

CHANGING ROLE OF BORDERS IN THE CENTRAL EUROPE – FUZZY BORDERS AND THEIR EFFECT ON COOPERATION

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Abstract

The paper deals with the changing role of administrative, mainly national borders and how it is affecting the cross-border areas and communities inhabiting these areas. Borders are perceived differently across the world depending on the model of border interaction (Martinez, 1994). For a person inhabiting borderlands, border can be a limiting factor for living in his functional space. Recently in the EU, borders became less permanent, more permeable, many people do not perceive them anymore inside the EU, but the EU external border is still remaining hard. 30 years ago, the borders in the Central Europe were hard, permanent and truly limiting the freedom of mobility of people, goods and ideas. This new reality of the borders' role must be understood and acknowledged by planners, geographers and decision makers.

Keywords: borders, cross-border areas, fuzzy borders, fuzzification, cross-border cooperation

Introduction

A border is a belief, an imagination that creates and shapes the world, a social reality, rather than an object or a material artefact (Houtum et al., 2005). Within the EU, the borders are becoming fuzzy, they are not hard anymore and by the decisions taken at the EU level, such as acceptance the Schengen Agreement and its addition to Amsterdam Treaty and resulting Schengen space of free movement of people, they are becoming softer i.e. (semi)permeable. This idea is based on assumption that international borders are turning so porous that they no longer fulfil their historical role as barriers to the movement of goods, ideas and people, and as markers of the extent and power of the state (Wilson, Donnan, 1998).

This process of border fuzzification takes place also at the outer EU borders in form of EU accession policies as the belonging to the EU is becoming fuzzy. In this light, it is hard to continue in inside/outside EU dichotomy and as an alternative Christiansen et al (2000) introduce term 'EU's near abroad'. EU borders and EU border policies produce interfaces and intermediate spaces between the inside and the outside. These borders are moving zones spatially and temporarily and they can be crossed by people, but also goods, capital or ideas. However, this does not mean that borders are vanishing or there are processes leading to total de-

bordering, rather the degree of fuzziness of borders needs to be recognized Christiansen et al (2000). Globalization in form of increasing flows of capital, goods, people and information across states borders are creating new transactional identities challenging the old dominance of the state. Within the EU are these new identities initiated by cross-border interaction (Flint, Taylor, 2007).

The paper is elaborating on the changing role of administrative, mainly national borders and how it is affecting the cross-border areas and communities inhabiting these areas. Borders can be perceived in many ways for various persons. For one person it can be seen as a line on a map where one's country ends and the next one begins and when crossing it, one needs to wait a queue to get checked by the police. However, for a person living in bordering area, the border can be a limiting factor for his functional space. In the EU, particularly after introduction of the Schengen space, borders became less permanent, more permeable, many people do not perceive them anymore. Not too long ago, though, borders in the Central Europe were hard and truly limiting the freedom of mobility of people, goods and ideas. Luckily enough, this is not the case anymore. This paper discusses how the borders can be perceived in this new reality where borders are becoming softer and fuzzier and how it is affecting the planning of these areas and, most importantly, the people and communities located at the borders.

Fuzzy borders and the process of border fuzzification

The theory of fuzziness and fuzzy borders is not of planning-related origin. It is used here as a concept suitable to frame the problem of territorial belonging and legitimacy of decision making. Word fuzzy and fuzziness are terms increasingly being used by planners worldwide. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines word fuzzy as not clear, not sharp or distinct. It is usually connected with borders and it was for the first time used in academic literature in 2009 in influential paper by Allmendinger and Haughton, in which they used the term soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries to define spaces located between statutory administration levels whose boundaries were not distinct, but overlapping and changing in time (Allmendinger, Haughton, 2009).

The term was introduced initially to computer science by Lotfi Zadeh in 1965 in his paper introducing fuzzy set theory, describing fuzzy sets as an extension (or generalization (Yager, 1980)) of Boolean logic (Zadeh, 1965). The paper in which the term fuzzy sets was introduced was according to Google Scholar associated with 28 000 citations (Dumitras & Moschytz, 2007), while Wikipedia entry on Zadeh states that his work had been cited as September 2015 150,852 times.

