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# CROSS-BORDER REVIEW

YEARBOOK

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2014

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## Lectori salutem

*People are territorial beings.* For them, proximity means familiarity and safety. While shielding and protecting this proximity they build subjective spaces and pull up boundaries. Some are allowed in these spaces while others are excluded. Formed by the activities of certain individuals and groups of people, boundaries are constantly changing. It is only time that passes judgment upon their persistence and volatility.

*People are curious beings.* They are governed by the same exploratory drive as the multitude of animal species. Beyond the desire to create spaces of proximity, they seek to gain new insights and knowledge: so begins the questioning of things followed by the quest to interpret them. Meanwhile, they open boundaries and then draw new ones. They are not able to live without borders.

*People are bordered beings.* Our life's events are limited by space and time. Indeed, this "limitedness" is what urges humanity to push further and further, to somehow transcend its own spatial and temporal limits. The limit is therefore the driving force for innovation: on the one hand we are curious as to what might be on the other side; on the other hand, once seen, we want the old boundaries to be erased and new ones formed.

Thus, the limit is the paradox of the growth of human knowledge. There is neither progress nor innovation without limits but at the same time progress itself means to transcend these boundaries and to create new ones, which, in turn, appear as challenges for the next generation, and so on.

The Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) was established in 2009 with the aim of contributing to the alleviation of the suffering and problems caused by national boundaries in Central and Eastern Europe and to promote mutual understanding between majority and minority ethnic groups for a peaceful coexistence. While preserving familiarity, our mission is to motivate neighbouring nations to get to know each other better and to create a sense of shared familiarity.

In May 2013, CESCI founded the European Institute in Esztergom, located along the Hungarian-Slovak border. The Institute conducts research primarily in the area of border studies, implements projects within this field, and plays a knowledge-sharing role in the region. As part of this knowledge-sharing role, which matches CESCI's mission, we hereby launch our first yearbook as a virtual workshop of discussion on borders, the intention being that this will assist in building a collective home in Central Europe.

This publication does not only share, but also welcomes articles from professionals researching in the area. Let's re-think and re-write our (internal) Central European boundaries together!

Gyula Ocskay  
Secretary General CESCI



## Editor's Note

With the release of this yearbook, the European Institute of Esztergom has reached an important point in its lifetime. The edition is, on the one hand, a repository recording the institute's activity for posterity, and, on the other hand, a flagship work aimed at the introduction of our research and professional partnerships and the publication of investigations into our major research questions which, it is hoped, may inspire further enriching debate.

Our research questions deal with the problems of borderlands, the peripheral situation of border regions, the consequent problems of the theoretical breakdown of borders as barriers against the circulation of people and economic activity. In addressing these questions we also take into consideration other scientific researches in geography, economics and sociology on the theme of borders. The geographical focus of these investigations is the territory of 'In-Between Europe', the intersection of German and Russian (Soviet) spheres of influence. The countries of the area, a political buffer zone, have taken a largely different path than the states in Western Europe. Our region has already seen numerous occasions when the taking on of supposed western European advantages led to the infraction of local characteristics and interests. This process accumulates the need for convergence towards the centre, the difficulties in adapting to western models and the lack of their social conventions. It may also be true that the countries and societies of the area took identical paths in recent years and maybe in the course of the longer period since the years of transition.

Although our yearbook is structured into the usual sections (theory, practice, workshop, chronicle, review, outlook), the dualism derived from the disparities of the above mentioned processes (as well as the fact that the same phenomena appear differently to the European core areas and to our region) is tangible from many aspects throughout the whole issue. The meditation on the problems appearing in our publication together with the questions put in focus are mostly concentrated around four major points as well as their internal dualism.

First, book reviews (largely of recently released essential works and doctoral theses) best describe the polarized nature of the two parts of Europe (western-eastern) and provide the volume with a historical context for our region. The aspects of western European centres are influenced by fundamentally different orientations. For example, their research questions are based on the conceptual rudiments of post-nationalism and post-structuralism, which may appear to be strange and unusual from our viewpoint. In the sense of such an east-west dichotomy a project report may emphasise the local problem area of a several decade-long emigration flow to Western Europe when asking to what extent

is the homeland able to benefit (and if indeed it is able to) from the foreign experiences of the emigrants.

Secondly, the most tangible element of the initial situation is probably the economic dimension, especially through its core-periphery dualism. From this perspective border regions can be described as areas with specific economic activities. It follows that economic necessity, the lack of resources, and the abovementioned particular viewpoint is in the background of development policy as major problems and needs, respectively. But this economic situation is also relevant when investigating settlement systems existing in different economic environments on both sides of the border.

Thirdly, spatiality is presented by the dualism of local and global. On the major part of the Banat of Temeswar, formerly a single administrative unit, initially a euroregion and later a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) attempted to integrate former local connections into a new global dimension. The same perspective is backed by the reports summing up the basic questions and problem areas of different events visited by the institute's associates.

Last but not least, the dichotomy between vision and practice also speaks of social problems. This is reflected, for example, in the intersection of urban development strategies and cross-border cooperation or, perhaps better said, in its absence. Largely similar problems emerge in the pictures derived from the available documentation of young EGTCs from Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, at the Hungary-Slovakia border, in contrast with the several-year-long success story of the Ister-Granum EGTC, for example. However, the will at the foundation of our European Institute in Esztergom to choose the EUROPA ACADEMIA of Bolzano, whose activities are presented in the Outlook section, as a model example also reflects on courageous visions.

With regard to the complex problem areas outlined above we hope that this edition will prove useful, both stimulating researchers dealing with border regions to reconsider and debate the problems and supporting practitioners and policy-makers by pointing the way ahead. In accordance with the mission of the institute, by reaching a wide range of potential readers, the work should become indispensable reading on the scientific approach to the problems of border regions.

Zsolt Bottlik  
Editor



# Frontier Incident or Metamorphoses of Normality

GYULA OCSKAY

## Introduction

In my study, I state that borders are discursive facts, their present form is produced by a nation-state discourse with totalising claims. From this proposition several conclusions can be drawn. My study deals with three of these conclusions.

First of all, and working mainly from the contemporary viewpoint that queries the way power is exercised (“governmentality”) and its identity constructing narratives dominating the nation-state era, borders are not self-evident phenomena.

Secondly, the number of sovereign states has nearly tripled since the Second World War. The proliferation of borders is explained by the same paradigm that helped set in motion the arrangements that were expected to be permanent following the Treaty of Westphalia. The process is not complete, the number of borders is expected to increase further in the future. As we learn from John Stuart Mill: “...it is in general a necessary condition of free institutions, that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities” (MILL, 1977). The global diffusion of democratic rights gives legitimacy for the acquisition of sovereignty over a given area to every minor community.

Finally, in the light of the foregoing, due to the scarcity of resources the growing numbers of countries with decreasing sizes are simultaneously forced to join together into larger units in order to secure their borders. The outcome of this dual process is not yet fully evident.

## Sovereignty and production of space

The cliché that modern political thinking dates back to Machiavelli, is generally fed by a (superficial) tendency present in the eminent writer’s work called “The Prince” which seeks to separate the field of secular-natured politics from a transcendental-based morality. Notwithstanding the fact that this tendency is unclear even in the cited work, this problem is far from being treated one-sidedly in Machiavelli’s entire oeuvre. His other major work, the “Discorsi” (Machiavelli 1517, mainly chapters I-XLIX) is regarded as a programmatic work of the

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humanist virtue-based republicanism, and as such, deems moral and political spheres inseparable.

It was pointed out by Michel Foucault that the shift in political theory should not be sought in the work of Machiavelli. In one of his deservedly famous lectures he drew his audience's attention to the fact that the real change in attitude occurs not by virtue of the author, but by his critics. Regarding Machiavelli's purpose with the Prince as well as his definition of sovereignty there is no difference from the authors of mirrors for princes of the Middle Ages.

"Throughout the Middle Ages and classical antiquity, we find a multitude of treatises presented as 'advice to the prince', concerning his proper conduct, the exercise of power, the means of securing the acceptance and respect of his subjects..." (FOUCAULT 1991, 87) advises These works therefore aim to provide good advices to the ruler (the sovereign) on how to acquire and maintain power. And what purpose did Machiavelli have if not this?

We can likewise find similarities in the approach to sovereignty. "[...] for Machiavelli, it was alleged, the prince stood in a relation of singularity and externality, and thus of transcendence, to his principality. The prince acquires his principality by inheritance or conquest, but in any case he does not form part of it, he remains external to it." (FOUCAULT 1991, 89-90 – highlighted by us).

Like medieval sovereigns, Machiavelli's prince acquires his power over the territory and the population living there through occupation, heredity or accession but there is no immanent togetherness between the population and him. This means that regarding the interests of subjects it is not relevant to whom they pay taxes. Their lives are not affected by the change of the prince's person: "[...] there is no fundamental, essential, natural and juridical connection between the prince and his principality." (FOUCAULT 1991)

It is well known that according to Machiavelli to seize power is a matter of fortune (which means the recognition of the adequate conditions) and virtue (*fortuna è virtù*). It is not important (i.e. accidental) who rules when having talent for ruling.

Foucault also draws attention to the issue that this externality (transcendence) necessarily results in constant wars. The power of the prince (again: accidentally) is applied to a certain territory which he will protect as an external sign of his sovereignty, rather than the subjects living there (FOUCAULT 1979).

The approach is completely different in the case of Machiavelli's critics (Foucault mentions Innocent de Gentillet, Frederick the Great, Guillaume De La Perrière and Paruta). In their view the power holder develops an immanent relationship with the subjects (citizens). Therefore it is not a specific territory, but the population that becomes the objective of his activities. With the neologism in the title of the aforementioned lecture, Foucault playfully refers to this change in attitude: *gouvernementalité/governmentality* is a word generated by merging

“government” and “mentality”. The unified word refers to the practice which aims not at maintaining control over a specific territory (=Foucault’s “sovereignty”) but is led by the aim of “the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health etc.” (FOUCAULT, 1991). - something that would today be likened to the social ideal of welfare state. The relationship between the practice of governmentality and *policia* (a specific governance technology of the State) (FOUCAULT 1979) and the formation of the bureaucratic apparatus enabling social care to be used is not coincidental.

The cardinal novelty lies in the manner of exercise of power. In order to achieve its goals, the government “in some sense immanent to the population” (FOUCAULT 1991, 100). This essential connection will be determined by theorists of Reason of State, who claim: “[...] the state, like nature, has its own proper form of rationality, albeit of a different sort. Conversely, the art of government, instead of seeking to found itself in transcendental rules, a cosmological model or a philosophico-moral ideal, must find principles of its rationality in that which constitutes the specific reality of the state.”(FOUCAULT 1991). This is a real novelty compared to medieval theories on political power.

The schematic process presented above led to the formation of widely shared opinion on the normality of modern nation-states and state borders. Since Plato and Aristotle three levels of “governance” were distinguished: originally, morality summarised principles of self-governance, *oikonomia* outlined principles of household management, and principles of the governance of the polis were comprised by politics. In the period of modernity, *oikonomia* has been merged into the political sphere; this is how political economy was born formulating principles of the art of governance. (The word “bureaucracy” was used for the first time – and with a negative accent – in a work on political economy by Vincent de Gournay in 1745.) Togetherness of the family was thereby raised to a nation-state level; “economy” became “national economy”. Defining it on a theoretical level, nation-state sovereignty is therefore inseparable from national interests and nationalism.

Foucault, however, does not draw this conclusion, in fact, he set governmentality vis-à-vis the concept of medieval sovereignty (also valid to Machiavelli). However, he refers to natural law-based contractualism as the generator of a theoretical matrix in which principles of governance were collected (FOUCAULT 1991) and some kind of inconsistency can be detected here. A basic principle of natural law-based contractualism is that all political power derives from the consent of the people (including all citizens), therefore social contract theory is inseparable from the theory of popular sovereignty. This wording might, in fact, be too strong. The defence of this claim is problematic even for the two prevailing authors of classical contractualism. The recognition of society-constitutional and power legitimising effects of the contract is not necessarily linked to the idea of popular sovereignty. Hugo Grotius’s perception of sovereignty is very similar to

the medieval royal Christology Theses (GROTIUS 2012) and Hobbes' sovereign also evokes the Middle Ages (HOBBS 2012).

Therefore, it is not sovereignty that stands against governmentality: along with the evolution of governmentality the nature of sovereignty has also changed, became impregnated with immanence, and changed its direction, as well as becoming secularised. This evolution is a result of many centuries' change, it neither appeared for the first time with Machiavelli's critics, nor in a compact way.

It is still a disputed thesis whether nationalism is a very modern phenomenon, or whether it is organically linked to the creation of bureaucratically organised nation-states. According to some scholars (e.g. Karl R. Popper, Jacques Rupnik) nationalism is some kind of atavistic eruption of tribal instincts in our modern, enlightened age. The opposing theory is commonly associated with the name of Ernest Gellner, although the author of the first major analytical concept, Lord John Acton, also clearly linked natural law-based contractualism and the diffusion of the idea of equality before the law with the birth of nationalism (ACTON 1862).

The process is described by Diener and Hagen very similarly: "The transition from religious-monarchical sovereignty to popular-territorial sovereignty was facilitated by the unity of the people (real or imagined) and their sanction (real or imagined) of the state to represent them." (DIENER, HAGEN 2012)

In this new political order sovereignty is no longer attached to a (varying) person, but to a more or less permanent unity of territory (see Bodin) or a political body (Rousseau). The loyalty of subjects is re-structured in parallel, and is no longer bound to a royal family and a number of local autonomies, but to the nation itself. A theory associated with the name of John Stuart Mill stating that the precondition of free institutions stands in coincidence of the borders of the government with that of nations, is considered as a basic thesis of nationalism. The proper method of exercising the power of nationalism is a bureaucratically organised office-state based on nation-state sovereignty and one common language: theoretical and practical realisation of immanence.

Sociological and epistemological foundations can also be applied to this political theory model. The former is linked to the name of Alexis de Tocqueville, who, in his work titled *Democracy in America* introduced the process of the development of social equality in a manner that still has its impacts. According to Tocqueville, along with the decline of aristocratic social order its method to exercise political power also recedes. Pillars joining individuals interconnected by superior and inferior relationships of hierarchy collapse, while individuals find themselves positioned alongside one another with no coupling strength: "Aristocracy had made all citizens into a long chain that went from the peasant to the king, democracy breaks the chain, and sets each link apart." (TOCQUEVILLE 2010).

Charles Taylor clearly attaches this phenomenon to the appearance of nationalism. In his interpretation, the novelty in modernity was that „there is

a shift from hierarchical, mediated-access societies to horizontal, direct-access societies" (TAYLOR 1998). In other words, formerly existing intermediary powers (so-called "local autonomies") have disappeared: the individual directly faces the (impersonal) state power. Aristocratic society is replaced by the egalitarian-individualistic one.

Government becomes a deputy of society, while simultaneously an ever more powerful identification is evaluated by citizens towards the current regime. This identification is able to facilitate the exercise of republican virtues without the evolution of tyranny described by Rousseau, and to guarantee legitimacy to the power (national power) – as also Machiavelli states in *Discorsi*. "In a despotism, a regime where the mass of citizens are subject to the rule of a single master or a clique, the requisite disciplines are maintained by coercion. In order to have a free society, one has to replace this coercion with something else. This can only be a willing identification with the polis on the part of the citizens..." (TAYLOR 2005)

Taylor's important conclusion is that not only nations create nation-states in order to survive but even modern (governmental) states are dependent on different nations. It is no coincidence that state and nation are interdependent.

Taylor cites Benedict Anderson, who considers nation-states as "imagined communities". These states "[have] socially shared ways in which social spaces are imagined." (TAYLOR 1995, 1998)

At this point, Taylor's theory is related to the above mentioned epistemological approach which can be interpreted as the base for the sociological model underlying the political theory introduced.

One can consider Henri Lefebvre, who made a decisive impact on Anglo-saxon geographers (WARF 2006) and who provided ammunition to relationist critics of quantitative geography with his work (*La production de l'espace*) published in 1974 (in English, in 1991), as being the source of this epistemological approach.

According to this approach (Lefebvre's) and in contrast to the previous absolutist conceptions, space does not exist by itself but it is a deduction of our perception. The first level of interpretation (*l'espace perçu*) is bound to human activity. When being active we perceive things in the world around us, from which the image and notion of physical space is derived. Since different individuals have diverse life experiences so this notion is different for each person. The spatial understanding (mental map) of an elderly woman who has never crossed the "frontiers" of her home village is quite different from the manager's who has boarded a plane several times a week and travelled thousands of kilometres. This does not mean that the world outside does not exist but it is mapped differently in each individual's mind. Objects of reality exist objectively but the space itself is constructed in the mind, in which these objects are arranged uniquely.

The second level is that of conceptualisation (*l'espace conçu*): we, ourselves can also create spaces for ourselves. In reality a country or a region does not exist,

we only re-construct and convert the elements of external physical reality the way that objects become filled with symbolic significance. One of the most important messages of Lefebvre's work is that societies of countries with different stages of development and structure have been producing their own spaces differently.

This conceptualised space obtains an independent ontological status at the third level and becomes a determining factor to our way of thinking, perception, activities and identity (LEFEBVRE 1974).

What Lefebvre means is that human beings create spatial structures as an objectivation of their perceptions of space which then are considered as independent factors of reality, and these objects become parts of everyday activities. The lived space (*l'espace vécu*), the space of the world's living environment is therefore always discursive-natured: it presupposes a kind of knowledge horizon with which a community is able to define itself (see Taylor's remarks.).

It is worth referring to a thought of Foucault once again. He summarised all his thoughts on the nature of politics in his inaugural lecture held in 1970 at the Collège de France. The essence of the presentation, called *Order of discourse* (*L'ordre de discours*), was that every political system limits the number of possible discourses: it is not possible to talk about everything with everyone, everywhere, anyhow. This is the reason why political and social discourse is able to define and influence spatial perceptions of human beings living in a society.

This is the discourse that modern bureaucratic nation-states have monopolised: "it has become an important and primary pole of knowledge production on society in spatial terms as well as having control over mechanisms which justify the truth it represents" (VARRÓ 2004). It creates the knowledge consumed and "reproduced" by the population. A nation-state deprives citizens of the possibility of a pluralistic, inter-subjective space production as it draws frames taken for granted through its bureaucratic system of governmentality. This exclusivity-driven identity narrative has led to the design of many representative forms over the past centuries, ranging from national currencies and national parliaments to the protection of the national language, but in a more transparent way it still appears today in the form of (often strictly guarded) state borders.

The state border is a symbol of normality: it is the political identity designated by laws drafted in accordance with the principles of popular sovereignty and, at the same time, it is also a spatial mapping of legitimacy. The state border itself is a line otherwise invisible to the naked eye designated by consensus, beyond which the world ends somehow. The invader also acts against normality.

### **Borders as discursive facts**

The approach interpreting borders as discursive facts in accordance with the theoretical framework presented above, became common among scholars of

borders about one and a half decades ago. Contemporary researchers no longer interpret the border as an objective physical entity.

As Henk van Houtum (2011) points out: “A line is geometry, a border is interpretation.” Elsewhere he identifies borders as social phenomena (HOUTUM 2003), similarly to another eminent expert on the subject, David Newman who – in accordance with the framework of Lefebvre’s interpretation – regards nation-states as conceptualised elements of space: “Borders are social and political constructions. Someone creates them and, once created, manages them in such a way as to serve the interests of those same power elites” (NEWMAN, 2011).

These constructed spaces, and their designated boundaries transform the surrounding reality into a living space, they become part of our identity and our habits.

“Once created, borders become transformed into reality, a default situation which impacts upon daily life patterns and social mores, determine the parameters of exclusion and inclusion, and creates the categories through which social and spatial compartmentalization is perpetuated” (NEWMAN 2011).

According to Houtum maps displaying borders do not uncover, but produce the truth (HOUTUM 2011). Currently, the competence of truth production – as presented in the previous chapter – is owned by nation-states. The nation-state paradigm sets borders to which it attaches truth and falsity symbols. John Agnew calls this phenomenon the “Territorial Trap”: the fact that the state appears as a monopolised seizer of power derives from its sovereignty; the borders of the state and society coincide (see Taylor’s remarks), the state is the “container” of society; the state determines the definition of “internal” and “external” and drafts their horizon of interpretation. Everything beyond the state border is uncertain, foreign, chaotic and uncontrollable (HOUTUM 2003; DIENER, HAGEN 2012).

This model was initially developed in Europe and later spread across the world through colonialism and liberation from colonialism. Today it is a relatively general interpretation of territoriality that it does not only define identities but is also a source of continuous conflicts. The reason for this is the monopolistic nature of nation-state sovereignty. An area either belongs to one state or another, there is no third option: “If expressed in territorial terms (as in national border conflicts), the fact that territory (unlike other ‘goods’ such as democracy or development) has a finite and fixed total directly encourages ‘zero-sum’ thinking, where gains for one side are typically seen as losses for the other, and vice-versa.” (ANDERSON, O’DOWD, WILSON 2003).

Territorial processes always result in games with zero sums, there is no win-win solution for rivaling space and border narratives within the nation-state paradigm.

Since the Second World War, the amount of countries has almost tripled but there are still thousands of ethnic groups without their own state. By the

dispersion of democratic ideas Mill's doctrine and the right of autonomy will strengthen separatist tendencies and the increasing number of smaller and smaller territorial sovereignties cannot be stopped, it seems. Limited resources can easily bring on the closure of these proliferated borders.

### **Frontier incident: the crisis of traditional governmentality**

Today, as described above, we find ourselves facing the crisis of the structure inherited from modernity.

The definition of governmentality (based on the above) could be accomplished by listing fields ruled by the ministries: government is nothing more than taking care of all those things different ministries deal with. We experience today that there is no field where a nation-state can represent its own sovereignty through its ministries. And we should not only think about such areas as foreign affairs or national defence. The curb of epidemics and large diseases, the modernisation and enhancement of competitiveness of education and the fight against pollution and crime are all of international concern. From where we are, not even demographic problems are manageable within a nation-state framework (see contexts of migration, employment and social security).

When examining the history of European integration a tendency of homogenisation emerges whereby the pre-existing level of competencies of nation-states are gradually put into the hands of the bureaucracy in Brussels. The European Union gradually draws fields into the control of a central super-structure of power above national level, which previously belonged to the self-definition of the nation-state following the practice of governmentality: national currency, legislature, border crossings. This, however, is not an exclusively European phenomenon.

The name of the process globalisation implies that one day every problem will become global. However, network economy, polycentric urban networks and the appearance of clusters strengthen not merely global trends. The weakening of nation-state competencies can also bring about an appreciation of local-regional factors. Consequently, while the former centre of power, the governmental level, is losing its importance global and regional levels are in appraisal. Both challengers openly query nation-state sovereignty and the modern interpretation of popular sovereignty, and interpret national borders not as givens but as barriers to overcome.

Sociological aspects of this process are also outlined by Tocqueville and Taylor. According to the eminent 19<sup>th</sup> century French thinker the equality of conditions is not an American phenomenon but it is something that will gradually become common within all political bodies. As Taylor stated, horizontal, direct-access societies develop belongings "to ever wider and more impersonal entities" (TAYLOR 1998). Tocqueville concluded that it is inevitable for people not to feel



more and more similar to each other, whereas Taylor believes that an egalitarian-individualistic society *ab ovo* cannot have clearly plotted borders: it seems that Kant's dream is being fulfilled since all of us are becoming citizens of a global republic (KANT 1963).

From an epistemological perspective, we may observe that the totalising attempt of the nation-state has failed: a multitude of local discourses have been developed (to put it in "postmodernism", we could say that the national metanarrative gave way for smaller local narratives). And as we know from Lefebvre, this multi-elemental conceptualised space becomes the framework of our life-world: our identity is not only defined on a nation-state level but also within smaller social spaces.

It is important to note here that locality is not identical necessarily with a geographically defined space. Identities appearing within the society interpreted as a body (quasi space) can also be discontinuous in physical space (*perçu*) (such as the circle of fans of a football team, or ad-hoc groups on social networking sites organised in no time). This is the reason why we cannot speak of the revival of medieval regionalism either (since this space is not a space that was perceptible to peasants in the 14<sup>th</sup> century). Our life-world today is slashed through and through by our space-related perceptions, and while medieval subjects found their local-regional identity as ready-made durable frames, today the self-definition of people constantly fluctuates between different spatial structures generated by themselves or others.

It is no coincidence that experts of human geography speak of mobile identities, moving borders (PAASI 2011), liquid modernity (BAUMAN 2000), fluidity (HOUTUM 2003) or very often of de-territorialisation (DIENER, HAGEN 2012). By the latter we understand that the world of space is giving way to a world of flows.

The most important change lies in the fact that the state is only one actor in the discourse on space that, even according to the Taylor model, has become more democratic. Space has been given a new face.

And how can all this affect the modern interpretation of sovereignty?

Our starting point was the theory that according to the medieval definition of sovereignty where the ruler in relation to its subjects remains transcendental, external and accidental. His rule is identified by its connection with a particular territory; he will protect this connection with his army along the borders of his country.

The essence of a modern nation-state is that the people themselves become the sovereign. Governance in relation to the population's state is an immanent mode of exercising power: it draws its operating principles from itself. The border is a token and symbol of these free institutions.

Today's crisis of governmentality does not signify anything else but that the change of direction of loyalty, subjects (citizens) become transcendent,

externalised and accidental compared to the state apparatus: we can live anywhere in the world, we can change our nationality freely and we can settle anywhere on the globe.

Our togetherness cannot exclusively be defined on a national basis. The border is an accidental discursive fact. This does not mean that it can be optionally changed but that generally it has no special significance concerning the identity of the individual.

On the other hand, it is not exactly the fulfilment of the Kantian dream. The cosmopolitan republicanism is not virtue-based (consequently, Machiavelli again is not modern in this respect either) but it is determined by interest: it is constituted from interest-fragments of competing alternative local discourses.

As Anssi Paasi points out: “Postnationalism and transnationalism ... suggest that sovereignty is diffusing away from the nation-state, which would weaken the link between political identities, participation and the territorial state.” (PAASI 2011)

It is striking, however, that the most successful transnational integration, the European Union – despite the presence of a legal framework guaranteeing the permeability of borders – could not succeed in redefining or “occupying” identities which would otherwise be proper for the objectives of integration. The lack of interest towards the European elections that has been experienced illustrates that the EU is not able to develop such a degree of identification that, even today, weakened nation-states succeed in achieving. And there is no legitimacy without identification. The legitimacy of the EU institutions is only of a legal nature, political and social aspects of its legitimacy being very poorly defined, and in the writer’s opinion the reasons for this are theoretical. It is very probable that problems cannot be solved within the frames of a presently forced nation-state paradigm because it is based on that concept of sovereignty which is hardly understood above the nation-state level. As we noted, governmentality was inextricably attached to the nation-state paradigm through the past centuries: in a non-nation-state reality, this model does not work. For the success of the European Project a new model is needed that is not so strongly tied to the nation-state paradigm but based on joint use of space, thus transcending the zero-sum mentality.

The challenge is tremendous. Not only because of the legitimacy deficit observed in the direction of the EU. International terrorism has re-written the definition of war in using global systems of the global world. While a strategy was relatively simple to create in the past – the geographic locations of the hostile positions could be identified, troop movements could be monitored and reacted upon – today’s enemy is unidentifiable, invisible and elusive, just like boundaries of the state and the self. This new phenomenon compels states and also the Union to protect external borders far more rigorously.

The process called re-territorialisation will be strengthened further by two (similarly) global phenomena in the future: overpopulation and its attendant migration, as well as the limitedness of resources. Even today we often already encounter the effects of these processes. A strictly guarded fence is built on the Mexican-U.S. border, the British government aims at limiting the measure of immigration, Slovenia prevented the EU accession of Croatia for many years due to a maritime border dispute, the most serious source of conflict today is the territorial demand of Russia at the Black Sea, etc.

We are witnesses to two opposing processes: on one hand borders in the globalising world disappear or become permeable one by one, on the other hand, new borders are continuously emerging and sometimes even surveillance of the existing ones becomes more and more restricted. Just like Diener and Hagen concluded: integrationism and neo-isolationism are simultaneously present in our world.

As we have observed, the redefinition of narratives about borders and spaces is in progress. It is an intriguing question which of the two conflicting phenomena will determine new-normality in the future.

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# Investigating the Role of Borders in the Transformation of Space in the Light of the European Union's Regional Policy

MÁRTON PETE

## Introduction

Borders are decisive societal elements of the geographical space; societies are framed and at the same time divided from each other by these lines. From the point of view of the society state borders are considered to be of first importance among all boundaries as they strictly demarcate the space of action of each state power and the spatial framework of their sovereignty. Beyond their role of dividing the geographical space these political boundaries largely contribute to its transformation as well. Notable British historical geographer Norman Pounds (POUNDS 1997) insists that: "Boundaries not only set limits to political obligations; they also set bounds of economic regimes. [...] one frequently finds abrupt changes at political boundaries, quite unrelated to the physical setting. Their explanation must lie with the contrasted economic and social policies pursued on each side of the line."

State borders of current notion as political boundaries are relatively new phenomena, their origin dates back to the Peace of Westphalia (1648) that established the still existing international political system based on sovereign states with unlimited power within their area (which system arose from Europe but became decisive in the whole world through the process of colonization by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). At the same time the system of national economies filling in the framework of nation states also came into being and resulted in the internal homogeneity of the states accompanied by remarkable differences between opposing border sides concerning their regulatory systems.

However, the decisive role of national economies in the field of national regulation seems to have been weakening since the middle of the twentieth century. A continuously widening and deepening economic and political integration process, originating from Western Europe from the 1950s, led to the establishment of the European Union in 1993. An important element of the integration process was the development of the community area to an open supranational economic space where the free movement of goods, capital, services and labour

force is ensured. The two main fields of intervention of this advancement are the harmonization of national regulation at Community level on the one hand and the removal of borders as physical barriers hindering the flows of economy on the other hand. These targets were aimed to be achieved by the *acquis communautaire*, the community law targeting the rapprochement of national regulation systems and the Schengen Treaty, signed in 1985 in the aim of dismantling physical and trade barriers, respectively. In this Western European context of the homogenization of the regulatory environment and the removal of borders the question arises for researchers of spatial relations, primarily for geographers: how and to what extent do state borders affect economic development? And indeed: do state borders have real relevance from the point of view of spatial economic development?

In this study we aim to give a brief reading on how the understanding of the role of state borders in economic development was incorporated within the scientific discourse on community level regional policy and to what extent the initial concepts are still valid in the current state of the integration process. In the framework of the study we carry out a brief review on the most important theoretical results of the literature on the economic role of borders before presenting the attempts to apply the theories within the changing European context of the 1990s and the 2000s. When reviewing the professional literature a decisive aspect was how the authors considered the role of the borders in the transformation of the economic space. Following the review we assess the most important statements of the recent ESPON research projects, strongly connected to the regional policy of the European Union, on the role of the borders in the spatial development of the enlarging EU. Finally, in the light of the recent tendencies we will give an outlook on the expected reevaluation of the role of state borders when facing new challenges.

## **Theoretical framework**

The economic geographical analysis of borders (and border regions as well) had already appeared in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the works of Walter Christaller (CHRISTALLER 1933), geographer and founder of the Central Place Theory, as well as in those of August Lösch (LÖSCH 1940), economist considered the father of regional science or even Herbert Giersch (GIERSCH 1949(1950)) who is held to be the most influential economist in post-war Germany. In his above mentioned magnum opus summarizing his entire scientific performance Lösch claimed that state borders fragment market networks thus leading to economic losses and he describes border regions as deserts, that are appropriate only for a small number of economic activities. Giersch revealed that economic actors prefer to choose central place locations instead of borderlands so to rationalize their costs and reach the greatest possible market area within the state and that border regions therefore tend to lag behind. However, according to his concept the unification of greater western European state economies and the removal of

borders would result in a fundamental transformation of the spatial pattern of the industry and thus that of the whole economy of these states as well. Such an integration would make the process of agglomeration more concentrated at international level. Meanwhile many agglomerations that came into being due to the artificial advantages meant by national frameworks would decline whilst lagging border regions would certainly take advantage of the new circumstances.

The role of space came to be ignored by mainstream economics and social sciences by the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was only taken into consideration by these disciplines again in the 1980s. The so-called *spatial turn* is often related by the scientific community to the release of *Geography and Trade* (KRUGMAN 1991), a work by the economist Paul Krugman who basically dealt with the questions of international economics and trade theories. But other geographers such as David Harvey and Edward Soja had already largely contributed to the implementation of this turn in the course of the previous decades. Interestingly, Krugman himself also took into account the question of borders in his works, although in an implicit manner, as he compared the spatial concentration of the economy of the European Union, fragmented by borders, with that of the United States, considered as an integrated nation economy (KRUGMAN 1991; KRUGMAN, VENABLES 1993), with the consequence that economic sectors show more concentrated territorial patterns in this latter due to the integratedness.

By the end of the 1980s it was not only the rediscovery of space and spatial interrelations that contributed to the emergence of studies on the questions of borders. From the 1950s to the 1980s, in a period lasting from the end of World War II to the collapse of the socialist bloc, state borders in Europe were reasonably stable which stability was largely the result of the balance of power between capitalist and socialist countries (O'DOWD 1998, cited by VAN HOUTUM 2000). The dominating influence of neoliberal thinking in economics, the continuous deepening of the European integration, the opening of the borders of former socialist states as well as the emergence of cross-border interactions pointed at new opportunities while the collapse of multinational states such as the USSR and Yugoslavia and the escalation of the following border disputes and conflict turned borderlands into sites of new challenges. Meanwhile, while some economic theorists such as Kenichi Ohmae were speaking about "the borderless world" (OHMAE 1990) or even "the end of the nation state" (OHMAE 1995), strongly connected with other concepts announcing the death of distance and of geography, the majority of geographers and social scientists would rather talk about the transition of the role of borders by pointing at the fact that the different functions of borders usually change in different dimensions. A fine example of this complexity was observable after 9/11 when the importance of the role of the border as a barrier or at least as a filter was again underlined in the course of the war against terrorism but in spite of this the characteristic processes of the

economy did not undergo fundamental changes as the borders remained open for the spatial flows of economy. An often cited example is the Canada–United States border that did not disappear as a result of globalization but indeed still tends to have an important role in sharing trade and investments between national markets (HIRST, THOMPSON 1999). Beside this the two countries remained the major economic partners of each other following the post-9/11 reinforcement of border control (BRUNET-JAILLY 2012).

Borders were finally adopted in economic thinking but it did not lead to a deep renewal of this latter. This is exactly what Henk van Houtum, a notable researcher of economics dealing with the economy of border regions, insists after a comprehensive review on the professional literature stating that terms such as “border”, “boundary”, or “frontier” are to be found in practically none of the text books on economics (VAN HOUTUM 1998). In one of his more recent works (VAN HOUTUM 2000) in which he reviews the professional literature of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dealing with the questions of borders he explains the emergence of this subdiscipline with the fact that in spite of the globalization and European integration processes in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the turn of the millennium saw more state borders than ever before and this controversy addressed new questions on the meaning of borders.

In his dissertation, that dealt with the impact of state borders on cross-border economic relations between firms in border regions of the Netherlands and Belgium, Houtum himself also questioned the *raison d'être* of borders from the perspective of economics. In asking “Why are there any borders at all?” he raised one of the most fundamental questions. The answer however points beyond the disciplinary framework of economics: borders are expressions of sovereignty, of power and independence. Borders express the controlling of space (VAN HOUTUM 1998). This control covers questions of national economy as well; therefore borders also mark the intervention area of the economic and trade policy of the states as pointed out by Terry Clark, an outstanding sociologist of the New Chicago School (CLARK 1994). From another point of view state borders also mean the contact zones of different economic policies having a local effect on border regions and their inhabitants. Therefore, according to Clark, one must distinguish between the impacts on national level which affect the entire population of the country and the impacts that affect mainly the population of the borderlands.

It was in the 1980s that Peter Nijkamp, notable Dutch economist and researcher of the questions of regional economics, well pointed at one of the most important questions in border studies: do borders really mean barriers for regional development potential, as it is stated by the traditional view or are frontier zones indeed inspiratory environments with high development potential that leads to success when the bottleneck effect of the border weakens? Nijkamp



himself considered borders mainly as barriers when examining their effect on communication (NIJKAMP, RIETVELD, SALOMON 1990) as well as on transport infrastructure (NIJKAMP 1993).

European integration is likely to have taken this latter side when targeting the homogenization of the economic space by legal harmonization and the removal of physical barriers, as already described above, associating this with the enhancement of the community's competitiveness and economic development perspectives as well as with the convergence of lagging regions.

### **Attempts at a practical application**

Numerous studies were published around the turn of the millennium on how the economic potential of border regions inside the EU emerged in the course of the integration process. Generally speaking, borderlands along the internal borders between western European member states successfully managed to enhance their economic performance in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, as a result, the European Union reached an advanced level of economic integration by the end of the century. Some scholars have already put the question whether the further deepening of the integration was still possible and, if so, to what extent and whether it would mean the disappearance of border effects (BRENTON, VANCAUTEREN 2001).

The EU accession of central and eastern European countries in the 2000s has also brought up a series of new research questions concerning the disappearance of borders and the expected convergence of border regions. Dirk Engel, German economist dealing mainly with the questions of business economics, examined the economic effects of the opening of borders in the border regions along the Czech Republic–Germany and the Polish–German borders in the course of the 1990s (ENGEL 1999) however his outcomes did not prove generally the positive effects of the border opening on economic attractiveness. Meanwhile the proximity of the Polish border had a positive effect and the Czech border had indeed a negative influence on the establishment of enterprises in the former GDR.

The results of Annkatrin Niebuhr, German economist who also studies the regional imbalances of the European economic space, pointed at the contrast between the internal border regions having showed improving economic performance and the regions along the external borders that performed below the EU average, and that therefore one could hardly trace a general pattern on the EU border regions (NIEBUHR, STILLER 2002; NIEBUHR 2004). However, Niebuhr guessed that the expected transition of the relative economic status of the border regions along the internal borders would offer some new information for these investigations. She foresaw unfavourable perspectives for these regions after the accession. At the same time, when examining the central and eastern European countries, she pointed at the fact that the development potential of the border

regions in the 1990s outweighed that of the non-border regions, admitting that the border regions were initially far more underdeveloped (NIEBUHR 2005). Following the EU integration of the Central European space the dynamics of border regions was largely in proportion to their distance from EU 15 countries, thereby the most successful borderland regions were in the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia as well as in the western part of Hungary and Slovakia. Nevertheless, the economic development on the level of the nation economy was more decisive for these regions than spatial proximity.

Similar outcomes were published in 2005 in a study of the research community by the experts on regional development at the University of Thessaly, a higher education institution based in an area that is affected by the external EU borders. Lefteris Topaloglou and his associates examined the socio-economic impacts of the Central European EU accession of the NUTS 3 regions on the borderland situation of the EU (TOPALOGLOU et al. 2005). With the involvement of different social and economic indicators (such as purchasing power parity, unemployment) and the quantification of nominal characteristics (such as language differences, neighbourhood) the regions were grouped into five clusters. As a result of the research the former external border regions and the neighbouring border regions of the new member states were finally placed in different clusters with different perspectives: the borderlands areas of the “old” member states were claimed to have unfavourable perspectives while the latter ones were foreseen as areas of convergence. A couple of years later, in another study, Topaloglou and his associates proved that the opening of the borders brought indeed a favourable environment for the border regions of newly accessed EU member states through the increase in intensity of cross-border interactions on the one hand and the enhancement of economic attractiveness in the eyes of both western “old” member states and eastern non-member states on the other hand (TOPALOGLOU et al. 2009). However, convergence was not mentioned further.

Thus, at the end of the 1990s the eastern borders of the EU 15 were predicted to face disadvantages with respect to territorial development. In contrast the advantages of the accession countries with regard to labour cost, the application of recent technologies and the import of capital stock reinforced the argument that some regions of the old member states, especially those situated close to the new member states, would have to face competitiveness problems. However, some scholars (such as BRÖCKER, SCHNEIDER 1999) pointed at the weaknesses of these theories (such as the ignoring of the expected increase of labour force in new member states or the positive effects of low-cost inputs for western enterprises).

This brief review on the outputs of researches on the role of borders in the economic space can hardly be considered as fully comprehensive. The above cited scholars from the fields of economics, geography and social sciences and their works reflect such thoughts that presume borders have an effect on the reshaping

of the space of economy and that geographic proximity encompasses economic potential. As we saw, different scholars interpret this ideological background in various ways and one of these interpretations, which identifies borders as economic barriers and targets the demolition of these barriers, became a basic principle of EU development policies.

This pursuit received particular attention in the central and eastern European countries situated in the eastern side of the former Iron Curtain. Looking at the discrepancy between the geographic proximity and the economic underdevelopment of these countries, beside the insufficient infrastructure and the structural problems of economy, the borders were identified as main reasons for backwardness. As a result of the accession of the central and eastern European countries the weight of member states interested in the advanced support of cross-border interaction saw a remarkable shift, concerning both the former border between eastern and western Europe and the internal borders of the former socialist bloc which were also largely closed. Within the EU the support of similar purposes had already been effective for several decades among the oldest member states but, in line with the new demands, this formerly marginal field of the development policy has largely increased during the 1990s and especially during the 2000s and its territorial scope has been relocated. In the following section this process is going to be presented.

### **The emergence of borders in the EU development policy**

The free movement of all the factors of production and the balanced territorial development as long-term purposes of the European integration already appeared in the Treaty of Rome though the identification of borders as barriers and the community policy aiming to tackle these barriers were implemented in an explicit manner within the intervention areas of the European Community only three decades later, in the second half of the 1980s. However, settlements and regions situated along the borders already had to face a series of difficulties originating from their geographical situation (which were manifested mostly in backwardness of infrastructure) and they tried to create connections with their neighbours on the other side of the border who often met the same challenge.

The very first institutionalized cross-border cooperation (EUREGIO) came to life in 1958 along the Dutch–German border and stimulated the establishment of other ones in the following years. A Europe-wide panel for the common interests and problems of borderland areas was provided by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), founded in 1971, that succeeded in offering these cross-border initiatives, initially and notably the EUREGIO, some kind of community financial support. From the aspect of cross-border interaction these pursuits were of minor importance beside more decisive events, namely the signing of the Schengen Treaty (1985), aiming at the removal of all physical

and administrative borders, and the adoption of the Single European Act (1986), targeting the establishment of a single market in the foreseeable future. These treaties illustrate the distance that the EU, gradually lagging behind the USA in the global economic competition, had to cover in a short period to overcome – or at least to halt the spread of – its backwardness by deepening the economic integration of its member states. These treaties saw the borders from the perspective of their role as economic barriers and their primary aim was to enable the integration of the nation economies. By that time the EU had already counted twelve members therefore the majority was made up by members suffering from striking internal territorial imbalances (e.g. Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal). As a result of these internal imbalances the creation of unity meets difficulties not only at country level but also at regional level. Basically, the support systems of the regional policy (ERDF, ESF) were aimed to support regional convergence however the different programs and projects targeted the lagging regions as virtually distinct cases and they rarely implemented them into an international context.

The INTERREG Community initiative was launched in 1990 with the aim of strengthening the socio-economic integration of the community at subnational (regional, local) and supranational (macroregional) level – and at transnational and interregional levels as well – by supporting cross-border cooperation, concentrating mainly on tackling the hindering role of borders on social, economic and cultural fields. The initiative earned considerable success, partly because of the fact that even developed regions of the European Community could benefit from this sort of support unlike in the case of other funds of the development policy. Therefore its weight saw a continuous increase in the course of the following programming periods. The initiative was finally implemented within the cohesion policy of the EU in the period 2007–2013 under the name European Territorial Co-operation.

In parallel to the success of the initiative the role of borders underwent a reassessment in the development policy of the EU. Cross-border studies and initiatives received especial attention and borders gradually came to be considered as opportunities, and they also therefore began to be popularly perceived as “laboratories of European integration”. In the course of the 1990s the opportunity was also provided to new member states (Austria, Sweden and Finland) and later to candidate countries to benefit from INTERREG programs. As reflected by probably the most detailed study on INTERREG, the Ex-Post Evaluation of INTERREG III Community Initiative (PANTEIA 2010), the intensity and efficiency of the initiatives at the borders of the newest member states which joined after 2004, both when cooperating with each other and old member states, did not reach the volume of similar initiatives run by old member states. These differences are largely due on the one hand to administrative burdens such as

the disagreement of legal frameworks and on the other hand to the novelty of these financial tools, the lack of experience and the poorer culture of cooperation. Moreover, we should not ignore the fact that investing in more developed areas always leads to greater output, in nominal terms at least.

