

SPATIAL MULTIDIMENSIONALITIES IN THE POLITICS OF REGIONS: CONSTITUTING THE ‘PHANTOM REGION’ OF CENTRAL GERMANY

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With 4 figures

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Summary: This paper provides a new perspective on the multi-dimensional character of regions as ‘spatial phantoms’ and contributes to the ongoing debate on interconnected relational and territorial approaches to regional space (cf. ELDEN, 2005, 2009, 2010; JONAS 2012a, 2012b, 2013; JONES 2009; MURPHY 2013; PAINTER 2010). Using the example of the Central German Metropolitan Region, we show that regional spatialities co-constituted by relational and territorial concepts simultaneously, leading to a multitude of spatialities-in-becoming. We argue that, ontologically, regions are multidimensional polysemic spaces and can be realised as spatial phantoms with contextually changing and fluid spatialities. Due to discursive practices of ‘Geography Making’ in the context of culture and politics, however, these regions frequently, but not always, appear as bounded territorial containers.

Zusammenfassung: Der Artikel eröffnet eine neue Perspektive auf die Mehrdimensionalität von Regionen als „räumliche Phantome“ und erweitert gegenwärtig geführte Debatten über die enge Verzahnung von relationalen und territorialen Konzepten in der Neuen Regionalgeographie (siehe ELDEN, 2005, 2009, 2010; JONAS 2012a, 2012b, 2013; JONES 2009; MURPHY 2013; PAINTER 2010). Am Beispiel der Metropolregion Mitteldeutschland werden regionale Räume aufgezeigt, die diskursiv sowohl von relationalen als auch territorialen Elementen konstituiert werden. Die Region als mehrdimensionaler polysemischer Raum, so das Argument, kann somit ontologisch als räumliches Phantom mit fluiden, sich kontextuell ständig verändernden, räumlichen Erscheinungsformen und Inhalten angesehen werden. In der diskursiven Praxis alltäglichen „Geographie-Machens“ erscheinen sie aber nach wie vor regelmäßig, aber nicht ausnahmslos, als territoriale Container.

Keywords: Political geography, Eastern Germany, regions, multidimensionality, spatial containers

1 Introduction

This paper illustrates the interplay of multiple, coexistent, and becoming spatialities that constitute what we call ‘phantom regions’. Consequently, we consider regional spaces as constructed of interrelated material and symbolic processes and structures; as multidimensional spatialities in-becoming. As an example, we refer to the everyday use of various spatial concepts by political stakeholders in the context of the ‘Cultural Region’ Central Germany. The paper follows up on research into processes of everyday linguistic regionalisation (see SCHLOTTMANN 2005, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2012, 2013) and on earlier work on the construction of the Central German region in public media and everyday-language use (FELGENHAUER 2007, 2010; FELGENHAUER and SCHLOTTMANN 2007; FELGENHAUER et al. 2005; SCHLOTTMANN et al. 2007). One major finding of this work was that the Central German Broadcast Company MDR succeeded in promoting its version of the Central German entity by constructing a nar-

rative around the history of this particular region. In everyday communication, however, multiple variants and meanings of the region were proven (still) abundant (ibid.). An initial assumption of this research was that irrespective of particular meanings, the linguistic and social constitution of spatial constructs is based on specific spatial concepts and perceptions. This assumption could be evidenced empirically in the narrative construction of the broadcasting council, media content and in common perception. However, the focus of the argument here is founded on the everyday use of the container concept and its essentialisation in everyday language use, while virtually ignoring contemporaneous geographical concepts. The overall objective here is to reconstruct the spatial multidimensionality of regions (and their borders) in-becoming, based on the assumption that particular sub-fields of the politics of regions are dominated by particular spatialities.

The entity of the Central German Metropolitan Region comprises the three German federal states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia and was

established in 2008 as a political alliance between the nine core cities Chemnitz, Dessau-Rosslau, Dresden, Gera, Halle, Jena, Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Zwickau. Regional cooperation in business and science, culture and tourism, transport and mobility, and family friendliness weave the fabric of the area. The nine core cities are essential elements of the metropolitan region concept to form the city-network (Fig. 1). Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in this paper, besides the network concept the territorial containers of the three federal states also play

an important role in the conception and articulation of the Central German Metropolitan Region. Elucidating the multiple spatialities of the region in specific context (and their overlap), we suggest, opens up the possibility of revealing conflicts and frictions between related discourses and practices in the field of regional politics. Such a perspective is crucial to understand the, often contradictory, political processes and motives that are simultaneously translated into and, shaped by discourses of everyday region-making.



