rückzugkultur) and the milieu of the bourgeois refugee (Refugiumsbürgertum) in Dresden, see Rehberg (2008).

> Where can you hear something like that, that more than twenty-thousand people gathered […] to demonstrate for the sake of beauty? That is definitely an expression of Dresden's specialness.[34]

The writer highlights the value-oriented attitude of Dresdeners, who have more than once brought humanitarian and cultural values to the fore and were ready to protect them against the ideological or utilitarian interests of politics.

In comparison to Dresden, the Okhta conflict is characteristic of the »St. Petersburg way of life«[35] as a motive for distinct civic engagement both at the end of the 1980s and today. It is about »a unique hierarchy of values, which doesn't place comfort at the top.«[36] The city's residents are ready to sacrifice their comfort to keep this order in St. Petersburg: »You can't treat us like that! We won't let the demolishment happen—you can't buy us with a well-fed life!«[37]

The discourse on St. Petersburg also offers some additional means to constitute the city as a subject of relations. The dwellers of St. Petersburg feel »love for their city«[38] as well as »pain, if it is being ruined.«[39] The Okhta conflict requires them to show their »loyalty toward St. Petersburg«[40] and that means not letting others »betray the city.«[41]

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34   Rosenlöcher, *Die Zeit*, February 7, 2008, 39.

35   Tat'ana Lichanova, *Novaya Gazeta*, August 20, 2009.

36   Ibid.

37   Ibid.

38   Ljudmila Ėl'jaševa, »Pis'mo tem, kto ne ljubit Peterburg,« *Novaya Gazeta*, May 12, 2008, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru /articles/4265/.

39   Boris Višnevskij, »Gazoskrëb v tumane,« *Novaya Gazeta*, May 13, 2010, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/5833/.

40   Boguslavskij, *Novaya Gazeta*, September 6, 2007.

41   Tat'ana Lichanova, *Novaya Gazeta*, August 20, 2009.

Such a sincere and loyal attitude toward St. Petersburg treats the city as if it was a vulnerable personality with a range of feelings and emotions, which therefore requires a sensitive approach. This moralizing attitude to the city can best be seen in the following statement of the famous preservationist and urban activist Nikolai Žuravskij, who argues, adapting the words of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, that »We are forever responsible for what we've rescued.«[42]

Thus, the narrative of social exchange between two cities and their residents consists of long-term events and short-term simple actions, moralizes the relations between actors, and as a result provides interesting insights into the event/structure complex, and shows the city to be a resident's assignment.

The city as a resident's assignment

Embedding the city in history has ethical implications. The Dresdener's assertiveness is particularly honorable, that's why it is a »moral duty« of the city's residents to ensure its survival and protect its heritage. Being a Dresdener means, therefore, to be constantly aware of the assignment to preserving this heritage and carrying this burden for a lifetime: »the burden of being a Dresdener.«[43] If one looks back at the history of the city, it becomes clear that »the Dresdener […] embodies an effort of resistance.«[44]

The contextualization of St. Petersburg as a city with severe past(s) also calls upon a sense of obligation from its dwellers to pay tribute to the sufferings of the city and to acknowledge its accomplishments. Furthermore, the discourse about St. Petersburg emancipates the city, claiming it as »an inspiring« or »uniting factor,«[45] which has throughout history

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42   Sergej Vasil'ev, »Čelovek goroda,« *Novaya Gazeta*, December 24, 2009, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/5522/.

43   Rosenlöcher, *Die Zeit*, February 7, 2008, 39.

44   Ibid.

45   Boguslavskij, *Novaya Gazeta*, September 6, 2007.

repeatedly mobilized its dwellers to action. For instance, the city »united the people, suffering in the days of the Blockade, into a living organism, a civil society,«[46] and it »mobilized people for the sake of rescuing the historical image of the city«[47] for the present.

The city is mostly depicted in both discourses on the city as a process and product of the ongoing efforts and accomplishments of its dwellers throughout urban history. The theme of handing over responsibilities and duties—to love and care about the city—to the next generation exemplifies this very clearly. Rosenlöcher commented on the demonstrations against the bridge in the following way:

> Surprisingly, many of the offspring of Dresden with Dresdener offspring of their own in buggies. […] And besides many of those, whom I've known since '89 […] as I saw them, I knew it was about us. It was about our perseverance[48]

The phenomenon that should be recognized here is the civic engagement tradition based on regionally specific socialization with its own moral attitudes and practices.

According to the discourse about St. Petersburg the symbolic exchange between the city and its dwellers should also be maintained here in order to preserve the distinctiveness of this city and to avoid the fate that »future generations will not live in a unique city, but in a chaotic accumulation of building constructions«[49] and will »get to know St. Petersburg only from archive photos.«[50]

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46   Ibid.