*Figure 1. -border metropolitan areas of considerable importance in Europe*



*Source: CORINE Landcover, Eurostat*

## Comparing ESPON projects

The INTERREG III was the first program in which central and eastern European candidate countries could participate. An important element of this initiative was the ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) 2006 Program, launched in 2002 in the frame of strand III C that aimed the scientific justification of the regional development policy at community, member state and regional levels, as well as the establishment of a scientific research community in the field of territorial development. The most important outcome of ESPON was the development of the institutional framework for the investigation of major territorial problems and questions at European level. Thanks to its research projects a great number of formerly disregarded questions came into focus, as did studies dealing with the emergence of cross-border interaction and the development of borderland areas.

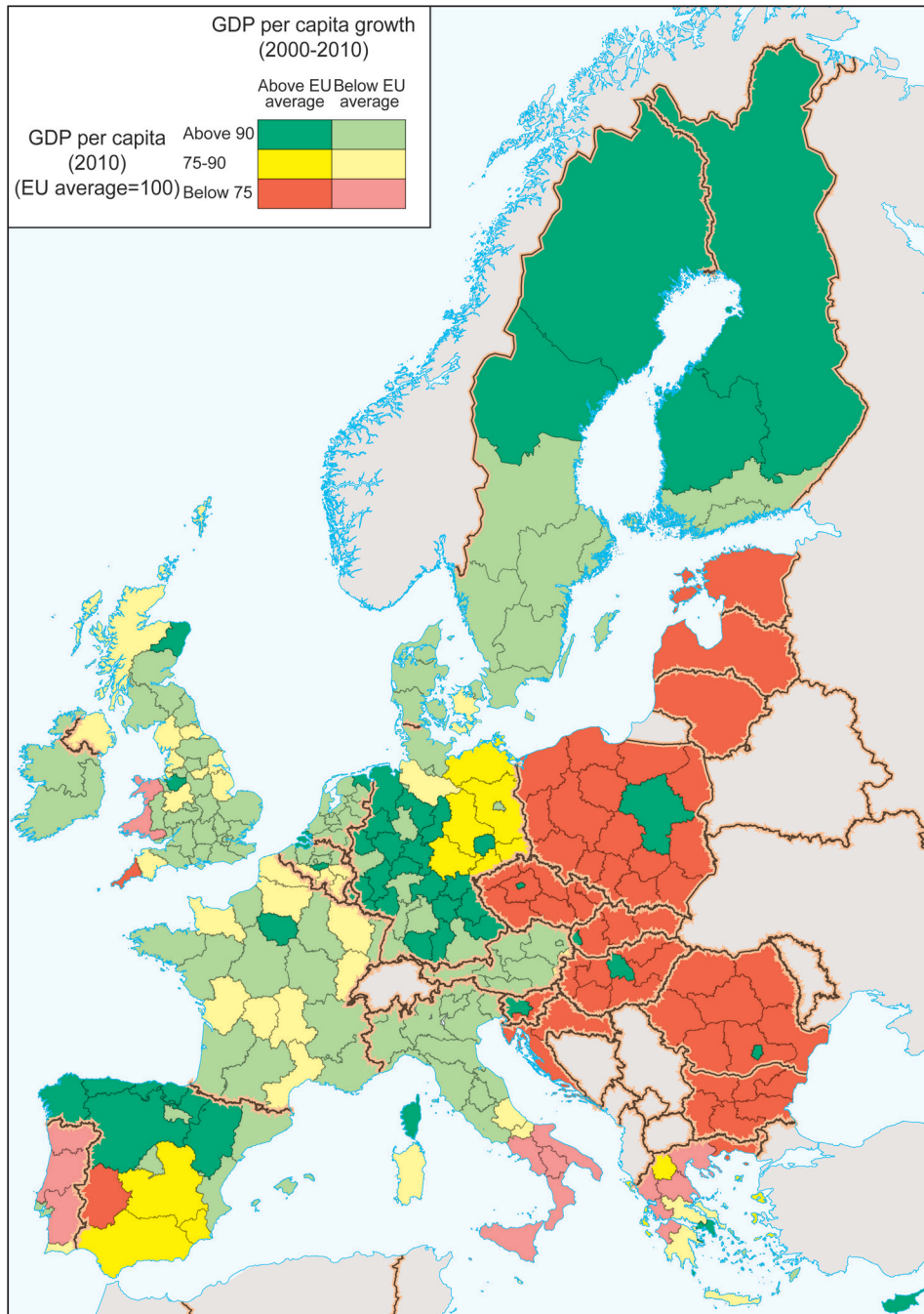
In the frame of ESPON 2013 numerous studies were published in the course of the 2007–2013 programming period which dealt with the linkages between borders, borderland areas, cross-border relations and the regional policy of the European Union. In the following section the results of four research projects will be reviewed in order to examine their contribution to the definition of the role of borders in the economy. These projects are:

- GEOSPECS (Geographic Specificities and Development Potentials in Europe)
- METROBORDER (Cross-border Polycentric Metropolitan Regions)
- ULYSSES (Using applied research results from ESPON as a yardstick for cross-border spatial development planning)
- TERCO (European Territorial Cooperation as a Factor of Growth, Jobs and Quality of Life)

According to their context each document assumes that the deepening of European integration generated a new economic and territorial dynamic during the 1990s, furthermore the accession of the central and eastern European countries (in 2004 and 2009 respectively) enhanced the permeability of the formerly closed borders. Each document at least refers to the importance of globalization and the decisive role of spatial flows in territorial development. From this basic principle they infer that this changing socio-economic environment offers new development perspectives to borderland areas. Moreover, each study insists that the EU policy takes a remarkable step forward for the development of borderland areas. TERCO also points out that territorial cooperation is increasingly connected with territorial cohesion.

Officially the concept of territorial cohesion appeared in 1997 in the community law for the first time (Amsterdam Treaty, Article 16.; see as European Union 1997). It has no clear definition but is generally cited as a polycentric development that

Figure 2.



Source: European Commission, Eurostat

targets the development of competitiveness and innovation clusters, a balanced territorial development and the enhancement of connectivity and networking (see ESPON 2013a for more on territorial cohesion). It was in the Treaty of Lisbon that territorial cohesion was implemented within the most important horizontal goals of the EU and since then it has become a key concept of the regional policy.

In spite of the positivist basic context a common feature of the studies is the identification of borders as dividing objects. As for the understanding of ULYSSES “borders are almost synonymous with political, demographic and economic remoteness, the meeting place of different competences, structures, legal and social affairs and they also behave as functional and territorial discontinuities” (ESPON 2013c). The concept of economic discontinuity also appears in GEOSPECS, referring so to the differences in economic performance between the sides of a border, as well as to other differences of specific economic (e. g. tax) and social characteristics with economic relevance (e. g. innovation potential). These discontinuities are not stable, neither in time nor in space, and their temporal changes are highly relevant for the role of borders.

GEOSPECS brings the concept of *border effects* – usually analysed by macroeconomics in the context of trade theory, the traditional location theory, or new economic geography – into the study of assessment of the dividing role of borders, then clearly defines – by taking other approaches of social sciences into consideration – what it considers to be open or closed borders and what kind of political-administrative, natural, economic and sociocultural factors point toward the openness or closedness of borders. The conclusion of this investigation is that along various EU borders numerous factors still refer to the closedness of the border, even in the case of internal borders. In the same study a detailed analysis is performed on cross-border commuting. This has doubled the number of its participants within ten years from the mid-1990s in EU-27 countries. However it is still far behind the volume of internal commuting. Despite that 19.5% of the EU-27 population lives in proximity to borders, i.e. within a 45-minute travel distance to the nearest borderline, which distance is seen as critical limit of daily commuting. The causes of the differences are partly derived from labour market restrictions – since the beginning of the 2000s the removal of the restrictions is no more immediate and general in the case of new member states – but they are largely related to the individuals themselves. These kinds of barriers are mainly present at the borders of old and new member states but they are also notable even in such regions where the labour market is highly integrated like in the northern countries.

Another neuralgic point where the different studies take a common stand is the consideration of border regions as a general category. The authors of GEOSPECS treated the category of border regions with considerable criticism since the very beginning as fairly different sorts of regions were included in this category and it



was therefore difficult to shape effective “one-size-fits-all” development policies. A more detailed examination of border regions points out that generally those areas where border regions are lagging behind have indeed already been suffering from other factors of backwardness mostly due to their unfavourable geographic location and situation – such as rural areas where the primary sector dominates in the economy. This is certainly the case in the peripheries of the EU. Meanwhile the borderland regions of high metropolitan potential in the European core area have successfully enhanced their economic performance and their populations saw increases during the 2000s that balanced the population losses of peripheral border regions. The authors deny the statement of classical and neoclassical location theories that no competitive metropolitan centres can emerge in border regions, by citing the examples of Geneva and the city of Luxembourg.

A basic principle of the METROBORDER project was exactly this view that border regions of high metropolitan potential can also be successful on a European scale insofar as they are able to exploit this potential. The initial spatial context of the study was intended to be the *Greater Region* (with Luxembourg at its centre and including adjacent regions of Belgium, Germany and France) and the *Region of the Upper Rhine Valley* (a Franco–German–Swiss tri-national metropolitan region) respectively, but in their outlook the authors aimed to point at similar integrating cross-border metropolitan regions throughout Europe. Even in Central Europe, where border regions are less dynamic, two such metropolitan regions were finally identified, namely the Vienna–Bratislava and the Ostrava–Katowice urban areas (*Figure 1*).

The results of ULYSSES project also point to the slightly deterministic nature of borders. According to the outcomes of the investigations performed in the study, even if borders continue to play a decisive role when interpreting the differences between regional processes, the socio-economic situation of border regions is much more interrelated with their overall position in the European space than with their borderline location.

### **An outlook on the wider European context of regional development**

All in all the investigations presented in this paper show that the handling of regional problems related to borders seems now to have found its place in community regional policy and become an integral part of it. However, the understanding of these problems can hardly be effective without taking into account the wider European context.

The above cited studies, either explicitly or implicitly, divide Europe (from the perspective of regional development) into two sharply different parts, so tracing a geographical and at the same time developmental core area (which is identified with the so-called “pentagon” area stretching from London to Paris,

Milan, Munich and Hamburg) having the capacity to largely benefit from the advantages of integration. By contrast, the major part of the remaining territories has not managed to converge to this core yet, despite their previously promising development. The financial crisis of 2008 exercised its most painful effects on these peripheral regions, the economic convergence formerly experienced at member state level ceasing or at least slowing down. However, the “disappearance of borders” has likely opened the opportunity to regional and local entities at state borders to benefit from the economic potential of their neighbourhood rather than depending only on the economic performance of their own country. This seemed to be an obvious scenario on the borders of old member states and central European states accessed in 2004 where the entire removal of physical borders after having joined the Schengen Area, the abolition of labour market restrictions and the remarkable differences between “eastern” and “western” states concerning the level of economic development all pointed towards this perspective.

In reality, the processes of real economy did not fulfil expectations and it is only partly a consequence of the crisis. Since the millennium the central European states of the 2004 EU accession have all seen the social and economic boost of their capital regions in contrast with the modest development of all remaining regions, therefore internal regional imbalances became far more decisive than either east-west or centre-periphery dichotomies (*Figure 2*).

The development policy of the European Union, no matter how much it is committed to the enhancement of cross-border relations and the development of borderland regions, must continue to concentrate its resources primarily on the development of its territorially contiguous external periphery, keeping in sight territorial cohesion as a horizontal goal and by no means ignoring the development of physical and human infrastructure supporting cross-border interaction.

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# Geographic Differences in the Long-term Demographic Processes of the Settlements of the North Hungarian Border Region

LÁSZLÓ JENEY

## Introduction

During the last almost one and a half century the section of the Slovakian border region between the Danube and Tisza rivers, the so called “Northern border region” has been characterized by one of the most spectacular demographic transformations of all the border regions of Hungary. The rather fragmented settlement network of the region has been heavily influenced by the more significant events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The region became the outer periphery after World War I and the majority of the settlements lost their administrative centres. The strict, occlusive effect of the state border was strengthened under the decades of socialism. In the case of the Northern border region the systematic settlement policy of the 1970s had a polarising impact. Many settlements of the region were appointed as the target localities of investments in heavy industry. These settlements were the beneficiaries of the state settlement planning policy and could therefore realize significant population growth despite their cross-border locations. In the case of other settlements (mostly villages) investment and development were expressly prohibited, which resulted in serious population declines and the danger of depopulation. The impact of the wrong-headed socialist settlement policy affected the decades after the transition, and the society of the smaller settlements with altered compositions (due to emigration) struggled to adapt to the circumstances of the market economy. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the populations of the centres of industrial zones began to fall dramatically, their halcyon days having gone. However, the disappearance of borders in line with the European integration process could reduce the “closedness” of the border region. Its advantages are utilized to different extents by the settlements.

The above mentioned processes did not affect all the settlements in the Northern border region in the same way, they acted selectively within the settlement network. Spatially and temporally different impulses touch the examined settlements and their population numbers therefore change in unique ways. This study seeks to answer the question of whether, despite the range of

population growth rates and determinants, characteristic types of settlements are observable in terms of their growth paths in the last century and a half. Further to this, assuming such settlement types can be demonstrated, a secondary research question asks what common features characterise them and where are they situated geographically, that is to say, whether population growth has region-specific elements.

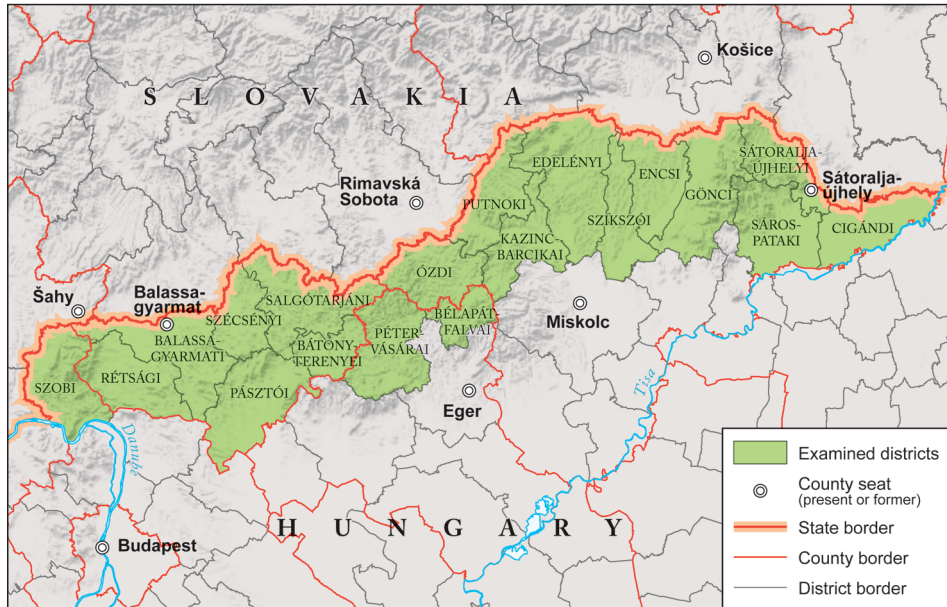
### **Geographical frame of the research: Northern border region of Hungary**

The Northern border region forms the geographical frame of the analysis of this study, covering the regions along the Slovakian borderline between the Danube and the Tisza rivers. It was an important aspect of the delimitation of the examined border region that the region should not divide the more or less organic gravitational districts between the towns and villages, so that the borderline of the examined region fits with the Hungarian district borders. Indeed, this region consists not only of districts located directly on the state borderline, because, due to its shape and size other districts are situated close to Slovakia, although they are not directly adjacent to it. So along with the districts which directly touch the state border all other districts whose geographical centres are situated closer than 40 km from the state border (for example Szikszó district) are included in the studied region.

The Northern border region includes predominantly the districts of Northern Hungary NUTS2 level region (the only exception is the Szob district from Pest county). Almost a half (10 districts) of the 21 examined districts are from Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (Cigánd, Edelény, Encs, Gönc, Kazincbarcika, Ózd, Putnok, Sárospatak, Sátoraljaújhely valamint Szikszó districts). The studied region also includes the whole area of Nógrád county and two northern districts (Bélapátfalva and Pétervására districts) in Heves county (the other parts of this latter county do not lie in the border region with Slovakia) (*Figure 1*).

The total surface of the Northern border region described above is approximately 7900 km<sup>2</sup>, which constitutes 8.5 percent of the total area of Hungary. The sparsely distributed population of this border region result in its share of the population of the country being even smaller, only 5.8 percent according to the 2011 Hungarian census. It reflects the local settlement network - with many small villages - that altogether 423 settlements belong to the Northern border region. This is a considerable proportion of the national number (13.4 percent) - every 7<sup>th</sup> settlement (!) in Hungary belongs to the Northern border region.

The examined border region comprises a more or less homogenous landscape unit. According to the landscape division of the Carpathian basin the studied area corresponds roughly with the North Hungarian Mountains as a whole, only its Eastern edge, namely the Bodroghöz small landscape unit (administratively

*Figure 1: The area of the examined Northern border region*

Source: edited by Áron Nagy

Cigánd district) belongs to the Great Hungarian Plain (DÖVÉNYI ed. 2010). The region regarded as “Mátraerdő” (meaning “Mátra Forest”) by the renowned Hungarian geographer, Gyula Princz is culturally relative homogenous, the Slav impact is observable in its gastronomy or dialect. Its Western part Palócföld (Palócland) comprises its own geographic unit with a special identity, and in its Eastern part remarkable Rusyn communities assimilated into mainstream society, the Greek Catholic religion reflecting their presence. Due to the nature of the landscape, its relief and natural resources, settlements where mining and quarrying were traditionally carried out alongside (or instead of) agriculture are characteristic of the region.

## Theoretical and methodological background of the research

The statistical data used for the analyses derive from the census database of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). The time frame of the research covers the period between the first modern official Hungarian census (1870) of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and (up to the publication of present article) the latest census (2011). Here, measurement of population growth is based just on population number data and does not take into consideration the factors lying behind the growth (natural increase or migration balance). The data refer to changes in the total number of the present population until 1970 and that of the permanent population from 1970.

This long, lasting for almost one and a half centuries, span of time is divided into four periods. The three terminal dates between the four periods refer to dates of characteristic events determining the population growth processes of the settlements:

1920: the changes of the state borders after World War I, which made the examined region the outer periphery

1970: the elaboration of the planned, systematic Hungarian socialist settlement policy, which polarized the settlement-network, emphasising industrially important settlements and towns with central functions for the compensation of Budapest, whilst strongly restricting the functions of smaller villages

1990: the transition, which created a new structure, changed competition between settlements and meant that being a border region could be advantageous through active cross-border cooperation on one hand, and could be disadvantageous by causing the blocking off of peripheries on the other hand.

So the above mentioned three terminal dates (1920, 1970 and 1990) between the four periods divide the whole span of time into periods with unequal length. The earlier periods cover a half century (1870–1920 and 1920–1970), and the later ones cover 20–21 years (1970–1990 and 1990–2011). For the sake of comparability between all the periods the annual average population growth for the settlements has been calculated (where the numbers of elapsed years are taken into consideration). The annual average change of the population number for the settlements ( $V$ ) could be calculated using the population figure for the two censuses ( $P_{t_0}, P_{t_1}$ ) and the number of the years elapsed between the two censuses ( $n$ ) applying the formula below:

$$V = \sqrt[n]{\frac{P_{t_1}}{P_{t_0}}} \times 100 - 100$$

During such a long time the administrative boundaries of the settlements clearly could change, merging of settlements could occur or (mainly after the transition) they could become disunited. In view of the fact that the population change in the settlements for our purposes here should be determined only by demographic processes (and not be affected by the accidental administrative realignment of the settlements), in this research the data of the earlier periods pertain to the settlement-network of 2011.

## **Turning-points in the one and a half century long demographic development of the Northern border region**

### **From inner periphery to outer periphery after World War I.**

The examined area did not belong to the country's outer periphery for most of Hungarian history. It belonged to the Southern, declining part of the "Felvi-



dék” (“Uplands”). The region became a real border region only once: during the age when Hungary split into three parts, when the region fell into a section of the castle line between the Ottoman Turkish occupied area and the Hungarian Kingdom.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century after the administrative consolidation under the Austro-Hungarian dualism the studied region included parts of more Hungarian counties. The Northern parts of Heves és Borsod counties and the Southern parts of Hont, Nógrád, Gömör and Kishont, Abaúj-Torna and Zemplén counties belonged to it. Although this hilly area was not reckoned among the outer peripheries of Hungary, it could be regarded as an inner periphery, because it covered the more obturated border areas of the counties mentioned. Furthermore, the examined area’s relief meant that the it was avoided by the main transportation arteries and this strengthened the “inner peripheral” character of the region. The only important main route to cross the region is in a north-south direction in Abaúj and connects Budapest with Kassa and Eastern Poland. No east–west oriented main route has evolved to be able to traverse lengthwise the protracted subtending region. And what is more the county centres are mainly outside the studied region (Ipolytás, Rimaszombat, Kassa, Miskolc and Eger). Only two of the seven former county seats concerned are situated in the study area: Balassagyarmat (seat of Nógrád county) and Sátoraljaújhely (Zemplén county).

According to the data of the first modern Hungarian census from 1870, besides these two county seats – although it had no county seat function – Sáros-patak also emerged, having significant educational functions.

Between 1870 and 1920 the population number of the whole Northern border region was characterized by moderate growth of 0.6 percent per annum on average, which lagged behind the Hungarian average (referring to the current extent of the state). The regional average certainly obscures the sometimes very significant inequalities among settlements. The heavy industrial development of the Northern industrial zone of Hungary started up not only with the communist takeover of power, but even during the age of dualism remarkable immigrations characterized the settlements featuring mining and metallurgy. This is demonstrated by the fact that the most dynamically growing settlement of the period before World War I was Ormosbánya, where the population number increased annually by almost five percent on average for half a century. But the growth rates of Karancsalja, Ózd, Rákócziabánya, Rudabánya and Salgótarján were also high. The increase in the number of residents of Salgótarján is remarkable because in 1920 it had a larger population than the traditional county seat of Nógrád, Balassagyarmat, which presaged the beginning of a new era in the urban hierarchy of Nógrád.

In the meantime in the easternmost part of the studied region the villages of Abaúj-Torna and Zemplén met, in response, with losses. Their common feature is

that in 1870 they already had small populations; the population number exceeded 1000 residents in only 3 of the 25 most rapidly shrinking villages. Besides domestic population movements international migration also played a role in the decrease. Although Hungarian citizens (there were many ethnic Rusyns and Slovaks among them) mainly emigrated from the currently Slovakian and Subcarpathian parts of the Uplands (Northern part of the Carpathian basin) to America, numerous emigrants also left the examined villages for overseas.

As a result of the arrangement of territories closing World War I, the Northern border of Hungary runs along the boundary of the study region so that the region formerly reckoned as “inner periphery” became “outer periphery”. The new state border divided organic gravitation relations among settlements, many parts of the region became “without centres” (e. g. the Southern part of Abaúj). Transfer of Ipolyság, Rimaszombat and Kassa to Czechoslovakia meant that some of the settlements alongside the Ipoly River or those surrounding Putnok or in Southern Abaúj became subordinated under more geographically remote centres, like Budapest or Miskolc.

### **The unsupported versus favoured settlements of the industrial axis in the socialist development policy**

During the decades of socialism the population processes of the Northern border region were characterized by a vigorous differentiation. The era of Rákosi supported those settlements which had favourable terms for industrial development. Quite a lot of settlements are situated in the region with propitious resource factors for the location of industry. Therefore there were already some notable heavy industrial zones (e.g. in the surroundings of Ózd, Salgótarján) before socialism. In the planning policy of the 1950's the proximally located Miskolc – which was the 2nd largest town in Hungary at that time – was judged an upper tier town along with Budapest. These two towns could partake of funds isolated from the others; however immigrants to the socialist industrial towns (e. g. Kazincbarcika) were also treated preferentially with, for example, higher salaries.

Nevertheless, the above mentioned processes resulted in that from the 1970's the state planning policy made conscious efforts to develop provincial counterpoles for the alleviation of the exaggerated Budapest-centricity. Hungary was one of those socialist countries, which played a pioneer role becoming an example for systematic planning policy regulating the whole settlement network of the country. On the basis of the State Settlement Network Development Concept born in 1971 the central power systematically ordered the settlements with different sizes into a hierarchy, and development funds were designated accordingly. The spirit of the age was characterised by development being accompanied by the award of certain functions and the issuing of investment permissions. Conversely the

withdrawal of a settlement from development meant the cutback or denial of investments. The main beneficiaries of the age were the high- and middle-level centres. Only the seats of the regions and the counties were deemed high-level centres in the region of North Hungary, so in the Northern border region examined in this article only one high-level centre was marked out: Salgótarján, the seat of Nógrád county, although that is only a partial high level-centre. The proportion of middle- and low-level centres among the settlements of the Northern border region was lower than the average of the country. On the territory of the Northern border region only eight middle-centres were marked out, one part of them was made up of the other settlements already having town status (Balassagyarmat, Kazincbarcika, Ózd, Sárospatak and Sátoraljaiújhely), and the other part of them by the potential towns (Encs, Pásztó and Szécsény) in the areas lacking towns.

Altogether 96 low-level centres were made out in the Northern border region, the proportion of them among the settlements is also less than the average of the whole country. The development of the low-level centres was very sensitive to this socialist settlement policy. In accordance with the so called "rationalizing" efforts of the new economic mechanism various functions were taken back step by step. Almost all the special state policies were transformed to conform with the State Settlement Network Development Concept (merging of agricultural cooperation, relocation of secondary schools from the smaller villages, the elimination of the cultural houses in the countryside, disappearance of the administrative role of the district seats due to the introduction of the two-level council system). The revoking of the functions would have been supplemented by the development of transportation, so that the availability of these services in the neighbouring larger settlement would have been unhindered. However even the transportation policy was dominated by the economics of scale, which manifested in the elimination of the feeder railway lines, and as a result of this process the settlements of the Northern border region moved increasingly into a peripheral position.

Summing up what has been said, in the Northern border region in the case of the remaining 318 villages no central function was determined. These so-called "other settlements" represented a remarkable proportion, more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  (!), of the settlement-network of the region. This proportion exceeds significantly the average of the country of 63 percent. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office claimed in its 1980 report in connection with the demographic change of the settlements without central functions, that between 1970 and 1978 the number of villages having less than 500 residents had increased from 711 to over 900. In case of such types of settlements the natural decrease had come to stay, the emigration is characterised by the fact that in 1978 on average every 10th resident moved away (KSH 1980).

### **Cross-border cooperation as a tool for recuperation from the transformational depression**

The State Settlement Network Development Concept had already received very much criticism in the later years of socialism and in the mid-1980s, before the transition, had fallen into abeyance. However the impacts of the planning document being in force for almost one and a half decades could hardly be restrained. The long lasting restrictions and prohibitions led to the chronic depopulation of certain smaller villages, which in the case of many settlements unfortunately also continued after the transition.

Many residents of smaller villages had formerly commuted to the larger industrial centres (for example to Miskolc). After the transition the industrial zones of Northern Hungary fell into structural crisis. Through the multitudinous departures the former commuting opportunities also ceased. On the other hand, under the circumstances of the market economy, many public services (e. g. transport, public utilities, communication, education, health) in the name of “rationalization” were neglected in the sparsely populated rural areas and living conditions in these villages were made more difficult. The pinch in employment opportunities and the decay of the former village way of life generated a further wave of emigration.

Specific groups within the local societies took part in the emigration, which altered the social composition of the settlements concerned. Predominantly the younger cohorts of child bearing age participated in the emigration, which resulted in the natural demographic sustainability of the settlements, the age structure and sex ratio and the balance between employees and dependents having been strongly altered (DOBÁNY 1999). Mainly older people remained in the villages, which process led to serious ageing, and, in extreme cases, to the danger of extinction especially in the smallest villages (e.g. Keresztéte or Pamlény). While emigration is much more characteristic of more educated and innovative social segments, the bulk of those who stayed in the countryside were of a lower degree of education and often unemployed, people who are less innovative, active and flexible under the circumstances of the market economy. (G. FEKETE 2001) The value of real estate has dramatically fallen in the settlements affected by emigration making these settlements attractive for the Gypsies living in deep poverty (e.g. Csenyété or Gadna) (BELUSZKY-SIKOS 2007). The difficulties of social integration of the Gypsy communities generated further emigration from the numbers of the original inhabitants. However the higher birth rate observable among the Gypsy community compensates the loss of migration, and the young composition of the age structure in these villages stems from this (BALÁZS 2011; KOVÁCS 2013). Changes occurring in the social structure can lead to social problems and in the case of some villages overpopulation rather than extinction presents the problem.

These processes resulted in the examined Northern border region belonging

among the areas with the most disadvantageous position in Hungary today. This is manifested also in the development policy, which tends to concentrate the development funds on the most underperforming districts. Therefore the 33 most disadvantaged districts are specially treated areas. More than a third of them (12) are situated in this examined region. However, research aiming to study the impacts of development aid on smaller territories shows that the quantity of rural development funds is insufficient to finance the “catching-up” of the most disadvantaged districts (VARGA 2012).

In 2004 Hungary and Slovakia joined the European Union. With the integration, the cross-border cooperation and the accession to the Schengen Zone the borders gradually turned to regions with special possibilities (KUTHI –NAGY (ed) 2005). Numerous EGTCs were established on the border areas of Hungary, many of them on the boundary of Hungary and Slovakia. The final disappearance of the borders could maintain the former gravitation relations between the settlements. However in the case of the Eastern section of the Hungarian–Slovakian boundary it is a serious challenge that, after the transition, the Slovakian side of the border became a similarly depressed region too. Heavy industry (e. g. Steel Factory of Kassa) became dangerous also here. The region is characterized by emigration and higher unemployment rates and lower incomes relative to the Slovakian average. Numerous Gypsy communities live on both sides of the border, their social integration is one of the greatest issues for the local development policy.

### **Characteristic types of settlements according to the long-term population dynamics**

As it has turned out, significant differences are observable among the settlements of the Northern border region according to the population processes during the last almost one and a half century. However, there are such settlements, where the population number has similarly changed (increased or decreased) for the same period. On the basis of this the examined 423 settlements could be classified into characteristic groups.

The classification of the settlements of the Northern border region according to their population growth was carried out with the help of cluster analysis. For this purpose the 423 settlements of the examined region were regarded as points in a four dimensional space, where the four dimensions are the annual average rates of population growth for the four periods (expressed as percentages). The closer to each other the settlements are situated in this space, the more similar their population processes are to each other. The distance (D) between two points/settlements (a and b) is expressed by the Euclidean distance following the formula below:

$$D(a,b) = \sqrt{(\hat{a}_{1870-1920} - \hat{b}_{1870-1920})^2 + (\hat{a}_{1920-1970} - \hat{b}_{1920-1970})^2 + (\hat{a}_{1970-1990} - \hat{b}_{1970-1990})^2 + (\hat{a}_{1990-2011} - \hat{b}_{1990-2011})^2}$$

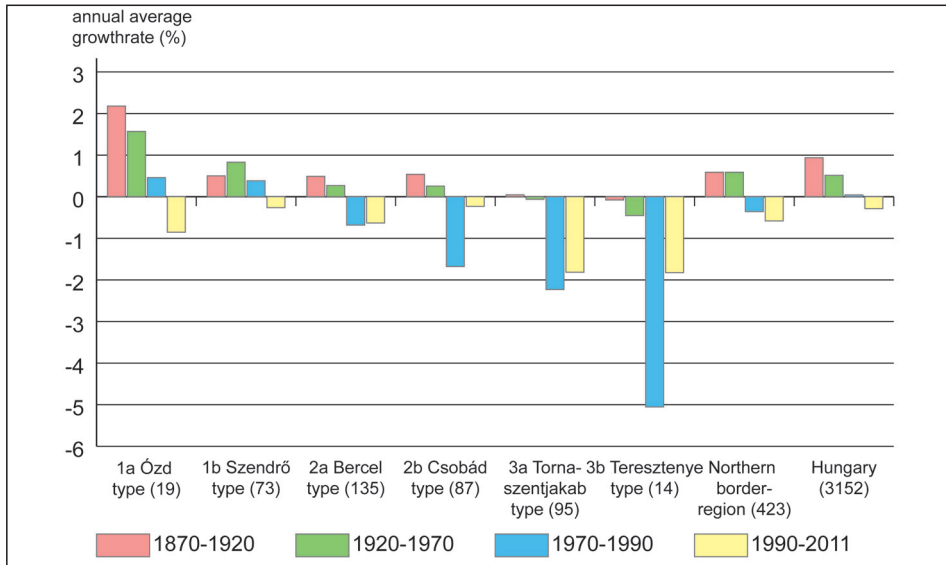
SPSS software was used for the cluster analyses and the calculations could be carried out by standard methods. Among the group forming methods of the hierarchical cluster analyses the frequently applied “Wards’s method” seemed to be the most optimal in this instance, because the settlements scatter relative equally among the clusters. Besides this it was important that the clusters formed should be as homogenous as possible to avoid the danger of the so called “chain effect”. (For other methods of cluster analyses, for example for the method of nearest neighbour, it is often problematic that under the process two very different cluster far from each other could merge if there is a “halfway settlement”, which could connect them serving as a bridge or a chain-link. It is possible the settlement “A” is the nearest neighbour of “B” and the nearest neighbour of “B” is “C” which although very different from “A”, could then be placed into the same cluster with it.) Therefore for the formation of the cluster it was regarded with emphasized priority that within the cluster there should be minimal deviation, that is to say the settlements belonging to the same group should not be far from the average of their group.

As a result of the analyses the 423 settlements of the Northern border region could be separated into six clusters (groups). Three main types could be detected (1, 2 and 3), which could be divided further into subtypes (1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b). From the perspective of population growth the settlements belonging to the main type 1 are in the most advantageous position, these were characterized by the most dynamic population growth, while the settlements of the main type 3 experienced the highest levels of population loss.

The clusters were named after their standard, stereotypical settlement. Those settlements became the most typical, name-giving settlements which differed least from the average values of their cluster (the normal Euclidean distance was taken into consideration for this). On the basis of this the Ózd, Szendrő, Bercel, Csobád, Tornaszentjakab and Teresztenye types could be separated. The clusters include different number of settlements.

### **Groups of settlements characterised by a long-term increase in population number**

Predominantly such settlements with industrial and/or mining specialization belong to the Ózd type settlement group signified with 1a, which experienced very extreme waves of population change. Besides the name-giving Ózd the population of Kazincbarcika, Ormosbánya, Rákóczibánya, Rudabánya or Salgótarján increased to the highest extent not during the socialist decades, but around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The development policy of the 1950's focusing on heavy industry also boosted these settlements. As a result of the long-term increases the settlements belonging to this cluster have the largest population numbers. The three largest towns of the Northern border region are Salgótarján, Ózd and Kazincbarcika. These settlements could realize the most

*Figure 2: Settlement types of the Northern border region according to population growth*

*Source: calculations of the author based on the census data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office*

dynamic increase for the whole period, however in the most recent decade they began to decrease. Since the 1970s their population number has rather been only stagnating, which indicates that their decline had begun under the later years of socialism and after the transition they experienced a real demographic crisis.

The group of 73 settlements belonging to the Szendrő type is more or less similar to the above described group. It can also be characterized by growing population numbers for the whole examined period from 1870 to 1990. However, the rates of increase became smaller in time, and turned to decreases in the population number after the transition. The basis of the separation (from the Ózd group) is that in their case the growth rates are lower and the decreases of the latest decade are also lighter. Their demographic situation could therefore be regarded as more advantageous, or less disadvantaged, in terms of changes in population. In these settlements administrative functions are more important than heavy industry. Lots of former or present district centres and small towns belong to this group, for example Szendrő itself, but Balassagyarmat with the former role of county seat, or Bátorterenye, Bélapátfalva, Edelény, Encs, Pásztó, Putnok, Sárospatak, Szécsény, Szob or Rétság with district centre functions also appear with, and resemble, Szendrő. During the socialist era these small country towns lost much of their traditional administrative role with the elimination of the district system in 1984, which disrupted their traditional urban–rural relationships.

### **Settlements with an intermediate demographic position**

The settlement type named after Bercel, a small settlement in Nógrád county, having the most (135) settlements is characterized by more disadvantageous population processes. The settlements of Bercel group have less important resources for the industrial development, their population number had a moderate increase until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but from the 1970s fell dramatically. This process is a heavy result of the above mentioned decisions of the socialist settlement policy and the impacts of these decisions remained after the transition too. Among the members of this very mixed group there are administrative centres, small towns, larger villages that had experienced a more successful past, for example the former county seat of Zemplén (Sátoraljaúlyhely), district centres (like Abaújszántó, Gönc, Pétervárasa, Szikszó, Szirák or Vámosmikola), or seats of common administrative units (e.g. Krasznokvajda).

The Csobád type had a very similar to the previous type of settlements. These two types can be merged to form a division of five clusters. The population number of the Csobád type had a very light increase until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century which in the 1970s turned to a dramatic decrease (annually -2.2 percent on average). These are mainly villages with 500–1000 residents which were less affected by the elimination of different services (primary school, post office, health and other institutions). Nevertheless, it was a more serious problem, that under the State Settlement Network Development Concept of 1971 and the establishment of the socialist agricultural cooperation these villages lost their traditional agricultural organization functions (instead of their own market economies other marketing methods were applied through the state system). Later with the “rationalisation” of the socialist agricultural cooperation the skilled agronomists moved off too. Many of these villages were removed from the industrial developments focusing on the larger towns and other investments towards these villages (e.g. for building housing estates to maintain the infrastructure) therefore were also restricted. A big difference from the previous type of settlement is that the level of population decrease slowed down after the transition; the settlements of this type are rather characterized by stagnation.

### **Smallest villages suffering from demographic crisis**

Types 3a and 3b are in the worst demographic position. Of the two types the 95 settlements belonging to the Tornaszentjakab type have a relatively better state, while until the 1970s their population number tended to stagnate. Real emigration occurred during the latter period of socialism, when they loose much of functions.

Among the six types the 14 settlements of the Teresztenye type feature the most dramatic depression. These are the settlements with the most disadvantageous demographic state not only in the Northern border region, but in the whole of



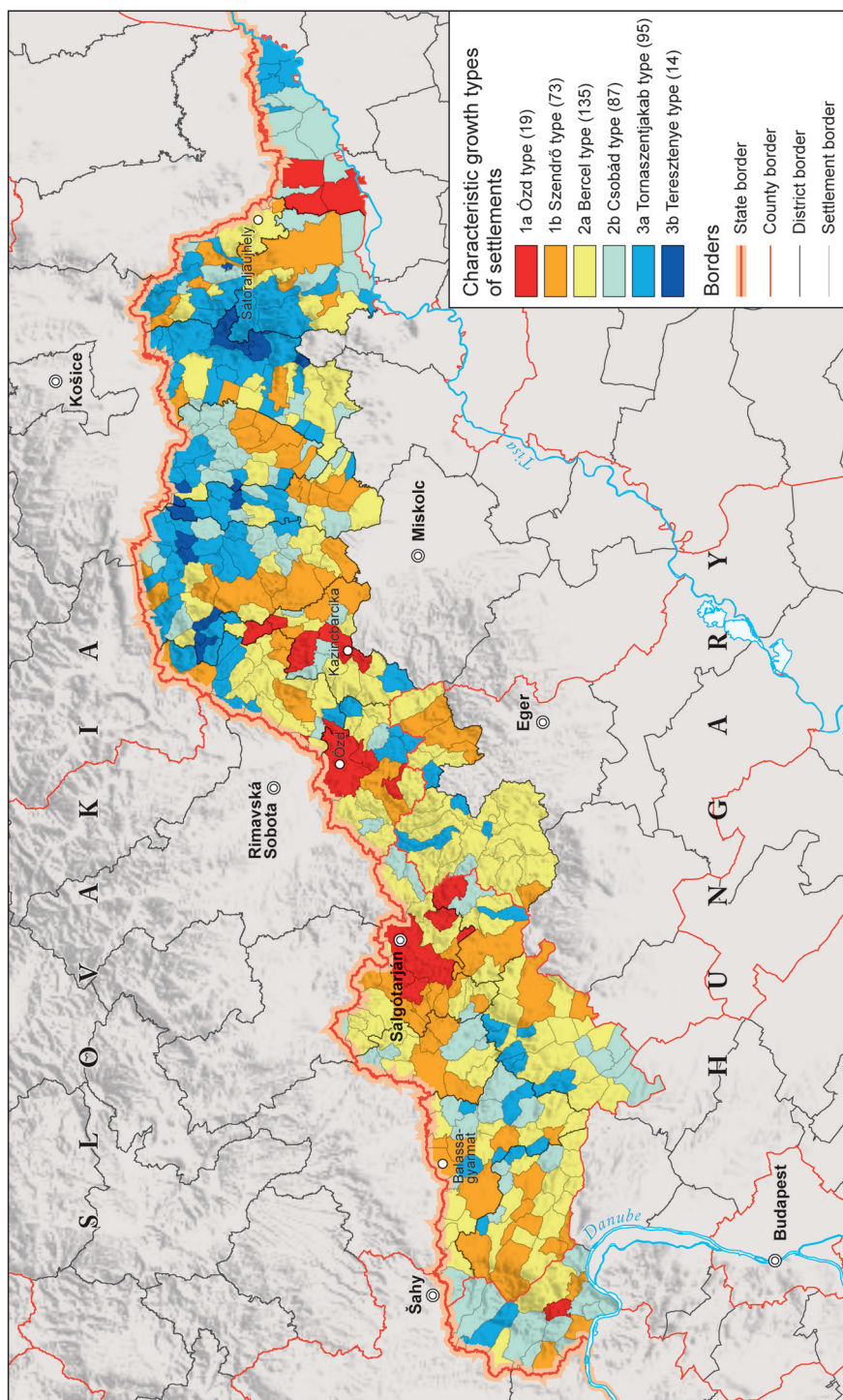


Figure 3: Geographical pattern of the settlements belonging to different growth types  
 Source: calculations of the author based on the census data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office

*Table 1: Average population number of the settlements by clusters*

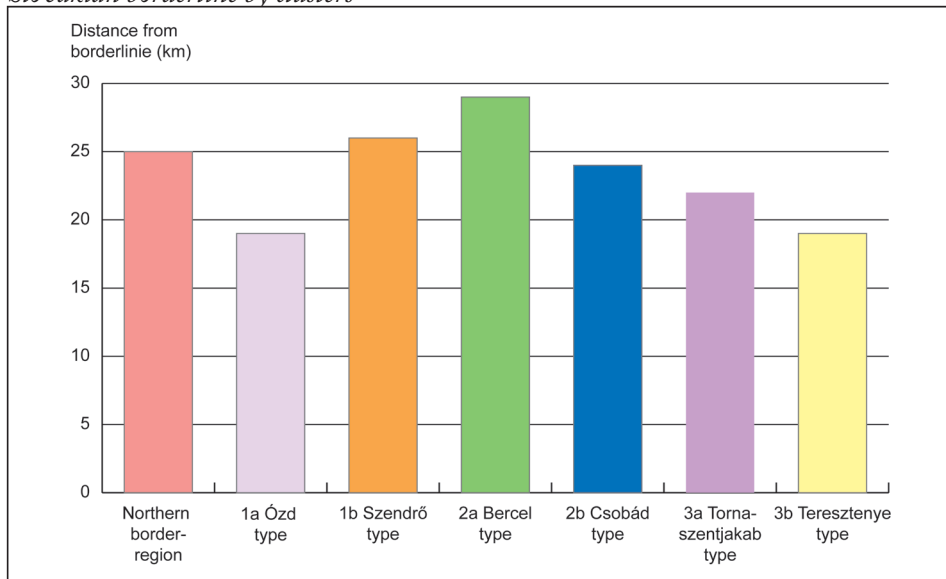
<b>Growth type</b>	<b>Average population</b>
<b>1a Ózd type</b>	6845
<b>1b Szendrő type</b>	2597
<b>2a Bercel type</b>	1184
<b>2b Csobád type</b>	740
<b>3a Tornaszentjakab type</b>	255
<b>3b Teresztenye type</b>	51
<b>Northern borderregion</b>	1344
<b>Hungary</b>	3101

*Source of data: 2011 census data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office*

Hungary. Their common trait is that their population number decreased for the total period of almost one and a half centuries. However from the 1970's the socialist rural policy not only left the settlements to themselves, but expressly forbade investment in these settlements (BELUSZKY–SIKOS 1982). Unfortunately their situation has not improved in the years since the transition. Their ageing society is less able to adapt successfully to the current requirements of the market economy.