Fig 1: Map Central German Metropolitan Region

The concept of discourse varies in different strands of scholarly inquiry. In our approach we refer to a pragmatic concept of discourse which is related to “Sociology of knowledge” (KELLER 2005), compatible with actor oriented micro-analysis used in earlier work on the constitution of Central Germany (FELGENHAUER and SCHLOTTMANN 2007; SCHLOTTMANN 2008). According to HALL (1997, 4) we understand discourses as “ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society”. These types of pragmatic discourses involve signification rules and normative orientations around ways of saying things as well as resources for action, be they social (actors or actors’ positions) and/or material (KELLER 2005, 14). There has been some debate as to whether such a perspective, which centres on the discursive dimension of language use, is political (HANNAH 2006; SCHLOTTMANN 2006). However, we claim the analysed discourse on Central Germany is political. This is evidenced in the particular speech that actors communicate with due to their political functions. The particular ways of region-making in the communication process we analyse, are a crucial part of the politics of regions. On the other hand, the discourse we analyse is also a cultural discourse in the sense that, firstly, all language use is culturally informed, and, secondly, that it is explicitly about a ‘cultural region’ that is constructed and implemented politically.

Accordingly, this paper considers the discourse of Central Germany communicated by the institutional body of the Central German Metropolitan Region. Publicly available documents (e.g. brochures, maps, press releases) issued by this registered association were the main source of data. In addition, semi-structured expert interviews with political stakeholders of the Central German Metropolitan Region responsible for culture and tourism and the official website (www.region-mitteldeutschland.com¹⁾) were used as points of reference. In the subsequent section we first give an overview of recent theoretical debates in human geography that are concerned

with the material-relational nexus of regional spaces. Subsequently, we utilise the case-study of the Central German Metropolitan Region to demonstrate how regions are constructed in different cultural contexts through the interplay of multiple spatial dimensions (territory, place, scale, and network). This is followed by a critical discussion of spatial multidimensionalities and in the last section, we draw some conclusions to inform current debates on the conceptualisation of regions as polysemic spaces.

2 Multidimensionality of regions

In (political) geography current debates on theoretical conceptualisations of multidimensional polysemic spaces illustrate the recent move beyond the long lasting opposition of relational and territorial approaches to regional space (cf. ELDEN 2005, 2009, 2010; JONAS 2012a, 2012b, 2013; JONES 2009; MURPHY 2013; PAINTER 2010). In their inspiring paper on socio-spatial theory JESSOP et al. (2008) identified four distinct spatial lexicons that have been developed by social scientists over the last thirty years to conceptualise space: territory, place, scale, and network (TPSN) (see also DICKEN et al. 2001; LEITNER et al. 2008; PAASI 2004, 2012; SHEPPARD 2002). Within this TPSN framework, the spatial lexicons are each associated with certain forms of the so-called ‘spatial turn’, and should be theoretically and empirically considered to be closely intertwined (LEITNER et al. 2008), though they problematize partially different topics. Advocates of a given turn, however, are often tempted to focus on one dimension of spatial relations only, so neglecting the role of other forms of socio-spatial organisation (LEITNER et al. 2008). Such one-dimensionalism falls into the trap of conflating one part (territory, place, scale, or networks) with the whole (the totality of socio-spatial organisation). In contrast, JESSOP et al. (2008) argue that all four (or more) dimensions need to be put into play, albeit not necessarily all at once. Although JESSOP et al. (2008) do not discuss the spatial concept of regions explicitly, their proposed TPSN framework is a source of inspiration for this paper, considering the idea of regions as the interplay of multiple conceptual spatial dimensions (cf. JONES 2009).