In the EU, with increasing permeability of its borders, the limited ability of people to have decision making power and ability to participate in public matters is a problem of fuzziness, which is not recognized in governance mechanisms. The

legal decision making power of person is exclusively in the place of his or her permanent residence and this can only be in one place, one unit, in line of container view of world. In this view, the territory is split into boxes or containers and decision making power is neatly nested within these boxes, while people are having single membership. Functional spaces overlap and so do living spaces of people. In the current system, one can for example vote only in the place he has a place of permanent residence, although he is not living there or if he is living there, he might not spend majority of time there.

The problem of territorial belonging, though, is not an issue only for people. If we take issue of water management as an example, rivers and water do not respect the borders, they are crossing them and occasional or more frequent flooding events affect spaces disregarding artificially constructed borders. Position this into a framework of rigid system with clear boundaries and competences and it is possible to see a contention with effectiveness and utility. As Hurd et al (2017) put it, crossing borders results in variously bordered combinations of time as well as space, superimposed on, challenging and reinforcing one another in shifting patterns of spatio-temporal overlap and disjunction.

Nevertheless, this process is not taking place in whole Europe. On the one hand, there is a distinction between the inner and outer borders of the EU, while the protection of the outer border is being reinforced by Frontex - European Border and Coast Guard Agency. On the other hand, even the outer borders are changing due to wider geopolitical situation. One of the 'hardest' borders is the border with Russian Federation. Due to the EU Neighbourhood Policy further blurring of EU external borders occurs on border with Ukraine. This takes place for instance by lifting the visa policy, where Ukraine citizens do not need visa to enter the EU since May 2017 due to visa waiver agreement between Ukraine and the EU. Functional areas have fuzzy borders (Haughton et al, 2010), however, they are traditionally governed by system following container rationale. Presenting Giddens's view of state as power container, Taylor (1994) asks a question if this container is leaking, i.e. whether its hard borders containing power and jurisdiction over delineated territory are blurring. Nevertheless, he concludes that the political state remains the major power container in the world. The fuzzy boundaries of these spaces require fuzzy strategies, which have trouble being implemented due to the fuzzy nature of these spaces as they are not neatly organized in containers and additionally they overlap and therefore the membership in these spaces is not singular. As a reply to this, Allmendinger and Haughton (2009) introduced the concept of soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries, advocating for them as having potential to facilitate and coordinate scales of development crossing administrative boundaries and in general more flexible and more appropriately aligned to fit with real geographies of problems and opportunities (Haughton et al., 2010). Unfortunately, these arrangements are to this day condoned by central governments.

These soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries are not aimed at replacing the statutory planning based on clear geographical and administrative boundaries, but rather increase the effectiveness of planning (here the strong pragmatic element is visible) by acknowledging the increasing openness of boundaries and incremental learning about with fuzzy boundaries and other planners and other professions, bringing new expertise, resources, insights and priorities (Allmendinger, Haughton, 2009).

Cross-border spaces

Since the dawn of the humankind the borders had been part of human settlements. Many of the conflicts in the history were about the position of borders. Although in the past decades the tendencies, particularly in the EU, are towards decreasing the significance of borders, borders still matter. In the globalized world which is becoming increasingly more interconnected, the impact of borders on space and people is increasingly debated (Haselsberger, 2014).

Borders are complex phenomena. They are human creations which are grounded in various ethical traditions (Brunet-Jailly, 2005). It is not easy to describe them, they are not black and white, it is not possible to say they are good or bad, or directly say whether we need them or not. Border scholars agree that borders are multifaceted, multilevel and interdisciplinary, their management of a matter for a variety of institutions and processes, which are transecting spaces in administrative, geopolitical, cultural, economic and social terms (for example Haselsberger, 2014; Paasi, 2005; Popescu, 2012).

Borders can be viewed as economic opportunities and economic threat as the same time, especially in cases when border is cutting through space and creates tensions in form of different regulatory frameworks, labor market conditions, legal structures etc. (Johnson, 2009).

The functions of borders are diverse as well. They are defining, classifying, communicating and controlling many aspects of spaces - geopolitical, sociocultural, economic or biophysical (Haselsberger, 2014). Borders divide and unify, exclude and include and are changing in the course of time. They are also subject of control power relations in wide meaning of the world, either of national power, but also power at lower levels, such as municipal power and jurisdictions. The condensed list of aforementioned characteristics serves purpose of picturing an image that borders are complex issue also from planning point of view. Planners for a long time operated within the borders and were managing closed spaces with fixed boundaries. The following chapter aims at analyzing the complex patterns the borders present and describing the challenges of borders in planning and territorial management. Particular focus is on regions which are dissected by borders – cross-border regions.