The growth pattern of the settlements is not independent from their geographical location. The settlements situated close to each other often belong to the same growth type. The settlements of the Teresztenye type (3b) which suffered from the most dramatic declines can be found in the Northern areas of the Cserhát and Zemplén hills alongside the Slovakian border obturated from traffic. Similarly the settlements of the Tornaszentjakab type also located in hilly landscapes. The settlements of the Szendrő type, with a more advantageous demographic position, form lines alongside the main routes with better accessibility (in the valley of Bódva, Hernád, Sajó or Zagyva). Generally speaking it is also observable, that the geographical situations of the clusters are not independent of the distance from the state border. The distance (by air) of each settlement from the Hungarian–Slovakian borderline was determined with the help of the ArcGIS geo-information software. The peripheral situation along the border correlates with population decrease, the more disadvantageous position a settlement occupies, the closer that given settlement is located to the state border. It weakens somewhat the relationship that many of the Ózd type settlements are located on the border. However these more important, larger settlements with

*Figure 4: The average distance of the settlements (by air) from the Hungarian–Slovakian borderline by clusters*



*Source: calculations of the author*

central functions are border crossing points, so for their case the state border performs a gateway function rather than dividing role.

It is also observable that settlements belonging to the same cluster fit into specific population classes. The clusters with advantageous demographic situations have more residents. The average population number of the Ózd type settlements is over 6000. While the most negative dynamics predominantly typify the smallest villages. The average population number of the settlements belonging to the Terezstenye type (3b) is only 51 according to the data of the 2011 Hungarian census.

## Conclusion

The examinations confirm that in the Northern border region of Hungary the demographic processes of settlements are strongly influenced by events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (becoming a border region, implementation of the socialist selective settlement development policy and the polarizing effects due to the possibilities and challenges after the transition). With these events the change of population number varies markedly in space and time.

Nevertheless, characteristic types of growth could be determined within this variability, the 423 settlements of the examined region falling into six types after a cluster analysis. The settlements belonging to the same clusters have are consistently sized with respect to number of residents and it follows from this that

the increase is not independent of the size of the settlements. The examinations proved the polarizing impact of the socialist settlement policy, which favoured mainly the centres, whereas, the smaller villages are nearly depopulated.

Some of the settlement types show a definite geographical concentration, each tending to coincide with certain spatial areas and not be represented in others. Therefore it is observable that the population growth processes of the Northern border region are space-specific.

Nowadays almost the whole territory of the Northern border region belongs to the most disadvantageous districts of Hungary. The results of this research point out that the Northern border region is rather complex and should not be considered a homogeneous whole. This should be taken into consideration by the stakeholders making decisions on development policy. Hitherto decision makers have often, unfortunately, treated these settlements too uniformly.

### Acknowledgement

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# The Aftermath of Border Changes – Accessibility Study in the Former Banat of Temes (1910–2014)

GÁBOR SZALKAI – ZSOLT BOTTLIK

## Introduction

Nowadays in this “Europe of the Regions” processes based on projects targeting the removal of borders and the close cooperation of borderland regions have received more and more emphasis. Hungary has several peripheral border regions which are adjacent to regions in similar situations on the other sides of the borders. Although not all of these regions were formerly prospering areas, their conditions were more promising due to more intensive social and economic relations. The efforts of the EU in the weakening of borders therefore enable the activation of potential energy on the one hand, and offer the possibility of a breakthrough in the renewed coordinate system of the economy.

The geographical scope of our investigation, the former Banat of Temeschwar is one such region which became part of the Danube–Criş–Mureş–Tisa Euroregion ([www.dkmt.hu](http://www.dkmt.hu); ZÁMBÓ 1997) so as to benefit from its borderland situation. Besides this a European grouping of territorial cooperation is also effective in the Banat ([www.btc-egtc.eu](http://www.btc-egtc.eu)). The Banat-Triplex Confinium EGTC embraces primarily the cooperation of settlements along the border since such forms of cross-border cooperation have been made possible.

The aim of the Euroregion as well as that of the EGTC is to enforce the economic integrity of the area despite its political dividedness by the creation and strengthening of cross-border connections, and also to reduce the importance of borders. An obvious precondition for this is the development of transport infrastructure, both in terms of quality and quantity.

The region’s particular history (KÓKAI 2003; 2004; 2009; 2010), its demographic situation (CREŢAN 1998; KÓKAI 2007; NAGY 2012) and its especially heterogeneous ethnic spatial structure (NEUMANN 1997; BENKÓ 2010) as well as the unfavourable local conditions in the three neighbouring countries have already been the subjects of researches led by both domestic and international scholars mostly with local origins (ĐURĐEV 1995; KICOŠEV 1998). However, research projects concerned with border changes and the actual role of borders have been very few in number.

Therefore in our studies, in the framework of a wider project, we examined the role of borders and border changes as well as the modification of the rail

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network of the research area from the perspective of an important local dimension, transport geography, more particularly, shifts in intraregional accessibility. With this we would like to make a contribution to those concrete ideas in transport development which can be read in numerous studies. The investigation of the rail network, which now plays a minor role in the modal split but was formerly of decisive importance, was motivated by the fact that through the usage of travel times the current and former situation can be compared in a quite detailed though largely model-like manner.

## **Data and methods**

We examine changes in rail accessibility through the actual travel times of two dates, the years 1910 and 2014. Timetable data used in our study origins from the timetables of the Hungarian and common transport companies from 1910 and the official rail schedules of the three neighbouring countries as well as that of the German railway company for the year 2014 (A magyar és közös..., 1910; www.bahn.de; www.regiotrans.ro; www.zeleznicesrbije.com).

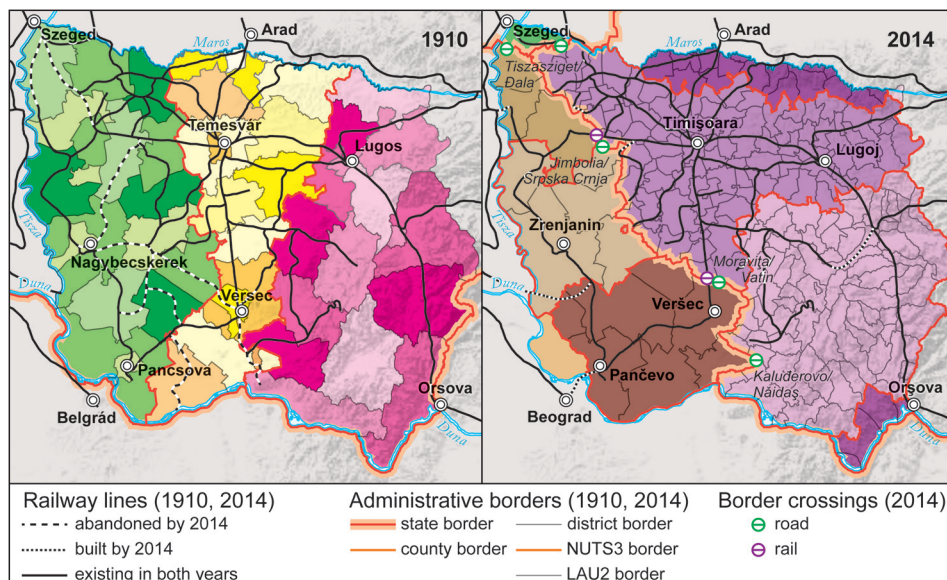
Accessibility within a region can be examined both in time and space. Our model indicates the shortest travel times and distances for the research area on the basis of an already elaborated method (SZALKAI 2001). The rail network as well as the stations and stops determined spatial accessibility that saw significant changes with the abandonment or the restructuring of rail lines. The temporal accessibility of stations and stops was calculated through an algorithm based on the usage of timetable data which was systematized by lines and stations, extended with the coordinates of these latter (besides the average spatial and temporal accessibility values the starting point was of course changeable). When calculating travel times we used the shortest route between stations regardless of transfer times. Each line providing passenger services was considered as active, independent of the frequency of daily traffic. Isolines based on these values enable the visualisation of areas with unfavourable traffic conditions and those which serve as hubs.

## **Research area**

The research area of our study is the historical land of the Banat of Temesvár (today Timișoara) that is delimited by the Tisza, the Lower Danube, the Mureș as well as the Cerna and the upper valley of the Timiș. The area was reconquered by the Habsburgs from the Ottomans in 1718 nevertheless it was not reattached to Hungary then but went under the direct rule of the emperor. Subsequently it was among the historical regions of Hungary with the most unstable destinies, uprooted several times from the central civil administration. After the return of the area, then bordered by the Mureș, the Tisza, the Danube and Hunyad County, to the civil administration system in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was covered



Figure 1. Changes to the rail network and the administrative division between 1910–2014; Border stations in the Banat



by three counties, Torontál, Temes and Krassó-Szörény. The centre of the region, Timișoara was the sixth most populous city in the country in 1910 (Figure 1).

As a consequence of the immigration and settling process of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the area was among the most complex territories in Europe concerning the ethnic composition of the population but was again cut into pieces by the peace treaties after World War I, and assigned to Romania, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Hungary respectively. After the obligated and multiple reorganisation of the administrative system the former north–south sub-national administrative borders were replaced by mostly east–west borders that influenced the hierarchy of the settlement network and the transportation network. Ignoring some minor territorial changes, current borders are largely identical with those defined by the Treaty of Trianon, dividing the three main parts of the Banat from each other which, apart from some major cities, suffer from their peripheral situation. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this fact determined the socio-economic environment within the area until the regime change of 1989.

In the first decade of the interim period that grew up in the wake of the political changes the three parts of the area followed different paths of development (PÁL 2004). It is no surprise that the decision makers in Serbia, stepping out of war conflicts, Romania, only starting its economic transition and Hungary, seeking EU accession, were trying to benefit from European trends and opportunities by founding an euroregion in the course of the preliminary phase

of EU accession at the end of the 1990s. In fact, this euroregion covered a larger area than the historical Banat but, with the Banat within its geographical centre, economic, cultural and historical relations were reconceptualised in a new inertial system (BALOGH 1997; PÁSZTI-TÓTH 1997).

This cross-border cooperation now involves the counties of Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád and Békés from the Hungarian side, Arad, Timiș, Caraș-Severin és Hunedoara from the Romanian side and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina from Serbia. The establishment of Banat–Triplex Confinium EGTC also serves the tightening of cooperations by providing a new legal framework within the EU (Soós 2013). Though these two organizations coordinate projects in parallel or even in overlap, their activity shows clearly the will to fill in the existing framework with content that will be enforced with Serbia's future EU accession.

### **The effects of border changes on the rail network**

From the historical and recent events described above one can see that a fundamental element of the enlargement of the circle of relationships is the transport network and its alteration as well as the aftermath of possible developments (MÉSZÁROS 1999).

The Banat, especially its northwestern part is still an area with one of the densest rail networks in the world. This is so despite the fact that the network created in the ages of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy became fragmented by borders; two lines were cut by the Hungary-Serbia border, one by the Hungary-Romania border and twelve by the Romania-Serbia border which unfortunately led not only to increases in travel time but also to the abandonment of numerous lines.

Changes to the network as well as current border crossing points (including road crossings) are shown by *Figure 1*. The discontinuation of rail transport was mostly typical in Yugoslavia where most of the lines were dismantled, while the fragments of the network on the Hungarian side declined by necessity as the rail bridges of Szeged and Csanád were demolished in the second world war in 1945.

In contrast to this the Romanian network saw remarkable development, at least in quantitative terms. The most important extension was the construction of the 39 kilometre long line between Caransebeș and Călnic in 1938 through which the industrial area of Reșița became connected to the network from the east (PALOTÁS 1961) reflecting, as it did, the transformed geopolitical environment of the area. A shorter, but logistically important, extension was also the connection of those lines cut by the Yugoslavian border (Lovrin-Nerău, Cărpiniș-Iohanisfeld). This border resulted in the formation of dead end lines while elsewhere train stops were divided from their settlement and attached to another country (*Figure 1*).

Thus the network became fragmented by the borders, and the opportunities for border crossing especially sparse between Romania and Serbia. There are only two rail crossings between these countries, of which the one between Jimbolia

and Kikinda serves only local border traffic with two pairs of trains per day. On the Timișoara – Belgrade line a direct express train service was discontinued a couple of years ago and nowadays only two pairs of trains offer direct connection between Timișoara and Vršac (TURNOCK 2005).

Three border crossings are open to road traffic between Romania and Serbia within the Banat (Jimbolia-Srpska Crnja, Moravița-Vatin, Naidăș-Kaluđerovo), while the Tiszasziget-Đala crossing between Hungary and Serbia was opened in 1993 and the Kiszombor-Cenad crossing between Hungary and Romania in 2000. Finally, as a point of interest but only of symbolic importance, one can also mention the provisory opening of borders at the triplex monument lying at the tripoint which has taken place on the last weekend of May (the day of the euregion) since 1998.

In our analysis we examined the accessibility of the most important centres of the Banat together with that of other cities lying outside the area but forming an organic entity with it. In this way the temporal and spatial accessibilities of Szeged, Arad, Timișoara, Orșova és Pančevo were mapped together with “general” accessibility conditions.

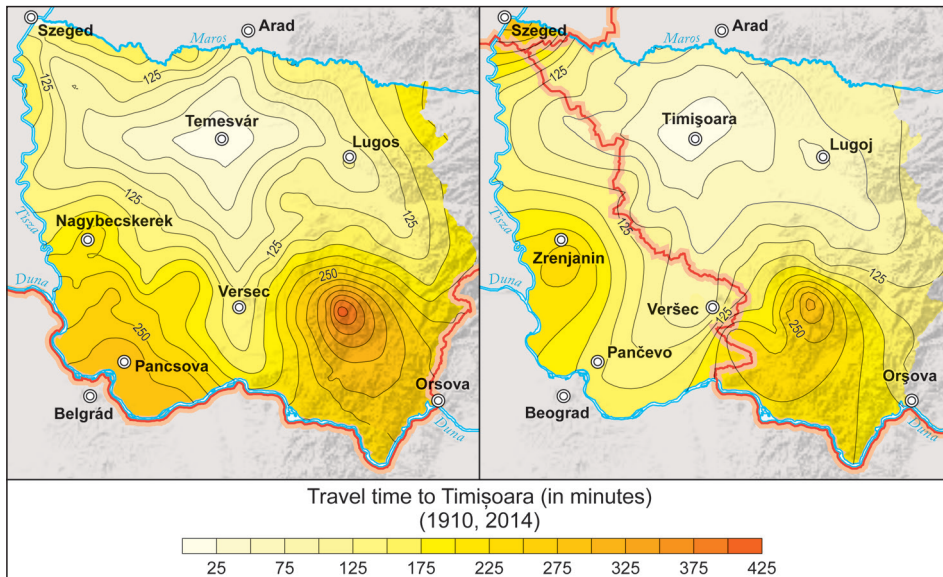
The most unambiguous indicator of accessibility is the mean values of travel times and travel distances between the settlements of the area. While travel time decreased from 3 hours and 43 minutes in 1910 to 2 hours and 56 minutes in 2014, travel distances seemed to have increased (from 117 to 130 kilometres). Therefore the changes of mean values show a combination of the increased speed resulting from technological development and that of growing distances due to the retrogression of transport networks.

As for the mean travel time from the five examined settlements it was only in one case, that of Szeged, that the value of this indicator changed in the opposite way (worsened). Similarly it was also the case for only one settlement, Orșova, that the mean distance became a few kilometres shorter. This improvement is due to the construction of the above mentioned rail line between Caransebeș and Călnic.

In the present study we present the results of the research with an emphasis on the examples of Timișoara, Szeged and Orșova. The spatial structure characterising the accessibility of Timișoara (*Figure 2*), functioning as the centre of the Banat, is also interesting in that it is identical in quality calculated as the mean value of the accessibility indicators of all examined settlements. Beyond this the example of Timișoara reflects the two most important changes in the rail network of the area as well as the remarkable decline in the accessibility of the areas of Szeged and the mouth of the Tisza.

Otherwise, in both years Timișoara’s accessibility was the best both in travel time and in distance among the settlements of the Banat. The mean value of 2 hours and 16 minutes in 1910 decreased by 28 minutes to 2014 though travel

Figure 2 Mean travel time to Timișoara; 1910, 2014 (minutes)



Source: *A magyar és közös...*, 1910;

[www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de); [www.regiotrans.ro](http://www.regiotrans.ro); [www.zeleznicesrbije.com](http://www.zeleznicesrbije.com)

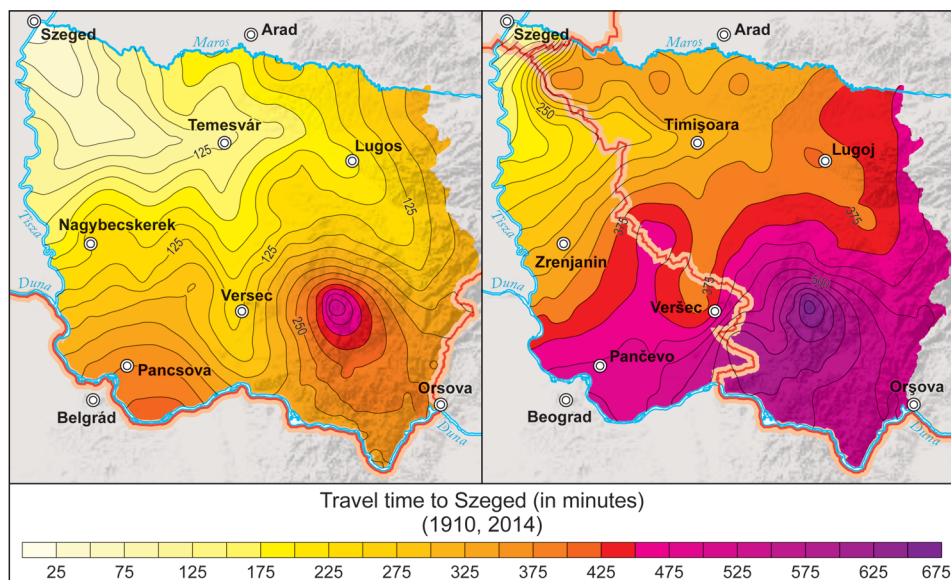
distances became longer in the meantime. This means that although traffic ceased in many cases, travel pace was accelerated on the rest of the lines.

Among the lines departing from Timișoara in 1910 those in the direction of Szeged and Orșova, as the part of the Budapest-Bucharest mainline, stood out concerning travel times. Towards north and south, in the directions of Arad and Vrșac, travel speed was also above average while technical specifications enabled only much slower traffic on secondary railway lines. In 1910 only one town had an extraordinarily high mean travel time, the mining town of Anina, lying at the end of a dead-end rail line that took a seven hour journey to reach from the centre of the Banat.

By 2014, as a result of shifts in the geopolitical situation, accessibility conditions changed primarily in the direction of the Serbian and Hungarian borders. The area of Zrenjanin, lying in the western, south-western part of the region along the lower section of the Tisza, became shadowed by the Serbia-Romania border which significantly worsened its accessibility from the central area of the Banat. Not only transit traffic was blocked by new borders but most of the secondary railway lines were also dismantled on the Serbian side. Therefore there are only two railway lines in operation connecting the two sides of the border.

In the northern half of the regions, while the mainlines running in western and southern directions lost their former importance, the traffic became

Figure 3 Travel time to Szeged; 1910, 2014 (minutes)



Source: *A magyar és közös...*, 1910;

[www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de); [www.regiotrans.ro](http://www.regiotrans.ro); [www.zeleznicesrbije.com](http://www.zeleznicesrbije.com)

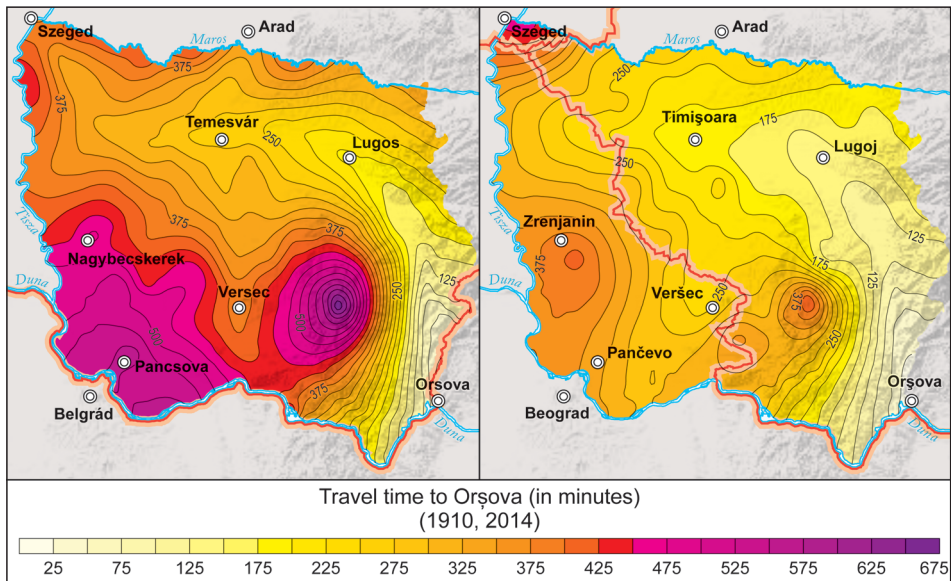
weighted on the Arad-Timişoara-Orşova axis. The average travel time to Szeged showed an extreme increase, as the accessibility of the centre of Csongrád county declined as a result of the absence of the Tisza bridge and the dismantling of rail sections in Serbia. The distance between the two cities doubled (from 113 kilometres to 219 kilometres), furthermore the shortest route means a significant roundabout running through Subotica and Senta, crossing thereby two borders (Figure 3).

Calculating on the basis of travel time only one border needs to be crossed. However this route via Békéscsaba takes four and a half hours in contrast with the direct express connection in 1910 that took only two hours. Therefore the two cities became practically inaccessible by rail for each other.

In the case of Szeged the increase in travel time was lower only towards those settlements lying in the south of the region (Orşova, Anina, Pančevo) which are situated far from the city. This is because the compensatory effect of faster transport on the negative effects of network fragmentation becomes proportionally more significant the greater the travel distances involved.

It is worth highlighting the accessibility conditions of Orşova in the context of the already mentioned construction of the Caransebeş-Câlnic rail line. The important role of this section is that it enabled better access to South-western Romania from the central territories of the country as well (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Travel time to Orșova; 1910, 2014 (minutes)



Source: *A magyar és közös...*, 1910;  
[www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de); [www.regiotrans.ro](http://www.regiotrans.ro); [www.zeleznicesrbije.com](http://www.zeleznicesrbije.com)

The map showing the accessibility of the then peripheral border town in 1910 illustrates only the axis toward Timișoara as, due to the orographic conditions, only one feeder line was connected within the mainline up to Lugoj. Anina, situated close but accessible only via Lugoj, was about 11 hours from Orșova by train. Thanks to subsequent developments this travel time decreased by four hours.

### Ideas on rail development in the Banat

The reversal of the post 1910 deterioration in accessibility conditions is among the main objectives of the Danube–Criș–Mureș–Tisa Euroregion. In the course of the integration period favouring regional cooperations and the support of borderland areas it was an particularly relevant question to what extent could such an initiative tackle historical obstacles and with what efficiency could it connect the fragmented parts.

Although it is obvious that the development of traffic infrastructure is a process needing a longer period, it is nevertheless curious that the permeability of borders from the Hungarian perspective was improved only by the opening of the Kiszombor border (road) crossing. There are no public transport opportunities in either the direction of Romania or in that of Serbia within the Euroregion as the Szeged–Timișoara bus link started in June 2003 has since been stopped. This means that the two twin cities are only accessible via Arad and with a connection.

Passengers trying to cross the border without a private car can, apart from hitchhiking, use the service of “voluntary” taxi drivers from Cenad who offer the route from the end of village to the border crossing (a couple of kilometres) for 10 euros. In contrast with the few already implemented ideas on the development of the transport network there are a remarkable number of plans from the Euroregion on the development of the infrastructure. Among these one can find the reconstruction of formerly existing connections and the laying out of new routes as well.

Implementation plans are already made for the reconstruction of the road bridge between Apátfalva and Cenad, blown up in 1945, while the rebuilding of the rail bridge between Magyarcsanád and Cenadu Vechi has appeared only as a long-term vision ([www.triplexregio.net](http://www.triplexregio.net)).

Related to these former plans the reconstruction of the Szeged-Timişoara rail line, to which four different possible track versions were proposed (TRÁSER 2003), would be of greater importance. The operative programs of the development plan of the Euroregion target the rebuilding of the original line, opened in 1857, which connected the Hungarian and the Romanian capitals. The greatest difficulty in the implementation of this route is found in reconstructing the rail bridge of Szeged, destroyed in World War II. However, the rebuilding of the defunct and partly dismantled section between Szőreg and Kikinda also requires great expenditure.

Although the line could play an important role in the daily life of the region and it is considered as one of the instruments that may contribute to the emergence of the peripheral area, the notion, formulated in the development plan, suggesting that the line would connect Europe and Asia is obviously exaggerating. The reconstruction of the line would indeed establish a new connection toward Belgrade. From the planned 114-km-long track 17 kilometres would be built in Hungary, 54 in Serbia and 43 in Romania. Furthermore, apart from the rail bridge in Szeged, the construction of 13 smaller bridges and new level crossings on the Serbian and Romanian sides of the border are needed. The construction works, for which the total budget is estimated to reach 217 million euros, are supposed to create 1000 new workplaces and to contribute to a shift in modal split in favour of rail transport against road traffic (A strategy for the..., 2005). In terms of the development of the road network the construction of a new trunk road connecting Szeged and Belgrade is among the most important objectives. According to the plans the road, starting from the M43 motorway, should cross the border at the tripoint with a roundabout, thus creating a new connection toward Timişoara at the same time (RIGÓ 2005).

The improvement of the connections between Romania and Serbia is also at issue. The opening of a road crossing between Markovac and Grădinari is planned and the rehabilitation of the Oraviţa – Jasenovó – Bela Crkva – Baziaş rail line has also proposed by the Serbian partner ([www.triplexregio.net](http://www.triplexregio.net)).

## Conclusion

From the analysis of the three pairs of maps one can see that the re-establishment of transport connections within the region, formerly an organic unity, is only in an initial phase despite existing ambitious plans and that accessibility conditions do not reach the level of 1910.

The database of the above analysis – in which we only examined time distances (not geographical distances) for three settlements – points beyond the analysis itself. Further to mapping the changes described the database, thanks to the characteristics of GIS databases, can be extended both in space and in time, through the involvement of other close (and even distant) points as well as schedules from other years, so as to refine dynamics. Additional opportunities present themselves when using the model weighted with other factors influencing accessibility (transfer time, frequency).

Besides this, with the help of this model there is an opportunity for planning to examine the effects of the dismantling of feeder lines and to test for the most optimal routes for new tracks. Although our present study focusses only on the rail network, with some minor changes, the approach would also be applicable to road transport. It thereby potentially enables a study of the complex transport geography of the region to be undertaken which, taking into account the above planning opportunities of the model, might open endless opportunities for similar investigations.

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### **Online resources**

[www.avv.de/web/download/tickets/euregoticket.pdf](http://www.avv.de/web/download/tickets/euregoticket.pdf) (webpage of the Aachen Transport Association)

[www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de) (webpage of German Railways)

[www.btc-egtc.eu](http://www.btc-egtc.eu) (webpage of Banat–Triplex Confinium EGTC)

[www.dkmt.hu](http://www.dkmt.hu) (webpage of Danube–Criş–Mureş–Tisa Euroregion)

[www.regiotrans.ro](http://www.regiotrans.ro) (webpage of Regiotrans rail company)

[www.triplexregio.net](http://www.triplexregio.net) (newsportal of Danube–Criş–Mureş–Tisa Euroregion)

[www.zeleznicesrbije.com](http://www.zeleznicesrbije.com) (webpage of Serbian Railways)



# Border Proximity as a Factor in Strategic Urban Planning - on the Example of Sub-region Centres Within the Slovak-Hungarian Border Area

ZSUZSA FÖLDI

## Introduction

Our study aims to assess types of focus that derive from a border's proximity and that act as factors determining the main directions and dynamics of urban development and urban planning strategies in the centres of Hungarian sub-regions in the Slovak-Hungarian border region. The fact of being located on, or close to the border alone is not sufficient to be an aspect worth studying, many other related features play a significant role in perceiving the state border as an environmental element (or as an internal resource) of strategic importance for the development and future of a border settlement. The most important factors related to the border are its legal status and its physical permeability (border-crossings, bridges in case of rivers, road connections). Additional factors such as the state of economic development of the area, other "soft" factors like traditions of cross-border cooperation and a formalized framework (formerly Euro-regions, presently EGTCs) also play a significant role. Historical administrative roles which existed prior to the Trianon peace treaty may still have impacts on the present, but these can easily fade away by a destroyed and not restored bridge over a border river (e.g. in the case of Szécsény). All these factors should be evaluated together attentively during urban development processes, so that they are incorporated into future visions, as well as medium and long-term strategies and all different stages of strategy planning (vision, goals, interventions). We chose to study Hungarian sub-regional centres of the Slovak-Hungarian border area because the legal status of the border practically ensures full permeability, while other, previously mentioned factors occur in very various ways, providing different opportunities for cities to shape their future.

Medium-term strategic documents about Hungarian towns have been developed constantly since 2007 (initially named as Integrated Urban Development Strategy (IUDS) and as integrated local development strategy ((ITS) after 2009) and in some cases have already been reviewed. In a Hungarian context, the obligation of strategic planning along with the preparation of strategic

documents was legally recorded in the Building Act (Étv.) and in its amendment in 2009. Further content clarification took place within the framework to the 314/2012. (XI.8.) Government Regulation. The examination of external and internal environments (status analysis) was a basic starting point in the strategic planning as an inevitable step in planning practices.

In our study, we seek to find out about the way integrated strategic urban development plans evaluate border proximity as a positively or negatively influencing factor on urban development within the Slovak-Hungarian border region, and about the extent to which visions and goals defined in the documents are built upon positively, in each given town. What are the ideas set out in comprehensive development activities and in specific projects that are designed to have a positive effect on the situation of the affected towns, or eliminate the negative consequences?

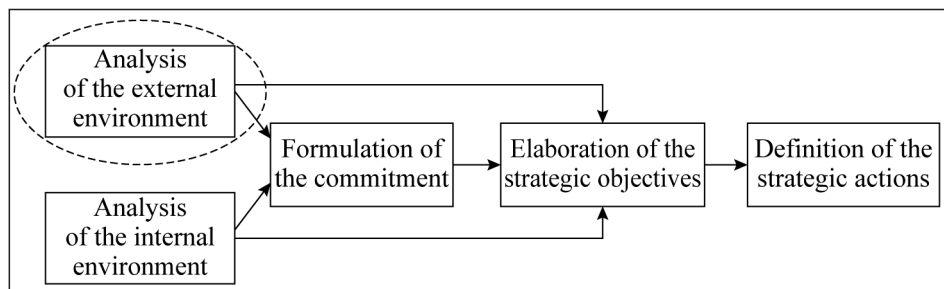
It is important to note, that based on previous IUDS research (FÖLDI et.al. 2009, BALÁS ET.AL. 2013), strategic plans were often carried out in a short time and were considered to be compulsory and time-bound to proposal-deadlines in the initial period (2008). Therefore, the actions of real strategic approaches in town management are not necessarily reflected in the documents. However, examining a greater number of documents, certain trends and other factors can be highlighted which relate to the effect of borders on urban development planning.

The study begins with the clarification of basic concepts, including the external and internal factors of strategic planning, followed by placing the state border and the attributes of border proximity - as a determinant of the relative position of settlements - within the definition group of planning-methodology. We take a short tour around the objective factor group that rates border situation followed by a synthesis based on the uniform analysis of the individual plans of each town.

### **Internal and external factors of strategic planning – location compared to state border, as an external factor**

Strategic management that has evolved from the business and enterprise sector (BALATON, 2010) is operated as a flexible system, and is built upon strategic planning and related feedback. During the rational decision-making process of strategy creation (*Figure 1*) prior to defining the future vision (for enterprises: Quest) the uniformly weighted analysis of external and internal environment is a requirement.

During the evolution of the strategic approach to corporate governance the simplified scheme of planning-implementation was quickly surpassed and evolved into a flexible management system responsive to external and internal changes, where planning is only a sub-element - more of an iterative process rather than the manufacture of formalized products (documents).

*Figure 1 The rational decision making process of strategy building*

Sources: Balaton, 1997 In: Mészáros 2005

Seeing the benefits and effectiveness of a strategic approach to planning within company and organisation leadership, urban planning and management and facing new global challenges in the Anglo-Saxon countries, tools applicable to urban areas were gradually adapted by constructing them from the bottom-up in the early 1990s. In addition to recognizing the benefits of the new design approach, strategic management has also gradually become popular during the 1990s. The strategic design method emphasises the impact of external factors (e.g., global economy, environmental problems) in urban planning, rejects the project approach and follows a logic based on dialogue and broad consensus (population, operators, NGOs, urban areas) where an integrated approach and accuracy based on action areas dominates during planning implementation (ALBRECHTS 2004; 2006).

Strategic thinking and planning - although there are progressive domestic examples from the EU pre-accession period - have been brought to the attention of municipalities as an instrument of development policy (top-down) rather than a grassroots demand for the planning initiative, which is scarcely present in a Hungarian context. The introduction of the plan type was based on government expectations, in compliance with the principles of integrated planning, the basis of the Leipzig Charter, 2007 (The preparation of documents from 2007 was an indispensable condition for the accessibility of the tender funds aimed at urban regeneration and functional expansion available through the construction of ROP, which was founded by the New Hungary Development Plan (2007–2013), the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and the ESF (European Social Fund)). According to the Étv. (BEA) modification of 2009 the preparation of a strategic plan is no longer optional (depending on intended application), but compulsory for all urban settlements as an additional document to the urban development concept.

What is strategic urban planning? According to the normative definition: “It is a socio-spatial planning process managed by the public sector, through which

a system of visions, interventions and enforcement tools are created. This system integrates and transforms space along with what this space may transform into.” (ALBRECHTS 2004)

The most important practical characteristic of strategic urban planning and related mentality is that it concentrates on decision-making, actions, results and execution. In order to underpin process-orientation with sustainability it eventually includes efficiency testing (monitoring), feedback and review (FÖLDI, 2011).

Principles and guidelines in the area of urban design within the field of strategic planning have introduced several new extensively examined aspects to the design methodology and practice, such as community (involvement) planning, action area planning, anti-segregation planning or examination of social and financial sustainability. Practical guidelines can be found in the Urban Development Manual (2007, 2009). Although these do not entirely follow the requisites of international scholarly literature on strategic planning, both versions focus on the acquisition of resources as their main goal. The 314/2012. (XI. 8.) Government Regulation has clearly distanced itself from the application requisites while classic hallmarks of strategic planning appear with an increased role, e.g. regarding external factors, a more significant emphasis is placed upon the examination of the agglomeration in an integrated unity with its city and the sectorial environment. However, the actual design scope of ITS is restricted to the area of the settlement, but urges a joint design with the agglomeration.

The range of development is expanded to its immediate vicinity and even global trends, as well as certain economic sectors; social policy requirements may also broaden the definition of the external environment. According to the Urban Development Manual (2007, 2009) the analysis of the external environment in the IUDS includes the description of regional role and an analysis of several development documents of various levels that might have an influence on the town. Additionally, the classical external factors influencing the strategy works are not discussed by the document in a systematic way but by a random design based on the demands and preferences of designers and clients. Despite their importance, most of the higher dimensions of the external environment barely appear in national strategic plans, as they are not compulsory chapters (e.g. local effects of global financial market changes or the rearrangement of focal points in the global investment economy, which undoubtedly affect local opportunities and prospects).

Therefore, based on the scheme of corporate strategic planning (*Figure 1*) the most important foundation of the urban development strategy is the examination of the external and internal environment. By a classical definition, this can be called evaluation. Regarding future design in terms of external environment, we examine the ways processes at various territorial levels, structures and their changes are or



may be influencing local events, developmental and operational opportunities. During the examination of the internal environment (which represents the town itself or the town and its agglomeration after 2012) a situation assessment is being made of the town and its districts, substantiated by highlighted qualities, statistical data and a complex organizational and operational analysis of the given subject area of development. Findings of the two-level study present ways a town - which is an elementary part of the settlement network, operates in an open system, and can almost only be defined together with its immediate area - can have the ability to adapt to external changes, assess internal capabilities accordingly and build a future based on all of this. The next part of the document after the complex situation assessment is the SWOT analysis - also taken from the business world - that firmly separates the internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) factor groups. Although these analyses have also been made on a district level, their subject was deemed inapplicable at regional level - due to the fact that the external environment is not interpreted the same way as for an entire town. A situation may arise where one of the external factors or processes is evaluated on both levels, or even cases where nearby settlements evaluate the same external factors in opposing ways regarding their future. Some factors of the external environment may even take part in forming the vision. Based on the local evaluation of changes in global economic trends and regional position, the vision of the town may include goals of survival, level control, or dynamic growth, depending on the transformations of the external factors. It is most common for a planning document to include a development priority such as the development of urban services or for a major project to have strong dependence on an external circumstance (other attractions, transit traffic).

The state border is given importance in planning as a factor influencing urban development of those towns that are located close enough to be affected by it in this context. This includes not only the immediate border towns, but also those with a current catchment area that extends to the border, or a road leading through them which leads to a border crossing. Since the territorial scope of practical planning within Hungarian design practice - in the case of the examined IUDSs - is mostly limited to the administrative boundary or in some cases to town limits, the state border is usually considered as an external environmental factor. However, as we will see, this is not obvious because many consider the relative position as an internal resource and consider it as a part of the internal environment (border proximity as an internal feature). This mostly has nothing to do with the physical distance of the border and the town. State border characteristics strongly influence even local development strategies (interoperability, availability of crossings, international traffic corridors etc.) and the reason for their changes can be found at higher levels (EU, level of intergovernmental agreements). It calls for a higher level of analysis of the external environment to understand reasons behind geopolitical,

security-related considerations and decisions that result in changes in the quality of borders. There are development programs known from the EU pre-accession period (though not on an urban level, but much like Euroregion programs such as the Euroregion Development Programme, 2001 (Terra Studio Ltd.)), that were significantly dependent on the different accession dates of Hungary and Slovakia, imagining serious logistical improvements based on the traffic load stationing in the Salgótarján area. Because the two neighbouring countries ultimately became EU members at the same time, these plans had to be re-evaluated due to changes in external factors.

In the preparation of the IUDSs the specific situation (characteristics) of state borders was considered by planners, but in varying depths, and potential modifications to this situation were generally overlooked in the medium term, which means they have ignored the possibility of change. This, in the ideal situation, is clearly not required in the case of the Austro-Hungarian and the Slovak-Hungarian border areas, since they are within the Schengen zone. Changes with such magnitude regarding borders are possible e.g. the inclusion of Romania into the Schengen zone, which may justify the reassessment of the strategic goals and development of border towns in the future. However, this more than likely will not be realised in 2014 because of the resistance of some EU member states. Besides the legal status that affects the permeability of state borders, the examination of the region's economic and social situation is important in addition to the cooperation's possibilities that can be termed 'soft characteristics'. This may significantly affect local opinions on the way borders might affect urban development.

### **The role of the state border in the strategic plans of Hungarian sub-region centres along the Slovak-Hungarian border**

The Slovak-Hungarian border region belongs to the Schengen zone, thus crossing the border is completely unhindered. The entire length of the border section is 679 km (HARDI 2008). There are 16 sub-regions located along the Slovak-Hungarian border section; therefore we overviewed the IUDSs of 15 towns. The sources of the documents were [www.terport.hu](http://www.terport.hu) and the websites of towns concerned. The IUDS of the town of Encs is not included in the documents processed, as it was not available in either of the sources. Findings in respect of the towns' strategic documents were synthesized according to the following document analysis criteria:

- Findings in relation to border proximity, assessment of the border and border margins from the town's viewpoint (e.g. border crossings)
- References to historical role, previous cross-border catchment areas
- Integration of border proximity into the vision and the target system
- Interventions and projects explained by border proximity in the document

Figure 2. The Hungarian–Slovakian Borderregion



Source: [vam.gov.hu](http://vam.gov.hu)

In the following, we provide an overview of the effect that borders – as factors coherent with external environmental elements – had on the strategic plans of the towns, the most important being the possibility of crossing and a well-established relationship supported by appropriate infrastructure.

As the test has not calculated in the three ferrying options and the two planned bridges there are currently 29 crossing options ([vam.gov.hu](http://vam.gov.hu)) from which five road crossings have opened up since 2007 while nine others opened between 2011 and 2013. This means the latter crossings did not yet exist during the time IUDSs were being written (2008–2010) (Figure 2). Prior to 2011, there were only three sub-regions, Tatai, Szécsényi and Encsi without a relevant crossing point, the subsequently created road links have minor cross-border traffic. The Danube and the Ipel are major physical barriers which presuppose the existence of bridges at border crossings in the sub-regions from Mosonmagyaróvári to Szécsényi (although there are three ferry crossings on the Danube). There are two additional border crossing bridges in preparation: near Helemba and Ipolypásztó – the first bridge has a significant role in the strategy of Szob.

The town of Szob, which is also equipped with a rail station is in a unique position since the town itself has no border crossing (that would be feasible with a bridge on Ipel), but the IUDS indicates that the bridge at Helemba is an external factor with a positive future impact that will determine the development (during the strategy development in 2008 only preparations were made, then an intergovernmental agreement decided on the construction of the bridge in 2012). The town's IUDS bases the role of being the centre of the Lower Valley of Ipel on this opinion. A similar bridge construction plan (with capacity-building purposes) that extends beyond local or even national competence is known from the strategy of Komárom. However, the IUDS of Szécsény indicates that there is no intention to rebuild a bridge blown up in the war in the foreseeable

future, obviously the creation of a direct road link between the two sides of the border was not anticipated either when preparing the IUDS (2008). Since the completion of the IUDS of Nógrádszakál, the construction of Madách bridge over the Ipel has been completed (2011). The strategic plan of Szécsény has not been renewed; therefore we do not know to what extent a bridge would be of strategic importance.

It can be observed that the border towns that gave more importance to the state border regarding future planning were those with a border crossing that also plays a role in the international transport network plans (such as the Pan-European transport corridors). According to the NRDC (OKT; VATI, 2005) the eastern section of the border - with the exception of from Sátoraljaújhely - is completely disregarded from the European network, which weakens the role of the crossing points within strategy-building as its impact and importance is below European scale. On the western border section, however, the international network connection is in contact with every crossing point (Rajka (Mosonmagyaróvár) Vámosszabadi (Győr), Komárom, Esztergom) so they are evaluated accordingly within strategies. Traffic-related development analysis about the impact of the border (and its crossings) also receives a high priority within the situation assessment and the strategic chapters of the IUDSs of border towns in the eastern section.

Beyond infrastructure-related external factors certain settlements also put emphasis on the traditional, historical role of their town during strategy building, but as we shall see below, this role may be strongly modified by other factors. Mosonmagyaróvár, Győr, Komárom, Esztergom, Balassagyarmat and Sátoraljaújhely were all county seats in 1900. Some played the role of district centres: e.g. Salgótarján, Szécsény and Szob. The Trianon peace treaty caused changes in the administrative status, a significant retraction of catchment areas and the birth of areas without any centres on both the Hungarian and Slovakian sides of the border (Kovács 1990 BELUSZKY 1999, BARANYI 2004; HARDI 2008). This was a historical setback in the case of multiple towns (e.g. Balassagyarmat, Szécsény), but later upgraded other settlements in their former catchment area, that were trapped on the other side of the border without urban centres (e.g. Encs, Cigánd, Gönc) or were given a role in the socialist industrialisation (e.g. Ózd). Despite their 'artificial' upgrading, new sub-centres regard themselves as being isolated due to their border position, which could not even be changed significantly by the free passage benefits of the Schengen zone, at least according to the testimony of the IUDSs (Ózd, Encs, Gönc, Cigánd). The joint Hungarian and Slovak accession to the EU (2004) followed by unlimited border permeability (the extension of the Schengen Convention in 2007) has reawakened the mutually nostalgic and realistic vision of expanding sub-regional centre roles of several border towns. As we shall see, this ambition presents itself as an external factor in setting the vision and the target system of the IUDSs, but in a different fashion on the western and eastern borders.