TERLOUW and WESTSTRATE (2013) argue for an overdue shift of attention from the historical evolution of regions to the circumstances in the pre-

¹⁾ End of 2014 the Central German Metropolitan Region and the Industrial Initiative Central Germany merged into the new European Metropolitan Region Central Germany with their old webpages no longer accessible.

sent in which regions are actually constructed. The starting point, then, is not the social construction of one specific region, but how multiple dimensions of regions are constituted by political stakeholders in different contexts. We call these multidimensional spatial effects (PAINTER 2010) ‘phantom regions’ that take different forms of appearance in varied contexts. In other words, when conceptualised as phantoms, regions are ontologically indistinct spatial entities, without clear boundaries. They are spatialities that are constantly (re)emerging in different forms and with different emphasis and meaning. These regions can, however, appear as distinct and bordered entities due to essentialising discursive practices of ‘Geography-Making’ (SCHLOTTMANN 2008) in particular spatio-temporalities. Regions and socio-spatial relations, thus, can be conceived of as temporarily stabilised spatial phantoms of political action (METZGER 2013). We observe that TERLOUW and WESTSTRATE’S (2013) analytic approach is limited to a one-dimensional focus on scale and ignores other conceptual dimensions of region-making practices. We perceive this as highly problematic as it means that other spatial dimensions are overshadowed by scale as *primus inter pares* – first among equals (CASEY 2008). This contrasts the claimed importance of the interplay of different spatial dimensions when conceptualising regions (JESSOP et al. 2008) and echoes JONES’ (2009) concept of ‘phase space’ as theoretical middle ground that “insists on the compatibilities between, rather the mutual exclusivities of, flow-like (networks, etc.) and more fixed (scales, territories, regions, etc.) takes on space” (JONES 2009, 489). (Regional) space, then, is both territorially anchored and fluid, and perhaps more importantly, framed by the balance between different political forces, which “can be activated in strategies, practices, and discourses, some of which are bounded and others unbounded (JONES 2009, 499). Of interest for our work is, though drawing on an empirical case, not the social construction of a particular region and its implicit boundaries, but both the linguistic and discursive actions and instruments through which different regional ‘space layers’ (JONES 2009) are made possible in multiple contexts.

In the subsequent section, we elucidate the making of Central Germany as a ‘Cultural Region’. We then illustrate how multiple, sometimes contradicting, spatial layers of the phantom region are discursively constituted, by drawing on three different strands of this discourse.

3 The ‘Cultural Region’ of Central Germany

In the discourse of Central Germany, shaped by the institutional body of the Central German Metropolitan Region, the region is addressed as a space of long cultural traditions. The Central German Metropolitan Region is a polycentric city-network stretched across three federal states of Eastern Germany. It is institutionalised as a political association (cf. PAASI 2013) combining the four governmental hierarchies of city, state, nation, and EU to bring together a wide range of energies, identities, potentials and interests in the region. The overriding objective of its activities is the long-term strengthening of the overall region as a location for business and science, as well as a cultural landscape. The principles of voluntary commitment, decision-making on a consensual basis and a variable geometry apply at all levels of the Central German Metropolitan Region. Although the mental map (DOWNS and STEA 1977) of Central Germany is most commonly associated with the three federal states of Thuringia, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt (FELGENHAUER 2010) the discourse of the region draws on multiple spatial dimensions (e.g. territory, network, place) and creates numerous different and temporary spatial layers of the region (JONES 2009) in the context of Central Germany as a cultural region. Over the centuries Central Germany has had major influences on the development of culture and thought in Europe. Again and again the region has been the origin of major developments in religion, architecture and art. From 1517 onwards, the Reformation began its worldwide course from Central Germany with the writings and preaching of Martin Luther. Weimar Classicism, as represented in the works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Gottfried von Herder and Christoph Martin Wieland, influenced an entire cultural epoch. The region also supposedly has a long musical tradition. With Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg-Friedrich Händel, Georg Philip Telemann, Heinrich Schütz, Richard Wagner and Kurt Weill, numerous major composers lived and created their masterpieces in the region. The Dresden-Hellerau Festival Theatre (Festspielhaus) was attracting the artistic avant-garde of Europe even before the First World War, including famous names such as Rilke, Kafka, Kokoschka and Le Corbusier. It was in Central Germany, where the Bauhaus movement and its protagonists such as Walter Gropius, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lyonel Feininger revolutionised architecture, design and art.