47   Ibid.

48   Rosenlöcher, *Die Zeit*, February 7, 2008, 39.

49   Valerija Strel'nikova, »Jurij Mamin: bašnju na ochte stroit grjaduščij cham,« *Novaya Gazeta*, September 10, 2009, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/5274/.

50   »Obraščenie orgkomiteta,« *Novaya Gazeta*, September 11, 2008, accessed September 30, 2015, http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/4515/.

Seeing the city as an assignment updates moral vocabulary such as the give-and-take relationship, loyalty, and gratefulness on the one hand and memory on the other. These are the notions that extend the temporality of self-perception in two directions—into the past and into the future. The moralizing is thereby produced largely, although not only, through events, which serve as a system of reference for arguing the necessity of loyalty and thankfulness in relation to the city. The city dwellers' promise of loyalty, to engage with the ideas of French philosopher Paul Ricœur (2006), connects different pasts with future visions of Dresden and St. Petersburg and thereby ensures the continuity of their self-images throughout a long period of time. These self-images or, generally speaking, the narrative of the city as an assignment and other moralizing patterns—reproducing the established classification of social and cultural norms, »must-haves« and »no gos« in terms of social relations and cultural lifestyle, spatial organization and architectural images—thus aim at maintaining the symbolic social order of Dresden and St. Petersburg.

Below, I provide an overview of symbolic exchange in terms of events and structures, offering an interpretation of this interplay as a form of interaction between the cities and their residents. This interaction unfolds throughout urban history and resembles, therefore, an »event,« stretched out in time. This »event« is a repetitive and, therefore, expected action, in terms of both the impact of the cities on their residents and the caring attitude of the residents, especially in their responses to anticipated threats. This means that the narrated exchange can be also seen as a structure, which arises within or is realized only by these short- and long-term actions.

Moralization as a resistance strategy for the maintenance of city order

The models of interplay between events and structures to be found in public discourses about the two cities, and the causality ascribed to these relations, demonstrates several narrative strategies for constructing the self-images of Dresden and St. Petersburg as entities showing the whole of these cities.

By referring to the different pasts of the city, the narration can construct historical events in a cyclical way, building a loop from the proper self-image, skipping over the wrong one, before returning to the proper one once again, letting events form »urban identity« as a structure by »restoring« it. The events can be ordered in a linear way, using the beginnings of the city to define the authenticity of certain of its self-representations. A popular, structure-engendering strategy for both cities, considering their pasts, is to construct the structure of »identity« by challenging it through numerous critical events, such as wars, revolutions, and other ruptures in the continuity of the self-image. Finally, the selection of past and present events, placed together, establish coherent connections between past and present, serving as a medium for the transcendent structure, which only reveals itself through events. To sharpen the effect of the event/structure interplay here, it should be highlighted that the narrative construction of the cities along temporal and self-referential lines demonstrates the composition of events, which constitute the cities as entities, as the whole, primarily by mapping them as figures that are capable of action. The whole of both cities presents itself as malleable and manageable on account of its own strengths and, regarding the long history of challenges and processes of restoration faced by each city, as assertive figures capable of resistance.

In the case of interaction between the cities and their dwellers, which is, beside self-referentiality, a way to narratively build the whole of the city, the narration deploys events as a tool to show the interaction among the actors mentioned. At the same time, it is this selecting and bringing together of events—mostly cases of protest and other forms of civic engagement to protect the »proper« vision of the city—which embeds the narrative construction of Dresden and St. Petersburg in their histories and, thus, takes part in the process of emotionalizing and moralizing the cities' relations with their residents. Incorporated within a structure of mutual give-and-take, the selected events create the perception of these cities as a moral duty for the city's residents and future generations and, therefore, form a stable structure of »urban identity.« A closer sociological look at these moralizing narrative patterns in the context of urban history

suggests, on the one hand, that these patterns fulfill a historical function in the cities' modes of reproducing themselves and, on the other hand, sheds light upon the similarities in the narrative construction of the two cities despite their differences in size and national cultural background.

How can one interpret the fact that relations between cities and their dwellers are depicted using the moral vocabulary of giving and taking, loyalty, thankfulness, and duty? According to the German sociologist Georg Simmel, give-and-take relations and social exchange, which are based on gratefulness, fulfill the function of maintaining social solidarity in situations that are not legally regulated, as is the case for the economy (Simmel 1908). If one projects this idea of the regulating symbolic function of social exchange onto the narratively depicted interplay of relations between Dresden, St. Petersburg, and their respective dwellers, an interesting perspective on the evolution and aims of these relationships emerges. What has provided for the preservation throughout their history of those aspects of the cities that have mapped the essence of Dresden and St. Petersburg and have been extremely important and dear to their residents, such as historical city views and architectural scenery? These aspects experienced revolutions, wars, political regimes with new, ideologically motivated visions of the city's image, neoliberal modernization of the cityscapes in the post-socialist era and so on. Legal orders and frameworks, which exist at specific historical points, could not save the cities from threats or interventions. Beyond cases of lawbreaking, violence, and emergencies, ideologically or economically motivated political will in Dresden, as well as in St. Petersburg, has always found a way to circumvent or adjust the law, thus exposing historical panoramas and architectural sites to danger and unbalancing the negotiated »values« and images. From this standpoint, it can be assumed that by mapping the whole of Dresden and St. Petersburg as figures, which creates the moral obligation to take care of them, similar to the figures of one's family members, the narrative about the social exchange between these cities and their residents constituted itself as a narrative strategy for overcoming diverse crises.