Another external soft factor besides urban strategy-building and cross-border bilateral cooperation is the specific formalised framework they are included in. The formalised background of cross-border cooperation is productive on both sections (east-west), so the EGTCs (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) formerly known as Euro-regions enabled the foundation to create a number of organisations to stimulate cross-border cooperation and to mobilize targeted development resources. Opportunities and the area of free movement differ within Euro-regions and EGTCs, clearly in favour of the latter. The EGTC delegates much wider powers to municipalities operating on a cross-border basis: they can create and maintain joint institutions and may also found economic enterprises. Thus they receive similar powers as counties in Hungary (IUDS, Esztergom, 2010). There were eight Euro-regions operating on the Slovak-Hungarian border, while nine EGTCs were formed in the period up to 2013 (Raba-Danube-Vah EGTC (2011), Arrabona EGTC (2011), Pons Danubii EGTC (registered in Slovakia), Ister Granum EGTC (2008) Novohrad-Nógrád EGTC, Karst Bodva EGTC, Sajó-Rima EGTC (2013), Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC (2012), Bodrogközi EGTC (2012), Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC (2010)). Since 2007, founding an EGTC in Hungary is possible in the framework of the law of XCIX. 2007 on the European groupings of territorial cooperation, but the Slovak-Hungarian border collaborations have mostly been created since 2010, which means that EGTCs could not be published in IUDSs written between 2008 and 2010 yet - except for the Ister-Granum EGTC (it was formed from a Euro-region with the same name in 2008). This, along with local EGTC development aspects, was also mentioned in the IUDS of Esztergom and acts as a foundation for the town's agglomeration and development plan. The IUDS of the town of Szob forms ambitions to become a cross-border centre to the Ipel Lower Valley area in reference to the goals of both the Ister-Granum and Ipel Euro-regions (Szob IUDS). From the rest of the IUDSs, Balassagyarmat IUDS (Ipel ER) and, in collaboration with several partners, Sátoraljaújhely IUDS discusses in detail the versatile options of potential euro-region cooperation. The IUDS of Salgótarján calls the effects of formal cooperation (Euroregio Neogradiensis) moderate, and sees its reason in the mutually disadvantaged state of the neighbouring region of Slovakia (IUDS Salgótarján). Komárom mentions two euro-regional memberships as well, but does not consider the role and objectives to be well enough established (Komárom IUDS). The IUDSs of Mosonmagyaróvár, Győr, Tata, Szécsény, Ózd, Kazincbarcika, Edelény, Gönc and Cigánd do not formally give relevance to this factor regarding their strategic plan; nevertheless they also build strategies for cross-border relations systems (e.g. Mosonmagyaróvár).

East-West development dichotomy experienced in both of the neighbouring countries strongly affects operative cooperation willingness and activity that has significant implications for local development needs and opportunities (ME-

ZEI 2004 ). This is partially due to the tangible differences between how border proximity is being perceived regarding the development of different towns within the development documents of eastern and western border regions. Both sides of the eastern border section are seriously lagging behind particularly in terms of economy which has an impact on cooperation and on the nature of (visible) development requirements incurred by each town. As already mentioned, the strategic plan of Salgótarján identifies the similarly low development level of the Slovakian side as the reason for failure in formalised cooperation. A total of two IUDSs were found in the eastern part of the Slovak- Hungarian border section (Salgótarján and Szécsény IUDS), which provide an explanation for the reason for giving a restricted role to borders in the towns' future plans in terms of economic cooperation. It is more typical not to mention non-existent features (in their case, an economic cooperation) in situation assessments and to refrain from indicating possible obstacles besides the possibilities in development documents. Explanatory texts in the two IUDSs are almost identical since their supplements were made by the same consulting firm, but its validity can be uniformly interpreted along the entire border section:

“The development effects deriving from border location have so far remained subdued despite the initiatives implemented in this area, as the connecting Central Slovakian area is also less-favoured within Slovakia [...]. Some of the economic development regulators and incentives in effect in Slovakia often have adverse impacts on the bordering Hungarian areas in particular, including Szécsény and surroundings (business relocation, significant labour inflow in addition to high unemployment rate, a more favourable support of applying Slovak workers in Hungarian businesses). All of these largely determine the socio- economic development opportunities in the region.” (Szécsény IUDS).

Based on the development strategies of border towns in the eastern section and the above mentioned citation, the analysis of the effects of economic, educational and other cooperation is much less typical than in the documents of border towns in the western border section. The development strategy of Mosonmagyaróvár deals with incomparably different external conditions:

“The situation in Mosonmagyaróvár is determined by a very dynamic border-related regional economic environment within which keeping and improving competitiveness appears to be a significant challenge. Since the EU accession and the termination of state borders Mosonmagyaróvár must stand its ground in an international competition within the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr triangle. Though the town's previous 'gate role' resulting from the meeting point between three countries (Slovakia, Hungary, Austria) is losing its importance exponentially, its place is taken over by a regional industrial-commercial and service-recreational role under the growing appreciation for regionalism. Economic development processes and municipal relations are now formed by much more organic regional organizations based on infrastructural features” (Mosonmagyaróvár IUDS).

In the IUDS of border towns, an important aspect of analysis within economy is the assessment of commercial and other services, based on which planners (especially in the eastern section) were able to notice the impact of border crossings on urban development (i.e. development of shopping tourism attractiveness). Regarding permeability participants of the planning process recognised further opportunities concerning cross-border ecological zones in the fields of nature and environment protection and more importantly in tourism development - a topic which is addressed with a similar emphasis in the case of towns close to the border (Szob, Salgótarján). In the IUDS of towns along the western section of the border, topics on permeability in terms of urban development are based on deeper, more versatile relationships, and cover development in fields such as education and healthcare (Mosonmagyaróvár, Esztergom).

Various factors related to the border should not merely be examined by themselves, but also depending on how they are evaluated in various stages of strategy construction and on what level they are integrated in future planning (vision, goals and specific interventions).

Borders are not necessarily interpreted as part of the external environment in analysis documents; it is rather its presence that is expressed through the relative position of the town to the border (border or close to border position). Materials mostly consider this situation (position) as a fact so it is indeed difficult to judge whether border proximity (position) is interpreted as an internal attribute or it is a part of the external environment which determines internal conditions and development demands. This has relevance in the SWOT analysis - but is also an important aspect in determining the competence of development demands. It is important to note that not all documents include a town level SWOT analysis (e.g. Komárom, Mosonmagyaróvár, Esztergom, Szob, Szécsény, Salgótarján, Sátoraljaújhely) - this is most likely because it is expected solely on a district level in thematic schemes. Tata and Kazincbarcika assess the proximity of the border as a possibility (external feature), due to their significant physical distance from the border. In the fine-tuned IUDS of Győr neither the border nor the border river are considered as relevant: the economy-based SWOT indicates the cooperation with Vienna and Bratislava as an opportunity. Similarly, the proximity of the border or the border crossing are not evaluated in the subject area of regional endowments since in the case of Győr, being part of the Golden Triangle, this factor does not even come up in this context.

Balassagyarmat assesses the strong transport hub and gateway function as a strength (i.e. internal factor) while in the case of Edelény the proximity of the border is also evaluated as a strength (in the latter case, it is difficult to understand because while Balassagyarmat is practically on the border, Edelény is approx. 40 km away). For Ózd the proximity of the border is evaluated only in relation to infrastructure as both a strength (internal) and an opportunity (external), but in

all cases as positive. Gönc is 3 km from the border crossing, its overall location is assessed as a weakness (internal factor):

“The town of Gönc lays in the Abaúj part of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, on the east side of Hernád river valley, at the foothills of the Tokaj-Prešov (Tokaj-Eperjes) mountain range, near the Slovak border. The settlement is remote from the capital city, the county seat and other more developed regions, and is logistically misfortunately secluded” (Gönc IUDS)

This shows how diverse the perception of a permeable border section with the same neighbouring country can be from an urban planning perspective, and how many other factors can influence the approach to the visions about the border and the impact on local development opportunities.

In theory, the vision and objective settings contained in the documents shows the extent to which a town bases its future on border proximity. For the towns of Tata, Szécsény, Edelény and Gönc there is no reference of any form to the role of the border in the towns' vision and objective settings. The IUDSs of Tata and Gönc explicitly state that all developments must rely on the internal resources of the sub-region. In the case of Tata this is more comprehensible due to its bigger distance and the lack of border crossing, while in the case of Gönc this strategic concept is more difficult to accept since the town is only 3 km away from the border, and serves as an international animal health care station.

The vision clearly builds upon its border proximity in the case of Szob: successful integration role in the Lower Valley of Ipel (both Hungarian and Slovak sides). Salgótarján envisions itself as the centre of industrial employment and labour markets for the eastern part of Euregio Euroregio Neogradensis. Sátoraljaújhely does not consider becoming the centre of a cross-border region in the future, but regardless it aims to expand relations with some settlements across the border besides its own sub-region. On the western border, the ambition of obtaining a central role in a cross-border area (with managing undertones) is only marginally emphasized. In this border region, the levels of both economic development and structuring are high, cross-border roles are based on partnerships. Economic poles such as Győr indubitably have a significant cross-border attraction – however the same catchment area is targeted by Bratislava as well. Mosonmagyaróvár, located near the tri-border point, aims to keep and strengthen international competitiveness besides the recovery of the town's old catchment area. For towns along this border region, such as Esztergom, position in the macro-regional networks serves as a benchmark. Towns also aim to locate themselves within the pan-European structure (transport, economy). This kind of thinking is scarce in the IUDS of towns along the eastern section of the border.

The nature of the specified interventions and projects reflect on the complexity of features of the border section as well as the perceptions regarding proximity to the borders. There are three development goals with the same weight



along both the eastern and western border sections. One of them is the demand of lifting traffic load generated by border-crossings (construction of bypass roads, road widening, increasing traffic safety). These development demands arising from increased border traffic are also present in towns without border crossings or even towns further away from the border such as Ózd, Kazincbarcika or Edelény. Traffic problems on feeder roads of border crossings can also be felt here resulting in major urban development issues. The second, similarly influential target generated by the border is the development of urban services, both quantitatively and qualitatively. These measurements fundamentally aim to service transitional traffic, but increasing the direct commercial and service attractiveness of the destination is also gaining emphasis in the case of towns such as Balassagyarmat, where the IUDS is designed to create opportunities to exploit larger chain stores and to attract customers from the other side of the border. The townscape and functional development of the town centre is linked to the goal of strengthening central functions and thereby its attractiveness – the studied towns intend to fulfil their duties with a townscape and content worthy of their title of at least sub-regional centres, which is only fortified further by their ambitions of extending their catchment areas beyond borders.

Further development ideas in development strategies on the western section of the border (e.g. the development of higher education institutions, infrastructure and development of health services) are not only based on border location, the documents also show that during the planning of the scale and quality of improvements, needs of the adjacent areas in Slovakia were calculated in as well.

## Summary

In our study, we examined the extent to which sub-regional centres on the Slovak- Hungarian border considered various factors related to their border proximity during the preparation of their urban development strategies. In our view the border is mentioned as an external environmental element (external factor) in the strategic planning process, but we accept that in some cases it can also be interpreted as an internal factor. During our survey, we found that free passage of the Schengen zone border is not uniformly perceived as a positive asset and integrated in the strategy when preparing the urban development document. Evaluation and integration of the role of the border in the strategy depends on further objective facts (factors) which can be examined on the basis of the document. However, regarding the rate the topic is processed, the attitude and thoroughness of local leaders with respect to planning also plays a role.

Differences between development strategies, concerning the rate at which the topic is processed primarily occur in correlation with an east-west slope of development on both sides of the border, traditions of cooperation and the nature of bilateral relations. Perceptions on the development impact of the state border

also vary according to its physical permeability, its distance from the town and the town's traditional roles. Individual factors are typically added up and thus significant differences are mapped out in the nature of strategy building and in its formalised presentation. The border on the western part - in spite of the Danube as a border river - was scarcely interpreted as an obstacle to overcome in the integration process. Towns envision themselves as part of a macro-regional network with an integrated transportation, economic and human service role. In the case of the documents of historic centres on the eastern border section, the recovery of catchment areas and the fortification of their central features (primarily service, commercial roles) were prevalent which is reflected in the vision and the formulation of development goals as well. Sub-regional centres along the eastern border section - from Salgótarján to Sátoraljaújhely - are mostly non-traditional centres falling further away from the border, and the possible energizing effect of the border is much less detectable in their strategies - even compared to towns of the eastern border section.

In a historical perspective the state border is not a factor that is reasonably easily stimulated; however a number of related features arise (change in legal status, new border crossings, road link building, intensification of cross-border cooperation and exploitation of EGTC opportunities) that may change the way of development of border settlements in the future. These factors are external factors of urban development, which, in contrast to the current design practice are worth deeper consideration to allow towns to receive the greatest possible benefits from their proximity to the border. It is advised to pay heed to the process of change in border-related dynamic factors and to initiative processes besides changes in the preparation of strategic documents that envision the future of towns near non-EU neighbours and border sections still outside of the Schengen zone.

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# Some Characteristics of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County

ÁRON NAGY

## Introduction

The regulation on European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) was adopted by the European Union in 2006. Through this new legal formula cross-border community initiatives were given a better chance than ever before to realise their aims. In this study it is investigated how the stakeholders involved have since been able to use this opportunity in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County.

The selection of the region for the investigation is justified by the well-known underdeveloped situation of this part of the country. Out of 33 most underdeveloped small regions in Hungary, as determined even by law, 10 are found in this county. Two-thirds of all the small regions of the county (15 in total) fall into this category, including 5 of the 7 small regions along the borders. On the other hand, however, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County plays an outstanding role in terms of the share of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation within the country as a whole. Out of 15 EGTCs with Hungarian involvement

recognised by the European Union at present 8 are connected to this county. It is thus noticeable that there are (and have been so far) great efforts made in the region to grab this new opportunity for catching up with more developed regions offered by the European Union. It remains to be seen whether this effort stops at the first step, that is in the formal establishment of territorial forms of cooperation, or if they will succeed in filling these frameworks with real content in the near future. After describing border changes influencing the various territorial units of the county and a short introduction to an earlier form of cross-border cooperation (Euro-regions) this study tries to present some details on EGTCs established in the last several years. The investigation was based on publicly accessible documents.

## Frameworks and Changes of Public Administration

Before 1920, during the times of “historical Hungary” the region under investigation was comprised mainly of Borsod County (county seat: Miskolc), Abaúj-Torna County (county

seat: Kassa (today Košice)) and Zemplén County (county seat: Sátoraljaújhely). Other counties like Gömör and Kis-Hont County (county seat: Rimaszombat) and Szabolcs County (county seat: Nyíregyháza) also had a smaller part of it. After the First World War the region was cut into two parts by the Hungarian-Czechoslovakian border. The borders of Borsod County were not affected by the Peace Treaty of Trianon. This county remained, with its full territory, in Hungary. In contrast, more than half of Abaúj-Torna County, more than two-thirds of Zemplén County and almost the whole of Gömör and Kis-Hont County were given to Czechoslovakia established at that time.

As it is well known physical (topography and hydrography) and social (ethnic) considerations and territorial connections that had come about as a result of organic development, were overwritten by the economic and strategic interests of the newly formed nation-states. As a consequence of this the bulk of settlements belonging earlier to the hinterland of Kassa (today: Košice), playing an important position in the urban structure of pre-war Hungary, now found themselves at this side of the border. Most of the settlements of the presently existing small regions of Edelény, Encs, Szikszó, Abaúj-Hegyköz, Sátoraljaújhely and Sárospatak lost their earlier centres in terms of settlement geography. In line with the relevant functional differences the same happened, albeit to a lesser extent, to

the hinterland of Rimaszombat (today: Rimavská Sobota) and Rozsnyó (today: Rožňava). The strips of land along the borders of today's small regions of Ózd, Kazincbarcika and Edelény thus became areas lacking any hinterlands around them.

In the interwar years the whole region, pushed to the periphery anyway as a consequence of the new conditions along the borders, owing to the distorted spatial structure, got into a multiply disadvantageous position.

In its present form Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County came about after the consolidation of the whole county system in 1950, partially or fully merging 4 earlier counties established after 1920. This was the time when most of Borsod-Gömör County (with the exception of 7 settlements), the whole of Abaúj County and Zemplén County and, further, the strip of Szabolcs County on the right side of the River Tisza (7 settlements) were merged together into one county.

## **Frameworks of Cross-Border Cooperation**

### **After 1990 (Euro-regions)**

The political changes in East-Central Europe created new conditions in the field of cross-border relations too. In the Eastern bloc, further away from the Iron Curtain, the earlier contacts along borders, existing in practice mostly on paper, determined from above and safeguarded by interstate agreements, could finally be replaced by bottom-up, locally managed contacts. One of the frameworks for

this could have been Euro-regions existing in Western Europe already for decades. Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County even became a member of the first such form of cooperation set up on the territory of the former Warsaw Pact, the Carpathian Euro-region including different regions in Hungary, Ukraine, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. However, just getting out of the Soviet sphere of influence, our whole region was characterised, unlike the West that had followed the road of integration for decades, by processes of disintegration in the early-1990s (see, for example, the falling apart of the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia). As a kind of reaction to it, the Carpathian Euro-region tried to fulfil a rather symbolic function by demonstrating the peaceful coexistence of the member countries vis-a-vis the conflict in the Southern Slavic parts of Eastern and Southern Europe that had started to unfold just at that time. The prevalence of the former practice of cooperation inherited from the Warsaw Pact and CMEA is well demonstrated by the fact that even the founding document of this Euro-region was not signed by the heads of the public administration units involved but by the foreign ministers of the member countries (SÜLI-ZAKAR 1997).

The mental power of state borders and the unsettled matters of the joint past swept under the carpet were characterised by the fact that Slovakia, established just at this time, and, further, Romania being somewhat worried about its sovereignty, were

present for five years only as observers in the Euro-region. Even later Slovakia was only represented, unlike other member states, at a sub-county public administration level (first by some settlements then, later, by two district-level regional governments (GRÚBER 2002)).

After the beginning of the 2000s the number of Euro-regions partly or fully covering the area under examination started to increase. This was assisted to a great extent by the changing attitude of Slovakia regarding cross-border forms of cooperation. In 1998 Slovakia signed, then entered into force in 2000, the European Outline Convention of the European Council (Madrid, 1980: European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities and Authorities that is a convention supporting the decentralisation of cross-border connections). As a result, the interstate agreement regulating cooperation between the two countries entered into force in 2001 (HEGEDÜS 2006). A total of 4 Euro-regions were established around the Millennium (in chronological order: Euro-region Sajó-Rima, Euro-region Košice-Miskolc, Euro-region Karszt and, finally, Euro-region Zemplén). They have practically functioned so far, as a consequence of their territorial dimensions, in a parallel way with one another. As a result of the differing public administration and legal frameworks of the member-countries, cooperation between these countries was difficult anyway and on top of that

Table 1: EGTCs registered in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (basic information)

Name of EGTC	Year of foundation	Members from Hungary	Members from Slovakia	Population, 2011 (capital)
Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó	2009	6	1	4 976
Karst-Bodva	2009	2	2	4 724
Abaúj-Abaújban	2010	9	7	9 915
Bodrogeközi	2012	6	11	14 520
Sajó-Rima	2013	2	2	73 535
Via Carpatia*	2013			
Svinka	2013	2	1	2 338
Torysa	2013	2	1	2 685

\* Via Carpatia was brought into being by county administrations therefore it covers each settlement within Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Košice counties.

*Forrás: KSH, 2013; ŠÚSR, 2012*

these Euro-regions called to life rather recklessly and overlapping one another in terms of territories, were compelled to share finite financial resources (FEJES 2010).

### After 2006 (EGTCs)

Community policy in 2006 made a big step forward, by adopting the EGTC regulation, towards the practical establishment of territorial units above nations. In contrast to Euro-regions based on the Madrid Outline Convention (not even ratified by some member countries) the regulation of the European Union on territorial groupings became an automatic part of Community law thus being compulsory for all members. To put it more simply: the establishment of an EGTC depends indeed only on the will of the territorial unit to be included in the grouping. The territorial grouping operates as an individual legal

person and each of its members have to abide by the law of the founding state (see Soós-FEJES 2009 for more detail on the legal background of EGTCs). Since the operating possibilities and access to development sources for European territorial cooperation are less difficult than in the case of Euro-regions, the number of EGTCs in both Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County and in Hungary as a whole also started to increase, one decade after the appearance of Euro-regions. One-third of all EGTCs are registered in Hungary.

The “expectation of a miracle” hoped for and expected from the EGTCs as new institutional forms is well illustrated by the example of Monostorpályi in Hajdú-Bihar County. The records of meetings of the local government document well the series of votes on joining the most promising EGTCs of the moment.



This village, very close to the Romanian border, expressed its intention to join a total of 4 EGTCs in the course of only six months (even some of those geographically not connected to the settlement at all). They joined 2 EGTCs at the same time in December, 2012 (the Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC and the Kárpátia EGTC the latter being at the verge of officially being established under the name “Kárpátok EGTC” at the beginning of 2014). Then, a little later, in June, 2013, they even joined a third one (Torysa EGTC). Moreover, according to the records of local government meetings dated July, 2013, even joining the EGTC “IDEA” was voted for and approved. (Since no such EGTC in the whole of the EU exists it is likely that either the Torysa or the Kárpátok EGTC was mis-interpreted. One of the statuses of EGTCs under preparation is marked by the label “idea” at the Committee of Regions in the EU.)

At first impression it looks like the establishment of so many EGTCs in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County were spurred by the idea of trying to lay hands on as many resources from Brussels as possible, in the shortest time possible. It is not easy to justify the establishment and operation of 8 EGTCs in the county (*Table 1*), irrespective of any bottom-up, otherwise justifiable initiatives.

## Characteristics of EGTCs

### Mosaic-shaped Territorial Location

Out of the EGTCs established at settlement level (with the exception of

Via Carpatia EGTC) only the Bodrogköz EGTC can claim to cover, based on the location of its member settlements, a geographically coherent area, that is, it forms a really cross-border territorial unit. The 17 settlements of this EGTC (Alsóberecki, Felsőberecki, Karcsa, Karos, Tiszacsermely, Tiszakarád, Bara, Černochovo, Klin nad Bodrogom, Ladmovce, Malý Horeš, Malý Kamenec, Somotor, Streda nad Bodrogom, Veľký Kamenec, Viničky, Zemplín) are all located in one big “block” in Bodrogköz, forming an organic unity even in a geographically visible way. Only its easternmost settlement, Malý Horeš, is somewhat separated from the rest, its transport connections with other member settlements of this EGTC being secured through Strážne és Veľký Horeš, neither of which are members of the EGTC.

The other EGTC with relatively high settlement membership is the “Abaúj Abaújban” EGTC in which there are two ‘blocks’ of settlements, one Hungarian, one Slovak, not directly connected with each other. The Hungarian ones (Arka, Boldogkőújfalu, Boldogkőváralja, Fony, Hejce, Hernádcéce, Korlát, Mogyoróska, Regéc) are located on the left bank whereas those in Slovakia (Cestice, Komárovce, Nižný Lánec, Perín-Chym, Veľká Ida, completed with two not very distant other settlements, Debrad’ and Rešica) are on the right bank of the River Hernád.

In the cases of the other territorial groupings it is rather difficult to discover any geographical rationality

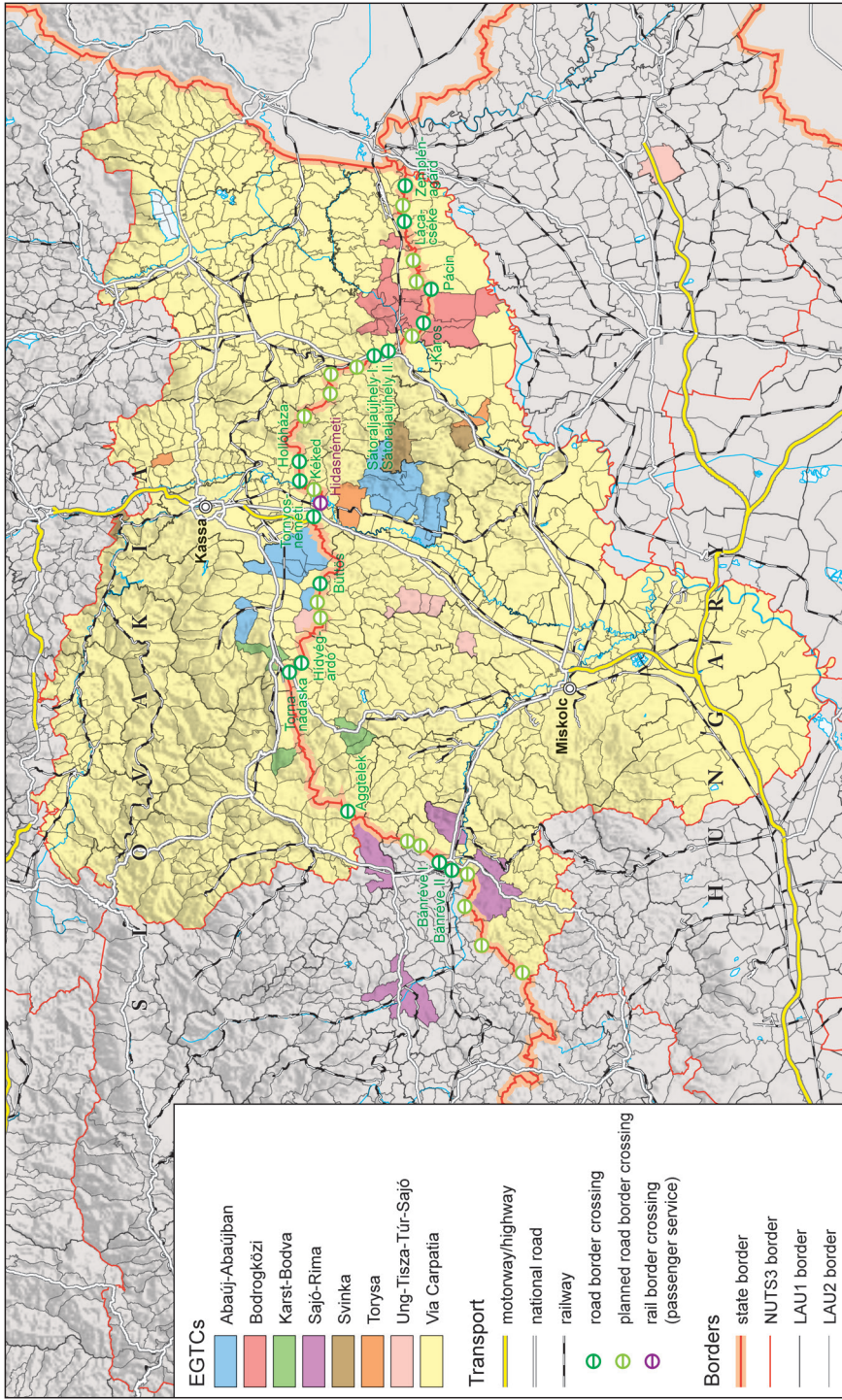
in cooperation among the present member-settlements.

Judging from its name and declared aims the Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC would aspire to represent a much bigger area than its present territory. Since 2009 only the Hungary-Slovakia «branch» of the planned Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine-Romania cooperation came about: even this is more symbolic than real since Slovakia is represented by only one settlement (Janík). One might even be given the impression that contacts with the future partner-settlement on the other side of the border have been made exclusively to establish the EGTC. Apparently real cooperation reaching beyond county level from the River Sajó to the River Túr has so far not successfully taken root. As a consequence the association between the five small settlements in the Cserehát region of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County linked to the water catchment area of the River Hernád (Baktakék, Beret, Detek, Gagyapáti, Homrogd) and Kántorjánosi 150 km away from them in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County in itself does not really appear viable for the long term. (The broader context of this is that a kind of association under the name Ung-Tisza-Túr EGTC had already been established before the present Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC. This grouping consisted, on the Hungarian side, of a territorial unit which was at a higher level of public administration than county level and, further, on the other side of the border, of representatives

of 3 other countries. According to the records of membership approvals the founding settlements of the first EGTC in Hungary and, as a matter of fact, in Europe as well, were Túristvándi and Fehérgyarmat in 2007. Owing to partly political, partly professional reasons this territorial grouping «died out», in legal terms it was not registered in court, and the present Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC was founded by the parties with adverse interests on the basis of this earlier grouping. The adversity of the parties is well demonstrated by the fact that the chairman of Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC was called, according to the records of meetings in 2010, by the mayor of Fehérgyarmat, an impostor.)

The Karst-Bodva EGTC and the Sajó-Rima EGTC are both comprised of 2 settlements each on both sides of the border. These two EGTCs show certain continuity even in their name with the earlier Euro-regions. The members on the Hungarian side of the Karst-Bodva EGTC are the two neighbouring members of the Settlement Association of Galyaság, Perkupa and Varbóc, the remaining 12 members of this settlement association are not part of this grouping. The Settlement Association Galyaság had earlier been a founding member of the Karszt Euro-region too. On the Slovak side the 2 member-settlements (Hrušov and Turňa nad Bodvou), being at a distance of 20 km from each other, are, at the same time, members of the Bódva Union, also one of the founders of a former Euro-region.

Figure 1 EGTCs in the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county



Source: CESCI, OpenStreetMap; 2012. évi XXIV. törvény melléklete a batánátkelekről

The Sajó-Rima EGTC unites, through its member-settlements, a significantly bigger population. Out of the four settlements of the Borsod-Gömör Basin three are district seats (moreover Ózd is the second and Rimavská Sobota the fourth largest city in its respective county) and even Tornaľa is ranked as the second most populated settlement of its district. Twin city connections (Ózd-Rimavská Sobota and Putnok-Tornaľa) which were rather decisive even in the Euro-region bearing the same name, are also functioning well in the territorial grouping. In terms of their territorial location the points of connection between the member-settlements involved is not easy to determine in the case of the two youngest EGTCs having only 3 members each on each side of the border, namely Svinka EGTC and Torysa EGTC. The names of these EGTCs refer to the names of tributaries flowing into the River Hernád in Slovakia. Obišovce is on the shores of Svinka (Szinye) so in this case the name could be justified although this settlement has no geographical connections whatsoever with Háromhuta or Tolcsva, being 80 and 90 km respectively from it at the shores of the Tolcsva brook flowing into the River Bodrog. (The common danger of rapidly emerging floods, more and more frequent these days, in all these settlements even at a considerable distance from each other, could perhaps be mentioned as a possible common point of connection).

In the case of the EGTC named after the River Torysa the member-settlement on the Slovak side, Čížatice, is not even to be found on the shores of the river giving its name but on those of Olšava (Olšva) several km east. The two Hungarian member-settlements here are Gönc, near the River Hernád 50 km from here, and Sárzasadány, approximately 50 km further on, at the shores of the River Bodrog.

It is then obvious that in the geographical sense only the Bodrogköz EGTC and Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC, both consisting of small settlements, and the Sajó-Rima EGTC, uniting regional centres into one unit, can be termed as organically developed EGTCs (*Figure 1*).

The viability of territorial units coming about through the EGTCs and the natural contacts between the member-settlements can be justified, beyond geographical location, by a possible common historical past too. This can most easily be judged by investigating the public administration system prior to 1920. In this respect the Karst-Bodva EGTC should be mentioned where all 4 member-settlements used to belong to the same district (Abaúj-Torna County, Torna District). In the same way, the unity described earlier underpinned by geography in the Bodrogköz and Abaúj-Abaújban EGTCs, both uniting a much higher number of settlements, is reinforced further by the fact that they had been part of the same county (namely Zemplén and

Abaúj-Torna) before 1920. As far as the other EGTCs are concerned such common heritage rooted in the past is impossible to demonstrate because of the large geographical distances involved.

### **Uneven Transport Connections**

Physical connections and the practical aspects of cooperation among the members of territorial groupings are greatly determined by the density (and, as a matter of fact, the mere existence) of border crossings and by the quality of roads and railroads leading to these crossings. There are altogether 15 border crossings at present in the county. There had been only 6 of them before both countries joined the EU. The Hungarian-Slovakian agreement signed in 2012 reckons with altogether 36 points in their respective transport network suitable for crossing the borders. It can thus be declared that movement through the borders has considerably been improved in the last decade and even the political will is there to continue this trend that is to make borders between the two countries - in terms of transport connections - quite disappear. It is, however, questionable whether these ambitious plans are based upon solid economic foundations and when the planned developments are to be carried out.

At the moment the Sajó-Rima EGTC finds itself in the most favourable situation as far as crossing the border on road is concerned. Owing to the settlement structure transport

connections between the 4 cities are available on main roads in both countries. Relying on the web-based road planner the border crossing point at Bánréve-Král' is accessible, by using secondary roads, in 15 minutes from Ózd and in 5 minutes from Putnok. On the Slovak side Tornaľa is 15 minutes while Rimavská Sobota is 30 minutes away from the border on main roads. Since 2007 there is a possibility, also at Bánréve (namely at the crossing point Bánréve-Lenartovce), to cross the border (towards the west of the present border crossing point) on a secondary road. This road brings Rimavská Sobota somewhat closer to the county but only by a few kilometres which save no time for the driver because of the road network hierarchy.

In the Karst-Bodva EGTC Perkupa and Turňa nad Bodvou are directly connected on a secondary road in Hungary and on a lower level road in Slovakia through the border crossing at Tornanádaska-Hostovce. The distance of 20 km can be covered in 25 minutes. Of the other two settlements in the EGTC Varbóc, being a 'cul-de-sac village', can find contact towards the border (and to other directions as well) through Perkupa (5 km). Hrušov finds itself in an even less favourable geographical situation in terms of transport possibilities: it is only several kilometres from the border but its nearest border crossing point to Hungary, at Tornanádaska, being 20 km away. Due to the physical conditions (southern strip of the Gömör-Torna karst forming a natural barrier) it would

be rather irrational to create a nearer border crossing point. (There is only one border crossing point for cyclists, between Szögliget and Silica, in the list of potential border crossing points featured in the Hungarian-Slovakian agreement mentioned earlier).

The various settlements in the Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC are most rapidly accessible by using the main road E71 between Miskolc-Košice through the border crossing point at Tornynosnémeti-Milhost'. The 65 km distance between the two settlements farthest away from each other within the EGTC (Boldogkőújfalu-Debrád) can be covered in slightly more than an hour. The secondary road connecting Büttös with Buzica, opened in 2007, offers an alternative mostly for settlements near the border on the Slovak side. Taking this road, however, cannot reduce the time between the settlements on the two sides of the border, owing to the geographical situation of the Hungarian fellow-settlements. This will only be possible when the motorway M3 is completed up to the state border. The construction of the high speed road on the Slovak side, between Košice and the state border, has already been finished.

The border crossing at Büttös has improved the transport geographical situation of the settlements in the Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó area. One of the Slovakian member-settlements, Janík has got closer by about a quarter of an hour to its fellow settlements in the Cserehát. In fact, it still takes about 50 minutes to reach the nearest Hungarian village (Gagyapáti) on road. The planned

border crossing point at Perecse-Janík is likely to improve the situation more, further reducing access time.

The new border crossing points east of Tornynosnémeti (Kéked-Trstené pri Hornáde, Hollóháza-Skároš) and the planned road connections (Abaújvár-Kechnec, Pusztafalu-Brezina, Vilyvitány-Byšta, Felsőregmec-Michal'any, Alsóregmec-Čerhov) may ease contacts along the borders for those villages in Zemplén that are not involved in present territorial groupings.

The Bodrogköz EGTC has also influenced, in an indirect way, cross border developments securing more favourable accessibility. The road between Karos and Streda nad Bodrogom, finished in 2007, was built as a result of the establishment and operation of Bodrogköz Development Partnership - itself being one of the antecedents of territorial groupings. The border crossing point between Velký Kamenec and Pácin (bordering the EGTC) was already built in the 1990s. As a result, the member-settlements can even use two border crossing points if they do not want to use Sátoraljaújhely-Slovenské Nové Mesto offering a secondary road connection on the far side of the River Bodrog or Lácacséke-Pribeník connected with the eastern edge of the EGTC. In case the planned connecting points (Felsőberecki-Klin nad Bodrogom, Pácin-Strážne, Nagyrozvágy-Velký Horeš) are all built the Hungarian-Slovakian border will totally become accessible from both sides in the whole territory of the EGTC and its immediate neighbourhood too.

The EGTCs are not in such a favourable situation in terms of rail connections for passengers at all. (As a matter of fact the same applies to the whole Hungarian-Slovak border section having only two rail connections in total one of which touches, at least, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County.) The railway line between Miskolc and Košice crosses the border at Hidasnémeti. Apart from this international train services between Miskolc and Košice are exclusively accessible by boarding trains either in Encs or in Szikszó. From this point of view only Via Carpatia, representing county level, qualifies as an EGTC where rail traffic offers a real alternative to road for transport connection. In theory the access time between the two county seats is also identical by rail and by road (1 hour 25 minutes).

### **Role of the Hungarian Ethnic Minority**

Cross border forms of territorial development can serve, beyond short term economic advantages, as a base for a long term change of social attitudes. They can offer an efficient institutional framework for mutually getting to know one another better and for dissolving historical grievances between nations separated by borders. This framework can also be, in the long run, one of the keys for further development.

It is questionable whether EGTCs in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County (or, for that matter, the majority of EGTCs in Hungary) are indeed suitable to assume this role. Superficial

knowledge about ethnic relations (that is, the fallacy that the Hungarians are in a majority everywhere in the border regions of Southern Slovakia) might even suggest that in our case the EGTCs serve as instruments for making our relations even stronger with the Hungarians living outside our borders.

Out of the eight EGTCs, however, only the Statutes of Bodrogköz EGTC mention the Hungarian ethnic minority. In fact, this element is ranked no. 1 on the list of targeted activities of the Grouping: "When setting the main priorities of the Grouping supporting Hungarians, especially those living in Slovakia, is at the top of our list". The content and visual elements of the home page of this EGTC also underline the importance of contacts with the Hungarian community separated by the borders. The same can be observed on the web site of "Abaúj-Abaújban" explained by the fact that the same foundation was instrumental in the establishment and operation of both EGTCs. It would of course be pointless to neglect ethnic conditions: in the case of the Bodrogköz EGTC, for example, Hungarians have an absolute majority of the population in 10 out of 11 partner-settlements in Slovakia. The decisive majority of mayors are attached to Slovakian political parties with Hungarian interest (MKP and Most-Híd) and, based on their names, the other 3 independent mayors are presumed to be of Hungarian origin, too.

As far as the other EGTCs are concerned, one finds no direct reference

to ethnic elements which seems natural because the ethnic composition of the population is more heterogeneous. The share of Hungarians in the whole population is more than fifty per cent in 4 out of the 7 settlements in Slovakia of the Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC and 1 each out of 2 settlements each in the case of the Sajó-Rima and the Karst-Bodva EGTCs respectively. The fact that in both settlements in the Karst-Bodva EGTC the mayor is from the Hungarian political party MKP somewhat contradicts ethnic statistics or, applying a more positive interpretation, the secondary importance of ethnic considerations. Of the EGTCs with 1 settlement in Slovakia the share of Hungarians does not reach 50 per cent in the Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC. In the case of the two “youngest”, most recently established EGTCs (Svinka, Torysa) where the Slovakian member-settlement is further away from the border there is practically no Hungarian ethnic element visible at all.

### **Recent Activities of EGTCs**

Six of the EGTCs registered in court have been registered in Hungary, two (Karst-Bodva and Via Carpatia) have been registered in Slovakia. Further than the registration by the court, it is safe to say that only those EGTCs can be taken seriously in the long run the establishment of which the Committee of Regions have been informed about (in line with the stipulations laid down in Article 5 of Regulation 1082/2006/EC approved by the European Parliament and

the Council). According to the most recent available statistics (4th February, 2014) all the EGTCs established in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County are included in the list of the Committee of Regions.

Below I try to compare the aims declared in the Statutes of EGTCs with their practical implementation. The latter, that is, the activities of EGTCs, are included in the annual Monitoring Reports of the Committee of Regions of the EU. The most recent Monitoring Report contains information about the year 2013 not yet featuring the two most recently established EGTCs (Svinka, Torysa). A further indicator about the level of efficiency of territorial groupings with relatively longer histories could be whether these EGTCs, or, indirectly, their member-settlements, appear among the winners of projects of the Hungary-Slovakia Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013 (HU-SK CBC). Beyond this even their participation at the calls for tender for EGTCs registered in Hungary, by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice may well illustrate the level of their activity. Slovakia does not support EGTCs registered in Slovakia by such direct instruments.

The aims contained in the Statutes of the Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC focus primarily on employment. The key expression is sustainable job creation which also appears in the activities of improving ecological conditions (afforestation, conserving natural heritage), introducing experimental



agricultural models (labour-intensive crop production, time-intensive animal husbandry), renewable energy projects and, more concretely, supporting local enterprises. Creating local employment opportunities as a solution against forced migration and illegal immigration, a rather important problem in the region, is also featured among the priorities of this territorial grouping originally aiming to include Romania and Ukraine too. A model project “Solar energy – energy day by day” can still be found on the web site of the Hungary–Romania Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013 providing information about the foundation of this EGTC. The project was aimed at modernising the energy use of public buildings by solar energy, establishing a 1 MW capacity solar energy ‘farm’ in Szabolcs–Szatmár–Bereg County. However, later no further information about this project was published. The monitoring reports of the EU are also rather vague when mentioning several other projects planned by the EGTC, waiting for government support. Neither the EGTC itself, nor its member-settlements individually are mentioned among the projects of the Hungary–Slovakia CBC programme. The reporting only of ‘waiting for government support’ is more than telling that the EGTC has no real activities. There were no government decisions on giving funds to this EGTC (which admittedly applied for such funds only once throughout these 3 years).

The basic information sheet on EGTCs compiled by the Committee

of Regions of the EU mentions, gives details about members of the Karst-Bodva EGTC, the local governments of settlements on the territory of national parks (Aggtelek National Park and Slovak Karst National Park) on both sides of the border of the karst Gömör-Torna. On the one hand it suggests openness to other settlements to join and, on the other hand, it recognises that the presently 2 members each from Hungary and Slovakia greatly fall short of covering the region in question. The priorities of the EGTC are linked with tourism, the preservation of cultural values and protection of the environment by supporting SMEs. Its tasks also include the joint development of cross border transport systems, energy network, water supply, waste management and cooperation in the field of health, culture, tourism and education. In contrast to the above, neither of the monitoring reports for 2009–2013 contains information about development projects completed. There are no winning projects among those in the Hungary–Slovakia cross border cooperation programme 2007–2013 either which could be connected to the EGTC or at least to any of the 4 settlements involved. The financial background of the operations of the territorial grouping is limited to, and dependent upon, the membership fees paid by the members.

The activities contained in the Statutes of the Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC cover a rather wide field (the list includes more than 60

nationally listed activities). In the field of activities of public benefit education, employment, social and health services for multiply unfavoured segments of society and of minorities are highlighted but culture, protection of the environment and transport connections are also emphasised. This EGTC has implemented and carried out 3 projects so far and each of them has been focused on tourism.

The project *Abaúj* tourism without borders was carried out between 2009 and 2011 by the VITEA Foundation and by 9 member-settlements of the EGTC (in decreasing order of support size: Boldogkőváralja, Rešica, Debraď, Fony, Korlát, Mogyoróska, Boldogkőújfalu, Regéc, Arka). The total value of the project was EUR 1.365M. In the frameworks of the project the following activities were listed: construction of open-air theatre and appropriate site for cultural entertainment events in Fony, Korlát and Arka, memorial house dedicated to Duke Ferenc Rákóczi II in Mogyoróska, refurbishment of the house of culture in Rešica, tourism information office in Regéc and Debraď, tourism information boards and touch-screen terminals in several places throughout the EGTC, and, finally, a tourism information web page was created (at the moment this also qualifies as the official web site of the EGTC). Two small sized “road trains” have also been purchased showing on their route the attractions of Boldogkőváralja and Arka (the castle at Boldogkő, Péchy-Zichy Castle, folk house in Boldogkőváralja–Arka).

The Key to success project aimed at organising practical training, between 2010 and 2012, for local SMEs involved in tourism with the participation of almost 40 entrepreneurs in the region. Two settlements (Hejce, Perín-Chym) from the EGTC were involved and the total value of the project was EUR 1,782M. A facility offering practical education in tourism was opened in Hejce and the house of culture in Perín-Chym was refurbished and was partly converted into an international conference and event centre as well as an information office for promoting international business.

The project titled International education network for SMEs was given support in 2011 with the participation of a member-settlement of the EGTC Rešica under the leadership of the VITEA Foundation. The total support amounted to EUR 125 thousand. An in-house training centre is under construction here. The other participant in the project is the settlement Buzica (a non-EGTC member) where an exhibition on milling history will be opened in the local mill and a training hall will also be opened.

Besides this, Rešica also applied successfully for financial support in the frameworks of the HUSK CBC Programme in 2013. The title of the project is ECOFUTURE—efficient partnership between the public and private sectors as a means for utilising renewable energy, and the size of the EU support is EUR 350 thousand.

They have successfully taken part in the calls for tender by the Ministry

of Public Administration and Justice (between the years 2011 and 2013 they received in total more than HUF 40M). In 2013 they received financial support, beyond their operational costs, for research in the field of geo-thermal wells too.