3.1 Cultural discourse of the Central German Region

Arguably seven strands of the cultural discourse of Central Germany can be identified (CENTRAL GERMAN METROPOLITAN REGION 2013). The Cultural Heritage discourse strand draws on the Garden Kingdom Dessau-Wörlitz with its historic parks and buildings, the history of modern architecture and the Bauhaus movement in the region, Central Germany's unique medieval towns and its important milestones in German history. The second discourse strand is that of Musical Traditions in the region. Central Germany's famous composers, its orchestras and festivals, and the importance of music from classic to modern times are essential aspects of this discourse of Central Germany. Cultural Routes is a discourse strand stressing the region's pilgrims' ways, its Romanesque Road, and the Martin Luther Way, all of them being cultural routes through Central Germany. Fine arts are the focus of the discourse strand of Cultural Locations in Central Germany. The creative sites of painting, design, theatre, and literature in the region are communicated through this discourse. Central Germany's eventful past, its medieval treasures, baroque jewels, and contemporary art, which are displayed in various collections and museums in Central Germany, are the focus of the discourse strand Cultural Treasures. Central Germany's castles, churches, and historic buildings are part of the Cultural Edifices discourse strand and represent another facet of the region's cultural discourse. The last discourse strand identified in this study is Cultural Landscapes, which draws on the region's historic gardens, forests, and parks. Due to space limitations in this article, we subsequently limit our analysis on the three discourse strands of Cultural Heritage, Cultural Routes, and Musical Traditions to illustrate Central Germany's multidimensional facets and emergences in a cultural context.

3.2 Cultural heritage

The Cultural Heritage discourse strand draws on the region's rich cultural heritage and its historic sites. The Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Kingdom (Fig. 2) was created in the spirit of the Enlightenment between 1764 and 1800. Six castles, seven historic parks and more than 100 smaller architectural edifices are in the heart of the UNESCO Heritage Site. The historic starting point of this cultural place and centre of the 142 km² sized Garden Kingdom is the Wörlitz

Gardens, the first landscape garden in continental Europe. In the form of the Wörlitz Castle Germany's first neo-classicist edifice was built between 1769 and 1773. Only a few kilometres away in Oranienbaum, the only Dutch-inspired Baroque Park and castle complex in Germany can be found. In the gallery of the Rococo palace of Mosigkau Baroque paintings by the Dutch and Flemish masters are displayed. The Georgium, a castle set in an English-style park of the same name, is home to another collection of paintings which forms the "Anhaltische Gemäldegalerie".

Not far from the site of the Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Kingdom lies the Bauhaus Building, which was constructed in 1925/26 based on the designs of Walter Gropius (Fig. 2). Until 1932 it was the creative hub of the world famous "Hochschule für Gestaltung" (Academy of Design), whose works and ideas influence concepts of modern architecture and design to the present day. Since 1994 the building has been the headquarters of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and is a contemporary place of research, teaching and experimental design. However, the Bauhaus was founded in Weimar in 1919 (Fig. 2), before it had to move to Dessau in 1925 on account of political pressures. Both Bauhaus locations in Dessau and Weimar are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Today, the building where the Bauhaus movement was founded is the main building of Bauhaus University and part of its design faculty.

The origins of the Protestant Church lie in Central Germany, where the birthplace of the Reformation can be viewed at the Luther memorial sites in Eisleben and Wittenberg (Fig. 2). Since 1996 these have been part of UNESCO's World Heritage and include the entrance to the Castle Church in Wittenberg, where Martin Luther attached his 95 theses on 31 October 1517, and the City Church in Wittenberg, where he preached his prominent 'Invocative Sermons'. At the City Church he gave lectures and wrote his most important works. Martin Luther was born in Eisleben in 1483, where a museum was established as early as the end of the seventeenth century. The house in which Luther died is the site of another museum, which is an important memorial and place of remembrance to Luther's death.

The Wartburg near Eisenach in Thuringia (Fig. 2) is a significant place of German history and an outstanding monument of the feudal period in Central Europe. At the Wartburg, well-known poets such as Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram von Eschenbach and Albrecht von Halberstadt fought their legendary 'combat of the minstrels'.



Fig. 2: Map discourse cultural heritage

In the year 1521 Martin Luther found refuge in the Wartburg, where he translated the New Testament into German. Three hundred years after the start of the Reformation, in 1817, 'Burschenschaft' student fraternities from all over Germany celebrated the Wartburg Festival in an early demonstration of German unity. In the nineteenth century the Wartburg was turned into a national monument and represents an architectural mixture of Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Historicist influences. Highlights include the Romanesque Palas, a roofed hall built in 1155, which is today regarded as the best-preserved secular Romanesque edifice in Northern Europe.