Sohn (2014) recognizes 5 functions of national borders:

- *Delimitation* the national sovereignty to make a distinction of who is included and who is excluded
- *Separation* as a mean to regulate the degree of control, filtering and protection
- Serving as an *interface* in terms of contact, exchange, diffusion, collaboration or confrontation
- *Differentiation* as managing of differences which can potentially be suffered or desired by actors on each side of the border
- *Affirmation* in sense of allowing the staging of an instance of power, intention or an identity, which is closely connected to controlling and managing functions.

The important thing to elaborate here on is that traditionally all these functions have been a privilege of national institutions which were in charge of borders, their organization and control. In the past decades this has been changing and today these competences are being contested and constantly by-passed or re-interpreted by multiple actors, state and non-state (Sohn, 2014).

Planners no longer can perceive borders as only physically demarcating territories, but they need to acknowledge the complexity of borders in order to understand the processes taking place around them and consequently be more equipped to manage them. If we take Slovakia as an example, the country consists of 8 NUTS3 administrative units, all of which are in contact with national border. In Europe, the Association of European Border Regions lists at the moment 185 cross-border regions (AEBR, 2018) which is great rise in the number when compared to early 2000s when Perkmann (2003) lists more than 70 which started to occur since 1950s with majority being former in 1990s. Additionally, there are 23 European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (AEBR, 2018).

Border are subject of multivariate interpretation. Their functions are visible and invisible, obvious and more or less subtle and so are the power relations in society concerning framing of borders and their discourse practices and border perception and interpretation (Haselsberger, 2014). Spykman (1942) suggests that territory around the boundary is probably central to understanding power relations across boundaries. Many planners in their daily work are both consciously or unconsciously confronted with borders (Haselsberger, 2014), not necessarily national, but also regional or ethnic (for example Basque countries of France and Spain (Anderson, O'Dowd, 1999)), many of which may not be officially acknowledged, but they still have an impact of planning processes and planners' jobs. Frequently the functions of borders clash and create challenges for planners. These challenges are inevitable and in order to address them effectively, it is important to understand the processes going on around borders and as Haselsberger (2014) argues, it is important to shift planners' perception to relational view, seeing borders in context and see the connections between the border functions which exist in parallel.

Planners also often regard borders only as physical demarcation on space, as a line in the map, which is not always sufficient. To strengthen the understanding and to improve the planning conduct, the complexity of borders needs to be recognized by making use of the intrinsic knowledge base supplied by border scholars (Haselsberger, 2014). This makes a link between theory and practice which is of crucial importance in nearly all aspects of science. The relationship between the theory and practice is mutual, as theory informs practice and vice versa, practice forms the research agenda for scholars and this relationship is particularly true in case of borders, where this link appears to be rather underdeveloped and there is large space for improvement and arguably it can benefit strategies and communities in these border areas. In connection to this, planners at the same time, together with policy makers, need to understand the importance of their decisions as they affect both physical and sociocultural landscapes at various scales, from local to national and beyond.

History of border perception and function

In the course of history, the borders played an important and varying role. In the past, the monarch's effective control tended to diminish closer to the border and therefore in the ancient times the focus of the royalty was not particularly in borders, as they were hard to protect and manage, but on controlling people and settlements (Graham, 2006). In the Roman Empire, the conquest of territories and extending the borders of the empire was central to the differentiation between civilization and barbarism (Brunet-Jailly, 2005). In this we can again see the idea of differentiation between us and them, in this case, us – civilized nation and them – barbarians, who were threatening the empire, their values and their way of life.

On the contrary, in the Middle Ages there is some evidence about feudal system being more concerned with protecting and controlling cities and territories and less focus was on having clear boundaries and the borderlands were rather vague (Burnett-Jailly, 2005). However, these borderlands were important as through them the ruler could have a spatial view of his possessions and these borderlands became boundaries or frontiers.

When we fast forward to the early New Age period, specifically to year 1648, the Peace of Westphalia marked a crucial milestone and turning point in border history. The peace treaty at the end of 30 years' war introduced the principle on nation-state sovereignty and the right of national self-determination (Haselsberger, 2014; Brunet-Jailly, 2005) which consequently brought new understanding of borders for people and for territories (Paasi, 2005). It was since around this time that borders became crucial for keeping national sovereignty and state power (Van Houtum, 2011) as self-determination and sovereignty became the organizing principles and the borders delineated modern states (Brunet-Jailly, 2005).