This strategy can be seen as a socio-ethical supplement to existing legal regulations, which should theoretically protect cities and their heritage from risks, but is often insufficient, as history attests repeatedly in such different national contexts. It is about the creation of solidarity among the urban community in order to encourage the »right« way of dealing with their city—solidarity that has advantages at critical times. Sociologically perceived, the narratives of the give-and-take relationship, duties, assignment and the promise of loyalty aim to reproduce the symbolic order of Dresden and St. Petersburg, including the relevant classifications such as what it means to be a Dresdener or a St. Petersburger, what is supposedly right or wrong, imaginable or non-imaginable for these two cities.

Translated into urban practice, this perception has different articulations for instance in the areas of urban development and architectural policies. Most notably, each of the cities meets the challenge to be perceived as an entity through its striking self-referentiality. This aspect highlights the capability of the city to handle urban development issues on its own, without expecting external aid or delegating management and responsibilities to actors from »abroad.« The negative and positive connotations of the multiple pasts of each city are fixed and represent the basis for the city to organize itself and consequently shape a definite, intentional vision of itself. The future of both former royal cities and cultural capitals has been therefore depicted as successfully malleable, however it is barely negotiable and seen from the perspective of the past. The ambivalence of the situation exemplifies in both cases marketing of the city, which, on the one hand, promotes Dresden and St. Petersburg in terms of their rich historical heritage and, on the other hand, vainly tries to transform the disparities between tradition and modernity into a productive interplay—for at the moment the past dominates city development narratives at the expense of the future.

Finally, as a side note, the common mode of narration developed historically by two cities due to their comparable local distinctiveness, despite their different national origins, proposes a vision of a particular type of historical city. It is a city distinguished by emotional bonds to its

cultural heritage and with resilient narrative reproduction modes, formed as a reaction to the challenges of architectural interventions.

Events, structures, and identity narratives

Returning to the event/structure complex, it should be said that, as the case studies of Dresden and St. Petersburg have shown, it is relevant to observe the way societies or local communities narrate and, by doing so, conceptualize relations between events and structures, including causalities that are ascribed to them, and the composition of events, which confirm or confront each other. Whether or not the constitutive function of events can be assumed to illustrate and prove or challenge and mediate a structure, it is clear that the perspective of the event/structure interplay exposes the narrative patterns of the (collective) actor and the actor's strategies of reflecting on itself. Whether or not structure presents itself in the narrative as something that also exists beyond events in a similar way to »identity,« or »superficial historical power« or, on the contrary, as something that exists only at the moment of an event, as is the case for symbolic exchange, this focus shows how actors' self-perception and modes of reproduction function.

Generally speaking, the event/structure relationship in both case studies is constructed in a rather complementary manner: a structure such as »urban identity« is seldom presented as something external to events, and events are not only illustrations of a more global phenomenon. On the contrary, they are significant points in time, challenging and thereby establishing the existence of structure. Noteworthy here is the fact that the economy of narrative identity construction requires dealing with certain long-term periods as if they were short-time actions. Thus, the entire temporal spans of dictatorships, for instance, stand alongside the events of the Second World War or the protest actions of the preservationists. Especially interesting from the point of view of the event /structure complex is its ambivalence, demonstrated by the exchange between cities and their residents. As mentioned earlier, as a form of interaction stretched out over time, the symbolic give-and-take relationship is narrated as an event. At the same time, this exchange is a repetitive

process, realized in discourse mostly by events over the course of urban history and therefore it is a structure, which arranges the reproduction and continuity of a certain vision of Dresden and St. Petersburg.

To conclude, the narrative constitution of the cities as subjects by means of self-referentiality—namely by referring to their multiple pasts—as well as through symbolic exchange and moralization, both created through the interplay and duality of event/structure relations, have become significant modes of the discursive reproduction of Dresden and St. Petersburg.

The focus on narration, constructed by event-structure relations, proved itself in contemporary case studies to be a successful analytical tool, demonstrating the modes of imagination and knowledge production of both cities at work. The contribution of the event/structure interplay to a narrative constitution of the city as an entity, which was highlighted in this research, shows that the event/structure-perspective can be useful for analyses of other social structures of belonging and identification both in and beyond cities.

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