The preservation of cultural values and transferring them to the younger generations are both outstanding priorities among the aims of the Bodrogköz EGTC. They will appear, according to these aims, in the form of organising traditional, folk art and other cultural events. Another aim is, beyond the preservation of culture, the preservation of the natural environment. Even the issue of combating unemployment appears at the end of the list of aims. The more detailed list of targeted activities contains a total of 24 points. Here job creation is highlighted more and it transpires from the other points listed that they aim to create jobs by developing tourism, handicrafts and local agriculture.

There are no concrete results known about the activities of the EGTC since its foundation in 2012. However, there had been some cultural programmes organised earlier through the cooperation of the member-settlements (Bodrogköz Development Partnership) and the construction of the road crossing the border between Karos and Streda nad Bodrogom in 2007, as a concrete development, is also worth mentioning. The monitoring report for 2012 mentioned, as a problematic area in the activities of the EGTC, the lack

of resources necessary for the own contribution, as laid down by EU rules, of the possible projects.

The EGTC was an indirect beneficiary of the HUSK CBC call for tender in 2013 because one of the projects supported was the reconstruction of the road crossing the border between Veľký Kamenec (one of the members of the EGTC) and Pácin. The total sum of EU support was over EUR 1M.

The fact that the (text of the) reasoning and the requested and received sums of support are all meticulously identical in the case of both EGTCs in all of the project proposals they submitted to the Ministry clearly illustrates that the practical management of the territorial grouping (the Bodrogköz EGTC) is in the very same hands as that of the Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC. The only exception was the year 2011 when Bodrogköz EGTC, just before foundation, requested and received only HUF 8M instead of HUF 20M.

The Sajó-Rima EGTC set more ambitious plans even in its Statutes, by reasons of the size and central functions of its member-settlements in the region. They include, among others, working out and executing common economic development plans, coordinated development of spatial infrastructure and transport systems, preparation of plans for water catchment areas and for managing water bases. Besides this, they pledged to continue forms of cooperation between public institutions and social

organisations which had already been part of the activities of the Sajó-Rima Euro-region like those in education, culture, leisure time and sports. As they claim, the founding members expect other, smaller settlements of the Euro-region to join too. In their opinion the most important future development projects are, among others, the improvement of the road network (they target to build a 2 by 2 lane high speed road link across the border at Bánréve), waste management and sewage treatment.

They successfully applied to the Hungarian state for funding in 2012 for establishing the EGTC and in 2013 for the operations of the EGTC and for cross border cooperation, obtaining a total of HUF 14M.

Via Carpatia EGTC also corresponds to a former Euro-region (the Košice-Miskolc Euro-region practically non-existent these days). The renewed partnership between the two county seats offers greater opportunities for comprehensive regional development through the legal frameworks offered by the EGTC. Their declared aims practically cover the whole of social and economic life of the region: improvement of employment opportunities, support to agriculture, tourism development (both in the fields of conference, wine and gastronomic tourism), preservation of cultural heritage; cooperation in the fields of health, transport, waste management, flood prevention, protection of the environment, construction of cycling paths, development of the To-

kaj wine region, energy supply, disaster prevention, establishment of cross border logistical and industrial zones. A separate point in the list of cooperation fields is development of transport networks in east-west and – even more markedly – north-south directions, the latter being an all-European priority, along the old road lines after which the name of the EGTC was given. Even at its very first General Assembly meeting the development of the north-south transport corridor was marked by the members as their most important task.

Torysa EGTC and Svinka EGTC are both apparently parts of the same “EGTC-founding project”. The Hungarian member-settlements were thinking, back in 2012, in terms of participating in the planned Kárpátok EGTC (at this stage it was still called “Kárpátia”). These two EGTCs were established at the same time and their chairman is the same person. Even members of the Supervisory Board on the Slovak side are identical in both EGTCs. The contents of the Statutes are the same word by word. The general aims include in both cases the popularisation of folk art traditions and cultural values and natural, architectural heritage and the protection of the environment. Safeguarding both transparency and publicity are particularly mentioned (meaning, for the moment, only a facebook profile without real contents in the case of the Torysa EGTC). Both EGTCs received HUF half a million each in 2013 from the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice.

A rather big contrast is perceptible when the aims laid down in the Statutes of EGTCs are compared with de facto developments that have indeed taken place. The very diverse aims have not been realised in practice, with the exception of Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC, although, admittedly, part of them may indeed be justifiably excused by the limited time available. As far as the social embeddedness of EGTCs is concerned, equally, one should not jump to far-reaching conclusions either, again because of the relatively short time since their operations started. This is especially true in the case of EGTCs registered in 2013. However, it is rather telling that, in the age of the information society, 6 out of 8 EGTCs do not yet have their own web site. Even in the case of those which do one finds it impossible to find up-to-date information. It turns out from the web site of Bodrogköz EGTC that it has not been updated since 2009 and there have been no new posts on the web site of Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC since 2010. Paradoxically, it is Gömör-Torna EGTC, not yet even officially registered, which has the most up-to-date web site content and the most active facebook profile.

### **Further EGTC Initiatives**

Besides the 8 EGTCs existing at the beginning of 2014, registered by the court, there are at present 2 other known county-level initiatives.

The Gömör-Torna EGTC unites the settlements located in the karst Gömör-Torna and in the upriver

section of the River Bódva. Their Draft Statutes were prepared back in 2011 but the EGTC has not yet officially been registered. The idea of a territorial grouping came about as a result of successful cultural and touristic cooperation for years (Gömör-Torna Festival, later called Gömör-Torna Summer). Their strategic aim is to use the development opportunities stemming from the touristic attractiveness of national parks in the area more efficiently. They reckoned on the participation of 21 Hungarian and 4 Slovak settlements (small villages around Turňa nad Bodvou, the latter being also a member-settlement of the Karst-Bodva EGTC) involving more than 10 thousand people. It is obvious from these figures that if this formation indeed came about it would really be able to represent, in contrast to the Karst-Bodva EGTC, the interests of a considerable part of the karst region. (The somewhat messy situation (or the prevalence of the principle "let's keep more irons in the fire" referred to at the beginning of this study) is well demonstrated by the fact that Perkupa, being a member of the Karst-Bodva EGTC, is, at the same time, also a member of the Gömör-Torna EGTC, just under formation.). They applied for and received financial support to the tune of HUF 4M in 2013 from the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice for securing the operations following their registration.

One has been able to come across the name Kárpátok EGTC (earlier: Kárpátia) since 2012. By

the beginning of 2014 over 50 Hungarian settlements had indicated their intention to join, according to records of local government meetings. In 2012 there were a total of 35 Hungarian (not only those from Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) and 40 Slovakian settlements featured in the draft Statutes. This EGTC, planned to be registered in Slovakia (with headquarters in Komárom, itself being a member-settlement at present of Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC, too) would cover, on the Hungarian side, the area between the Rivers Hernád and Bodrog (bordering Szerencs, Sárospatak, Abaújszántó, Gönc and Pálháza). As can be seen, if it were set up, this would be the biggest EGTC in the county organised at settlement level.

### **Summary, Future Possibilities**

Following the short introduction and activities of the EGTCs it can be argued that geographical location greatly determines the success of any given territorial grouping. Of course it would be premature to come to any general conclusions since about half of these EGTCs have only recently been established. As a result they will have a real chance to realise their aims only during the development period of the EU between 2014 and 2020, just about to start.

It is somewhat unfortunate that Via Carpatia, that is the form of cooperation covering the whole region under investigation, was established only in 2013. However, now that this grouping is coming into operation the

two-tier EGTC system most likely to assist the development of border regions efficiently can start to be realised. (Territorial groupings covering smaller territorial units (LAU 1) could operate in a parallel way besides EGTCs of NUTS3 level. See the contribution of CESCO to the discussion papers of the Széchenyi Plan – Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives, 2010). This second tier could be covered efficiently by Bodrogköz EGTC in the Bodrogköz region; by Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC in the Abaúj region (completed perhaps with villages in Zemplén); by Gömör-Torna EGTC featuring in the plans, instead of Karst-Bodva representing only 4 settlements in the karst Gömör-Torna (or absorbing it); and, finally, by Sajó-Rima EGTC in the Gömör Basin. The latter EGTC establishes contact with Besztercebánya County, going beyond the territory of Via Carpatia, bringing together, as one unit, historical Gömör too. It remains to be seen whether a viable territorial grouping can be established in the poorest area of the county, namely, in Cserehát, (or, if it makes sense at all to establish one, since the Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó EGTC is apparently unable to connect in an organic way with the Slovakian side). Another question is whether and to what extent the Kárpátok EGTC under formation, likely to overlap the territory of the so far most successful Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC (even further than the Zemplén region void of EGTCs), will 'overturn' this system.

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# The Borders of National Economy – Critical Theory and Notions of Economic Policy

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## Introduction

After 1989 the central and eastern European region and particularly the economic relevance of national borders was decisively transformed by the fact that the economies of these countries were much more incorporated in the international space and processes of globalization than before. In the investigation of the cross-border organisation of capitalism and the understanding of the Eastern European varieties of capitalism critical theory (BODNÁR 2013; ÉBER 2009) has yet been given a minor role in the literature. In this problem-raising study I examine how the cross-border self-organisation of economy and the relevance of borders are investigated in international economic geography applying critical theory and why this conceptual framework is well applicable in the analysis of notions on economic development in Hungary, the effective and less effective practices of development policy and thus in changing the behaviour of political actors.

## The border as economic geographical category and critical theory

Borders as analytical categories have always been present in economic

geographical research. The question “What is where?”, the spatial organisation of trade, as a theme of the classical economic geography, has turned attention onto the global linkages of borders, nations and economies since the emergence of the subdiscipline (BARNES 2000); at the same time this approach pointed at the groundlessness of the differentiation between economic and political borders. The classical central place theories of economics and the new economic geography based thereon, labelled by Paul Krugman, fixed the importance of borders (regardless of whether they divide nations or regions) in the territorial analysis of economic phenomena through the concept of absolute space. These approaches proved again the *raison d'être* of spatiality as a perspectival and analytical category in economics (cf. DUSEK 2013). However the final conclusion of these studies, just as that of mainstream economics, suggesting the omnipotence of market, sweeping away national borders and annulling geography has always been contested by economic geography. The problematic nature of ignoring borders is well demonstrated by the

professional debates of the 2009 World Development Report pointing out that the notion of new economic geography originating from neoclassical economics leads to the reproduction (instead of the disappearance) of inequalities with the decline of the role of borders (LAWSON 2010). Nevertheless, these effects are unacceptable for the majority of economic geographers who, with the downturn of the quantitative revolution around the early 1970s, turned to critical theory for new inspiration.

Critical theory puts emphasis on the active social construction of economic spaces. Borders doubtlessly influencing the operation of the economy are not abstract categories and entities that can be traced up by the usage of indicators and black-boxed estimations (CZIRFUSZ 2010) but are brought into being by the actions (namely the practices of economic policy that will be discussed below) of economic actors. Furthermore their existence is influenced by such structural constraints as the global capitalism of our days (see e.g. WALLERSTEIN 2004). Those authors who criticize the dominant world economic order from this perspective normally insist that economy necessarily depends on the continuous transformation of spatial organization which occurs on different scales, for example, at nation state level, in spaces with national borders and between them as well (BRENNER 1999). Of course this approach also uses the concept of absolute space (for example Brenner introduces the notion of territorial state to assert the

territorial sovereignty of the state, limited by borders, and this is an important analytical perspective). However, it is the institutional system of the territorial state which ensures the cross-border movement of the factors of production. This latter approach opens up research for the concepts of relative, relational and networked spaces. Global economic interdependences can therefore be the subject of complex researches with the help of borders as ontologies. Following Brenner researches may aim to point out the role of borders and economic processes in the reproduction of uneven geographical development, to turn them into subjects of critical analysis and, finally, to show alternatives for different modes of organization.

In Hungary border studies and particularly the examination of cross-border economic relations have interested regional studies for a long time. However these examinations are mostly concentrated on the description of cross-border economic organisation and they rarely consider global organisation (such a theme could be the interlacing of global production networks and cross-border commuting in the Western Transdanubia region) or how the nature of regime change reproduced borders and territorial states (VARRÓ 2010). So critical theory and particularly its notion considering spatial economic processes, uneven development as well as spatio-temporal fixes together with economic dependencies and the changing political projects of nation states (HARVEY 2004) can claim a

place in the analysis of borders in the Hungarian and more generally eastern European economies.

### **The borders of national economy in notions of development policy**

The borders of national economy and the consequences of borders on the social and political system drew the attention of analysts of domestic economic policies during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly because of the continuous transformation of power relations. The controversies of the economic system of the dualist period are well interpreted in the essay of Lajos LEOPOLD (2002 [1917]) on the simulated capitalism which he describes by tracing a sharp economic borderline between East and West whereby the influence of western markets and credits resulted in the emergence of a capitalist legal system (with the notions of economic borders) which was indeed a “mimicry-capitalism”. In Hungary between the World Wars the questions of the nation state borders and the existence or non-existence of customs and custom barriers were issues that divided political parties, as each group argued for or against the role of national economy in establishing such trade barriers in the fragmented eastern European economic space.

Under socialism the notion of internal economy as an organic whole became exclusive in the practice of development policy as well as in economic planning. The spatial organizational frame of economy was

constituted by the political-economic space delimited by state borders, though “nation” as label was replaced by “people”. Socialist economic systems meant the framework in which the scientific, rational planning of production factors was enabled in contrast with capitalist countries where economy organized itself in an “anarchic” manner, both inside and across borders (MARKOS 1951). Of course this viewpoint totally misunderstood for example Marxist political economy and its inherent territoriality which derives the inequalities of capitalism from the logic of capital and not from its anarchic manner. As each country was a distinct political entity at that time state borders did not become descriptive categories of the analyses. Borders had no other functions than geographically delimiting economic planning under the sovereignty of socialist states. At the same time borders of socialist economies had their own role in interstate commerce but different from that of the ages before 1945: for the then-dominant economic geographer György MARKOS (1952) the spatial division of labour between countries was charged with the problems of imperialism (expressing power relations) in contrast with the rationally organized method of the Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance).

After the regime change, the preparation for EU accession and then the accession itself changed the role of borders as well as their economic importance in the theory

and the practice of development policy. Cross-border development and cooperation became important elements of “Europeanization”: with the incorporation of European norms the sense of joining Europe was reinforced in political practice. Although borders between old and new members states went somewhat blurred the difference of the two groups remained a meaningful narrative (see e.g. VARRÓ 2008). Nevertheless the researches pointed out that borders and cross-border economic projects are such political projects that are purely considered as tools in eastern European countries (SCOTT 2013). Consequently one can say that borders, as a legacy of the spatial notion of socialist planning, did not become analytical categories in the analyses of economic processes underlying development policies.

SCOTT (2013) also called attention to the fact that borderlands played a decreasing role in national development planning. In this I'm curious about how economic development documents write about national economy, its borders and their permeability; therefore I do not limit my analysis to the economies of borderland regions. In the remaining part of the study I am going to analyze two Hungarian development policy documents, thought to be interesting from the perspective of the theme: the Wekerle Plan (The Hungarian economy's growth strategy at the scale of the Carpathian Basin) and the National Development 2030 – National Development and Spatial Development

Concept, adopted at the beginning of 2014, predominantly relating to the 2014–2020 EU programming period.

In the economic policy discourse Wekerle Plan, which has been cited many times since its adoption (therefore one can consider it as a reference point), integration as a tool for convergence to Western Europe and for the dissolution of tensions between centres and peripheries is suggested. In my opinion this approach does not take into consideration those economic mechanisms, emphasized by critical theory, through which the western European centre and the eastern European periphery organize themselves: namely the two regions mutually presuppose each other. In the document the suggested integration would not be an economic integration which might re-identify the role of borders from an economic aspect, rather it would transform a cultural milieu into economic resource. I agree with the evaluation of the current situation in the plan, suggesting that the wider economic cooperation of the countries of the Carpathian Basin could be successful. At the same time the re-thinking of the borders of national economies should not be conducted, because of the above mentioned centre-periphery relations, i.e. to strengthen economic relations with countries outside the eastern European region: the goal is exactly the reduction of economic interdependencies. The dual nature of the economy (due to western European capital investments) is repeatedly mentioned by the



document as a problem, correctly. The principal problem of the plan (which likely explains the delay of its effective implementation) is obviously that it aims to strengthen the positions of the Hungarian economy (as an entity with nation state borders) within the Carpathian Basin but also seeks partnerships based on the concept of mutual advantages. If we take the resources of the region as fixed then the reinforcement of the Hungarian economy is only viable at the expense of other economies, and the partnership relations would weaken Hungary as an economic space in some sub-sectors. From the perspective of borders the document sets the objective of achieving results through the targeted domestic support of the actors of national economy (small and medium sized enterprises) outside the borders of national economy so as to make borders permeable for them. The steps of this goal are multiple, according to the document. First of all the plan sets infrastructural objectives which are principally important in border regions: by ensuring the permeability of borders in transport and services, functional relations may be established in the geographical space which are “split up” by the border. Another set of objectives relate to the labour market: interlacing economies with standardized training systems and the reinforcement of labour force mobility (not exclusively in border regions). It is important to note that the economic role of borders does not only come up for capital (enterprises) but also for labour. Unfortunately, it

was exactly the flexibilisation of the labour force through state policies that reproduced the inequalities between the different groups of society (ARNOLD, PICKLES 2011; COE, JOHNS, WARD 2008) therefore the improvement of the permeability of borders can result in a competitive situation that does not serve social justice, promoted by critical theory. Thirdly, objectives of an economic nature target the transformation of production networks in which domestic enterprises can take part in macro-regional supply chains both in manufacturing as well as in agriculture. The document however says nothing about the fact that production networks embody such globally organized power relations, in Hungary’s case too, in which the enterprises situated in the different parts of the value chain are exposed to the others in different ways (see e.g. NAGY 2010). These positions are influenced by measures of state economic policy, making state borders visible and non-visible, permeable and non-permeable, passable and impassable (BERNDT, BOECKLER 2011). Finally, the objectives of the plan are of a cultural nature as well: ethnic Hungarian entrepreneurs living in neighbouring states, relatively minor cultural differences allow Hungarian entrepreneurs to enter into other countries (therefore this narrative is not about borders as barriers but the lack of borders in the cultural sense).

The spatial framework of the most comprehensive - and at the same time newest - document of

the Hungarian development policy named National development 2030 is concerned with the national economy though the concept starts from global determinations. The assessment of the current situation suggests the idea of a national economy having open and passable borders, which seeks to build connections with the economy of other countries in every directions, aiming to embed itself into the global economy. From this point of view the development policy represents that standpoint of economics which hopes to achieve welfare through the establishment of the free market and the free movement of resources. Subsequently the document correctly declares that Hungary has an opened economy and is largely exposed to the processes of world economy. Supposedly it is thanks to the effects of the above mentioned "European ideas" on the openness of borders that the preservation of this openness appears as a political commitment. The document sets the objective that domestic enterprises should more deeply integrate within global production networks, ignoring again though its problems. Among the "national priorities" of the document, contradicting these precedents from many aspects, the creation of a "patriotic economy" is foreseen which is built on domestic resources to the greatest possible extent, using local economies as guidelines (repeating simultaneously the above described ideas on integration within the European economy). Therefore, according to this document, which is likely to

influence fundamentally the practice of development policy in the upcoming years, borders tend to have an ambivalent role in the future operation of economic policy.

The reinforcement of the central European position and the reconciliation of macro-regional interests is definitely an important goal but neighbouring states are mostly considered as markets by the document. The idea of the economic integration of the Carpathian Basin was incorporated into the National development 2030 programme with a content that is appropriate to the Wekerle Plan which, in relation to borders, aimed on the one hand at the establishment of economic transferability between national economies as entities, and on the other hand targets the deepening of the cohesion between border regions within the spatial framework of entities resulting from EU policies (e.g. euroregions, etc.). Therefore, in the course of spatial analysis of the current situation a distinct part concentrates on the reassessment of borderland regions, specifically with a focus on the opportunities of EC funds. This part of the analysis however fails to clarify the actual role of borders: the economic processes presented are obviously not based on the borderland situation but on other economic and historical factors (e.g. Miskolc and Košice are victims of the transition crisis while the western segment of the Hungarian-Slovakian border prospers thanks to foreign investments). Elsewhere it was exactly the dividing economic role of

the border that was disregarded in the analysis: Ukraine and Hungary are two radically different territorial states with different economic positions in the world economy so this fact may explain in itself the economic problems of the border region.

## Conclusion

In my opinion the analysis of the two policy documents clearly shows that the material role of the borders of national economy is not unambiguous for mainstream domestic economic policy based on the traditions of classical planning theory – the territorial state is generally built on the emphasis of the role of state borders whereas, in contrast, cross-border cooperation attempts to loosen the sovereignty of territorial states (cf. POPESCU 2008). I propose that critical theory offers such alternative readings on the nature and the macroeconomic determination of economic borders which I would like to introduce in an eastern European historical relational approach in conclusion to my study.

Borders, their redrawing and the interdependencies of economic processes depict national and global power relations. In eastern Europe these interconnections, no matter how far they seem to be the outcomes of the transformation years with the inflow of European discourses, are not new at all. Živković and Medenica (2013) provide for example an historical overview of those power relations in the Balkans which have shaped the internal borders of the peninsula since the Congress of

Berlin (1878), on the one hand through the fragmentation of the states – and thus the fixation of state borders serving economic interests – and at the same time through trade facilitations towards core countries and free-trade agreements – thus by ensuring the transferability of capital across borders. These processes resulted in an external economic dependency, while the internal ties of economy were eliminated in this economic framework. Their analysis refers to those balkanic precursors of critical theory which urged a Balkan Socialist Federation for the people of the Balkans since the 1870s, thereby standing firm for the alternative reading of internal and external borders.

From many aspects the situation of Hungary fits well with this image. The plan of Kossuth on the Danubian Federation, although its focus was on the resolution of the question of nationalities, contained an economic vision: the joint custom and trade system would have meant the decrease of the importance of internal economic borders and the shift of external borders (together with the transfer of economic governance to supranational level) (KOSSUTH 2004 [1862]). In contrast the transformation of the economic policies of eastern European countries after 1989 was predominantly characterized by neoliberal reforms and the belief in the omnipotence of the market (cf. BOCKMAN, EYAL 2002), therefore the decrease of the role of borders in limiting economic flows

was also served by the signature of the association agreement with the European Economic Community and the establishment of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). Pronouncedly in the Hungarian case the historical path dependence, the orientalist reading of the neighbouring states and the Balkans (see for example KŐSZEGI 2010), resulted in the reinforcement of such perspectives in development policy which alloyed a sophisticated Carpathian economic imperialism (with an outlook on the Balkans) with the promotion of the inflow of western foreign investment.

There is no doubt about the important role of state borders hindering or facilitating economic activities in present-day Hungary. A critical understanding of the borders of national economy – from which only some examples could be presented here – is indispensable to the conceptual renewal of social sciences dealing with spatial relations. Through the analysis of some documents of the Hungarian development policy I argued that thinking about the role of borders in the every-day working of the economy is important as current documents are obviously hardly adequate to reach the declared objectives (and to formulate at least coherent goals). So notions on borders have prominent importance in the formulation of opportunities and barriers of economic policy as well as in promoting such alternatives that would serve the decrease in dependence of the eastern European region on the global economy. However, this

should not be implemented through the transformation of the borders of national economy into an impassable fortress (autarchy) but through the establishment of such an eastern European alliance that would lead in the long term to the emergence of the macro-region's internal economy as well as to the improvement of standards of work and living and the reduction of social inequalities.

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## **The Present and Future of Regional Centres and Cities with County Rights;**

**Conference organised at the University „István Széchenyi”, Győr, on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2013**

The conference on major cities titled “*The Present and Future of Regional Centres and Cities with County Rights*” was organised by the University “István Széchenyi”, Győr, in conjunction with the Regional Statistical Section of the Hungarian Statistical Society and the journal “Regional Statistics”, on 23rd September, 2013. The event took place in the frameworks of the project “*The Győr Vehicle Industry Zone as a New Direction and Instrument of Regional Development*” (TÁMOP-4.2.2.A-11/1/KONV-2012-0010). The venue of the full-day conference was Auditorium ‘F’ of the University “István Széchenyi” in Győr.

As an overture to the whole conference the bigger cities in Hungary were located in East-Central Europe by Mr. János Rechnitzer (economist, Department of Regional Sciences and Public Policy, University “István Széchenyi”, Győr). In his lecture he reiterated that the vehicle industry is a rapidly developing branch of our region. The research director of the university pointed out, among other things, that geographical differences between the various settlement factors are manifested primarily not between but, rather, within the countries involved. Thus competitive advantages

are differentiated by regions when the development initiatives of the industry in question are decided upon.

Research carried out by three economists of the University “István Széchenyi” at Győr, namely by Krisztián Koppány and Norbert Kovács (both at the Department of International and Theoretical Economics) and Dániel Szabó (Department of Economic Analyses), on the economic network system and growth of Győr and the Győr Vehicle Industry Zone, was presented by Krisztián Koppány. In the frameworks of their analyses the possibilities of regional macro-modelling were investigated.

The economies of scale of local communal services was investigated by a five-member working group also consisting of economists from Győr the members of which were, besides Krisztián Koppány, Katalin Czakó (Department of Regional Sciences and Public Policy), Tamás Dusek, Veronika Poreisz and Éva Szalka (all three from the Department of Economic Analyses). Following a short theoretical overview the debatable traditional approach concerning the economies of scale of local communal services was evaluated with a critical eye by Veronika Poreisz. She then introduced the empirical results of the research team related to the same topic, drawing on the data base of almost 300 settlements across the country.

The conference continued with a lecture on a similar topic when the regional and local integration of communal services was investigated, in

a case study prepared for a model area in Győr, by a research team consisting partly of the same members featured in the previous study, namely Krisztina Czakó, Tamás Dusek and Veronika Poreisz, joined by István Szabó, economist at “Raab Audit” Tax Advisory and Auditing Ltd., Győr. After outlining the general arguments and debatable views for and against organisational integration, the research team’s own empirical results regarding general services like communal waste, district heating or real estate services, were introduced by Katalin Czakó.

The examinations made by transport engineers Balázs Horváth, Richárd Horváth, Bertalan Gaál and Lajos Szabó (all from the Department of Transport, University “István Széchenyi”, Győr) on the public transport system and mobility demands of Győr and its agglomeration, were presented by Bertalan Gaál. Following his theoretical introduction to network analysis he gave a practical demonstration of the public transport network of the Győr region. As a consequence of their different characteristics the bus network and the rail network were presented separately.

In his lecture geographer György Csomós (Department of Civil Engineering, University of Debrecen) classified the various Hungarian settlements assuming the role of economic hub by their dynamically changing economic situation after the big turnaround of the whole system in Hungary in the early-1990s. During his talk he went into the details of the main features of economic processes,

also characterised by a number of anomalies, of the period between 1992 and 2011.

Geographer Géza Tóth (Central Statistical Office, Budapest) presented his comparative investigations, made jointly with lawyer Zoltán Nagy (Department of Financial Law, University of Miskolc), on the relationship between leading cities and their “hinterland” in the country. Their research shed light on the fact that the changes in the economic potentials of cities and their hinterlands involved took different courses.

The closing lecture of the conference was given by geographer László Jeney (Department of Economic Geography and Futures Studies, Corvinus University of Budapest) examining the changing urban network of the Carpathian Basin at the turn of the Millennium. In the course of the county-level examination the various types of counties according to the changing characteristics of settlement networks were delineated. The results show that counties can be classified even by determining which factors their urban character is in connection with. Urban characters are measured by the proportions of the population in middle-sized and big cities, respectively.

The September conference in Győr encompassed a very forceful and obviously very timely topic bearing in mind that leading cities and their hinterlands are gradually becoming, after the changes of the political and economic system in the early-1990s,

more and more decisive elements of the spatial structure of our country and its wider area (namely the Carpathian Basin and East Central Europe). In summation it can be stated that the high-quality lectures given at the conference contributed with valuable professional information and knowledge to the further investigation of the development processes in our cities after the Millennium.

LÁSZLÓ JENEY

### **Memorial Day European Territorial Cooperation in Terms of the Central European Year**

**Pálfi Memorial Day, Magyarország háza,  
Budapest, on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

The Memorial Day and Award Ceremony commemorating István Pálfi (1966-2006), organised by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, was held for the fourth time on the 15 October 2013 in Budapest. This year the Pálfi Prize was awarded to Belgian statesman Luc Van den Brande, former Minister-President of Flanders (1992-1999) as well as former President of the European Union's Committee of the Regions (2008-2010), Special Adviser to Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, together with Gyula Ocskay, former coordinator of cross-border relations of the town of Esztergom, and former Director of Ister-Granum Euroregion, currently Secretary General at the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI).

At the conference following the Award Ceremony actual questions of strategic planning targeting the development of borderland areas and those of cross-border cooperation were at issue.

The first section (Partnerships, cooperations for sustainable common development along borders after 2014) began with the presentation of Luc van den Brande who pointed at the fact that Europe is connected by common values (referring firstly to legal achievements), traditional partnership and a highly developed economic and social welfare system. However, to preserve its competitiveness, Europe needs innovation and creativity, which centralisation can counteract. Regions and cities are not only subcontractors in the execution of top-down ideas, new partnerships based on geographical closeness are needed instead of pyramidal hierarchies, and real multilevel governance would also be effective in making people feel closer to the decision making process. An important element is the harmonisation of domestic and international policy making (the so called 'glocalization'). Furthermore, cities and regions should participate in the decision making of higher levels and in the achievement of community and global goals. The role of cities is especially important in energy consumption and consequently in pollution emission as well. Intervention for climate goals should therefore focus mainly on cities but other problems such as migration, poverty or youth unemployment

are also strongly concentrated in these places. EGTCs (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) providing legal frameworks for territorial cooperations should also be given an important role as they delimit functional regions providing effective tools for rationalisation. Their importance lies also in the supposition that a local cooperation may also work even if formal cooperations do not (citing here the examples of the Polish-Belarussian borderlands and that of Nicosia and Lefkosia). In his opinion cooperation between regions is not effective enough and its development should be better balanced.

Nóra Ivády (Ministry of Public Administration and Justice) presented EGTC as the institutionalized form of cross-border cooperation. It was the Madrid Convention that first sought to ensure a legal framework for already existing cross-border initiatives, however the breakthrough was only made by the EGTC Regulation, entered into force in 2006, which defined the competences of the planned initiatives in advance. There are 41 EGTCs currently working throughout the European Union of which 16 involves Hungarian partners, and 12 have their seat in Hungary. The review and then the amendment of the EGTC Regulation which took place in 2011, resulted in significant novelties such as the simplification of the approval process and the opportunity for a partner from a third country - providing it is a party to the Madrid Convention - to take part. The 2014-2020 period

may provide still new opportunities for EGTCs. New instruments will be available such as integrated territorial investment (ITI) and community led-local development (CLLD).

Vicente Rodriguez Saez (DG Regional Policy, European Commission) conducted his presentation on the advancement of planning for the Programming Period 2014-2020. A so-called 'Legislative Package' has already been performed, which sums up amongst other things the goals of cohesion policy, the basic concept of the principal reforms, the framework and follow-up of the implementation as well as the strategic approach. Two distinct objectives were set for European Territorial Cooperation. These are the Europe 2020 Strategy on the one hand and macroregional cooperation on the other. Financial support is expected to be allocated as follows: cross-border cooperation (CBC) 73 %; transnational cooperation 21 %; interregional cooperation 6 %. As of the current state of affairs the creation of the framework of European Territorial Cooperation for the period 2014-2020 is considered to be finalised.

Alfonso Alcolea Martinez (Committee of the Regions, EGTC Platform) suggests that the role of EGTCs is very important in regional policy, as about 650 local and regional authorities (LRA) have managed to become involved in the cooperation. The involvement of national administrative systems, overcoming national fears and improving the efficiency of cooperation

between DGs (Directorate Generals of the European Commission) are by any means of major importance.

As a closure of the section the audience had the opportunity to ask questions. The questions mainly concerned thematic concentration, considered as a basic principle for the next programming period (aiming for the concentration of 80 % of EU support on four thematic objectives), together with integrated territorial investment, the support of successful cross-border initiatives that are not EGTCs, advancement toward multi-level governance and the popularity of EGTCs in Hungary.

The second section (Borderland aspects of the preconditions of smart, intelligent and inclusive growth) introduced the toolkit and the institutional system placed at the disposal of cross-border planning for the 2014-2020 programming period and discussed the basic principles laid down by development policy.

Gyula Ocskay (CESCI) discussed the sustainability of the planning of borderland regions. In his view border regions need integrated spatial development otherwise the development process would be marked by roads and bridges leading to nowhere (citing the Katalin Bridge near the town of Szécsény as an example). The exploitation of territorial capital, the potentials residing in the external and internal characteristics as well as the past and the future of the region, is of primary importance. He emphasised the need for the re-es-

tablishment of traditional relational system of towns suffering from the distortedness of their hinterlands. The elaboration of the Ister-Granum Integrated Territorial Investment was also based on this concept. Concerning future notions of development policy he took a stand for cohesion-based development against the sector-based approach, and for territorial concentration against thematic concentration. He places importance on the principle that investments should reinforce connections, that they should be integrated, create permanent facilities and remain sustainable.

István Vagács (Ministry for National Economy) presented the notions of the Hungarian government on the reinforcement of the country's position and role within the Carpathian economic area through the cross-border elements of the Wekerle Plan. The economic connectedness of Hungary and its neighbours is traditionally tight, so the government established the tools supporting entry into external markets based on this connectedness. EXIMBANK increased its credit fund which is now available not only for exporting companies but also for their suppliers, and not only in the case of merchandise exports but also in that of services. The achievement of the goals set in the Wekerle Plan are supposed to be served by the Carpathian Region Business Network, initiated by the Ministry for National Economy, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Hungarian Investment and Trade Agency, which targets support of

the opening of national economies of Central and Eastern Europe towards each other and contribution to the transformation of the Carpathian area into an acknowledged, interlocking and strong economic region.

Martijn Spaargaren (Joint Technical Secretariat INTERREG IV A. Germany-Netherlands) introduced the outcomes and the future focal points of cross-border cooperation along the German-Dutch border. The area covered by the INTERREG Program hosts about 12 million inhabitants, 55 thousand enterprises and 24 higher education institutions. Its budget, ensured by the European Regional Development Fund, makes up 138 million euros. The share of the first priority is 58 %, and the total number of small and medium enterprises in the partnership is about 350. The partnership works in a bottom-up manner and one of the main outcomes was that creating cooperation needs time and intensive support. Among project examples he mentioned the Healthy Greenhouse project in which numerous universities, research institutions, economic organisations as well as enterprises from agriculture, industry and the service sector of the program area were involved. Among the main challenges, difficulties concerning community and national legislation, the availability of projects, administrative burdens and the communication of the added value were the most typical. As for the future plans the focus will be on innovation, building on existing networks and creating cooperation on higher levels.

Dávid Pelech (Budapest Danube Contact Point) presented the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the macroregional initiative of the European Union which includes the territory of Hungary. The EUSDR was founded in 2011, the road maps were completed by 2012, and in 2013 the planning of the next seven-year period was launched. Since its inauguration the macroregional initiative took up a wide range of successful projects such as the development of a regional gas market model or the Ukraine – Hungary flood management project. The role of the Budapest Danube Contact Point in the strategy is the development of concepts into projects, the development of project financing, the coordination of project promoters, the multiplication and the exploitation of relationship capital as well as the transformation of the macroregion into a functional region.

During the third section (Experiences in program planning in Europe) one could observe numerous foreign examples on the experiences of planning for the 2014-2022 programming period.

Anu Roomere (Estonian Ministry of the Interior) presented the experiences on the Estonia–Latvia Operational Programme 2007–2013 and their implementation in the planning process. In terms of quantity most of the project proposals were submitted in the theme of community-level cooperations, mainly from non-profit organizations, but ultimately few of them were provided financial support. The majority of the support

financed some transport investments, and the promoters of the approved projects were mostly local authorities. Therefore the objectives for the next period target the support of civil organizations and initiatives, as well as intensive cohesion and the promotion of a high degree of competitiveness. The most important thematic objectives are the development of small and medium enterprises, environmental protection, transport development as well as employment and job creation.

Karen Maguire (OECD Regional Innovation Unit of the Regional Development Policy) briefly introduced the researches of OECD dealing with the problems of borderland regions. These researches of the OECD normally investigate the regional level and put a special emphasis on geographic proximity. An important point in these researches is the quantification of costs and advantages and the creation of appropriate indicators like the „Öresund Integration Index” which aimed to express the advancement of integration between the Danish and the Swedish sides of the Öresund Region since the inauguration of the Öresund Bridge (2000). OECD has already formulated proposals in the theme of cross-border cooperation, aimed for example at the delimitation of functional areas, the exploration of common characteristics and the examination of international experiences.

Nóra Bartha of the Széchenyi Program Office presented its programs concerning cross-border cooperation

for the 2014-2020 period. Five CBC programs, a pre-accession tool (an IPA program between Hungary and Serbia) and a quadrilateral cooperation (ENI) will be supported with a total amount of around 320 million euros. She briefly introduced the activities of the Program Office too. This performs territorial analyses with the involvement of regional and local actors, and deals with the implementation of thematic and specific objectives, the elaboration of institutional structures and the allocation of financial resources available in the framework of the European Regional Development Fund for the 2014-2020 period.

Imre Csalagovits (Office for National Economic Planning) briefly introduced the Danube Transnational Programme which was brought to life by the EU for the support of the thematic preferences of the Danube Region Strategy. The budget of the programme is estimated to reach 200 million euros. Its working community is similar to that of an EGTC, and among the principles of the formation continuity, simplification and transnational governance are the most important ones.

Altogether the conference provided a great opportunity for the critical assessment of the EU policy supporting borderland regions, and also for that of cohesion policy, as well as for the introduction and the comparison of already achieved goals in the development of border regions and cross-border cooperation together with that of the main difficulties and

challenges. Based on the feedbacks and the experiences, numerous similarities are to be found concerning distinct border sections and borderland regions throughout the European Union. It is therefore important that, as of the current state of the planning process for the upcoming period, border regions will be likely to get more weight than ever in the budget of the 2014–2020 period.

MÁRTON PETE

**In the Light of the Experience of Serbia's Accession to the European Union;**

**Headquarters of the Association of Professional Organizations Subotica, on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

In what ways can the future EU accession affect Serbia? How can we increase efficiency of cross-border cooperation from both Hungarian and Serbian sides? What has been achieved regarding joint development projects that can prove their importance? The conference held in October 2013 in Subotica was intended to find answers to these, among other, questions; its title was “In the light of the experience of Serbia's accession to the European Union”.

The Regional Scientific Association Subotica, the Southern Great Plain Regional Section of the MRTT and the expert economic committee of the Regional Committee of the MTA (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) Szeged organised their joint professional

meeting for the second time. In the opening lecture of the plenary session, Imre Lengyel (Head of the Institute of Economics and Economic Development, University of Szeged) summarised the Hungarian experience. What can be learned from nearly a decade of EU membership of our country by Serbia, where the current key foreign policy goal is integration to the European Community? The Canaan expectations typical to the period following the fall of the Iron Curtain now belong to the past. The examples of Hungary and all other previously socialist countries that joined the European Union show that EU membership does not result in automatic integration to the developed regions of the continent. On the contrary, all socio-economic indicators support the claim that since the accession in 2004, instead of the expected convergence the development gap between the old and new Member States is even bigger. Studying the internal spatial attributes of development it is clear that developmental pathways are not promising in post-socialist countries. Regional development disparities within countries have also increased; mostly capital cities and their surroundings have benefited from the EU accession. For Hungary, this means that not only just the region of Central Hungary failed to become competitive on an EU level, but also that growth opportunities in the rural economy decreased due to the draining effect of Budapest. The development of transport infrastructure is a good



example, where the construction of the radial highway structure resulted in the automatic increase of market range of the central area, displacing local businesses operating in the periphery. The availability of EU development aid as a solution has not lived up to expectations since the dominance of developed regions also prevails regarding the allocation of resources. Job creating business developments did not get sufficient capital in the least developed areas. Project-based tendering exercises are now proven to be a dead end, counterproductive tendering should be replaced by an integrated regional development approach (e.g. with some exaggeration, all towns in the Southern Great Plain region have constructed thermal baths from EU funds, which most likely will not be viable in the long run due to the lack of effective demand). Currently it is an open question if, for example, Hungary will be able to learn from the above-mentioned mistakes and able to use the EU development funds of the 2014–2020's period more efficiently. Nevertheless Serbia has the opportunity to avoid these issues.

A first condition is of course whether they succeed in joining the European Union in the near future. As the history lecture of Bálint Juhász Jr. (economic deputy secretary of Vojvodina province) indicated, the accession story of Serbia started in 1997 and it took fifteen years for the country to receive candidate status. Negotiations on policy harmonisation will also hopefully commence from 2014. This, of course, is not an automatic

guarantee of accession; in countries like Turkey or Macedonia integration is in an advanced stage on paper, but because of their special positions in the current geopolitical environment, there is no realistic chance of them obtaining EU membership. This level of rejection by the current member states does not concern Serbia since cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, and foreign trade statistics show that their natural partner is the European Union, rather than Russia and China as is often heard in current political discussions. In this respect it is a realistic hope of Serbia to be the 28th country to become a member (though Montenegro, independent from Serbia from 2006 also aspires to this title). Of course, a much more important question than the accession rank is whether the country is able to exploit the development funds of EU membership properly. Disorganised development strategies appear on many different territorial levels, which still presages an outcome similar to the one in Hungary, which is not very promising.

In the second session of the conference, the presentations related to Serbian-Hungarian border relations. Most of them revolved around a specific 'cooperation' and research on it, but an outline of the border situation and a theoretical model of the traditional geo-economic description concerning the area were also presented, which can be attributed to Ágnes Pál (University of Szeged, Department of Geography and Ecotourism).

It was interesting to experience the relativity of development regarding local energy resources presented by Gabriella Szónokyné Ancsin (University of Szeged, Department of Economic and Human Geography). The Southern Great Plain region in Hungary is ranked among its least developed regions, which sets the developmental goal for Vojvodina, the most developed region of Serbia. Examples of geothermal energy utilisation in Csongrád County may stimulate new initiatives in Vojvodina, which has even better potential in terms of geothermal energy. Besides substituting traditional energy, its significance lies in the emergence of the geothermal industry itself.

A comparison of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Southern Great Plain region and Vojvodina was presented by Imola Rittgasszer (Institute of Business Studies, University of Szeged). The degree of creativity within companies was measured by a questionnaire-based study, which showed Serbian SMEs as more favourable, however - as pointed out by a number of contributions to the debate - the analysis methodology is not yet fully developed. One of the indicators of creativity is the so-called tolerance dimension, which includes an indicator regarding whether ethnic minorities are employed by the employer. In the multicultural Vojvodina this is interpreted completely differently (different nationalities can be minority depending on company leadership and local environments) than in the

ethnically more homogeneous Southern Great Plain region.

From the lecture of Zoltan Takacs (Subotica Regional Science Association) about relations it soon became apparent that, according to the locals the main problem is not possible isolation of institutions with a Serbian interest (although they also gave us such an example concerning the failed cooperation between the Faculty of Civil Engineering in Baja and institutions with a similar profile in Subotica), but the seemingly unjustified inaction of Szeged which otherwise represents a geographically significant natural connection. This launched a lively debate about the issue of the University of Szeged having collaborations only with Novi Sad and Belgrade. Szeged naturally claimed their orientation was due to the colourful palette of higher education in these cities that facilitates cooperation, while Suboticians shared an extreme opinion that Szeged might be disinclined to create competition in Subotica. According to the lecturer the fields of training and research should be separated within the cooperation, and while current tendencies would indeed seem logical regarding research, criticism may rightfully address training provision in the large cities of the South Plains (e.g., why there is no external branch in Subotica).

The theoretical problem is sufficiently supported by an operating cooperation, as described by Zita Seres (University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technology). The IPA funded project related to the Serbian-Hungarian

wastewater treatment has at length been created between the two Faculties of Engineering at University of Szeged and University of Novi Sad. In addition to the presence of institutional conditions underlying the cooperation, the performer repeatedly stressed the importance of personal relationships as the pledge of cooperation. Beyond technical content the specific long-term goal of the project is the establishment of relationships between university students. During the project difficulties arose from the fact that, unlike the Hungarian government, Serbia has not funded the project with 15% of the total IPA value, so remaining support had to be obtained from factories interested in wastewater treatment.

The analysis by Mária Kölcseyné Balázs (Szent István University Békéscsaba, Institute of Social and Management Sciences) of applications received by the National Cultural Fund between 2007-2011 from Vojvodina was also related to the the practical use of EU funds. The examination of slightly more than 100 applicants pointed out that despite the opportunities the range of applicants is narrow (only 30 applicant organizations within 5 years, from 15 settlements in Vojvodina, seven of which have not even once won). Furthermore the conditions of these tenders were not nearly as strict as stakeholders can expect in the case of future EU proposals. The necessity for more elaborate documents including more detailed budget plans was mentioned as an advice to tender writers. Successful applications

within a particular community can be highly important in the long run because otherwise, along with the the loss of motivation arising from the sense of failure, stakeholders may automatically exclude themselves from the development sources due to not tendering.