Nevertheless, it is hard to talk about stable borders from this time on in Europe. The process of changing borders in Europe was constant and culminated at the end of 19th and particularly in the beginning of 20th century, when great European monarchies collapsed and a series of smaller states appeared from the debris of former imperia. In this period of history modernization and the formation of nation states led to hard borders and these became consequently important structuring devices for various social practices (De Vries, 2008).

The principle of national self-determination became a doctrine in the second half of 20th century during the Cold War. During this time the borders were fairly stable and states achieved large degree of control over the economy, politics and culture of the citizens and capacity to regulate cross-border flows (O'Dowd, 2001). It was time of unprecedented density of relations and subsequent complexity of relation of state to its citizens revealed the practical importance of belonging to one state and drew attention to territoriality or territorial boundedness of states (Haselsberger, 2014).

Border regions were also often turned into buffer zones and to military zones, in which the combat was rehearsed regularly and was expected to take place here (Burnet-Jailly, 2005). Maginot Line between Germany and France, built in 1930s and which was also underground-militarized, is a good example.

Border categories

The relational view stems from understanding that every space, either virtual or physical, is demarcated by some sort of boundary and vice versa, each boundary defines some space. Relational view means drawing attention to the spatial impacts of boundaries on human and environmental activities and the other way around (Haselsberger, 2014). To do this and facilitate the relational understanding of space and boundaries, it is important to consider different types of borders and types of spaces they demarcate.

Traditionally planners and many politicians and policy makers adhere to so-called container view of the world (Dangschat, 2006) and fall into territorial trap (Agnew, 1994). This view is based on understanding world and space as neatly fitting into containers with clear boundaries. It is based on perception of borders and spaces as closed entities and it was an understanding of borders for a long time, since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

However, this interpretation of borders holds increasingly less plausibility and does not reflect the development in border practice. In the light on globalization and permeability of borders, introduction of Schengen space in the EU and similar factors, borders are becoming increasingly more porous and are permitting material and immaterial flows. Within this development, the spatial dynamics of borders and border regions are unravelling as a result of various functional and environmental relational geographies (Haselsberger, 2014).

The Table 1 lists several border categories and what types of spaces (geographies) they demarcate. Additionally it gives classifications for these spaces. It is possible to see that, although the trend seems to be in increasing the permeability of borders, thick geopolitical boundaries are present and important as they delineate political and administrative spaces. These are important for formal plans and help create some sort of order in plans and competences for administration and management of territories (Allmendinger, Haughton, 2009).

However, functional spaces do not always necessarily respect these borders as the geopolitical boundaries do not reflect them fully. Functional spaces have their own logic and do not automatically correspond with administrative or environmental spaces (Davy, 2002) and they reflect more complex relational world of associational relationships and these are stretching across more geographies and their sociocultural and economic border are more fluid and fuzzier. Spaces like this can be classified as soft because their boundaries are fuzzy and cannot be easily differentiated and, more importantly, they change in time (Allmendinger, Haughton, 2009).

Table 1: Border categories and their specifics

Border category	Relational geographies	
	Type	Classification
Geopolitical boundaries	Political and administrative spaces	Hard spaces
Sociocultural boundaries	Functional spaces	Soft spaces
Economic boundaries	Functional spaces	Soft spaces
Biophysical boundaries	Environmental spaces	Fuzzy spaces

Source: Haselsberger, 2014

It may seem appealing, but at the same time rather naive (Newman, 2003) to think that processes of opening borders will remove all the barriers. Overcoming container effect of borders through many sorts of cross-border cooperation is complicated process and a challenge and all these efforts require sensible and deliberated approach. These efforts require relational understanding and how each border functions and what it means both for the administration and for communities. Is removal or softening of the border desired and would it be beneficial? Questions like this need to be asked and actors of various kinds and levels of relevance should be incorporated and coordinated, from both sides of the border.

That being said, container and relational view can be in reality interrelated. It is nearly impossible to fully remove container view as political administrative systems are based on it, but also as it reflects the national sovereignty and issues of

identity and ethnicity. However, the latter issues require also relational view which can reveal hidden relations which can be overseen using the container view. Therefore, the challenge is in combining these two views and opening our eyes for sometimes hidden interrelations and expand our horizons to intertwined networks of spaces (Haselsberger, 2014).