With no fewer than approximately 1200 timber-framed houses from six centuries and an enclosed medieval centre, the historic old town of Quedlinburg (Fig. 2) is one of Germany's best-preserved heritage sites of the Middle Ages. Quedlinburg is an outstanding example of a European medieval town and is under protection of the UNESCO World Heritage programme. On the Castle Hill high above Quedlinburg rests the Collegiate Church of St. Servatius, a masterpiece of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Its crypt contains the graves of the first

German king, Heinrich I, and his wife Mathilde, whose palatine was established on Quedlinburg's Castle Hill. In the east of Saxony, astride the Neisse River and the border between Poland and Germany, a gardening artwork of worldwide significance can be viewed. What looks like pristine nature is in fact a landscape cultivated by men. The creator of Muskau Park (Fig. 2), Prince Hermann of Pückler-Muskau, describes his concept of landscape design as 'nature painting'. Laid out between 1815 and 1844, the 700 hectare sized park is a joint Polish and German World Heritage Site and represents an important site of cultural cross-border work in Europe.

As a synopsis it can be said that the Cultural Heritage discourse strand communicates six historically significant sites in Central Germany: Bad Muskau (Muskau Park), Dessau (Garden Kingdom), Eisenach (Wartburg), Quedlinburg (Medieval Town), Weimar (Bauhaus), and Wittenberg (Martin Luther Memorial Site). All nine Core Cities of the Central German Metropolitan Region, however, are silenced (with the exception of Dessau) in the cultural discourse. Consequently, in the context of Cultural Heritage the phantom region of Central Germany takes a different shape to the one seen above (Fig. 1).

The Cultural Heritage discourse strand places a strong focus on the two federal states of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia and seems somewhat bounded by their territorial borders. Interesting, however, is the heritage site of Bad Muskau, which is the only site located within the federal state of Saxony. It also crosses two discursively bounded spaces: the region of Central Germany and the national border between Germany and Poland. Thus, in the Cultural Heritage discourse strand, the region of Central Germany stretches beyond its territorial containers of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia, and illustrates the ‘phantomisation’ of both federal and national borders in Central Germany.

3.3 Cultural routes

The Cultural Routes discourse strand illustrates a network of several walks, from cultural, over historic to religious trails, as constituting the region of Central Germany. The Route of Kings, Merchants and Pilgrims is one example of historic roads linking together people and places and encouraging trade and cultural encounter. The Via Regia, the Ecumenical Pilgrims’ Way, and the Way of St. James of Saxony are also part of the regional discourse of Central Germany. The Romanesque Road, which connects over 80 cathedrals, fortresses, cloisters, and churches of Medieval Germany and the Trail of Classic Writers, a track of major literary personalities of Central Germany (e.g. the Goethe Route or the Schiller Trail) are other examples of spatial networks communicated in the discourse. Perhaps the most prominent aspect, however, is the Martin Luther Ways, a network of numerous trails connecting historic sites of the Reformation in Central Germany, thereby following the footsteps of Martin Luther (Fig. 3).

In 1483 Martin Luther was born in Eisleben (Saxony-Anhalt). The town of Stotternheim near Erfurt saw the beginnings of historic events, which were to change politics and culture in Europe for ever, when Martin Luther commenced his study at Erfurt University in 1505 and entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt two years later. It is here, that all four routes of the Thuringian Luther Way converge. The Northern trail connects Erfurt with Stotternheim, while the Eastern loop leads from Erfurt over Weimar, Jena and Gera to Altenburg. The Southern loop links Erfurt with the historic sites of Arnstadt and Paulinzella, while the Western loop combines the cities of Gotha, Eisenach

and Mühlhausen (Fig. 3). By the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 it is anticipated to combine all 30 of the most important historic places in the federal state related to Martin Luther. In the neighbouring state of Saxony the Luther Way links the two cities of Torgau and Löbnitz. A subsequent circular route integrating Leipzig, Zwickau and other towns and villages in which Luther and his wife Katharina von Bora have lived and worked are still at the planning stage. In the future, the Saxon Luther Way will connect all major places of the Reformation in the state of Saxony. The Luther Way in Saxony-Anhalt is one of the most extensive pilgrimage networks in Central Germany and leads from the towns of Wittenberg and Eisleben to Mansfeld. More than three dozen important sites of Luther’s life are linked by the Saxon-Anhalt Luther Way, which consists of 421 km tracks today.