These institutionalised forms of cross-border cooperation can provide a solution to local resource shortages as well. Of course the danger still exists that eventually those settlements that are in the greatest need of development assistance will fail to be receptive. Nevertheless, EGTCs that provide the legal framework for cross-border relations to gradually replace Euro-regions may bring a new dimension to horizontal relationships, as pointed out by Zsuzsanna Fejes (University of Szeged, Department of Political Sciences). In order to enable Serbia to apply the EGTC Regulation, the adoption of the Madrid convention may serve as a prerequisite. In its absence, Serb municipalities can only obtain so-called 'observer' status within projects affecting the Serbian-Hungarian border such as the Banat-Triplex-Confinium EGTC. Ukraine, while taking much slower progressive steps towards EU integration has already joined this convention. For this reason, it may seem that the political will to build a closer relationship is missing from the Serbian side.

The final lecture session was about a presently successful and seemingly sustainably managed project with a relatively small number of sources

that was presented by Dalma Makkos and János Schwertner (Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Social and Economic Geography). The Voice of Village fostered the creation of contacts between emigrants from three settlements in Vojvodina (Ada, Zemun, Temerin) and one in Hungary (Lajosmizse). The long-term goal of the project is to raise awareness among the leaders of the settlements that emigrants may have the same knowledge base on the life of the settlement than the present inhabitants. Since migrants typically represent a younger, more educated group, who also have active western-world experiences, they may as well be involved in the development of specific development plans. The EU's development policy sets the priority on local, community-based developments (CLLD - Community-Led Local Development) for the 2014-2020 period. It is doubtful whether the most deprived areas of development with an aging population will be able to effectuate local economic developments in practice. Even if remigration may seem to be a utopian process at present, the intensification of personal ties, and thus the inclusion of external knowledge will definitely create greater chances for the execution of community planning.

Listening to presentations of the conference featuring diverse and useful examples, the observer could only sense inadequacy in the title of the professional workshop emphasizing Serbia given the fact that Vojvodina was represented almost exclusively by

the Hungarian minority. It would have been useful to find out more about the point of view of Serbian stakeholders on Hungarian-Serbian relations, including getting an insight to whether the mutual economic interests can make existing ethnic divisions disappear.

ÁRON NAGY

### **Capacity Building and Cross-Border Cooperation**

#### **Anniversary Conference of the Euro-Institute. Maison de la Région, Strasbourg, on 21<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

The Euro-Institut based in Kehl, Germany celebrated its 20th anniversary on 21th October 2013. The celebration and the conference organized on this occasion hosted more than 200 guests who had the opportunity to gain an insight into the institute's two-decade-long history and its range of activities. The conference itself was committed to debating the greatest challenges of the present and perspectives for the future and had the involvement of former and current associates of the institute as well as numerous other interested parties and guests.

The institute was inaugurated on 23rd April 1993 under the name Euro-Institut, Institute for Regional Cooperation and European Administration (Institut für regionale Zusammenarbeit und europäische Verwaltung/Institut pour la coopération régionale et l'administration européenne) and initially its main field of activity was

the organization of training courses. At first the courses were mainly held for students but later targeted training sessions came to life that hosted about fifty thousand participants within the past twenty years. Currently these successful training programs concentrate on three main pillars:

Providing cross-curricular competencies on the structure of political and administrative systems, cross-border cooperation, communication between different cultures and the management of cross-border projects. Connecting to this the institute offers tandem language courses where the partners learn each other's native language as a foreign one.

Providing professional competences in the fields of environmental protection, spatial planning, youth policy, healthcare, local issues, culture and law application amongst others. Specialised training sessions have been held on several occasions on different subjects such as cross-border occupational safety and health as well as law enforcement and jurisdiction.

Providing European competences with particular attention to the policies, legal system and funding opportunities of the European Union as well as the development programs and calls for proposals (which mean the development of such competences are essentials both for the management activities of EU projects and for the creation of international partnerships).

These three pillars still constitute the central core of the institute's activities. However, with the years the field of

activities has undergone a remarkable enlargement with the incorporation of project implementation and follow-up activities as well as project and policy consulting activities on the one hand, and applied research activities aiming for the scientific implementation of the development of border regions on the other hand.

Until 2008 project implementation and follow-up activities were confined to running a documentation centre but since then the follow-up of individual projects has increasingly come into focus, and in the course of the last couple of years they contributed to the implementation of numerous projects. Consulting activities also underwent significant changes with the years. Initially, most attention was paid to the identification of differences between the two sides of a border, then the emphasis was placed on the assessment of cooperation programs which activity later became more progressive as planning was put in the foreground: the elaboration of feasibility studies, cooperation initiatives and programs.

Concerning its applied research activities the institute aimed at strengthening of connections between science and practice. In the frame of scientific activities a wide range of publications were released on issues of cross-border cooperation (such as in the themes of institutional, cultural or economic cooperation), and the institute regularly organizes scientific events aiming to debate these questions. Besides these activities the institute plays an important role in numerous

programs and scientific organisations dealing with the questions of borders.

The institute celebrated its 20th anniversary under the name Institute for Cross-Border Cooperation (Institut für grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit/Institut pour la coopération transfrontalière) that refers to the German-French border area, the territorial focus of the institute's activities.

The conference organized on the occasion of the anniversary had a clear thematic structure based on the above mentioned activity fields. After a brief introduction the importance of the institute was assessed at first from the perspective of its contribution to development policies, with an emphasis on community-level development policy, then from that of its scientific activities and finally from its role in the socio-economic life of the larger border region together with its responses to the demands of local/regional actors.

In his introduction Josha Frey, president of the Euro-Institut and member of the state parliament of Baden-Württemberg, stressed that 20 twenty years represent a remarkable age in the short history of European integration, as the Euro-Institut was founded before the establishment of the Schengen Area and the European Union as well as the introduction of the common currency. Currently, the European union faces the greatest challenge in its history which may give an important role to the institute. From the very beginning the institute aimed at the bridging of distances, either

between people or administrative bodies, and achieved considerable success in turning border regions to neighbour regions.

Since 2006 the institute has been directed by Dr. Joachim Beck who graduated in administrative sciences and has many years of market experience from the field of regional development consulting. In his speech he emphasised the importance of border regions in European integration pointing out that if a cooperation cannot work between neighbouring Kehl and Strasbourg it will certainly not work successfully on European level either. Border regions are therefore the laboratories of European integration.

The institute has connections to the chapters of the community regional policy targeting the border regions. The institute works closely with the two most prominent organisations for the development of border regions, the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) from France and the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) from Germany. The Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN) also helps the institute in sharing and gaining experience. This network enables answers to similar questions of development policies to be found in a comparable manner. The TEIN currently has 12 member institutes of which the Euro-Institut is one of the oldest and a basic model for the others.

In the field of regional development the role of the institute became decisive by contributing

to INTERREG programs. Martin Guillermo Ramirez, Secretary General of AEBR pointed out that the institute managed the implementation of five generations of INTERREG. Jean Peyrony, Director General of MOT added that INTERREG was no longer sufficient for the development of border regions, the involvement of member states is also important. He therefore welcomed the macro-regional initiatives of the EU which would offer new opportunities for the next programming period. Both of them agreed that the most important decisions are still taken at national level and that powerful centralization had recently begun in numerous member states (which led to the reinforcement of national competences). However, through its directives the European Union accomplished remarkable progress (e.g. in the field of cross-border public healthcare issues). Although regions do not have to be granted strong competences in all cases, they ought to be sufficiently equipped. Therefore capacity building and local/regional partnerships as well as the role of institutions such as Euro-Institut are of major importance.

The next section discussed questions of research, knowledge production and knowledge transfer. Since the very beginning Euro-Institut recognized the importance of scientific embeddedness therefore it sought close cooperation with the scientific sector. The two main partners from higher education are the University of Public Administration in Kehl and the Insti-

tute of Political Studies at the University of Strasbourg. For many years the two institutions have offered courses that are organized in cooperation with each other and experts from the Euro-Institut and provide adequate knowledge of the German and French institutional systems as well, targeting state administration workers from both sides of the border. The associates of the institute play an active role in higher education, and the institute itself provides internship opportunities for students. Besides this the two universities are important research partners for the Euro-Institut having participated together in numerous research projects that resulted in the release of a wide range of publications (e.g. *Perspectives of local governance in Europe, Vivre et penser la coopération transfrontalière/ Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit leben und erforschen 1-5.*). Meanwhile Professor Michel Casteigts, honorary president of the institute, pointed at the fact that unlike other disciplines whose knowledge bases evolved over several thousand years the discipline of cross-border relations is entirely new. Its knowledge cannot be transferred by scholars; experts basically learn from each other and produce the knowledge together. No quality education is possible if there is no direct link with the production of knowledge. In this knowledge production process interdisciplinarity plays a crucial role as the problems of borders and borderlands usually affect multiple disciplinary fields. He found it was a problem that the presentation

of problems was still predominantly carried out at national level even though these problems had numerous cross-border concerns. He thought it would be useful to create an international protocol on the investigation of cross-border themes.

The third main pillar of the institute's activities is in the active contribution to resolving problems of everyday life in the border region. A number of questions that are believed to be decisive for everyday life on both sides of the border are to be tackled such as labour market imbalances between the neighbouring countries as well as differences in the application of employment law, the preparation of administrative workers and elected representatives for cooperative work and, related to this, the development of a common institutional and political culture (even on a European level) and the most effective involvement of society in these processes. The cooperation of the most important administrative bodies of the two sides

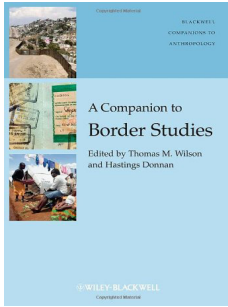
of the border (the Region of Alsace, the department of Lower Rhine and the Urban Community of Strasbourg in France as well as the Freiburg Region and the Ortenau district in Germany) has a long tradition and it is due largely to the facilitating and inspiring work of the institute.

As a summary of the conference Josha Frey underlined that there was no guarantee that the same solutions would be effective in all border regions. However, in the course of the conference we had the opportunity to learn more about an institution that, in spite of the dividing historical and geographical legacy, has achieved remarkable success in the integration of the social structures and economic resources of the border region and offered innovative solutions for the emerging new demands of local and regional actors. Furthermore the institute set new goals for the European community as well, lead the deepening of the European integration towards new horizons

MÁRTON PETE.



**THOMAS M. WILSON and HASTINGS DONNAN (eds.) (2012): *A Companion to Border Studies*. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 616 pp.**



Wiley-Blackwell has been publishing its Blackwell Companions to Anthropology Series since 2004 which titles, according to the publishing

company, aim to offer a series of comprehensive syntheses of the traditional subdisciplines, primary subjects, and geographic areas of inquiry for the field. Taken together, the series represents both a contemporary survey of anthropology and a cutting edge guide to the emerging research and intellectual trends in the field as a whole.

*A Companion to Border Studies* was released in May 2012 as the 22nd title in this series. The editors, Thomas M. Wilson (Binghamton University, State University of New York) and Hastings Donnán (Queen's University Belfast), are both scholars in anthropology together with most of the authors (15 of them) who represent this field of science according to the disciplinary nature and the aims of the series. The second biggest group is that of the geographers (11 scholars) and the third one is that of the historians (3 scholars) which reflect to the prominent role of spatial and temporal dimensions in border studies. Beside them, scholars from a wide range of other disciplines

(such as political science, administrative sciences, sociology, European-, Asian- and Indonesian studies respectively, development studies, and ethnology) are also involved.

The authors see the relevance of research on borders in the fact that the number of state borders saw a dramatic increase in recent years and at the same time the volume of international mobility got far higher than ever. The juxtaposition of these seemingly controversial processes supposes a change in the role of borders. As Wilson and Donnán point out in their introduction, researchers and policy makers realized that many factors affecting the changing circumstances of the national and international political and economic environment are mostly to be found in border regions.

Emphasising the topicality and relevance of research on borders is a recurring motif of the essays in the book. Their authors repeatedly reveal on the one hand the scientific added value of border theory in the examination of bounded political economies, and, on the other hand, the decisive role of the intersection of territoriality, power and the state for the different manifestations of identity and culture, both in local and supralocal contexts.

The studies of the book are grouped into five greater parts starting with political borders appearing in the geographical space, then gradually concentrating the understanding of borders on society, on its groups and finally on the level of individuals, showing meanwhile the changing role

of territoriality, power, governance and identity, on national and global level as well.

The first greater part discusses the problem of borders from the perspective of sovereignty, territory and governance. The starting point is marked by the study of Brendan O'Leary on the partition of geographical space and its traditional tools, borders. Partition created the framework of the divergent historical evolution that resulted in the emergence of different identities, as it is pointed by Josiah McC. Heyman. A fine example of this process cited in his work is the US-Mexico border which saw the emergence of a distinct 'border culture'.  
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Besides partition the role of state power is also of decisive importance concerning the shift of dividing border effects. Actually, the dividing role of European state borders saw a remarkable transformation in the course of recent decades. European integration largely contributed to the weakening of state borders between member states, whilst external borders were strengthened, as the study of James Wesley Scott points out. Subsequently, after the comparison of European and African practices of cross-border cooperation, Anthony I. Asiwaju reveals the substantial disparities which result in African countries being unable to succeed as well as European countries do in the field of cross-border cooperation. Far more than this, European integration gave different answers to the questions of international security policy after the events of 9/11 than North America

where the restricting border policy of the United States obviously played an effective role. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly explained the reasons of these different practices of security policy experienced in the North Atlantic region through the interrelations of the wider social and economic environment. However, the 'neo-authoritarian turn' experienced in the welfare states against the free movement of labour force that would restrict the immigration of people because of security reasons of national interests is more and more effective in western European countries despite that these countries benefit most from these movements in economic terms, as it is presented in the study of John Borneman.

The chapters of the second part examine the context of states, nations and empires. In the currently existing global economic and political system, despite the globalization process of recent decades and ideas suggesting a borderless world, borders still seem to be of dominant importance, as James Anderson describes, and while formerly prevailing 'former' empires were step by step overcome by 'informal' empires, primarily by the United States, the demand on the stability of borders is increasing.

The emergence of the stable and democratic states of the current world order supposed, beyond the collapse of 'formal' empires, the internal structuring of the national framework, delimited by state borders. In many cases this was carried out through a violent assimilation process of which

a painful loss was the 'nationalization' of contested borderland regions and especially cities of multicultural social background. Numerous escalating ethnic or religious conflicts of our contemporary world, especially those of divided cities, such as Belfast (protestant-catholic), Jerusalem (Arab-Jewish), Mostar and Sarajevo (Bosnian-Serb-Croat, and Islam-Orthodoxy-Catholicism respectively), Beirut (Christian-Muslim) and Kirkuk (Arab-Kurd-Turk), all point towards the reproduction of the above mentioned processes and the sharpening of the problem, therefore the actuality of this theme is insid in the essay of Liam O'Dowd.

The historical colonial empires themselves have played an important role in the formation of current state borders and the largely artificial nature of these borders also contributed to the emergence of various identities and national attitudes on opposite sides of borders even when the basic cultural geographical characteristics showed minor differences. This is clearly demonstrated through the example of the British/Canadian-US border by Allan K. McDougall and Lisa Philips and in the case of thate borders in South America, primarily of Argentina and its neighbours, in the study of Alejandro Grimson. However, some challenges of our time, such as the questions of security policy, may tie together independent states and lead them towards joint policy making inasfarnus they are ready to partly renounce their sovereignty. A fine example for this is the case of the United Kingdom and the Republic of

Ireland, in the essay of Cathal McCall, which countries keep on trying to harmonise their foreign policies in the aim of preserving the openness of their common land border.

In certain cases, states themselves target the transformation of a part of their territory into a buffer zone, creating some kind of 'no man's land' along their borders or in such places which are under the state's control but do not constitute an integrative part of it, neither in geographical nor in administrative terms. These peripheries often served to host some undesirable but necessary state responsibilities which is well portrayed through the example of the overseas territories of the early years (1870s, 1880s) of the French Third Republic, used as penal colonies, in the study of Olivier Thomas Kramsch. The relevance of this problem is doubtless in light of the extrajudicial detention facilities of the United States (e.g. Guantánamo), although the author omits to mention them.

Nowadays, thanks to modern technological devices, the exact delimitation of borders can be performed in a largely precise manner, by taking into account a wide range of circumstances. The study of David Newman suggests that the clarification of border disputes and the creation of national frameworks is far more a political than a technical question as it is seen in the case of the difficulties around the establishment of the State of Palestine where the proposal for the delimitation of borders, based on scientific evidence and supported

by modern technological tools, was not approved for the creation of the national framework, due to the lack of political will.

The third part is devoted to questions of security, order and disorder in the context of borders. The secure border as such has been given reasonably different understandings in recent years. The answers to such questions like who protects the border against who and what, and for what reason, can quickly change with time which is well illustrated in the essay of Mathijs Pelkmans. In the course of the 20th century the Georgian village of Sarpi, situated on the Turkish border, had to face at first the consequences of the isolationism of the Soviet Union, then the challenges of illegal activities following the reopening of borders. In any case the events of 9/11 fundamentally influenced notions on the security of borders. However the efforts that the United States made in the field of security policy seemed somehow exaggerated. They tended to be geographically detached from borders as the increasing usage of biometric data was no longer confined to control of border crossing but also used to observe the movement of people, as it is pointed out by Brenda Chalfin. Also an important element of the security of borders is their exact delimitation and recognition. However, as we have already seen above, the Israel-Palestine border (the so called 'Green Line') cannot meet these expectations, as it is still a source of tensions for both sides 60 years after the declaration of

the establishment of the State of Israel and there can be serious risks associated with this situation discussed in the study of Dan Rabinowitz.

Chapters dealing with questions of cross-border economic (often illegal) activities considered by the central government as the weakening of state power also fit in the theme of order and disorder. Examples are cited from the borderland of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda by Timothy Raeymaekers, and from the Afghan-Tajik border area by Jonathan Goodhand. These border regions are indeed dynamic peripheries in contrast to the economically lagging central areas. A distinct field of border security is presented in the study of Alan Smart and Josephine Smart. The protection against the dread of epidemic diseases across borders became of high importance following the great international pandemics of recent years even the strictest border controls and closures were ineffective against these 'natural' phenomena. The openness or 'closedness' of borders is of decisive importance for natural ecosystems as well. Hilary Cunningham claims that even if borders are social constructs they also split the networks of nature as well as the connections of society, furthermore they create different living conditions (such as affecting environmental quality, nutrition access, protection, etc.) for animals as they do for humans too.

In the fourth section the displacement, emplacement and mobility of the population as a

global challenge is investigated. The studies examine the movement of the population and the intervention of borders in these flows primarily in a geographical context, therefore the authors of this part predominantly represent the field of geography. The reshaping relationship between borders and population mobility and, related to this, the changing role of state borders are also taken into consideration.

The role of borders, meaning the geographical framework of states, is largely defined by the purposes and interests of the states themselves. Sometimes the openness or 'closedness' of borders depend on the current purposes of the state power. This dependence makes the movements of society, especially those of borderland regions such as cross-border daily commuting, reasonably vulnerable. Border crossing movements of the daily routine, often originating from pre-border times can suffer serious damage when it comes to the intervention of the state (such as the closure of borders) motivated by short-term protectionist reasons, as was the case on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, presented by Nick Megoran.

The political attitude of the state can also be decisive in much less extreme cases. Henk van Houtum points out that in wealthy societies a border is not unambiguously a barrier but rather a filter for migrants which allows or denies the entry of immigrants according to the interests of the state. For instance, in the migration policy of the United States borders and

their control play a meaningful role. In contrast the emphasis on internal control has increased only in recent years. However, as Mathew Coleman argues, this is poorly synchronized with border control and its efficiency is contested as, for example, it does not conduct labour inspections to spot illegal workers. He set these experiences against the practice of the European Union where border control and immigration control are resolutely separated and governed by different policies.

In many cases migration is strongly connected with the violation of law and illegality. This refers to the crimes committed by or against migrants such as illegal entry or human trafficking which make borderlands the 'sites of crime' and their consequences are not only effective in place but also far beyond it, as is shown by Michele Ford and Lenore Lyons in their essay. Another form of illegality or the creation of barriers in welfare states against the inflow of asylum seekers. Australia and North America as well as the countries of Europe have elrmed quite similar strategies to keep asylum seekers out of their territory which reminds us in many ways to the logic of the formerly presented penal colonies. Ith study of Alison Mountz ésd Nancy Hiemstra reveals that the most attractive destination countries ofr global migration have created some kind of buffer zones oi their territorial waters and overseas territories, or even within the territory of other states where laws and responsibilities normally provided

by national sovereignty and national legal systems are of limited effect.

Nicholas De Genova points at a distinct controversy. He claims that immigrants often wear the label 'alien' on themselves and are therefore treated with contempt from the side of the 'integrating' society. Although a wide range of jobs and professions are almost exclusively taken up by (illegal) immigrants, by all accounts their appreciation is by far not in line with their actual role. A specific case of the emergence of individual 'borders' around migrants is when the society of their home country splits into two along the question of whether to migrate or not and along the opinions of participants and non-participants on each other. In the background of these conflicts it is often about the geographical (border modifications) or political (transformation of political system) alteration of a state's framework, as it is described in the essay of Pamela Ballinger. All these phenomena contribute to the book's suggestion that borders are not only confined to the geographical space and increasingly applied but even moral.

The fifth part continues with a discussion of opinions on the manifestation and perception of borders in everyday life from foregoing representations of subjective individual and community perspectives. As David B. Coplan reveals, the physical construction of borders (e.g. that of border stations, fences) is in many cases largely of symbolic relevance

serving indeed some kind of marking of the sovereign territory of the state. Through numerous examples, such as that of the border between Togo and Ghana, one can see that there is no real exclusion, distancing or control behind these scenes, as neither local society nor public authorities give borders practical importance. In other cases symbolic borders can really divide social groups of different statuses. These borders are however readily re-evaluated, reconceptualised and extended as the recently sparked social debate around a soviet war memorial in Estonia presented by Robert J. Kaiser shows. Here the formerly decisive language-based social barriers were overwritten by the assessment of the relationship towards the nation. The opportunity for the re-evaluation may not only contribute to the overcoming of social but also to that of geographical borders: even the most restricting and dividing borders can be considered as dynamic spaces of social interaction if we examine them from the perspective of connections, as is done by Robert R. Alvarez in the case of the US-Mexico border. Nevertheless, it is this same border which serves as an example in the study of Paul Nugent of the controversial emergence of asymmetric cross-border relations and cross-border urban areas. Eventually, it seems to be a well-established notion to claim that the roles of borders show dynamic shifts depending on what individuals and communities assign them and the same borders can differently manifest themselves on an individual level.

Altogether, the book certainly has the capacity to examine the most important themes and research fields of border studies from different aspects and approaches. It is a honour to the editors that despite the impressive (more than half-hundred pages long) extent, the disciplinal multiplicity of the authors and the largegent orientations of their studies they managed to publish a reasonably compact and well-structured work which may become an important literence for a wide range of researches in social sciences aimin at g thenderstanding of borders.

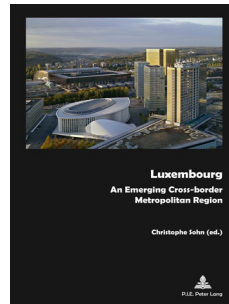
At the same time, this variegation which is one of the greatest values of the book has obviously posed difficulties during the editing. The editors have clearly sought balance in the sections but this has, however, been accompanied by a noticeable internal contextual and methodological inhomogeneity on the one hand and the overlap of problems discussed by different subdomains on the other hand. These which areourse, anomalies difficult toly avoidab anoma mprehensive works but b anut mae ave structuring would nevertheless have resulted in a the strongnternal cohesion ofto the iuevolume.

Taking into consideration all aspects this book has a very important role in the professional literature of border studies. With its anthropological view it aims to place the individual within the centre of the examination of the bordered geographical space, and to approach the role, the characteristics and the shifts of borders as well as social phenomena firmly connected

to borders (such as sovereignty, exclusion, identity) from the situation of the individual. Due to its extent and complexity it could hardly be considered a basic work, its importance is rather in bringing the attention of researchers who examine borders from various aspects to meaningful linkages between the questions of borders and the most important global, regional and local challenges of our time.

MÁRTON PETE

**CHRISTOPHE SOHN (ed.) (2012):**  
*Luxembourg: An Emerging*  
*Cross-border Metropolitan Region.*  
P.I.E. Peter Lang, Brussels, 313 pp.



The subject of our review was published by Christophe Sohn, an employee at the Luxembourg-based Center for Populations, Poverty and Public Policy Studies, CEPS/INSTEAD since 2005. As a senior researcher and the head of the DEODE (Geography and Development) research department he also coordinates the work of the METROLUX research team. The group focuses on studying integration processes in cross-border polycentric metropolitan areas based primarily on Luxembourg but also other border regions across Europe. Research conducted by the METROLUX group covers three areas: firstly, the modalities of economic

development of the cross-border metropolitan regions within the global system, secondly, ways of cooperation and governance to coordinate activities and territorial development including a variety of public and private actors, and thirdly, the examination of the international role of the aforementioned processes.

The present volume contains the results of a METROLUX project carried out by the research team between 2007 and 2009. Fourteen authors took part in the production of the work, mainly CEPS/INSTEAD geographers, but experts on specific areas in academia also participated (mostly from universities of the French language area (Luxembourg, Strasbourg, Nancy, Paris, Lyon and Mulhouse)) besides other professionals of organizations interested in regional planning (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion, Spatial Planning Observatory of Luxembourg, the German Council of Science and Humanities, Wissenschaftstrat). The Luxembourgish, German and French authors were selected from a wider region, whose scientific and practical activities ensured the possibility of exploring details of the characteristics of policies on cross-border spatial development, economy, mobility and governance regarding Luxembourg.

The overall objective of the above mentioned project is to explain and provide a theoretical framework for the atypical urbanization process of Luxembourg, and to analyse those spatial,

social, and economic processes due to which the metropolitan area is more strongly linked to the global economy, while mutual interdependence among neighbouring cross-border territories is gradually established.

The study volume aims to evolve around three key issues with the help of an international team of authors and thematic diversity. The first part of the book seeks to explore those central functions in Luxembourg that can capture the characteristics of the transformation of the city into a metropolis. The examination of the metropolis functions is mainly limited to the knowledge-intensive economy. According to the authors' hypotheses Luxembourg is a global city despite its size, since in addition to the symbolic and governmental functions related to the European Union it also has a highly specialized financial sector integrated into global economic networks. The research aims to explore what the potentials and the hindering factors are for development in the metropolis, what sort of spatial organisation do metropolis functions create, as well as the effect of state borders on all of these processes. The second part deals with cross-border interdependencies mainly in relation to the spatial dimensions of the labour market. It investigates the space-forming role of job-related mobility and the patterns of residence changes. It claims that the migration of workers in the border region is fundamentally influenced by different property prices and wage levels affecting housing conditions on each side of



the border. The third part of the book is about the hypothesis that a change in the functions of borders paved the way for the emergence of cross-border urban areas, which have resulted in new opportunities and problem issues in regional development. Spatial processes demand new governance frameworks that are capable of managing the urban network with cross-border methods instead of with the less and less suitable nation-state frameworks. The main purpose of the latter part is exploring the type of management system to be developed in the Luxembourg cross-border metropolitan region, the tasks of the city regarding this new cooperation, and the level of autonomy Luxembourg should have in decision-making on regional planning.

Viewed from Budapest the unique features of the urban network of Central Europe and the Carpathian Basin give even more importance to the topic of this book. The establishment of cross-border urban systems can be placed in the focus of scientific interest due to the fact that borders in the former Eastern Bloc and Central Europe previously functioning as a barriers and strong filters are rapidly becoming more and more open, where the almost hermetically sealed, alienated border areas are being transformed into integrated border regions over a few decades. The regime change and the accession to the EU both reassess the situation in border settlements. It was already clear by the millennium that national settlement networks and catchment areas will conform less

and less with administrative and state borders which will thus be crossed in a growing number of locations. Cross-border network connections of the European settlement system are going to be prosperous over the next few decades.

Cities at the top of the settlement hierarchy with a previously isolated development are now equipped with extensive cross-border catchment areas. Functionally related settlement-networks and mutilated catchment areas with large potentials will have to be taken into account. The reintegration of missing elements and levels of the settlement network (regional centres, etc.) into national settlement networks can once again provide central features to town-deficient areas. As a result of this process certain settlements can reclaim their natural centres, while the centres can retrieve parts of their associated hinterlands. The choice of the subject focus in our region is shown by the example of the recently emerging Central European cross-border polycentric metropolitan area around Vienna and Bratislava which has become the most relevant spatial organising force of CENTROPE. As a sign of this process in the region, the suburbanisation of Bratislava has led to the birth of a cross-border agglomeration in Austria and Hungary, for example.

There are also a number of settlements along the Central European border regions which were in close functional connection before the descent of the Iron Curtain or the peace systems terminating the

two world wars (or in fact which formed one settlement) and processes in their relations in recent years are pointing towards unification again. To mention examples, these twin cities and city-pairs lay along the Neisse, the Oder and the Danube (i.e. Frankfurt-Stubice, Görlitz-Zgorzelec, Guben-Gubin, Komárom-Komárno, Esztergom-Štúrovo), but Cieszyn and Český Těšín or Valka and Valga can also operate as cross-border functional units. Today, these communities are trying to intensify cooperation, create joint organisations in many cases (e.g. Gorizia-Nova Gorica) and coordinate their development plans. All the above mentioned serve as a motivation to open this book to study the subject in areas with decades of experience, find out what kinds of problems will have to be faced and ways of adapting the results with regards to the local particularities of our region.

Returning to the presentation of the volume, one of its most valuable parts is the introduction written by Chrisophe Sohn, in which the author conducts a thorough review of the literature on this concept of the cross-border metropolitan region in order to be able to define it better. This is valuable because the definition is still poorly understood, which obviously hinders common professional thinking on the subject. He presents a coherent summary about the appearance of the region-type in scientific discourse and European regional policies by studying scholarly literature on the subject, and at the end he proposes a definition as well.

In the first chapter, Olivier Walther develops a useful classification in order to rank operating businesses in the hi-tech and knowledge-intensive sector. The investigation of spatial dimensions of the knowledge economy faces serious methodological limitations due to the disparities between the reporting systems in Europe, especially in the eastern parts. It is an important result of the study that since the metropolitan area is well suited for classification, the knowledge economy in the country, which is highly concentrated to Luxembourg and its agglomerations, becomes mappable.

In the second chapter, Olivier Walther and Christian Schulz deal with the concentration of financial services within the city of Luxembourg. The results of the study should be evaluated in light of the low level of attention given by geographers to the examination of the development and geographical characteristics of centres - embedded into the global economy until recently - which have a great impact on the spatial organisation of their broader regions. The study is specifically based on a methodology by other authors, mainly relating to recent London based projects by Taylor and others. Besides questionnaires sent to the participants of the financial sector, leaders of global service businesses were also interviewed personally. In addition to the primary research, spatial statistical methods are also reported. The strong regional concentration of financial functions is well presented in the study on a map as well as the implementation of a nearest

neighbour analysis. Therefore, with the help of these methods it is possible to determine those advantages and disadvantages of location, and forces of concentration and dispersion that influence the spatial structuring of financial businesses in the metropolitan area.

Within the third chapter Ralf Blaser, Michaela Genscheimer and Christian Schulz examine international perceptions and representations formed about the city of Luxembourg. Besides interviews with the members of the Boards of Directors of banks, accounting firms and financial advisory firms this chapter is the most methodologically different from the others due to its content analysis of printed media. The approach can be evaluated as innovative and useful when compared with the scientific approaches of Europe's eastern half. The method of completing questionnaires during personal interviews is rare but not unheard of concerning the investigation of western cities. An example is the work on The Corporation of London by Taylor and coworkers. The sources of the media analysis includes a wide range of newspapers and magazines written in English, German and French based on the language skills of the authors. Multilingualism can be evaluated positively, but the content analysis results might have brought even more interesting results, if other Central and Eastern European sources were also available to authors besides the Prague Tribune. Differences between impressions about large cities

of the continent's eastern and western parts could also have been examined. Nevertheless, thanks to the work of the authors the way Luxembourg is perceived by international companies and printed media becomes clear.

In the fourth chapter, Antoine Decoville and Christophe Sohn attempt to map the functional structuring of the Luxembourg metropolitan area. The maps, which illustrate the functional catchment area of Luxembourg and its internal functional division and specialization, are valuable results of their work. These figures help determine the way international borders and regional socio-economic characteristics influence the spatial organization of the metropolitan area. Luxembourg's catchment area is also special due to its increasing transnational framework, which means that it is spread over all border areas of the three neighbouring countries to varying degrees, while the island-like structure of the commuters of knowledge-intensive sectors relates to the internal fragmentation of the agglomeration. Determination of the catchment areas is based entirely on labour market data, as the limitation is made according to the place of residence of commuters and workers of the knowledge-intensive sectors. Determining the geographic extent of urban agglomerations according to the proportion of suburban commuters is a long-established method regarding both research on urban geography in Central Europe and the analysis of functional urban areas defined on an EU level. Further research options

may include one of the gravity models often used in international scholarly literature regarding the determination of theoretical catchment areas, while other functions that form functional urban areas may also become the object of analysis in the future.

In the fifth chapter Philippe Gerber, Olivier Carpentier and Samuel Klein study the consequences of spatial specialisations arising from daily commuting and cross-border suburbanization. The study highlights the specificity of the Luxembourg metropolitan area, where, in the case of Luxembourg, the traditional central city-catchment area relations prevail simultaneously with the agglomeration's cross-border nature within mobility patterns. Net migration mapping clearly shows the cross-border processes of suburbanization. It is also found that the border plays a double role: on one hand, it acts as a barrier (block) because of the differences in property prices; on the other hand, it is an asset since moving close to the border reduces travel times, which plays an important role when choosing location of residence. The most valuable part of the study is the two maps produced by a vector method that determines the main directions of local residential and commuting flows using linear signals. In the former case movements are directed towards the town centre in each country, while in the latter arrows pointing towards the borders are very rare.

The study of Sébastien Lord and Philippe Gerber is to be highlighted in

the sixth chapter, since until now very little commentary has been available on the socio-economic inequalities which result from the process of 'metropolisation' - the urban sprawl and regional specialization - on a cross-border metropolitan regional level. Until now existing scientific practices mainly created analysis reports confined to one city or one urban agglomeration with a focus on sociological, demographic fields. This study however examines the types of residential movement on an inter-regional and transnational scale. The authors seek to find out the size of the area that covers residential mobility surrounding Luxembourg (the proportion of movements within or outside the borders), and the social or even economic characteristics (nationality, age, marital status, type of employment, duration of employment, monthly earnings and workplace-home distance) of migrants. Logistic regression models stand out among other methods. These enable the authors to explore which variables and to what extent make the relocation of employees of various location and social statuses probable. According to the authors' findings moving to Luxembourg or its agglomeration is mostly determined by professional rank and stage of life. The topic is worth further research as it is not yet fully proven whether transnational segregation tendencies are strengthened by the development of the cross-border metropolitan region.

In the seventh chapter, the case study of Olivier Walther compares three relatively similar Western Eu-

ropean cross-border metropolitan areas (Luxembourg, Basel, Geneva) in order to help determine the specific demographic features of the Luxembourg metropolitan area. The author aims to discover the effect of borders on demographic trends within the metropolitan region and whether urban growth is characterised by increasing or decreasing fragmentation and concentration. The model used by Walther related to cross-border demographic integration includes a very simple, easy to use method that displays changes in population density depending on the distance to the border, in two consecutive time periods. Demographic integration in the border area may take place if disparities are decreasing between the border areas within given transects between the two selected dates. Another method used in the study is spatial autocorrelation. The downside of the analysis is that it only takes change in population density and population differences into account, while many other demographic characteristics do not play a role in determining the level of integration. Nevertheless, Walther makes new scientific findings. Maps can be highlighted from his work, according to which the formerly heavily industrialised eastern half of the French border area was able to increase its population since the 2000s, contributing to demographic integration by joining the cross-border labour migration processes. Demographic integration varies by direction; it is less relevant towards

German territories. Nonetheless, equilibration processes have started between Luxembourg and Trier, which were simultaneously fed by the urbanization of the Luxembourg catchment area and the suburbanization of Trier.

In the eighth chapter, Christian Lamour and Franz Clement give a concise summary of the territorial governance and the cross-border metropolitan management of the Greater Region (Grande Région, Grossregion). The topic is also important because the processes of globalisation and European integration have drawn attention to the need for cross-border functional regions, as well as for cross-border management of large metropolitan areas. The authors also draw attention to number of other problem areas. Ways of governance based on spatial structures have to be developed to apply to several countries, so that they are also able to bring civil society and the corporate sector together, while cities with a great influence on spatial structures should be integrated into the cooperation networks. The study clearly highlights the fact that some regional players have different roles and responsibilities, skills and interests, and therefore the development of policy coordination is often severely hampered in the framework of macro-regional cooperation integrating different regional levels and institutional powers. Thanks to the authors we become familiar with changes in the regional planning approach since the 1980s,

due to which cooperation, which was initially considered as a national matter, has begun to move towards the establishment of cooperation within a multi-level institutional governance that aims to integrate cities as well. It is important to realize that polycentric urban network structures received support only in the last few years. The authors provided a valuable, but somewhat difficult to read summary – without tabular or map displays – on how cross-border urban network projects and cooperation networks were formed, and what types of objectives have been defined in the past decade (e.g., joint land use plan, European Capital of Culture, Trilux science park, Greater Region University projects).

In the ninth chapter, Eric Auburtin describes the role of urban cooperation networks within the governance of cross-border metropolitan areas. Description of these relatively newly recognized platforms (LELA+QuattroPole) of spatial development and the activities of urban development are the main results of the work. We would like to add that, although perhaps with a different emphasis, urban network relations and potential metropolitan cooperation axes were already represented with significant weight in scholarly literature from the early to mid-1990s even in a Central European context (e.g. in the case of Debrecen-Oradea). Auburtin also mentions that in the wake of the METROBORDER project, the development of polycentric cross-border cooperation became a

goal to the Greater Region in order to enhance more balanced regional development. However, as the author also states the effectiveness of urban network cooperation is threatened by gaps in governance and funding. Creating closer integration among cities and between cities and their functional catchment areas is crucial for the intensification of territorial cohesion. Nevertheless, issues of function-sharing based on the potential role of cross-border settlement networks should have taken a slightly bigger role. It is clear that urban networks in each border section and urban cooperation are be strengthened individually, and it might also be worth considering what sorts of activities regarding feature development and service organization does each cooperation require concerning their role within the urban network or their function density. Another result of the study of Auburtin is the critical evaluation of support for polycentrism displayed in the development policy of the border regions and individual actors.

In the tenth chapter, Antoine Decoville gives a comprehensive summary on the development of European spatial planning policies. He does not only simply seek to summarize urban policy documents of the European Union (e.g. ESDP, Territorial Agenda), but also highlights changes in the roles of different stakeholders and the ways the development of cross-border polycentric networks can unlock the paradox of simultaneously keeping territorial balance and

enhancing competitiveness. Besides regional policy documents the author's methodology also comprises the presentation of the opinions of decision makers and policy experts. Decoville examines the regional development policy of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg in particular with regard to the good practice of the Belval project, related to which he makes a number of relevant statements in the second half of the study on ways to exploit cross-border polycentric development, and to find out what obstacles stand in the way. Due to the country's small size and the unique characteristics of administration, the development of the Luxembourg metropolitan region is in the hands of the central government, and the role levels of functional urban spatial development and coordination above municipal level are still missing. Amongst others, the dominant role of the state and the weak role of municipal levels, underdeveloped urban-rural partnerships as well as the functional city-region cooperation can be described as important lessons. In contrast to the territorial approach, individual ministries are competing with each other to achieve their goals for their dedicated sectors, which do not strengthen territorial cohesion. The author also points out that the better involvement of civil society and business sector representatives would also serve a successful outcome.

In the 11th chapter, Christophe Sohn and Olivier Walther describe the theoretical and practical backgrounds

of cross-border metropolitan integration. The study hypothesizes that market-driven (spontaneous social spatial organisation) and policy-driven (spatial organisation determined by the objectives of the political actors) functional integration does not necessarily coincide. Thus, it points out that considering urban network forms as types of regions does not automatically create integrated regions. It is also necessary to recognise their political development, and establish social and political relations (spatial planning, conscious society-forming product management). We would also note that there is a particular risk of formation of these types of situations with respect to the establishment of EGTCs; it is sometimes difficult to adjust to the real functional organisation and to avert problems of competence. Awareness of literature in geography and related fields, as well as of border studies (e.g. through the writings of Perkmann, Anderson and O'Dowd, Ratti, Van Houtum, Paasi) is reflected in the summary. The authors study three sub-themes by synthesizing scholarly literature with the addition of their own research results. First, comparative advantages of the separating effect of borders and characteristics that provide resources or cause disadvantages are determined. Though it contains little new information, the compact, well-reasoned summary has a worthy place in the book. It is welcome that, to the extent of one sentence or so, the authors look outside the Greater Region, and the relations between Copenhagen-

Malmö and Vienna-Bratislava appear as well. The second unit draws attention to the lack of cross-border metropolitan urban network cooperation and the territorial nonconformities between cooperation and functional agglomeration conditions. Finally, it provides a comprehensive image including professional reviews about polycentric development in the Greater Region that also highlights the types of natural collaboration capabilities in certain areas.

In his summary, Bernard Reitel suggests that Luxembourg can serve as an innovative model for the development of cross-border metropolitan regions. This is assisted by the unique, presently evolving governance framework that is formed with the involvement partners on a different territorial level in the neighbouring country. As the main result of the summary, a relatively unique cross-border integration model based on the characteristics of the Luxembourg metropolis (small size, highly specialized economy, the primacy of the state in the field of cross-border urban development) is presented. Descriptions of such cross-border urban development models are rare in the scholarly literature, thus it should for this reason alone receive a positive rating.

Without underestimating basic scholarly literature or previous groundbreaking works, the conclusions discussed above in each chapter within an innovative, cross-border analysis of the 'metropolisation' process represent important steps in this field of study. In

fact, with changing urban development policies the issue of cross-border urban region management appears with an increasing emphasis during scientific discourses as well. This volume is another substantial milestone in this process. It fits well into the academic mind-set, which defines policy proposals on the EU level, such as projects like ESPON METROBORDER or POLYCE. The reviewer believes that the authors should continue with their research, as they point out processes that establish cross-border functional urban areas, the role of borders in change, as well as the spatial patterns that emerge as a result of these processes. The research resulted in useful findings about the techniques of governance required in order to face the territorial challenges of cross-border urban regions; thus the unique development potential of cross-border regions becomes more definable. It is therefore welcome that Sohn and the authors attempted to integrate all of these during the editing of the book, studies on theory and practice are complementary.

Based on the aspects mentioned above, domestic researchers of related fields should consider paying more attention to the macro-region of the Danube Basin, where the organisation of the mostly separate cities into one polycentric network may contribute to cross-border integration and intensification of territorial cohesion. Apart from the metropolitan region, the previously mentioned twin cities and cross-border agglomeration potentials could be given greater weight within



scholarly literature in accordance with the development policy goals of the European Union. The establishment of another model could also be attempted besides the one in Luxembourg, which would render cross-border urban network integration comparable between and the Western and Eastern European examples.

Last but not the least, it should also be noted that overestimating the significance of the processes that amend the role of borders would be an error at least as large as it would be to ignore it. Borders do not “disappear” from political maps for example; neither do mental limits break down from one moment to another. The elimination of border controls and the prevalence of the EU’s Four Freedoms do not automatically prompt the creation of homogeneous urban areas in the Central European context. Territorial challenges in the border areas only create new opportunities for joint development, which, in the presence of suitable academic and policy backgrounds, can enable the foundations of functioning cross-border cooperation that can be filled with real content in the future.