Based on the diffusion of the borders, Martinez (1994) proposes four paradigms of borderland interactions. Firstly, the model of alienated borders describes situation where extremely unfavourable conditions limit any form of day-to-day routine interchange between the sides of the border as a result of for instance political disputes, intense nationalism, ideological animosity, or cultural dissimilarity. Secondly, co-existent borderlands signify in a territory where the countries reduce extant international border-related conflicts to a manageable level when such problems are resolved to the degree that minimal border stability can prevail. In this model relations are possible, but not to the point of allowing for significant cross-border interaction. Thirdly, the model of interdependent borderlands takes place when a border region in one nation is symbiotically linked with the border region of an adjoining country. This is enabled by relatively stable international relations and favourable economic climate. The end result will be the creation of a mutually beneficial economic system. Lastly, the paradigm of integrated borderlands occurs both sides of the border eliminate all major political differences between them and existing barriers to trade and human movement across their mutual boundary and borderlands merge economically, with capital, products, and labour flowing from one side to the other without serious restrictions.

Border communities

Borderland communities can be seen as organized polities within larger institutional architecture of state of belonging and have underlined the importance of local culture (Brunet-Jailly, 2005). Although borders divide stateless nations in the world, these nations in border areas remain unified by culture, ethnicity or language. Good example for this are Kurds who are divided by three international borders – Turkish, Iranian and Iraqi border or Flemish divided by two or Catalans, Basques or Irish. Historically, we can also look at for example Jewish communities who were living at the edge of the society for centuries. Richard Sennett (2012) argues that it was their position on the edge of the society who made them cooperate them more in order to survive and therefore they were able to flourish in their economic activities. Similar situation takes place also in Austro-Slovak borderlands – small, but traditional and strong minority of Croatian people who came to this area in 14th century when they were pushed from their homelands by Tatars and till today when keep their traditions and culture and language. This helps them bridge the differences between the two sides of the border and makes them able to continue in their traditions, although they are formally divided by

border. The functioning of these communities depends on their activism and level of engagement.

In Europe, borders “often separate regions and ethnic groups which actually belong together” (AEBR 2008: 12) and create various types of (Medeiros, 2011), directly and indirectly affecting the lives of people living in border areas (Lundén 2004). Interestingly, many European nations and border regions have lived next to each other with each side of the border developing its own administrative practices and following its own economic path (Medeiros, 2018).

Borders as institutions

Boundaries as institutional constructs create complex intertwined networks of government policies and functions that interact to form international boundaries delineating sovereign spaces (Brunet-Jailly, 2005; Paasi, 1999). They are the interfaces between people of different nationalities with different cultures and languages (Miosga, 2008).

Any form of cooperation requires some sort of minimum institutional framework for providing security for the cooperating actors, otherwise the cooperation efforts are at the risk of failing (Scharpf, 1997). However, the problem is that hierarchical control and sanctions do not exist and any communication is possible only through interactions in transboundary cooperation (Knippschild, 2008).

Generally, the institutional context has three dimension: social, consisting the amount and nature of relationships among actors; shared knowledge, in terms of existence and availability of knowledge as well as its acceptance by members of the network; and capacity to act also known as political dimension as tools available for the network to implement policy objectives (Healey, 1997). All these dimensions become increasingly important and complex in cross-border spaces as the border multiplies its complexity and these hardships contribute to informality and lack of commitment of planning in cross-border spaces (De Vries, 2008) and this to the reality that only small projects are implemented while bigger themes are only debated.

From the governance and territorial management point of view, multilevel governance, both its types can contribute to understanding border and cross-border areas as they provide analytical tools to redefine vertical and horizontal interactions of multiple governments and non-state actors during the process of implementation of cross-border policies (Burnet-Jailly, 2005; Johnson, 2009). This is one of the key arguments of this dissertation and this idea is developed later in conceptual part of the work. Perkmann (2003) argues that flourishing small scale cross-border regions are becoming more relevant as implementation units of EU regional policy in a context of multilevel governance.

Cross-border cooperation

Europe due to its density of cross-border areas is an excellent laboratory for experimenting with cross-border areas and their governance, cultural interactions and economic development (Johnson, 2009). Cross-border cooperation or governance models are a matter of shared management which inherently brings challenges and this is even amplified in areas where two or more administrative systems meet. What also separates cross-border cooperation from the conduct of national governments is that cross-border cooperation is more about persuasion and collaboration than power and coercion (Walther, Reitel, 2013).