Interestingly so far all Luther Ways are confined by the territorial borders of Germany’s federal states, although to the 500th Luther Anniversary in 2017 one united Central German Luther Way is planned that connects all local networks and crosses the borders between the three federal states. Today, only two examples of border-crossing trails are implemented in Central Germany: the Luther Way between Nordhausen in Thuringia and Stolberg in Saxony-Anhalt and the Luther Way connecting Eisleben in Thuringia and the city of Coburg in Bavaria, with the latter not only crossing the boundaries of Thuringia, but even exceeding the discursively constructed container of Central Germany (Fig. 3).

3.4 Musical traditions

The discourse strand Musical Traditions in Central Germany focuses on prominent composers and musical accomplishments of the region. The musical history of the region is closely linked to the two composers Bach and Wagner, who are the main protagonists communicated in the discourse strand Musical Traditions. The composer Johann Sebastian Bach was the musical director at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig (1723–1750) and significantly shaped the city’s musical history. The name of Johann Sebastian Bach is inseparably linked with the city of Leipzig, where he spent most of his life (Fig. 4). At the Bach Museum Leipzig original Bach manuscripts and devotional objects from his life are shown. Leipzig’s Bach Archive is another historical site devoted to scientific research into the musical Thuringian-Saxon Bach family. As part of its work, system-



Fig. 3: Map discourse cultural routes

atic research has been carried out since 2002 into documents relating to Bach in all the archives and libraries of Central Germany. Another historic site related to Bach is the Bach House in Eisenach, the birthplace of Bach, which has been disseminating in-depth knowledge about his work and maintaining the composer's musical legacy. Opened in 1907, it was the world's first museum devoted to the musician and composer.

Richard Wagner was also born in Leipzig and was musical director at the Saxon court in Dresden (until 1843) and composed some of his masterpieces while visiting his friend Franz Liszt in Weimar (Fig. 4). Richard Wagner, the precursor of modern music drama, was born in 1813 and a memorial was created near his birthplace on the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth. In 1814 the Wagner family moved to Dresden, where Richard was appointed musical director to the Saxon court in 1843. During a holiday in the year 1846 in the village of Graupa (near Dresden) Wagner composed large sections of his opera 'Lohengrin'. Here the world's oldest Wagner museum at the Richard Wagner Stätten Graupa was established. The many visits to his friend Franz Liszt also created a connection

between Richard Wagner and the city of Weimar. Other examples of well-known composers born in Central Germany are Georg Friedrich Händel (born in Halle 1685), Georg Philipp Telemann (born in Magdeburg 1681), and Heinrich Schütz (born near Gera in 1585). The world-class symphonic orchestras and choirs in the region are another facet of Central Germany's Musical Traditions communicated in the discourse with the Dresden Cross Choir (700yrs) and St. Thomas Boys' Choir (800yrs) being just two examples.

The region of Central Germany communicated in the Musical Traditions discourse strand comprises several historical sites in the states of Saxony and Thuringia. The federal state of Saxony-Anhalt, however, is not integrated into this layer of the spatial dimension of Central Germany. Although the discourse strand illustrates the border-crossing between two federal container spaces, the Musical Traditions discourse strand seems to be somewhat confined by the two territorial containers of Saxony and Thuringia (Fig. 4) and confirms the territorial characteristic as one important aspect of this spatial layer of the phantom region Central Germany as observed before (see above).



Fig. 4: Map discourse musical tradition

4 Discussion

The Central German Metropolitan Region network lies at the heart of Europe and brings together [nine core] cities from Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. (CENTRAL GERMAN METROPOLITAN REGION 2014)

This quote from the official webpage of the Central German Metropolitan Region illustrates once more the coexisting multi-dimensionality of spatiality that constitutes Central German Metropolitan Region and makes it a phantom region as we propose the term in this paper. Different spatial dimensions are drawn upon simultaneously to define a spatial subject, of which only the name is stable, but which turns out to be amorphous and ‘phantom-like’ in its essence. The relational concept of networks is used as well as the territorial containers of Europe and the federal states Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. In addition, specific places – core cities – are part of the regional conception of Central Germany. These cities are geographically located in the three federal states Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia and discursively constitute the Metropolitan Region of Central Germany. The participating core cities,

therefore, can be seen as fundamental elements of the regional concept and form the city-network of the phantom region, which fluctuates in contour and structure according to multi-faceted cultural contexts involved.