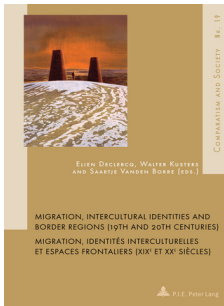
As mentioned during the evaluation of the choice of topic, the work includes findings of particular significance for the Central European region. The examination of the evolving polycentric cross-border metropolitan region has many relevant aspects for disciplines engaged in European cities, as well as for the fields of regional and urban

development. Ever since the end of the Second World War, analyses of metropolises at a European scale within the framework of geographical science have received a considerable amount of attention as well. As an act of providence, Western European works appeared one after another that, especially from the 1980s, dealt with the spatial characteristics of large cities. Polycentric urban development took root in European regional politics and scholarly literature during the second half of the 1990s. In contrast with Western Europe, perceptions about urban network-related cross-border regions have only begun to be adopted in the last two decades in the eastern half of the continent, set off by regime changes and processes of integration to the European Union. Moreover, the implementation of scientific and policy directions into regional planning began only after the millennium, whereas old Member States have track records several years, or even decades, long. With the overview of the book experts can gain methodological and practical knowledge on the phenomenon of cross-border urban areas appearing on the maps of Europe recently.

Thus, the volume is recommended primarily to geographers, urban researchers and regional development professionals who are interested matters of cross-border settlement network research and development.

ROLAND HESZ

**ELIEN DECLERCQ, WALTER KUSTERS and SAARTJE VANDEN BORRE (eds.) (2012): *Migration, Intercultural Identities and Border Regions (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Migration, identités interculturelles et espaces frontaliers (XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles). Comparatism and Society Vol. 19, P.I.E. Peter Lang S.A., Brussels, 294 pp.***



The reader can expect a journey around the world when opening up this study volume about the conference held in 2010 between international

historians and literary scholars. Not least because background sites for the research (amongst others, Argentina, Belgium, South Korea, the United States, micro-regions of France) are located in the most varied geographic space in order to present a social phenomena associated with immigration. Different cultures and social groups are affected by the studies of geographical mobility presented thus new points of view are constantly evolving. The diversity of research approaches and intervals on a historical scales can also open up new dimensions. We receive glimpses from this diverse and rather complicated world, where different sites are increasingly heavily disturbed by migration.

The point of departure – attention to the importance of the term in migration research is drawn

upon by the professor of comparative literature at the University of Southern Denmark, Søren Frank in his theoretical studies – is the city of Kortrijk lying near the Belgian–French border in the Lille Euro-region. An institute related to the University of Leuven is located here (Centre for the History of Intercultural Relations – CHIR), whose researchers engage in areas of cultural history and education history besides historical and comparative literature. Migration is a priority topic of projects regarding the examination of intercultural relations (this also includes the examination of local social phenomena in the border town). By examining the impact of culture the goal is to achieve a better understanding of migration. The present volume has been created in this spirit.

The volume examining the migration characteristics of border areas and specific intercultural identities organises the work of researchers from various European countries into five thematic units, which were written in two languages (English and French) in keeping with the spirit of the research. However, the thematic classification of the chapters may seem uncertain. The buzzwords summoned to the titles of the chapters (Theory, Nation and Identity, Migration, Borders and Interculturality) do not in fact exclusively relate to the studies included in each chapter. Most studies can be related to more than one (or even almost all) of the topics, therefore their position in this book could even

be switched based on their thematic emphases.

The studies can generally be characterised by a post-structuralist approach. Research related to non-European locations, as well as works also dealing with migrants from overseas, are written in the manner of post-colonialism. In terms of methodology, their characteristics demonstrate deconstructionism. Positivistic terminology and analysis methods appear in the work of a historian and researcher at the University of Sheffield, Timothy Baycroft, who studied the century-old migration process on the border of Belgium and France in the light of statistical data.

The first chapter of the volume introduces theoretical questions on migration research. It is worth a brief presentation of how we can be introduced to the opinions of historians and critics concerning the effects of geographic mobility on culture through specific narratives.

The increasing number of Nobel Prize winners, especially writers with a migration background is a process particularly notable within the last two decades, but has also been a general tendency in the 20th century. Based on this result, the previously mentioned Søren Frank points out the superficiality of this assertion in his study. The intensification of migration in the 20th century and the transformation taking place in society is manifested in radical new definitions. Due to its complexity, the new literary style represents a higher level of abstraction, which does

not only define writers with migrant backgrounds; therefore these changes should be taken into account in the work of literary analysts.

In the study of Ian Grosvenor, historian and professor at the University of Birmingham – in accordance with his field of expertise – he examines the cultural integration of those with migrant backgrounds in the UK from the perspective of education history. Putting the period after the Second World War under the microscope he perceives prevailing mistakes in educational values. For example, the participation of students with migration backgrounds in the learning process has not been taken into account, or the curriculum did not address the issue of migration appropriately. He illustrates with examples explaining the false ideology appearing in auxiliary materials, the actual political practice and the role of museums and schools in disseminating migration processes.

The essay of Charles Bonnet, a Lyons University scientist, seeks to present what kind of role the works of the Maghreb authors had in the evolution of postcolonial discourse regarding Arab migration in the French public opinion and in the mostly nationalist (promoting assimilation or exclusive) interpretations of the 70s. French writers with North African roots are not only present as witnesses in this process but by revealing a change in the spatial and social framework of migration, linked identity-loss or the multidirectional interaction between power factors, they unfold a world

where it is impossible to have the same discourse prior to the breakup of the colonial system.

Nation and Identity – he suggestive title of the second chapter of the book is a concept-pair that has been interpreted in many possible ways, in fact, in the last few decades they have even been set up as antonyms. The latter interpretation certainly brings up the topic of migration, since the immigrant individual and community does not identify automatically with the culture of the host country, or carry all the identity-shaping elements that prevailed in an earlier environment. How to cope with this problem in different countries? This chapter provides insight through the studies included.

CHIR associate and Doctor of the history of education, Walter Kusters draws attention in his study to such shortcomings as the different reasons for ignorance in the presentation of migrants in educational materials in France, a country with a significant number of incomers. The reasons are sought in narratives which underline the definition of the French nation. The author analyses the sense of mission-orientation, which was given to the first nation-state by the French Revolution and the cultural impact of the colonial past of great powers. Are they capable of renewing the 21st century French State in this respect (as well)? The study aims to provide answers to this question.

The expiry of the concept of nation is a characteristic of the period

between the two world wars. Matteo Pretelli, historian at the University of Trieste who studies the nation's image of fascist Italy provides an addition to this process. He uses school books specifically written for immigrant Italian colonies as instruments. With regard to the system of concepts and methodology, the study is not so spectacular, but still worth revising. Not only can we learn about the fascist nation's image, but also about the characteristics of relations in the Mussolini regime of immigrants, whose rhetoric is also reflected in other dictatorships...

The relationship of nation and identity is captured by another point of view in the study of Lionel Picard of Burgundy. The author analyses the decades-old mission of a German monthly magazine *Grafschafter Bote*, which aimed at protecting the interests of those displaced after the Second World War, as well as of Germans (Aussiedler) who left their homelands – mainly from Silesia – during the years of state socialism. The journal represented a community-building force between relocated and resettled Germans, but also had an important role in their (inter-cultural) identity construction and re-integration. The newspaper was also designed to draw the attention of people in the mother country to the fate of those Germans, who had to live in another state stripped of their nationality rights.

During the interpretation of the social impact of migration it may be an important issue to discover how

national identity is shaped by crossing borders, being introduced to new cultures and even the by simple notion of being on the road. Studies collected in the third chapter with the title of 'migration' are written in this nature.

The story of a migrant's life - how many ways can we interpret reminiscence? Can it be used as a resource to better understand migration? After reading the study of a researcher on British history at the University of Copenhagen the answer to the last question is clearly yes. Through the memoirs of an Irishman in England, Peter Leese's study reveals that one's life story may enrich national picture of history, national perceptions and the general cultural impacts of migration with a number of elements and new viewpoints, in a way that the official historiography of the country does not, or only very superficially covers.

Florence Labaune-Demeule, of the Jean Moulin University in Lyon, attempts to explain migration and the (re)construction of a series of constantly evolving events that determine identity through interpretation of the works of V.S. Naipaul, Nobel Prize-winning writer. Naipaul was born in Trinidad and Tobago with roots in India and now lives in England. His work often portrays border areas 'affected' by migration. They are not so much representations of physical borders, they are rather tied to a certain state: the state of "deidentification" during which migrants who leave their homeland

to colonise elsewhere, suddenly find themselves in "no man's land". Fractures in the identity cannot be re-established, but those personality-fragments which were not lost can be sorted into another unity together with the newly gained parts - as the writer's example shows, it is even possible by a creative process.

How can literary works contribute to the establishment of a collective identity? Yves Quairiaux, associate history scientist at the Mariemont Museum aims to give an answer. The framework of the study is provided by the mass relocation of Flemish workers to Wallonia from the 19th to the 20th century. One of the social reactions to the mainly economically motivated migrants was antipathy from most of the Walloon population against the newly settled. Reflecting this, countless poems, satires and dramas were born that turned the two coexisting ethnic groups even further against each other. Literary works written in this spirit significantly shaped Flemish and Walloon role identities according to notions of distinct differences which still have a partial effect on national and ethnic character.

Diverse interpretations of borders are presented in the fourth chapter of the book. The writing of An Van Hecke of the University of Leuven is one of the most extraordinary parts of the volume. In a short story, the author analyses various expressive forms of space in a fictional location. How can we get insight to the intra- and inter-relations and the separating effects of the border between Texan

Hispanics and Mexicans? The reader can expect an interesting journey of theory and methodology along the Valley of the Rio Grande. This writing makes the every-day analysis methods of the famous Timothy Baycroft seem especially dry and less interesting, but of course, due to our scientific practice the latter is more comprehensive.

Stephen Joyce's writing presents another interesting slice of migration research and related border interpretations. The author obtained a PhD from the University of Bielefeld in americanistics for writing that describes the birth of a contact zone in South Korea around a military camp in the 1960s, through the memoirs of a man with a South-Korean mother and an American soldier as father. The border does not only prevail between Koreans and Americans, but also between white and black Americans living in the camp. It also points out the demoralisation of civil society that comes along with immigrants, and that multiculturalism is not necessarily a positive trait of society.

Chiara Bignamini-Verhoeven, researcher of Jean Moulin University in Lyon attempts to portray the sometimes multiple connections between language, identity and geographic boundaries through the analysis of the novel of *Bonheur d'occasion* (The tin flute) written by Gabrielle Roy, French-Canadian author. The storyline, that takes place in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Montreal during the Second World War, focuses on effects that guide the characters to cross social boundaries -

which in many cases extend between neighbourhoods. The universal central element is language. Linguistic diversities categorise social conflicts and represent impossible boundaries to cross for the characters who also come into conflict with their own identity between two worlds.

The last chapter of the book is dedicated to multiculturalism. Silvana Mandolessi, visiting professor at the University of Leuven proves why and how irony becomes the fundamental characteristic of migration literature through a literary piece about migration. We got ourselves introduced to the work of the Argentinian author living in Paris merely out of curiosity, but the rich and extensive theoretical and methodological introduction appears to provide a great deal of valuable information to social scientists specialising in domestic migration.

The literary researcher Elien Declercq addresses issues of multiculturalism through an already discussed topic, the settlement of Flemish migrants in French-speaking areas. However, the focus of this study is not the earlier mentioned demarcation of identity. The author explores intercultural identity manifestations by analysing a number of couplets, popular in the second half of the 19th century. The deconstruction of the idea of a homogeneous national identity reveals itself through the art of tactical play between the conceptual duality of "identification" and "removal" that appears in artificial songs, and is conducted in order to maintain

mutual compliance between the ideas of maintaining memories of origin and the challenge of an intensive French assimilation.

A unique point of view on multiculturalism is the presentation of personal destinies. Élodie Gaden, a literary analyst from Stendhal University, Grenoble, undertakes an interesting attempt to approach certain aspects of inter-culturalism through the story of two French writers settled in Egypt. The study proves that the preservation of the witness identity linked to origins rather plays a role of mediation between the cultures, but by keeping a certain distance the identity of the person fails to integrate. The identification with a selected culture is such a segment multiculturalism that can bring a completely new point of view to discourses on migration issues.

The encounter of cultures can happen on several planes. One of these planes, that may be less obvious as a scientific medium but can still be a creative point of encounter, is the gambling table. The work of Céline Regnard, researcher at the University of Marseille explores the identity-forming role of gambling-life in 19th-20th century Marseille based for example on police report analyses. The focus of the analysis is placed on the intercultural environment created by the act of playing together, in which case the boundaries of social interaction are no longer necessarily between nations, but between gamers and non-gamers.

After the brief tutorial it is worth mentioning that the volume

is published as the 19th part of a series called *Comparatism and Society*. This interdisciplinary compilation of literature, arts, and social sciences does not only aim to work as a methodological arsenal, it also intends to build the widest possible link between scientists working in different universities with similar interests. This study volume is a worthy representation of intentions to cross linguistic, national and disciplinary boundaries.

MARGIT KŐSZEKI, GERGELY TAGAI

**MONIKA SONNTAG (2013):**  
*Grenzen überwinden durch Kultur? Identitätskonstruktionen von Kulturakteuren in europäischen Grenzräumen. Luxemburg-Studien, Bd. 3, Peter Lang GmbH., Frankfurt am Main, 277 pp.*



Monika Sonntag's book was published as the third volume of the series "Luxembourg Studies" at the University of Luxembourg, by the internationally renowned Peter Lang Verlag, publishers of scientific works. The author finished her graduate studies at the Universities of Trier and Montreal taking up several disciplines simultaneously in geography, sociology and national economic studies. After finishing her studies she worked at the University of Bremerhaven and in the Institute

of Regional and Structural Planning in Berlin. At present she is scientific research fellow at the Humboldt University in Berlin. She defended her doctoral thesis there. Her dissertation, published in a book format, is discussed in this book review.

The volume begins with a quote from literary historian, playwright and university professor of Swiss origin Adolf Muschg: "... The Europe I like has no borders; Greece would not have existed without Egypt just as Rome would not have existed without the Greeks either and, as a matter of fact, neither the empires of the Middle Ages nor even the modern American state would have existed without Rome. Versailles would not have come about without China, secession (art nouveau) without Japan; Picasso without African sculpture ... However, Europe is quite different ... But as Europe does exist for which I, a man being part of this culture, am grateful, I need to be the citizen of the EU and, moreover, I need other citizens of the EU around me who take responsibility for a Europe without borders in space and in time". The author continues the thought from here focusing on the fact that the search for identity in Europe also has its own problems because there are perhaps no other cultures in the world so interwoven with other identities, other cultures, as that of Europe.

The focal point of investigation in the book is a special dimension of the concept of a unified Europe, namely the abolishment of borders as forms of political construction. The main

aspiration in Europe becoming ever more unified is to push aside and/or re-interpret the earlier roles of borders in order not to hamper the economically unified market in any dimension. At the same time, however, economic processes have always been more in the limelight throughout the whole history of the EU while cultural integration has always remained in the background. The author's starting point is the contradiction that there is significant difference in terms of delineation between cultural and political identity of the population in Europe. While identity is (in principle) without limits (i.e. without borders) in cultural terms, at least as one sees it from the centre, the borders (limits) are still there in the political dimension despite the fact that their role has been changed and re-evaluated in the last few decades. As a result, the integration processes of the EU are also best described, in the opinion of the author, by the elimination of the borders and by the inevitable character of this process. The question is whether there is a kind of all-European identity in the cultural sense. As the title of the book makes a reference to it too: Can borders be overcome by culture?

The approaches highlighted above are nuanced interestingly by our special "Middle-European" way of seeing things. Namely, the frameworks of nation-states came about, due to historical circumstances, in our region belatedly and, moreover, this whole process was rather unique. Its product is the double European definition



of nations (cultural nation – nation-state) and it is manifested, despite the stormy historical cataclysms of the twentieth century, in the still existing heterogeneous spatial structure. This latter element distinguishes the nations in the western part of Europe and their territorial allocation from those in the eastern half of the European continent. While the author tries to introduce the definition of “post-nationalism” by placing it into a wider theoretical and philosophical context and in order to underpin her definition by scientific methods, the viewpoints of the countries in our region are still influenced in many places and in many aspects by the definitions of nations and concepts of identity developed in the nineteenth century. As a consequence the above processes were a priori, based here on different foundations from those in the centre of Europe.

The book starts by formulating the question in the first, introductory chapter, namely by the post-nationalistic search for identity of European societies. Following this the message of the author is grouped around three structural units. The first of these is the theoretical context followed by an introduction to the theoretical background, the theoretical framework accompanying scientific considerations and the typical hypotheses of the German-speaking academic milieu (chapters 2, 3 and 4). Here the author discusses in detail the post-structuralist theories of two philosophers, Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler. This part is especially important for the author

to offer a theoretical framework by which the reader is able to understand different matters of territorial identity.

The author highlights the instability and complexity of previous, traditional identities as the foundations of post-nationalistic Europe as defined by Derrida and Butler. The two philosophers mentioned lay emphasis on the inefficiency of the definitions of identity and also on the fact that definitions often do not describe concrete, coherent identity structures. These structures are not equivocal and this is based, in effect, on the special interpretation of the basic definition. Building upon these thoughts the author asks what the consequences in geography are of the interpretation of the “trinity” of spatial, border (and territorial) identity. The challenges and tasks of identity research in the field of geography come about exactly as a consequence of these theoretical perspectives, namely that the focal points of research should only be to analyse the characteristics of regions.

All this is followed by the second large structural unit of the book, the empirical context of the topic discussed. Chapter 5 contains a detailed methodological section in which the selection of the two geographical regions and empirical areas of research, namely the “(common) cultural spaces” of border regions are discussed. One of the pillars of the chapter on methodology is making interviews and their execution and evaluation are summarised here by the author. Cross-border forms of cooperation in the field

of culture and information regarding research in the context of the EU support programme are summed up in chapter 6.

The third big structural unit presents the concrete results of the study by the use of “positioning-analysis” in border regions through the identity constructions of the stakeholders of culture, more exactly through the territorial aspects of these identity constructions. The message of the author is built around two themes, partly around the territorial aspect of the whole process and spatial representation (chapter 7) and partly around how the cultural stakeholders of border regions position their activities vis-à-vis the actual borders (chapter 8).

The whole volume is finished by a detailed summary (chapter 9) and bibliography (chapter 10). The summary chapter sums up the main thoughts contained in the book from the point of view of “positioning analysis” in the search for geographical identity, border regions as the vanguard of searching for European identity and the cultural stakeholders as front-runners of European integration. Browsing through the list of items in the bibliography is also instructive for readers in Hungary; it presents approximately 330 items on more than 16 pages, in three (German, English and French) languages. This list contains not only scientific representatives of the so-called “sub-disciplines” of West European geography, which are not necessarily known widely in our country (as for example critical geography or social

geography) but also those in the fields of post-structuralist philosophy, other related disciplines and sociology.

Cross-border cooperation projects in the field of culture are supported by the EU with the aim of strengthening the feeling of togetherness of the population of the European Union. The author demonstrates through the examples of the Saar-Lor-Lux Grand Region and the Eurométropole Lille-Kotrijk-Tournai how stakeholders participating in cross-border cultural projects describe border regions and how they perceive their own role in this process. The originality of this work lies in the fact that these elements are empirically researched on the basis of post-structuralist linguistic theories and related spatial concepts, linked with the mental feelings of the society, based on territorial identity constructions. As far as stakeholders in the cultural field are concerned for them the search for a border region identity means, in effect, the search for an exemplary and, at the same time, antinomic European identity.

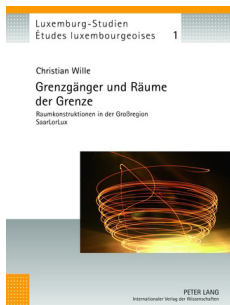
Viewing it from the theoretical perspective selected here the challenge and task of the geographical search for identity is to avoid stopping short at the analysis of the characteristics and at the examination of the outer borders of a region. Instead, it should concentrate on researching the process, the territorial aspects, the inter-relations of drawing borderlines and crossing borders and, further, the phenomena and forms resulting from these.

For reasons of the centre-periphery differences mentioned above

this volume is recommended to readers in Hungary not so much for the results contained in it but rather for its special viewpoint, theoretical framework and methodological approach. The reader may stop for a moment to think about how and to what extent he/she is able to accept or adopt, as a citizen of an EU member country, the (West) European viewpoints on a (not only economically) unified Europe or to make those living in the West understand our own viewpoints or perhaps bring the two concepts nearer to one another.

ZSOLT BOTTLIK

**CHRISTIAN WILLE (2012):**  
*Grenzgänger und Räume der Grenze: Raumkonstruktionen in der Großregion SaarLorLux.*  
**Luxemburg-Studien, Bd. 1, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 393 pp.**



The book series Luxembourg Studies (Luxemburg-Studien, Etudes luxembourgeoises) specialises in publishing the results of those researches and projects in the field of social sciences whose topics are related to the culture and society of Luxembourg. These topics range widely, from the history of Luxembourg through language, literature, politics and geography to territorial development and research into sociological problems.

A total of five books have been published in the framework of this series since 2012. Below we will get acquainted more in detail with the opening publication of this series, the work of Christian Wille with the title „Grenzgänger und Räume der Grenze” (Cross-border commuters and Border Spaces).

Christian Wille is a social and cultural scientist at the University of Luxembourg where he has been leading an inter-disciplinary project since 2007. Besides this he is also guest lecturer at various universities in Lothringen, Saarland and Luxembourg. He defended his doctoral thesis simultaneously at the Universities of Saarland and Luxembourg. The present publication is an adaptation of the author's doctoral dissertation originally written in German.

The investigations contained in the book focus on the trilateral border region of Saarland (Germany) – Lorraine (France) and Luxembourg called ‚Grand Region SaarLorLux‘. There are more than 200 thousand daily commuters here who cross the borders and work in one of the neighbouring countries. The author tried to find answers primarily to the question of what social, regional and cultural impacts daily, regular commuting has and how it influences the everyday life of people living there. As a result of daily commuting a practically new way of life comes about which raises a number of questions regarding the interpretation of space and living in border areas. Exploring cross-border commuting is especially

interesting because it is a phenomenon not thoroughly researched as yet and our level of information is rather limited as far as the living conditions and attitudes of cross-border commuters is concerned. In Wille's interpretation cross-border commuting is the possible prototype of a diverse, post-modern way of life since commuters are less attached to locality (they are „multi-local“) but they are extremely mobile.

After the first, introductory chapter the theoretical background of the topic is presented in the second one by the author. He demonstrates, among others, relevant models of spatial theory (like, for example, the absolutely substantialist, the relational-constructivist, the socially based ones) and the related intention-oriented and intellect-oriented types of actions and their constructions of spatial relevance too. The third chapter deals with the methodological background of the research. It turns out from the detailed description that his analyses are based on qualitative empirical examinations: in the first round the analysis of literature, professional interviews and explorative interviews with commuters were made by the author. Then he sent out standardised questionnaires by post and electronically to the commuters in the area. Based on the latter he was able to set up a data-base listing the details of 458 persons. In the third round he completed and refined his scientific results with further in-depth interviews. In Chapter 4 Wille goes into the details of the history of cross-border movements in the SaarLorLux

region. His investigations start with the beginning of the twentieth century and then the history of the border areas between France, Germany and Belgium, then, subsequently the history of borders around Luxembourg, cross-border movements and migratory processes are presented on almost 100 pages. His message is illustrated by plenty of maps and diagrams. The decisive, most important part of the book is Chapter 5 exploring the socio-cultural dimensions of cross-border commuting. Wille approaches his theme from the point of view of the social researcher focusing on working conditions and job satisfaction, employment careers, workplace socialisation and responses related to language and communication difficulties, territorial identity and stereotypes. The closing chapter of the book summarises the results of research by critically evaluating cross-border spatial constructions and labour mobility closely related with them.

Wille declares that the main motivating factors of cross-border commuting are, not surprisingly, better jobs and higher wages. Daily commuters are willing to accept travelling several hours day after day, sitting in traffic jams and often spending limited hours with their families in the hope of these two factors mentioned above. On the upside, namely, one may find more favourable jobs and working conditions, higher living standards and sometimes even a more exciting life. Commuters of the younger generation particularly claim that their decisions are often influenced

by hoping to get more life experience in a foreign country. A typical commuter is not so easily described by levels of qualification or social status here; in the Luxembourg region commuting is more a kind of lifestyle.

Special attention is paid by the author to exploring the social status of commuters in a foreign country. Commuters abroad are rivals to the locals on the labour market while in their mother country they are rivals to their fellow countrymen in the real estate market, as a result of higher wages received in Luxembourg, This inevitably leads to conflicts in sending and receiving countries alike. This question is even more interesting in the light of how these workers are able to integrate into the communities in their workplace or living place. Wille comes to the conclusion that commuters hardly integrate, or do not integrate at all, in the communities at their workplace, for them the communities at their living places bear more significance.

Wille gets rid of clichés like “young people go abroad only to learn foreign languages” or “they return home after work”. Young people without families often go shopping in various stores in Luxembourg, visit local restaurants, go to local cinemas or entertain themselves in local bars. They make full use of the cultural opportunities in Luxembourg and they often make friends with the locals. They sometimes face problems, however, at the workplace: commuters not only come from a different education system (as a result of which their levels of knowledge and

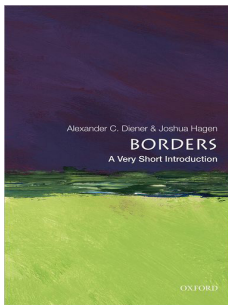
expertise are different) but often they represent a different working culture and they apply different working methods. For this reason certain companies employ only commuters from certain selected countries in order to minimise the differences between their workers. Luxembourg is a multi-lingual country: besides the official Luxembourg, French and German, English and the various other languages spoken by the many immigrants also add to increasing lingual diversity. As a result, language differences hardly ease the situation of commuters since communicating in a foreign language demands higher concentration and the commonly applied workplace technique “just explain yourself simply” often leads to a loss of information and misunderstanding. Commuters would like to be treated as equals in their workplace but it is obvious that the origin of the applicant is a strong factor even in the process of filling positions in Luxembourg.

This volume of almost 400 pages is not recommended to those who have become accustomed to or require flashy, quick reports or who are used to the copy-paste style of executive summaries spanning two or three pages. Reading this book demands time and energy because the author intends to reach into the real depths of his theme. Perhaps it is better to browse through this book as a handbook trying to avoid the meticulous analysis of the details placed under a microscope. Those, however, who are interested in cross-border economic conditions and social

processes, especially migration, will find it a book of excellent quality. Although the topic is local, the problem and the phenomenon under investigation is global, therefore the scientific statements made by the author are also valid for international comparison. The work of Christian Wille provides sound methodological and objective supplementary reading for those doing research on the social status of cross-border commuters or the space-specific processes of migration. Last but not least this book is recommended to the students of universities in Hungary working on their doctoral theses. Reading this volume they will probably learn a great deal about how one is to prepare scientific studies of the highest quality.

TAMÁS EGEDY

**ALEXANDER C. DIENER & JOSHUA HAGEN (2012): *Borders: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 144 pp.**



The Oxford University Press launched its Very Short Introductions series in 2000. These editions target a general audience and aim to give a brief and widely readable interpretation of the principal research questions, as well as some of the current problems, in a wide range of particular fields of interest.

The title *Borders* was published in September 2012, written by American geographers Alexander C. Diener (University of Kansas) and Joshua Hagen (Marshall University). As of their professional CVs both of them obtained their doctoral degrees at the Geography Graduate Program of the University of Wisconsin–Madison and it is from this background that their predominantly political geographical approach – tangible in the book – comes.

It was a definite challenge for the authors to synthesize the most important thematic fields of an emerging sub-discipline that has undergone a dynamic advancement in the course of recent decades within the scope of a pocket-sized book. However, the outcome is more than remarkable. Even this short extent enabled the drawing up of a largely comprehensive historical introduction, starting from the territorial marking of hunter-gatherer societies, passing through the first states of the Fertile Crescent, the geographical framework of notable city-states, empires and nomadic cultures of ancient history, then taking into account the phases of the emergence of modern states in which the absolutist transition of feudal states was decisive from the aspect of the current role of borders. The authors underline the importance of the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and the Peace of Westphalia (1648). The former one founded the concept of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states while the latter declared the concept of the

sovereignty of nation-states. Therefore, these documents were important milestones in the formation of the modern international system of states having unlimited authority within their territory, which system basically originated in Europe later becoming dominant all over the world through the process of colonization.

Far beyond this historical overview the book provides a comprehensive view on borders and, through them, on various highly topical and relevant questions and problems concerning the spatial manifestation of state sovereignty (such as terrorism and security policy, the extension of maritime borders for economic reasons, migration and refugees, international tourism, cross-border social interactions, environmental protection, social inequalities and the issue of supranational and regional movements challenging the existing nation-state framework).

The authors paid particular attention to the actualization of the book. Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, South Ossetia or Guantanamo are just a few places having become known by the media in the last couple of years where the practice of sovereign authority endangered the basic interests and sometimes even the legal security of certain social groups or that of the entire society. The defence of the legal (real or supposed) interests of the state finally manifested itself in violence against the civil population leading to controversies and dividedness among the actors of international politics

in the question of intervention or non-intervention. In relation to the assessment of these recent events from the perspective of state sovereignty the authors have investigated the roles, attitudes and concerns of the other states as international community and that of cross-border networks (international associations, world-wide web and social networks, diasporas) in the determination of the permeability of state borders.

Besides its numerous strong points its most criticisable point is its title. Although the book was titled *Borders* its content is overwhelmingly concentrated on state borders. The introduction points out that generally borders are present everywhere in the geographical space, they delimit the spaces of society for different functions. However, after this assertion the focus of the investigation gets very soon concentrated on the borders between states and other borders (e.g. subnational administrative borders, borders of electoral districts, city district boundaries) are only briefly mentioned in the subsequent text. Obviously, the contextual framework defined by the series does not enable such an extension of the thematic fields discussed in this book, nevertheless a more precise designation would have better expressed the orientation and the connection points of the choice of topic.

In any case the reasonably general and brief current title will enable the book to achieve the original aim of the authors, namely to draw the attention of

inquisitive but less informed readers to this sub-discipline and to create a starting point for research and researchers intending to engage in more detailed investigations in this thematic field.

MÁRTON PETE

**HARDI TAMÁS (2012):**

*Duna-stratégia és területi fejlődés. A folyó lehetséges szerepe a régió területi fejlődésében [Danube Strategy and territorial development. Potential role of the river in the territorial development of the region].*

**Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 293 pp.**



The title of Tamás Hardi's book, and its sub-title on the inside cover, suggest, at first reading, a bulky volume of almost three-hundred pages focusing strictly on territorial development and regional planning. Instead of a work for the profession, however, the reader finds an easily comprehensible book written in very understandable language. In this case the function of the expression „Danube Strategy” featuring in the title is that of a rallying call. As a matter of fact, the Hungarian presidency of the EU in 2011 placed the approval of this strategy at the top of priorities and when it was approved by the EU it was regarded as a great success for Hungary. As a result even those who kept a certain distance from EU

matters during Hungary's six-month presidency must have come across this notion. The timing of the book's publication is therefore not accidental and its timeliness is even more justified by the fact that the approval, in 2011, of the Danube Strategy was only one of the first steps among those aimed at developing the regions connected in one way or another to the river in transnational frameworks for the budget period between 2014 and 2020. In contrast to its title the book discusses the Danube Strategy only in the last 25 pages. The preceding more than 250 pages, however, offer adequate background information and knowledge for interested „laymen” and even for those experts who will be involved, as the text on the inside cover puts it, in one way or another in the practical implementation of the Danube Strategy.

Hardi is not new at all to this trade: he has published more than half a dozen studies dealing with the Danube area. His writings, which are related mostly with political geography, are also reflected in this book but, having extended them considerably, he offers a much more complex analysis of sometimes almost textbook-like thoroughness, divided into seven large chapters, on the water catchment area of the River Danube.

Chapter I can be interpreted as an introduction in which the most fundamental characteristics of the region's physical and political geography are presented. The frameworks are marked out by the author through the etymol-



ogy of the name of the River Danube and by detailed statistics on hydrography. Then, starting from the source of the river we finally reach its estuary, highlighting the more scenic upper and lower Danube sections, perhaps, understandably, somewhat overshadowing the middle section of the river we obviously know better anyway. Certain phenomena of physical geography like, for example, how the river delta comes about, are explained occasionally too meticulously to potential readers who are perhaps less familiar with this uncharted territory. The second part of this chapter makes an introduction into the political geography with detailed figures of the countries involved, on the catchment area in general and on the river in particular. The first important problem appears here: where to draw the border-lines of the Danube Region? We learn from the author that a region marked out by exact lines according to physical geography can prove to be a rather flexible notion in terms of political geography.

The question formulated in Chapter II, detailing the territorial structure of the region, stems from the same set of problems. Can this area be regarded as a region on its own? This is considered a key question by the author even from the point of view of the Danube Strategy. The diagram illustrating the cultural and ethnic spatial structure jointly demonstrates most eloquently how heterogeneous the valley of the River Danube is. Then, the first historical overview of the whole area is offered along the lines of unity and fragmenta-

tion, finding, of course, more examples for the latter. Starting from the Roman Empire and reaching the present one already receives a pragmatic response to the original question formulated at the beginning of this chapter: It is in our common interest that the European Union finds the ways and means of cooperation among the various forms of state involved, at least in the field of development matters. It is followed by an even more detailed retrospection demonstrating the changes in the spatial structure of the region under examination. The figures attached make it easy to follow the changes in the inner and outer zones of attraction too. Then the various efforts at closer integration are described by presenting the different concepts for a unified Danube Region. These concepts have always been conceived in times of various crises, under pressure from big powers nearby, but their implementation was always impossible due to the lack of internal unity. The final conclusion of this chapter is that certain lessons are to be learned today from the geopolitical past of this region: only closer economic cooperation is able to produce a unified „Danubian” approach and this cooperation can be safeguarded only by an outside force, that is, the European Union.

At the beginning of Chapter III the River Danube is seen from the point of view of big powers as an important field of geopolitical games. Here an historical view starts at the end of the eighteenth century and reaches out to our times discussing one by one the decisive powers of this period like

Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Germany and Great Britain. These two latter powers receive somewhat less attention than their influence on the region would justify. This is then followed by presenting the important international agreements and organisations from the point of view of free navigation, using the original agreements as sources of research. Thus we get an even closer picture of the efforts of big powers trying to control shipping on the River Danube and, as it turns out, the really important consideration in every historical period was dominance over the estuary of the river. One can perceive in detail what the original thought, formulated at the beginning of this chapter, meant in practice: namely that the geopolitical importance of the River Danube proved always greater than its economic importance. The chapter concludes with a description of current border disputes. The reviewer has the impression that something is missing here: one or two maps would have helped to understand better, apart from the dispute between Hungary and Slovakia in connection with the power station at Bős, the conflicts between Romania and Ukraine, or Croatia and Serbia, both less well known to us, but otherwise well demonstrated here.

Most of Chapter IV provides details of inland shipping and freight forwarding at a general, all-European level compared with other forms of transport, especially rail transport. The widely accepted notion about the disadvantages of river shipping is convincingly nuanced by the author and,

by presenting details about combined river-sea shipping, the possible profitability of water transport is well emphasised. The River Danube comes into the picture at this point although, after referring to remains of shipping dating back to Roman times, the reader gets an insight only into the history of Hungarian shipping from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present. The inter-war years especially stand out from the shipping history of the last two-hundred years. In this period the fact that Budapest had the rank and status of sea-port was of strategic importance for the Hungarian economy being under pressure from the countries of the „small entente”. It turns out the 1960s and the 1970s were the heydays for Hungarian sea shipping. After the low point in the 1990s, owing to NATO bombings and sanctions against Serbia, shipping appears to be gaining importance again in the Hungarian economy.

Chapter V deals with the waterway system. One is faced, already at the beginning of this chapter, when the importance of waterways is presented, with the unfavourable situation of the River Danube in West European comparison both in terms of its own waterway system and its insufficient connection to other transport systems. The development of waterways is justifiably considered as of strategic importance by the author who questions, at the same time, the standpoint of those who would totally play down river waterways for short term economic reasons. This chapter also discusses the various cat-

egories of European inland waterways and, within these, inland river sections qualified as international waterways. A separate chart presents details about insufficiencies and development targets in connection with the River Danube and its tributaries. The description of canal systems connected with the River Danube is made easier to follow by the maps attached. An interesting feature of this chapter is, from the point of view of territorial development, the list of plans not carried out. One can come to the conclusion that a certain proportion of the ideas not realised at a given time should indeed be considered in long term development strategies if the obviously irrational plans are taken out. In the longest chapter of the book the reader finds out more about the role of ports and bridges in shaping the region and about water barrages on the river as well. Details are given about the two hydroelectric power plants, those in Gabčíkovo and at Porțile de Fier/Đerdapska klisura, both involving the biggest riverbed regulation so far and producing the most electrical energy.

Chapter VI takes us once again away from the river and this time the area, already well known in other respects, is introduced by the author in terms of regional geography. A general description of differences in development levels is followed by an introduction, firstly to urban, and then to, rural areas. The centre of attention in the description of urban areas is city types characteristic of the Danube region and the introduction of capital

cities along the River Danube. The section on rural areas deals mostly with problems involving regions in Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. Of course, the classical, geographical description of regions along the Danube by countries cannot be left out of this chapter, completed in the case of each country with development plans relating to the River Danube. One must note, however, that Germany and Hungary have been left out, for reasons unknown, from this analysis.

After learning about the diversity of the Danube Region, in the last chapter one arrives at the up-to-date development plans embracing the whole region. One can read first, as if in a small encyclopaedia, about the initiatives after the dismantling of the Iron Curtain generated by two important events connected directly to the River Danube and to shipping in general. One of them is the opening of the Danube-Main-Rhine Canal in 1992 and the opportunities resulting from it, while the other is the physical barriers in connection with the Yugoslav war and the NATO bombing of Serbia. The two antecedents of the Danube Strategy (Danube Space Study – 2000; Vision Planet – 1999) are introduced by the author in detail in this chapter followed by the full introduction to and presentation of the European Danube Strategy. The dilemma already presented in Chapter II comes into the foreground again, namely, to what extent this culturally and economically diverse and heterogeneous region can and should be treated as one unified

area. Another question to be raised is whether the development areas designated and preferred by the European Union these days, reinforcing cohesion among nation states, can offer a new, more efficient solution to mitigating the differences in the region's levels of development. As far as the first question is concerned the author stresses that, due to existing ethnic tensions and diverse geopolitical interests, a strategy which focuses on the Danube Valley of true common interests, instead of on general territorial development, is by all means necessary. It proves rather useful to receive in this chapter, beyond learning about the general statements and priorities concerning the Danube Strategy, a short description about the nine winner projects connected with the River Danube that were approved

in the frameworks of the South East European Transnational Programme 2007–2013. Finally, the book concludes with the presentation of possible development directions applicable to the Danube Region.

One of the strengths of the work of Hardi is the very thorough historical thread when discussing practically any aspect of his theme. However, partly for the same reasons, the title of the book could be disputed, as mentioned briefly at the beginning of this review, since the emphases of the book were obviously and visibly not shifted to the present. The rich bibliography will prove to be a good starting point for those who are interested in one or another of the narrower segments of topics discussed in the book.

ÁRON NAGY

## The Institute Board's Visit to Bolzano

### Introduction to EURAC

#### Introduction

Immediately after its establishment the board of directors of the institute had to discuss future visions for the institution in accordance with the intentions of the founders. Besides taking into consideration opportunities in Hungary and other local features, we agreed to look for as many Western European institutions with a similar profile as possible at the very beginning. Besides Euro-Institut, Kehl that was already a contact of the CESCO personal network, our first choice fell on the European Academy Bolzano/Bozen (Europäische Akademie Bozen/Accademia Europea di Bolzano; EURAC -[www.eurac.edu](http://www.eurac.edu)). The experiences of our visit to the latter institution are summarized below, with topics involving the challenges of certain situations, particular innovation given in response and the lessons that are perhaps the most crucial in our case.

The European Academy is located in northern Italy, the capital of South Tyrol, Bolzano (Bozen), and was founded in 1992 with 12 full-time employees. Its foundation was initiated by the South Tyrolean provincial government as a private club. Finances are/were covered by the local Bolzano/Bozen autonomous area (45 %) and other individuals (55 %). In the beginning research had three basic pillars, such as language and rights, minorities and autonomies, as well as

the Alps and the environment which represented most of the historical, social and geographical conditions of the area. Today, the institution has 11 academic institutions from all over the world with around 200 research professionals and almost the same number of additional staff; in addition to Vienna and Rome it already has a representative office in Prishtina, Kosovo and in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina as well.

After prior arrangement Karl-Peter Kössler, research fellow and Paulena Magdalena Borowska, project coordinator at the Institute for studies on Federalism and Regionalism showed us around the institution, and presented us the niche research areas of the institute, as well as running projects during our visit to the EURAC. Our hosts also introduced us to Matthias Fink, Secretary-General of the Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino EGTC, with whom we were able to have valuable discussions.

#### Challenges

The wider environment of the Bolzano/Bozen seat of the institution, South Tyrol, was attached to Italy after the First World War. Hence the former Austrian province Tyrol fell into three parts (North Tyrol and East Tyrol which were not located along the border and remain parts of Austria, as they were not affected by boundary change). The majority of the population in the area (89%) had a strong local (Tyrol), at that time German-speaking, identity. The Italian (2.9%) and Ladin

(3.8%) -speaking populations were mostly concentrated in the southern regions and in cities. In the ensuing decades, the Italian state power set the goal of increasing the Italian-speaking population significantly in the disputed area according to contemporary doctrines. Meanwhile, despite defensive aspirations by Austria against the above mentioned local identity, it continued to strengthen. Immediately after World War II Austria attempted to take at least the parts with a German majority back, which, although unsuccessful, led the Italian party to indicate willingness to give autonomous status to the region.

The signing of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 secured the location of Austrian borders without South Tyrol, which has repeatedly drawn attention to this ethnic problem. In this regard the tense relationship of the 1960s between Italian and Austrian parts was put to a close in 1972 by the so called Second Autonomy Statute with points ratified in 1992 by the Italian Government, and adopted by the Austrian side. This created a Europe-wide example of territorial autonomy mutually agreed upon and recognized by both parties, which prevails in many areas of political and social life.

The creation EURAC in 1992 may be associated with the realised aspirations of post-World War II autonomy in the South Tyrol region on one hand and the establishment of the European Union's institutional framework on the other hand. Autonomy, and the institutional background thus established, granted a wide area of movement to the region's

decision-making bodies in order to establish an institution in harmony with the EU core objectives. It is not a coincidence that one of the first large-scale projects was the establishment of the EIA that aimed at the establishment of a trilingual (Italian, German, English) University in Bolzano/Bozen that suited the style and characteristics of the autonomous area. Among other outcomes of these efforts, the university was later founded in 1997. Meanwhile, in 1996, the EURAC Academy of Administration was established, which served as a training centre for government leaders. In addition, the original area of research expanded in a fourth direction, that of management and business culture. Furthermore, it actively contributed to the further development and expansion of activities at the College of Tourism Management and the College of Arts. Both institutions are now independent faculties of the University. The institution outgrew its original building in the middle of the 1990s due to its international ties and the rapidly growing operating staff, and moved to its present location in 2001, a renovated building adjacent to the Drusus Bridge. The activities of the institution have expanded with a new, innovative research sector, human genetics – researching hereditary diseases and related medical science in 2002.

It is evident that they were trying to find innovative responses to real problems in accordance with local characteristics and the challenges of the modern age, defined especially

by social demands. Accordingly, as with the expansion of staffing, huge sums were spent on expanding institutional infrastructure. Several laboratories are available to their employees scattered throughout the city, including DNA testing facilities and analytical instruments employing the most advanced technology. The receiving station for the examination of surface phenomena of the Institute for Applied Remote Sensing is installed on the 2,360 m high peak Ritter Horn, and is in communication with three NASA satellites. As a result of this conceptually formulated target system – although initially the institution's activities focused on the South Tyrol Italian-German-Ladin triple cultural region – it quickly embarked on research topics of international regions that made the institution internationally famous.

### **Innovation**

The activities of EURAC were generally defined by the conscious search for clear answers to the challenges of the 21st century that could be comprehended even by a casual audience at first glance. The broad activities were later categorised into four groups. At present, these are Autonomy, Mountain, Health and Technology.

The regional autonomy concept, as well as the protection of minority rights was brought to attention well after the Second World War even within Western Europe, and often it has only lately – or has not even

yet – been put to rest as a result of bloody clashes in the changing political situation. Taking into account the specific situation in South Tyrol, there is no wonder that problems related to autonomy were defined immediately after the foundation of the institution. The complexity of this issue is demonstrated by the fact that projects of autonomy that are considered to have a wider range of activities are run by researchers divided between four institutions.

The Institute for Minority Rights founded in 1993 conducts basic and applied research to further explore the fine details of the legal background for solving minority issues. Not only can we find topics such as the protection of minorities, European cultural diversity and European integration, but we can also perceive that ethnic conflicts are still causing problems, even within Europe. Although research is of primary importance among the activities of the Institution, it also regularly holds training courses and provides policy advice on request, given mostly by a team of lawyers and political scientists. Besides the annually published pages of the “European Yearbook of Minority Issues” known to so-inclined European professional circles, their findings have also been published on the Internet since the turn of the millennium.