The Cultural Heritage discourse strand, for example, designates seven historic sites as important cultural locations in the Central German Metropolitan Region. These historically significant places are Dessau (Saxony-Anhalt) and Weimar (Thuringia), Eisleben and Wittenberg (both Saxony-Anhalt), Eisenach (Thuringia), Quedlinburg (Saxony-Anhalt), and Bad Muskau (Saxony). They constitute the cultural region of Central Germany with the ‘modern’ core cities mentioned before being completely omitted. Interesting, however, is the heritage site of Bad Muskau, which not only crosses the ‘border’ of Central Germany but also the national border between Germany and Poland. In the discourse strand of Cultural Heritage, thus, the region of Central Germany stretches beyond the territorial container of the three federal states and crosses the border between two nation states.

Another consideration is that all cultural locations addressed in the cultural discourse of Central Germany are clustered into thematic groups disre-

garding their geographical position. In contrast to other debates aligned with economic and security issues the territories of the three *Länder* Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia seem to be less confined in a cultural context, where thematic bridges cross administrative borders and lead to supra-state (i.e. supra-*Länder*) city-networks. One such border-crossing network is the Martin Luther Way – a historic pilgrimage trail through the Central German Metropolitan Region and a cultural and tourism project uniting multiple sites of the Reformation within the region. Although the Luther Way today consists of more or less three separate trails bound by the territories of the three *Länder* Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia, one continuous city-network is planned to be completed by 2017 – the 500th Reformation anniversary. Other cultural trails in the region, however, are (and most likely continue to be) contained by the federal boundaries. The Musical Tradition discourse strand demonstrates a similar example of border-crossing networks, although comprising only the two federal states of Saxony and Thuringia. Important events/sites in the life of the composer Johann Sebastian Bach are discursively utilised to constitute a city-network of Leipzig (Saxony) and Eisenach (Thuringia), which encompasses cultural places such as the Bach Museum, the Bach Archives, or the Bach House. Similarly, the history of the composer Richard Wagner forms the backdrop for a city-network comprising Dresden, Leipzig (both in Saxony) and Weimar (Thuringia).

Hence, the spatial concept of network is a constitutive part of the discourse of Central German Metropolitan region. However, all three federal states Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia thought of as territorial containers are likewise crucial elements of its constitution. Although the main political stakeholders are located in the administrative core cities of the region, the federal state system of Germany significantly impacts on the cultural discourse in which another dimension of the region is constituted. The fragile and temporary spatialities of the Central German Metropolitan Region incorporate rigid administrative elements on a regular basis and demonstrate the impact of territorial boundaries on the region's changing spatialities. Territorial sub-regional containers are frequently incorporated into the spatial organisation of the Central German region and illustrate the multi-dimensional character as well as the co-existence of relational and territorial dimensions and the temporality of the phantom region ever 'in-becoming'.

5 Conclusion

This paper aims to contribute to current scholarly debates on processes of region building (e.g. COX 2013; CRAWSHAW 2013; GOODWIN 2013; HARRISON 2013) and to provide a new perspective on the multi-dimensional character of what we call phantom regions. Using the example of the Central German Metropolitan Region, we illustrate how regional spatialities can be co-constituted by e.g. network and container concepts at the same time, thereby leading to a multitude of spatialities-in-becoming. Regions understood as products of discursive practices must be conceptualised as constantly changing and always in-becoming due to the variety of spatial concepts performed in discourse in order to serve political calculations. Hence, they can be seen as territorial phantoms with contextually fluid spatialities, despite being frequently criss-crossed by bounded territorial containers. As a future prospect for our work, it seems important to delve deeper into the implications of possible, yet hitherto undiscovered, synergies and frictions between the different phantom shapes of a region over space and time. This would involve, for instance, looking closer at to what extent practices of regulation and governance are affected by the constant concurrence and conflict between spatialities that are involved in the perpetual becoming of a region.

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