Language is a tangible proof of the survival of minorities. In today's Internet technology world it is not so much isolation that causes the greatest problems of language, rather the weakness or lack of those language's

levels and dimensions, which can enable the articulation of individual interests. For this exact reason, the Institute for Specialised Communication and Multilingualism founded in 1993 has focused directly and immediately on research on multilingualism and scientific analysis of professional communication issues. This almost instantly made the institute's involvement in the international scientific world possible. Besides the traditional South Tyrolean problems such as bilingualism of local governments and rights (terminology, translation and terminology), work regarding the examination of general lessons has also been undertaken, for example, projects researching the major roles of language or its role as mediator. In parallel, research has gradually been built around migration and language issues, the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages, and the so-called language technology that specialises in the digital processing of languages.

Besides these legal and linguistic problems deriving from autonomy, the way this list of issues within administration that are already common problems of the 21 century appeared is also of importance. The creation of the Institute of Public Management was therefore not unreasonable. It examines the questions evolving around "(economic) administration organisation", within the framework of an interdisciplinary science that puts the government sector under the microscope regarding social sciences and business management aspects,

also taking into account prevailing legal conditions. In today's globalised world, the expectations of government actors have fundamentally changed. Organization-oriented thoughts and actions must be channelled through communication tools of the modern age as well. Therefore, the institute's research focuses on e-government, the measurement of expenses of bureaucracy, quality management issues for sustainable urban development, urban structuring and social structuring.

While sharing the principle of subsidiarity and trying to eliminate boundaries, one of the biggest challenges of Europe is to find a way to replace customs defined by the nation-state framework with the idea of a "Europe of regions". The primary responsibility of the Institute for studies on Federalism and Regionalism is enabling aspirations to put regions or federal structures, and the importance of sub-national governmental trends, into focus. This mostly means research on the multi-level nature of modern government. Just as we find the state among the actors of a multi-level governance as international organizations that have an impact on the regions and the municipalities of civil society, we also find individual citizens. Thus it is no wonder that great emphasis is placed on research on cross-border cooperation, on the effects of foreign relations between sub-regional bodies, on autonomy as a mean of diversity management and on multi-level financing as well. Perhaps this



is the segment most similar to our ideas within EURAC, and the one we imagine our own institution in Esztergom to resemble in the future.

The environmental impact related problems caused by one of the major sources of income in the area, tourism, have increasing tendencies across the world. Research inspired by the nearby Alps and high mountains are conducted within the framework of the three institutions. The work of the Institute for Alpine Environment, founded in 1995 should be mentioned first. Here a number of local, interregional and international projects are registered. The multidisciplinary group of young researchers study several topics of global relevance. An example of such is the research being conducted on alpine landscape ecology and ecosystems with particular regard to global climate change, the examination of functional diversity, ecosystem services, biogeochemical flows and sustainable development.

The scope of the foundation of the Institute for Applied Remote Sensing in 2006 was the integration of Earth observation methods and techniques into a multidisciplinary environmental research framework. The research activity focuses on the most recent problem areas demanding the most urgent solutions, such as biodiversity loss and climate change, and is currently carried out by four research groups: "Air and atmosphere", "Landscape, vegetation, snow", "Risk, vulnerability, climate change" and "Data processing and management".

The activities of humanity cannot simply be assessed on the basis of just a single aspect in our times. Of course the "mountain" as a complex economic, social and experimental space has unique dynamics. Today, it is evident that the natural environment alone does not determine the urban environment as arena of social life, location, function and nature, but that human activity also has a very strong (mostly negative) impact on the environment. These factors should be accounted for in development as well. The activities of the Institute for Regional Development and Location Management entail the assessment of this complexity

Health and its preservation should be important not only for individuals but also to society. Specific local contexts have also evolved. Two of the youngest institutes are the Institute for Mummies and the Iceman founded in 2007 and the Institute of Mountain Emergency Medicine founded in 2009, which, together with the previously established Centre of Biomedicine make up the institutional framework for research related to health.

Questions of sustainable development can be found amongst the most pressing issues in our lives today. Topics of food supply, environmental management, or even energy and the security of its supply are all issues that will require extensive technological developments around the world. With respect to these issues, it is important to mention the Institute for Renewable Energy which is associated with this

sort of technological innovations. The workers of the institute currently pursue activities in the field of solar energy and building energy within the framework of various international projects and in direct cooperation with industries. The institute does not only provide the scientific background for the design of complex power systems, but also promotes the deployment of renewable energy technologies and policy making through scientific instruments. The research work is processed in four groups. The activities of the research groups involve the planning of solar thermal equipment and solar panel systems in addition to the development and planning of energy systems and energy strategies for buildings.

After the tour of the institute and the review of its activities, we talked about the endeavours of the Tyrol-South Tyrol - Trentino EGTC with Secretary Matthias Fink. During the rich, informal conversation we learnt of many interesting local features, not only of the past and present of the organisation and the foundation of the EGTC, but also of those political demands, economic necessities, and the equally important social claims, which re-evaluated the situation in the region during the period following the Second World War, and lead to the development of this exemplary autonomy. Exploiting the EU's current efforts, they have created a region open in all aspects, an EGTC filled with real content consisting of three historic regions.

## Lessons

The overview above shows that the Bozen/Bolzano Institute, with a wide research base and many institutional research projects, now has a 20-year history including an unusually dynamic growth from the beginning to the present by Carpathian Basin standards. Since historical tradition was paired with political will, the regional autonomy was established in the early 1970s. Leaders aware of local features recognised the potential of local economic and social linkages, thus transforming a geographical periphery over time into a central area with a different coordinate system, without features that would have loosened the nation-state framework. Meanwhile, the European Union framework has also started to support collaborations in the border regions, the loosening of borders to abolish absurd situations and simultaneously level out differences between the adjacent border regions.

The processes of foundation and conscious development of the institution, and later the local university and the propagation of the region among (eventually international) scientific circles can be placed in this broader context. This is clearly indicated by the evolution of local and global focal points of research topics. Based on the local social (autonomy) and natural (alpine environment) specifics, these aim to embrace innovative fields within the context of the society of Western-European economic core regions

at the turn of the 20-21st century (e.g. health, modern technologies).

It is obvious that the historic traditions, social perceptions and experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are significantly different in the Carpathian Basin from the situation in South Tyrol. Nevertheless, analysis and understanding of the latter can certainly be useful for us, if we actually wish to fit into the structures of the European Union not just politically, but socially as well. In this sense, the first timid steps of the Europe Institute that led us to a personal visit to Bolzano/Bozen were definitely useful and we hope that relations with our contacts there will continue to flourish in the near future.

ZSOLT BOTTLIK

## **Far Eastern Relations**

### **Japanese Guests at the Institute**

Two Japanese experts were hosted by our institute in January 2014. Dr. Hiroshi Tanaka (Ritsumeikan University) and Dr. Hideo Kojimoto (Hirosaki University) visited Hungary and central Europe respectively in the aim of learning more about cross-border cooperation initiatives such as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The social and economic environment was not unfamiliar at all for the two scholars as they had already visited our country several times and summarized their experiences in scientific publications.

Paying particular attention to this issue of regional cross-border initiatives is highly relevant in Japan as the establishment of an interregional cooperation around the East Sea is in train with the involvement of coastal regions from Japan, China, the two Koreas and Russia. The configuration of the institutional framework and the creation of a stable operating mechanism are currently the most important priorities. For this reason the experts, coming from the fields of economics and political sciences respectively, were studying the legal framework of cross-border initiatives operating in Central Europe mainly in terms of their internal administrative division and their mechanisms of decision making. As Japan and the other countries of the emerging interregional cooperation are likely to have reasonably centralized public administration systems in vertical terms it is the Strategy for the Danube Region (and other macro-regional strategies of the EU) that is, due to its scale and top-down approach, a more suitable model of cooperation than EGTCs targeting primarily local entities with a bottom-up approach.

Besides studying the administrative organisation our guests were also curious about the economic and social added values of cross-border initiatives. Our institute seeks to play an important role in sharing experiences with our partners and, similarly, looks forward to participating in a fruitful cooperation.

MÁRTON PETE

## **Conditions of Community Planning “Genius Loci” or Maintaining Contacts with Those Who Left**

### **Introduction**

The last twenty years have been characterised, beyond the social and economic changes, by a considerable outflow of the population in the majority of the underdeveloped settlements in the Great Plain, most of them located in the border area between Hungary and Serbia. It is a daily social problem in many of these settlements, with the exception of the dominating big cities, that a considerable proportion of young, educated people leave, first temporarily then permanently, their birthplace and place of education. There are some who choose the nearest city, regional centre or even the capital but many seek prosperity, irrespective of their nationality, abroad.

Stay or leave? It appears a common dilemma for many. What serves our future prosperity better and is in our own interest in line with the short term or long term aims of the community? The aims of a community are nowadays met, in keeping with the modern methodology of regional development, with bottom-up planning based on its own, local knowledge and expertise. Is it possible to speak about community planning in those regions where the structure of the society is asymmetrical and where local knowledge and expertise are both missing?

These questions would perhaps

not emerge with such force if there were natural and living contacts between locality (the place where one was born and educated) and those that have emigrated from there.

These questions were raised and discussed in the frameworks of a project carried out by the Scientific Association for the Development of Small Regions (SADSR) in conjunction with its partner in Vojvodina, the Vojvodina Hungarian Institute of Culture and Education (VHICE), in the frameworks of a project carried out in the Serbia-Hungary IPA programme. Since the working language of these programmes is English our project was given the title “Voice of the Village” (VoV).

In the process of planning and implementing the project several characteristics typical of border areas came to the surface. For example, one was obliged, according to EU rules, to use English as a working language in the Hungarian-Serbian context. Naturally, in certain activities, Hungarian-Hungarian, “Vojvodina” Hungarian vs. “Vojvodina” Serbian relations and, rather interestingly, offering a viewpoint markedly different from the previously mentioned ones, relations between Hungarians “from Hungary” and Serbians from Vojvodina also came to the foreground in an emphatic way.

The present study intends to demonstrate how a cross-border project can contribute to strengthening relations along the borders and filling them with real content. At the same time our intention was to show what new elements such a project can supply

which can offer certain solutions in a given situation for other regions too. In our case this element is the fact and nature of maintaining contacts, as an instrument for community development being one of the foundations of community-based planning, with those who emigrated from the region.

### **Background and Aims of the Project**

The content element of the project is especially interesting from the point of view of living along the borders. In our case the border between Serbia and Hungary can be perceived as a barrier in the sense that it separates an EU country from a non-EU one. At the same time, this region is a contact zone as well, bearing in mind that the Hungarians on both sides of the border represent a majority. Another element of contact and correspondence is the similarity of problems, namely the process of emigration from the area. The peculiarity of the given situation is that, as far as Serbia is concerned, hundreds of thousands have found employment possibilities, for shorter or longer periods of time since the 1970s, in the West European labour markets. Many of them never returned home, and emigration became even more intensive as a consequence of the civil war in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. In contrast, the labour market of the EU became accessible for the Hungarian labour force only after joining the European Union. As a result the phenomenon of emigration became more marked and reached proportions of a real problem

only in the 2000s. Therefore on the Vojvodina side of the border a certain experience was accumulated in how to maintain contact with those who had left earlier. Although these experiences had not reached institutional levels they served well as a base and starting point, as a beginning of proper methodology, to the project's activities. This situation may be a little awkward because the notion of partnership meant in the case of our project that there was knowledge, experience on both sides to hand over or exchange with one another. That is the reason why, for example, partnership was not based on the principle applied in similar projects between Austria and Hungary in the frameworks of which a candidate member, or future member, for that matter, learns or, in other words, "takes on good practices" from an EU-member.

The aim of the project was "... *to strengthen relations in Vojvodina and Hungary with those who had left the region earlier and to start substantive re-migratory processes. This process can only be meaningfully supported in the long run if we know the exact population movements of the two big regions. On the other hand, our aim was to make the knowledge and expertise accumulated by those who had left the region part of the local collective 'pool of knowledge' as well*". ([http://kfte.hu/?page\\_id=118](http://kfte.hu/?page_id=118))

### **Methods Applied during the Planning and Implementation Phase of the Project**

The VoV project has its own life-cycle just as any other initiative of a

similar nature does. Here the initiating, planning, implementing and closing phases have been carried out and the current period is devoted to the tasks of evaluation and maintenance. In our case, just as in other similar cases, the curve of workload continuously went upwards towards execution then it started gradually to come down. Our aim is, of course, to prevent it, during the maintenance phase, from approaching zero.

Our methods during the preparatory phase consisted mostly of building contacts and organising meetings. We, as leading partners in the project, made a conscious effort to channel these events towards the original target according to the partner expectations, generally characterising cross-border programmes. During the planning phase we outlined our aims, then, in line with these aims, we determined the activities according to the means with which we intended to achieve them. Three broad stages in the methodology were identified during the planning process:

First, the establishment of direct contacts with those who emigrated from the region; second, scientifically based research in the field of those who emigrated and, finally, the widest possible dissemination of the results achieved and of the mission of the project itself.

These methods determined our later activities during the period of implementation and execution of the project. They were as follows:

**1.** Setting up and operation of InfoPoints in four settlements with the

intention of making and maintaining contact with those who left the region, the collection of knowledge in this regard and preparing a manual of methodology;

**2.** Research, by applying the survey questionnaire method, on those who emigrated from Vojvodina in general and among students of Vojvodina who have declared their intention to emigrate;

**3.** Organisation of various events with the purpose of making the activities of the project as widely known and popular as possible and setting up a kind of “travelling exhibition”.

The project has been closed only as far as the tendering and application process of the programme is concerned; there are still various ongoing activities.

### **Results of Maintaining Contacts with Those Who Emigrated from the Region**

SADSR (see above) had worked together with the participants of the project in Vojvodina years before submitting their tender documents for the call. This preparatory work consisted partly of learning more about similar problems raised by civil associations in Vojvodina and partly of exploring the actual situation and building further contacts. A number of stakeholders involved in the project took part in the process of formulating the basic problems. Among them political players (of rather different political commitments) like the mayors of Ada, Lajosmizse, Bečej and Temerin or the Chairman of the Vojvodina Hungarian

Association were featured just as civic associations (like SADSR being the initiator of the whole project, the “Than Brothers” Circle of Intellectuals from Bečej or the “Green Island” Association of Nature Protection from Ada), official public institutions (the Hungarian Cultural Institute of Vojvodina, the “Károly Szirmai” Library in Temerin, House of Culture and Library of the City of Lajosmizse) and even private individuals from Ada, Bečej, Temerin, Zenta or Lajosmizse. Active, working civic relations and receptivity were both basic requirements in the selection of settlements. All four local governments managing InfoPoints immediately recognised the possibilities in the project and were able to give the organisational background necessary for its realisation too. (Their dedication is highlighted by the fact that although the person holding the mayoral office changed in three out of the four settlements involved during the project it had no negative impact whatsoever upon the project itself, their commitment to carry it through remaining unchanged). These partners followed the various activities, during the whole implementation of the project, with great attention; they voiced their opinion at regular meetings and occasionally offered alternative solutions to the problems arising. The organisations in Vojvodina mentioned before are all focal points of the region’s social and cultural life, therefore the existence and operation of these communities is of essential importance for them.

The reasons for implementing the project were summarised by the partners as follows: *“Those who stayed behind at home and also those who left the region are preoccupied day by day, in Vojvodina as well as in Hungary, by the problem of emigration. As a result of this migratory process the whole social structure of the Alföld (the Great Plain) and Vojvodina has changed. Migration has not been stopped even when the Southern Slavic war ended. It afflicts all those living there no matter what nationality they belong to. Emigration leads to, in several settlements and also in certain regions both in the Great Plains and in Vojvodina, a loss of knowledge, a lack of ability for renewal. Outstanding personalities of the region born 50 or 100 years ago are still known in many places but the knowledge and expertise of those who emigrated, be it in the fields of art, science, sports or any industries of outstanding levels acquired in the outside world remains basically unknown. The fact is, however, that it is, in many cases, these pools of knowledge or expertise which could give a spiritual or intellectual leverage to turning around the future of a settlement or a region. Very often one knows even less about the lives or work of those who emigrated only some years ago. How favourable it would be for the birthplace, for the city where they had once gone to school, to possess the knowledge, the expertise of those who emigrated from here! Why does their original settlement, village or city, not honour them by maintaining contact with them and by collecting and storing the knowledge and expertise created by them? This is, of course, also true the other way round. Why does the person who*

*Table 1: Population of the Settlements with InfoPoints and Active Contacts Registered*

Name of settlement	Population (No.), 2011	VoV active contacts with those who emigrated from the settlement (No.)
Lajosmizse	11 140	250
Ada	10 547	250
Bečej	25 774	250
Temerin	19 216	250
Total	66 677	1 000

*had emigrated not honour his/her former city, village by making his/her knowledge and expertise acquired abroad available for them? It would certainly offer a pattern, a clue for success and for better understanding other people. The method and culture of institutionalised contact-building with those who left the region and live elsewhere has not yet been worked out. A number of settlements are maintaining data-banks about their emigrés. Sometimes, on special occasions like ceremonial days or events of the settlement in question, they are even invited to attend, but such contacts are rather accidental. In several bigger cities clubs for keeping emigrés together have been established with lobbying intent or with the purpose of keeping old traditions, but these clubs often become 'self-propelling' and the actual relationship with the 'mother-settlement' is disconnected. In the meantime a kind of re-migratory process is also perceived if only in traces. Its size and motives have not yet been researched with scientific thoroughness." ([http://kfte.hu/?page\\_id=118](http://kfte.hu/?page_id=118))*

The above detailed ideas were fortunately adjustable to Priority 2.2.2 of the Hungary-Serbia IPA Programme

supporting people-to-people initiatives in the frameworks of "Education and Cultural Cooperation" within the main priority "Economy, Education, Culture". (<http://www.hu-srb-ipa.com/hu/>)

### **Institutionalised Contacts - InfoPoints**

In the course of launching the project we started from the premise that a continuous communication flow with those who left the region is needed instead of contacts based upon emotions and on being limited by and large to one or only a few occasions per annum. Therefore we set up and operated four InfoPoints in four locations to start contacts with the emigrés involved: in Ada, Temerin, Bečej and Lajosmizse, respectively. The starting points of the tasks our colleagues in these four InfoPoints were expected to carry out were based on the following basic conditions (defined already in the preparatory phase of the project by the group of planners):

What are the benefits of maintaining contacts with those who



*Table 2: Education Levels of Vojvodina Hungarian and Vojvodina Serbian Fathers and Mothers, according to Responses from Pupils*

School education of parents	Vojvodina Hungarians	Vojvodina Serbs	Vojvodina Hungarians	Vojvodina Serbs
	Fathers (No.)		Mothers (No.)	
Up to 8th class	14	8	23	7
Technical school	11	21	8	13
Vocational high school	56	42	48	34
Secondary school	2	1	4	7
College and university	17	27	17	37
Don't know	1	1	1	3

emigrated from the region?

- They will help voluntarily and readily.
- Their opinions are respected by the local community.
- They are the ones who make daily comparison between their former and present living places .
- They recognise development possibilities.
- They are potential investors.
- What are the benefits of the VoV project for those who left the region?
- It reinforces emotional ties between them and the settlement they left earlier.
- Those who left are considered as cooperating partners by the present inhabitants of the settlement.
- They are able to support the citizens of their birthplace with their knowledge and experience.
- They are supplied with information.
- Their birthplace maintains contacts with them.
- Their chances for re-migration are thus kept open.

Those employed in the InfoPoints were working by a manual prepared

in the frameworks of the project. This manual offered methodological assistance for getting in touch with the highest possible number of emigrés in a more active and efficient way, with particular regard to the protection of personal data. Besides contact-building, launched among relatives and friends/acquaintances, the profiles created in one of the community portals and the information offered through this portal made the searching process more efficient (for example: <https://www.facebook.com/vov.becejbecse?fref=ts>). It became obvious that personalised requests are appreciated better by people and they indeed follow the events concerning their old settlement with greater attention. Besides this technique our colleagues were able to work efficiently, to obtain information and to make contacts at the traditional events of the various settlements (e.g. village ceremonial days, school reunions, meetings of emigrés). *Table 1* highlights the population figures of settlements and the data concerning emigrés obtained by the given

*Table 3: Willingness to Move Elsewhere among Pupils Questioned (per cent)*

	<b>Hungarians in Vojvodina (per cent)</b>	<b>Serbs in Vojvodina (per cent)</b>
Willingness to move abroad (studying or working in EU)	35	20
Willingness to move inland (to countryside, within the country)	20	30

InfoPoint.

The registered data were as follows: name, present residence (country, settlement), date of birth, previous domicile, e-mail address, postal address, education, vocational education, date of emigration, reason(s) for leaving the region, present occupation, possible fellow companions of emigration, family members left at home, means of maintaining contacts, status abroad, information, questions and, finally, suggestions.

The database gives the possibility of supplying information to those who left the settlement or region in question and, at the same time, of requesting and obtaining information, knowledge, expertise or opinion from them. Continuous “contact maintenance” (even after the project has finished) is facilitated, besides personal (telephone and e-mail) inquiry, by continuous daily and weekly placing of information on the community web portal too.

### **Results of the Survey Made Among Serbian and Hungarian Students**

An identity survey using the questionnaire method was made among Serbian and Hungarian secondary school students in schools on the

Vojvodina side of the border. The sample was determined on a representative basis applied to each given school with regard to Serbian-Hungarian proportions and proportions of boys and girls. The sample consisted of a total of 367 pupils in Vojvodina, among them 205 of Hungarian and 162 of Serbian origin. The schools participating in the survey were as follows: Technical Secondary School, Ada; Business and Trade Secondary Vocational School, Technical School, Technical High School, all three from Bečej; Lukijan Mušicki High School, Temerin. Among those classes questioned, technical high schools, vocational schools and “mainstream” secondary schools were represented in a proportional manner. The aim of the research was to get a picture of how a generation entering into adulthood in the coming years thinks about its future.

The results given by The Vojvodina Serbian and Hungarian pupils show marked differences in relatively few points. The Vojvodina figures of our research called our attention to a not totally unexpected but still remarkable process. Two factors deserve further consideration. We put questions

*Table 4: How Satisfied Are You ... ?*

*When referring to the „countryside” think about the area where you live (Bácska, Bánát or Szerémség) – judging it on a scale of 100 (0 meaning not at all, 100 meaning fully satisfied)*

<b>How Satisfied Are You...?</b>	<b>Vojvodina Hungarians</b>	<b>Vojvodina Serbs</b>	<b>Hungarians living in Hungary</b>
...with your life	71	75	62
...with the settlement where you live	56	62	55
...with your neighbours	62	64	61
...with the inhabitants of the settlement where you live	55	58	53
...with the area where you live*	62	56	59
...with the country where you live**	25	37	44
...with Europe*	54	48	49
...with the European Union*	45	38	32

\* Bácska, Bánát or Szerémség

concerning the school education of parents supposing that this might also play a role in the willingness to emigrate.

The parental backgrounds of Hungarian and Serbian pupils in Vojvodina differ as far as parents' school education is concerned. The number of parents with upper level education among Hungarian students in Vojvodina is more limited than among Serbian pupils of Vojvodina. The differential is big especially in the case of mothers. There are reciprocal differences in school education levels in the case of those with lower education: here the parents of Hungarian pupils are over-represented.

Apart from the difference mentioned above, willingness to move elsewhere is also judged differently among Serbian and Hungarian pupils

(Table 3).

More than half of both Hungarian and Serbian pupils would like to move from their present domicile after finishing school. There is, however, a marked difference in that if moving, Hungarians would preferentially choose moving abroad whereas Serbians would rather move elsewhere within the country. After evaluating written responses it became clear that while the bulk of Serbs would head towards bigger cities in Vojvodina (Subotica or Novi Sad) and, further, towards Belgrade or Niš, for that matter, Vojvodina Hungarians would choose Hungary and, to an even greater extent, Germany, England or overseas, mainly Canada.

The wider area around the original residence is already judged differently by the Hungarian and

*The wall of emigrants, VoV travelling exhibition*

20.08.2012, Lajosmizse.



*Jenő Hajnal and János Schwertner locate a memorial tablet in the Memorial House of Than Brothers*



Serbian youth (these differences are rather significant): see Table 4. The countryside (in Vojvodina) is judged rather positively (reaching 62 points) in the Hungarian group but Serbian youth is also quite satisfied with it (56 points). The Serbian youth are also critical about Serbia (37 points) while the Hungarian youth are explicitly dissatisfied with it (only 25 points). The Hungarian youth are more satisfied than Serbians with Europe as a whole and the European Union (similarly to satisfaction levels concerning the countryside or the country as a whole), but both groups are more critical about the EU (SZOBOSZLAI, 2013).

Emigration has its own, different, local channels of operation in practice: for example those having emigrated from Ada almost form a colony of their own in one of the cities in Canada where they help one another to obtain jobs, for instance, or assist those about to arrive from Ada with the aim of settling in Canada (based on personal accounts, Ada, 2013).

### **People-to-people: Exhibition Openings**

The material for a travelling exhibition was compiled in the frameworks of the project, with the participation of the stakeholders mentioned earlier, thinking collectively, containing information about persons who originated and then emigrated from the four settlements involved but who subsequently became known, famous or recognised in their own field of art, science, sport or other professional activity. Our aim was to feature as many living personalities in the tableaux as possible thus indicating that many who had left these settlements earlier were able to achieve success in other parts of the world. Their birthplace, the city where they went to school, the environment where they started their career all surely had a part in their success and this success can and should be shared by others. These success stories can be perceived, if one agrees with the line of thought mentioned earlier, as the collective achievement of the whole

settlement and one should build on it. Even community planning should be based upon these principles. Many of those who had earlier emigrated and now live abroad were invited and drawn into the process of compiling the contents of the exhibition, besides, of course, the actual participants of the project. In essence the intention was not to create a historic “pantheon” but to display a living and continuously renewing tableau of excellence and pride. This was also the idea behind the initiative to set up and display an empty tableau in each of the exhibition openings held on a special day for a given settlement in the four venues (Temerin, Ada, Bečej and Lajosmizse) each. These empty tableaux could then be filled by those having left the region earlier but who returned home for this occasion and wished to record their life and presence in this way. These events offered a unique opportunity to discuss the various project initiatives and, indirectly, more general matters of community planning too. It was obvious that personal meetings and contacts are of great importance in the life of any

community. These rare opportunities safeguard the togetherness of these communities and this is the token of a better, brighter future. Encouraged by the success of these events SADS R organised, outside the scope of this project, an exhibition and a joining event in Budapest too, in the Saint Joseph Community Hall in Békás-megyer. At this occasion a cultural programme was offered by renowned Hungarian artists having emigrated from Vojvodina or still living there, turning the whole occasion into a lively discussion and conversation until late in the evening. The notion was conceived here that such initiatives, taking up and maintaining contacts with emigrés could and should be the aim, and is in the interest, of all Hungarian settlements and regions. The image of the five exhibitions was adjusted to the spirit of local conditions: the “show” was given each time by a local folk or jazz musician, singer or poet or someone whose career had been launched from there. There was also an opening and a closing conference organised adjacently in which researchers,

*VoV travelling exhibition opening ceremony 03.08.2012, Bečej.*



*VoV travelling exhibition 06.01.2013, Békásme gyer*



*Table 5: Average Age of the Vojvodina Population, 2002, 2011*

	2002	2011
Vojvodina total	39,80	41,80
Vojvodina Hungarians	43,09	44,99

(Source: Dr. Gábrity, 2012)

scientists, politicians, experts and project managers presenting the project results gave lectures on different social and economic aspects of the Hungarian-Serbian border region.

### **Considerations of the VoV Project and Community Planning**

The above project elements can be perceived as segments of community development. The segment in question could well facilitate the “re-channelling” of the knowledge and expertise accumulated by those who had left earlier into the life of a settlement or region which had suffered considerable migratory losses in terms of regional and settlement development, cultural life or economic development.

The perception of this theme is particularly timely in view of the emergent notion of “Community-Led Local Development”. Although not known about at the time of planning and implementing the project, the notion of so-called CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) appeared among the preferred instruments of planning and implementation in preparation for the forthcoming budget period, 2014 to 2020, of the European Union. Hence it is timely and appropriate that

this factor should now be dealt with, in the evaluation phase of the VoV project. CLLD assumes the existence of communities upon which conceptual planning and also the professional and financial implementation of the programmes of a given region can be based. This practical step was preceded in the previous decade by the theory according to which the proposed, up-to-date form of planning is, under all circumstances, bottom-up planning. This notion, in itself an undisputedly forward-looking idea, can only be filled with positive content if regions with an asymmetrical social structure also receive help by which they are able to participate meaningfully in the process of bottom-up planning. One of its forms could be to build the knowledge and expertise of the emigrés into the planning process. In the case of Hungary the present, and especially future, demographic processes (loss of population in rural and underdeveloped regions) raise the issue of how these modern planning methods can be applied in areas and settlements with shrinking populations, distorted age structures and school education.

Aside from this and supposing that the protagonists of CLLD

*VoV travelling exhibition opening ceremony 06.01.2013, Békásmegyér*



*Zoltán Szűgyi read his poems*

programmes will be bigger regions or joint, multiple settlement efforts, it is possible to argue that first of all communities should be developed and then, subsequently, planning should be based on them. Stepping back a little, one might put the question to oneself: Are there communities in Hungary disposing of adequately wide expertise, social approval and even motivation for planning and realising complete regional programmes. “Are there viable communities having their own will and vision for the future and are these communities able to defend their values and represent their own interests and those of the future generations? If yes, are they adequately involved in planning and implementation? If not, are there any efforts in the course of developments preparing local communities for taking part in defining, executing and controlling their own needs and programmes?” (SZILVÁCSKU, SZABÓ, FVR, 2012)

*VoV conference. Bečej 24.01.2013.*



*István Pásztor, Chairman of VMSZ  
Vuk Radojevic, mayor;  
János Schwertner, VoV project manager,  
KFTE; Jenő Hajnal, project partner,  
Director of VMMI*

The horizontal instruments of Cohesion Policy, like, for example CLLD after 2014, will undoubtedly have a decisive impact, in the utilisation of EU support, not only on Hungary but also on Serbia, an officially accepted member candidate since 2012 and, within Serbia, on Vojvodina as well. We were not yet fully aware of this impact when the planning phase of the present project was launched, it will have greater significance in the “afterlife” of the project. The various stakeholders involved in the project concentrated in the planning phase with more emphasis on the most serious social problem of Vojvodina, aging and emigration. The increase in the average age in Vojvodina during the last ten years has been rather conspicuous (see Table 5). It is explained by low and decreasing natural reproduction rates (especially among Hungarians but, increasingly, among Serbs too) and by the emigration of younger people and young families.

It is called community or participative planning when the stakeholders are involved in the planning process right at the beginning, in order to directly build the needs, requirements and development recommendations raised by them into development strategies. In this context the planner is responsible not for drawing up the vision for the future or for defining solutions but for coordinating, harmonising and “fine-tuning” different interests, proposals and targets (CZENE, PÉTI, 2010).

The VoV project was characterised, throughout its whole life, by community planning, since the stakeholders described earlier worked out the methodology and the activities in a joint effort. Further into the process, more and more civic, local stakeholders and, later, emigrés from the region, could be brought in to support the project. The thought was formulated that even those who are not living there at a given moment might, through their emotional attachment, belong to the community of a settlement or region and, through their knowledge and expertise, be brought back and built into the future of the region or settlement in question. It is obvious that when CLLD type developments are initiated either in Hungary or in Serbia they are likely to be more successful if not only the locals but, at the same time, those having emigrated earlier (but still attached by emotional ties) are involved as potential stakeholders of

a community. This bears fruit when one is somewhat concerned about who should do the planning or what should be the vision for the future of one’s own region or settlement. One needs only to manage well and rely on one’s network of relationships: the experience to be gained from the VoV project may give an adequate method for that.

### **Conclusions, Experience, Results**

In the course of planning and implementing the VoV project we tried to find alternative solutions for maintaining contacts with those who had emigrated from the region of a rather exceptional terrain, along the border between Hungary and Serbia. Our aim was twofold:

To learn more about the motivations and intentions of emigrés and, based on this information, to convert, at least partly, the process of emigration into “re-emigration”.

To build the knowledge and expertise accumulated by the emigrés into the local visions for the future and to make them active parts of the local pool of knowledge and expertise.

As work progressed it gradually became clear for us, as the initiators of this project, how sensitive, how timely and how decisive a theme we have found in today’s “community-needy” world. We see every day how many people follow with interest the community portals of our settlements with InfoPoints, how heartily those having left a long time ago welcome information from home and how open they are to voice their opinions



or to offer help when they are personally approached. We have been building communities, acting as a kind of bridge between those who stayed behind and those who left. Having a community has its intrinsic value but it becomes even more valuable if it is stronger, able to make decisions, knows what it wants and has its own vision for the future. Throughout the project Hungarian and Serbian mayors, regional developers, teachers and librarians all worked closely together. The common aim forged people together. We are convinced that it can serve as a pattern to be used by other settlements or regions. We are working on making the “VoV model” transferable, in terms of its established methodology, to other border areas or to other regions suffering not only from economic but social disadvantages. “Nagging” about how many people are leaving their birthplaces in the hope of better living conditions is not enough. One must do one’s best to ensure that, those who have left should learn, gain experience and return home or, at least “send home” part of the knowledge they have acquired, as far as possible under the given circumstances. We proved that the first step in this process is community development followed by community planning. Reinforced by the new planning period of the European Union this process will already have strong foundations on which one can build.

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### Online resources:

- Website of the Scientific Association for the Development of Micro-regions: [http://kfte.hu/?page\\_id=118](http://kfte.hu/?page_id=118), (Accessed: 05.03.2014)
- Website of the Hungary–Serbia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme: [www.hu-srb-ipa.com](http://www.hu-srb-ipa.com); (Accessed 05.03.2014)
- Vov Bečej-Óbecse Facebook profile: <https://www.facebook.com/vov>.

becejobecse?fref=ts Letöltés:  
(Accessed 05.03.2014)

Subsite of the website of the Hungarian Educational Institute in Vojvodina launched for the VoV Project: <http://vov.vmmi.org/index.php?page=result> (Accessed 05.03.2014)

DALMA MAKKOS, JÁNOS SCHWERTNER

### **Successful European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation**

#### **The Ister-Granum EGTC**

The office of the Ister-Granum European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation is located within the St. Adalbert Centre of Esztergom, in the immediate vicinity of the Europe Institute. The foundation of the Europe Institute was induced by the planning and feasibility support of cross-border cooperation that provides an applied scientific background. Therefore it might be an interesting experience to help the activities of the institution to gain insight to a specific EGTC workshop that has been operating for several years as a framework of cross-border cooperation.

The coming into force of a Regulation of the European Union in 2006 made it possible to found EGTCs. The goal was to form a type of cooperation, which provided a legal framework for the resource management of European Territorial Cooperation. The EGTC has created such a framework that will ensure the possibility of cooperation between EU

Member States and their authorities, institutions and their associations, as well as the same institutions in other Member States in order to achieve their common goals regarding cross-border cooperation. Consequently, the Ister-Granum EGTC, but in general all EGTC activity, stands at the focal point of research on social and economic processes.

### **The beginnings**

Prior to the initiation of rebuilding the Maria Valeria bridge in October 2000, in minor regards to the rebuilding preparations a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the mayors of the two bridgehead towns of Esztergom and Štúrovo (Párkány) in May 2000. Then on October 13, agreements were signed to form the Spatial Development Association of Esztergom and Nyergesújfalu Sub-regions, and the Southern Regional Development Association of Párkány on the intensification of cooperation between a total of 33 municipalities. The cooperation was led by a 7-member Consultative Council in the first period that prepared the annual work plan and held quarterly meetings.

In 2001, the cooperation took up the name of Ister-Granum that refers to the Latin names of rivers in the project area, Danube and Hron. Simultaneously, eight professional committees were founded (industrial development and logistics, agriculture, culture and sports, education and youth, environment and nature conservation,

tourism, health and social policy, and transport), which consisted of both Hungarian and Slovak experts. The committees also envisioned possible cooperation on a wider economic and social dimension in future activities. The majority of these committees accomplished extremely useful tasks: they created databases, organised professional events and developed specific project proposals. Creating a regional development fund on both Hungarian and Slovak sides (Eurohíd Foundation, Foundation Budúcnosť 2000) was essential to enable the acquisition of resources necessary to achieve these objectives.

The activities of the two foundations, the purposeful promotion and coordination of professional plans, enabled the organisation of several Euro regional events and several bilateral cooperations have formed between twin-cities and sister cities. Among others, the Ister-Granum folk art festival, a showcase of different ethnic traditionalists and artisans in the region, was held annually since 2002. A competition between amateur theatre groups was also launched in 2002. Subsequently the name of Ister-Granum was adopted by a growing number of events: football cups, sailing days, poetry and drawing competitions have all been represented by the name of the Euro-region.

The cooperation has an increasing range of activities with appropriate content and targets; due to the high level of activity more and more people have joined the initiative, so the consultative

council decided on establishing a more solid institution.

### **The Euro-region period**

The Ister-Granum Euroregion, having outgrown the above mentioned cooperation association, and based on the recommendations of the Madrid Framework Convention, was ceremonially founded in November 2003 by 100 mayors, initially in a consultative framework for cooperation.

The regional parliament met twice a year (with the mayors of the towns as members) and has become the main decision-making body of the Euroregion. Work and the preparation of decisions between the two sessions were carried out by an eight-person presidency. The president of the cooperation was the mayor of Esztergom and the vice president was the mayor of Štúrovo (Párkány). Half of the committee chairs were Slovak and the other half were Hungarian mayors, who regularly gave account to the regional parliament of the work undertaken by the committee. Members of the committees were members of the Assembly, but regarding specific topics they were often invited as guests to the meetings. The eight professional committees still exist, but their numbers have grown with other, non-regional, professional members as well.

Meanwhile, the Euro-regional civil initiatives continued. The Euro-region's civil parliament was established in 2003, but its lengthy registration only ended in 2008. During this period, the Ister-Granum Wine

Knight Order was established in 2004 by Hungarian and Slovak winemakers. One of the major successes of the region was achieved in the field of healthcare, as the Vaszary Kolos hospital in Esztergom began to function as a regional institution. Since the closest similar institution on the Slovak side is located in Nové Zámky (Érsekújvár) in the Euroregion, settlements located on the Slovak side can now also turn to Esztergom's hospital for patient care.

From 2006 – the same year in which the civil portal began operation – the bilingual Civil Newsletter has been published quarterly and distributed among 1100 civil organisations within the Euro-region. A year later, local television studios of Štúrovo (Párkány) and Esztergom laid out the vision of creating a joint regional channel. In addition to the above mentioned, the Euroregion has produced a number of publications especially in the field of tourism besides its media appearances, and many other writings and studies on the border area have followed.

During this period, the activities of the Euroregion were characterized by an entire series of completed projects. Some of the applications were submitted by Esztergom as the mandated settlement, while many projects were executed by the two highly active development foundations, Eurohíd Foundation on the Hungarian side and Foundation Buducnost' 2000 on the Slovak side. Concerning the planning procedures for the bridges over the Ipel, Euro-region authorities granted their own contribution,

while the project is managed by the subregion. However, the development of several proposals was blocked by the lack of an adequate legal and institutional framework. For the same reasons the implementation of the development plan created in 2005 was heavily delayed, even though it was endorsed by all governments, and had been presented on the professional days organized by the Regional Policy Committee of the Parliament in September of the same year, held in the European Parliament. During this period, it was not possible to create stable cross-border institutions. Therefore, we were happy to welcome legislative processes taking place this time that led to the adoption of the EGTC Regulations. Therefore it can be stated with some certainty that from 2005 onwards we were conscious about the preparations that led to the establishment the EGTCs.

### **Foundation and activities of the EGTC**

The Grouping was founded on the 6th of May 2008 in Esztergom, with the participation of 46 Hungarian and 39 Slovak settlements in the presence of Luc Van den Brande, the President of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. The Metropolitan Court (in the lack of prior experience) ordered the repetition of the foundation process, so that it ended on the 13th of November 2008 with the release of the final order. In accordance with the former cooperation, the EGTC aims to assert the interests of the region in different fields besides

trying to execute developments that mostly belong in the research area of the Institute's geographers.

In the field of transport, in particular to road developments, the most significant action is the development of highway No. 10 and our efforts regarding the implementation of the V/C north-south corridor. We have organized a number of conferences, published many issues, and established a technical working group with transportation professionals as local actors. We are actively monitoring the case of the corridor, we participate in conferences and we are also engaged in the preparation of strategic planning processes. The Ister-Granum EGTC has joined the planning processes of the Ipel bridges, and has made its voice heard in all possible forums to promote building connections to facilitate movement between the area of Börzsöny and the area of the lower Hron.

Among other project plans in 2008, the EGTC submitted a project concept to develop a bike service network, which was supported by the evaluators, but unfortunately proposals submitted in the following rounds could not be executed due to a lack of financial support. The construction of a bicycle path connecting Ipolydamásd with Letkés, and the establishment of a service network involving 82 municipalities were parts of the concept. The implementation of the service network is included in the plans of the EGTC, and if applicable, it will also be involved in the construction of the cross-border bicycle path.

In the field of tourism, one of the most important projects submitted – and supported – by the EGTC in 2008 was the goal to establish a regional tourist destination organisation. The Ister-Granum won a grant of nearly €500,000 for this purpose. After the commencement of its realisation the project unfortunately encountered problems of pre-financing, so the grant had to be refunded one and a half years after the launch of the project. The project entitled “Boundless destination” aims at the establishment of an Esztergom-Štúrovo (Párkány) oriented tourist target region, including the development of necessary strategic documents and projects, the formation of an institutional and organizational infrastructure, creating touch-screen “info-kiosks” and information boards, producing tourism publications and the creation of a four-language tourism website.

Despite the failed project, the EGTC has still not given up on the realisation of tourism development of the entire region. This is mostly due to the fact that the region surrounding Esztergom in a 30 kilometre radius provides an excellent base for the development of program packages that meet all the needs of people visiting the area for several days.

At its meeting in December 2012, the Assembly of the EGTC set the target to establish the Ister-Granum Local Product Network, which would aim to support agriculture, especially the activities of local producers. Over

the past year five project proposals were filed to various calls. The first of these has not received support, but the subsequent three gained the endorsement of the evaluators, whereas the fifth one is still waiting for its final evaluation (its feasibility study was approved in the first round).

Supported by the Hungarian National Rural Network (HNRN), invited participants had the opportunity to participate in a study trip to the region (representatives of the LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs, farmers, mayors, regional development experts, consumer community members) in August 2013. We visited good examples of a self-sustaining village, fruit processing facilities operating on a cooperative system and an organisation helping family farmers and self-sufficient farms. As part of the second project we published a booklet in which we provide a glimpse of local products from the region as well as introducing the most active producers and regional recipes based on local products in the nearly 100-page publication.

A project that won the Visegrad Fund is now in the contracting phase, which includes the organisation of a two-day conference involving Polish, Czech and Slovak partner organizations (in Žilina and Esztergom). The conference in Žilina evolved around the marketing of local products whilst the one in Esztergom presents the legal frameworks of the four countries and addresses ways to overcome legal obstacles (for example, how a Hungarian

producer can sell in Slovakia). We submitted our biggest project on the tender of the cross border LEADER of the MNVH, in which three Local Action Groups in the area of the EGTC were also involved. This project aims to develop the Ister-Granum Local Product Trademark and to plan the marketing of the trademark program. Besides creating a database listing all producers of the region, two cultural, family-friendly events addressing the participants, two training sessions addressing producers on legal marketing and two workshops involving municipalities will also be organised. Additionally, we also intend to publish booklets.

As an addition to the above, we can also demonstrate our activity in the field of environment and energy, as well as in the field of economic development. In the previous years the EGTC has planned the creation of an energy agency. Feasibility studies also support the project, but for the time being we have been unable to secure a financial source. We have just started reviewing this program area. Our main goal is to reduce power consumption in our settlements and the exploitation of local opportunities (e.g., the creation of a biogas plant near a chicken plant). The working group established by the General Assembly held its meeting in the spring of 2013, and has set the goal of establishing the Ister-Granum Logistics Enterprise Zone by utilising the European Union's new tool for integrated territorial investment. The ITI aims to connect Hungarian

developed industrial zones with the logistical capabilities of Slovakia. Additionally, the development of industrial parks in Štúrovo (Párkány), Obid (Ebed), Nyergesújfalu and Látatlan are included in the plans as well.

PÉTER NAGY

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