Cross-border cooperation is becoming a key tool as localities and other territories strive to become global (Johnson, 2009). However, cross-border cooperation is not a straightforward process always leading to win-win situations. It has multi-dimensional character and comprises a variety of flows and transactions. This creates an ambiguity as some interactions can lead to convergence in one branch of public or sectoral policy (or one of the border) and increase the disparity in the other (Sohn, 2014).

Transboundary spaces are specific because they call into question the Westphalian political geography, particularly national identity and boundaries. In Westphalian model all this is contained in single territories, but today, in transboundary spaces specifically, this does not hold true and these are overlapping, stretching and spill-overing over the borders.

These spaces within many countries face specific problems, which include being located at the outer border of the country, their economic structure and infrastructure capacities are often weak, they are frequently sparsely populated and affected by out-migration and they are located far from the centers of political decision making (Miosga, 2008). For these reasons their economic development is rather lower and this is reflected in their GDP, what makes them eligible for help from EU structural funds.

Perkman (2003) differentiates two forms of cross-border interactions. Cross-border cooperation which is seen as institutional cooperation between authorities across national borders and cross-border region seen as bounded territorial unit consisting of territories participating in cross-border cooperation. He sees cross-border cooperation as a process whereby cross-border region is a result. In this dissertation term cross-border cooperation is used to describe the phenomenon which is troublesome and is the subject of the dissertation and cross-border cooperation is perceived according to Perkman's view as institutional arrangements between legal authorities enabling development of particular region.

Cross-border cooperation does not derive only from opening up national borders, but stems mainly from strategic behaviour of actors who actively mobilize borders as resources (Sohn, 2014). This is the factor of crucial importance and has implications for the success of long-term projects and visions which stretch over

single electoral or project period. Actors, both state and non-state has to recognize the border as a resource and utilize it in their projects. Therefore cross-border integration does not take place as a result purely of de-bordering process, but primarily due to the fact that opening borders creates opportunities for actors and these take advantage of these in the region in which they are located. This makes borders dynamic institutions

To better understand how the border can be seen as a resource, Sohn (2014) describes three approaches:

- Integration through development of economic and social interactions - here the border appears as a barrier of interactions which would otherwise take place and integration is a consequence of opening borders to a variety of flows. Integration process is seen as an evolutionary process based on increased interactions
- Integration by focusing on convergence of elements where it is necessary - in this view, two separated entities are separated by border and their integration is based on reducing their differences. It is a critique seeing integration exclusively by increasing flows, but by deliberate reducing of differences between them.
- Integration by motivating actors which are engaged in integration processes - this approach focuses on sharing integration efforts by all actors. It is a result of thinking that integration does not always lead to win-win situations and possibly social resentment stemming from tensions between communities and their differences.

In Sohn's (2014) view, the borders can be seen as a subject for regional, national and supranational institutions, but he argues that primarily the cross-border integration stems from the entrepreneurial and strategic behavior of actors who see opening borders as an opportunity. He opposes the view of seeing borders as the opposite of integration, but advocates the idea of borders as resources for a large variety of actors. This view, however tends to go into argumentation either-or, while in reality the truth is somewhere in the middle between these two approaches.

Nevertheless, for the actors and their engagement and cooperation the key attributes are motivation by identity-providing aims, shared vision and territorial identity transcending border and mutual understanding and trust (Sohn, 2014). Ensuring exchange of information in multilingual context and long-term perspective for the actors to keep them motivated to cooperate and a general move from 'shadow of hierarchy' to 'shadow of future' should be pursued (Knippschild, 2008).

On the EU level there exist several tools for making the cross-border cooperation more effective and legally recognized. The first attempt to institutionalize was the Euroregion. First Euroregion was Euregio between Germany and Netherlands which was launched in 1958 and first financed by the

EU in 1972. Soon after many euroregions started to occur and became the essence of EU cross-border cooperation (Dura et al, 2018). Simple definition of Euroregion is a territorial unit formed by two contiguous sub-national units belonging to two separate states (Perkmann, 2002). One of the problems was, though, that euroregions did not have legal subjectivity and could not create autonomous bodies properly capable of managing cross-border initiatives. As a response, several legal instruments that confer legal personality to cross-border organizations have been established over the last decade by EU institutions and the Council of Europe, for example the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (Dura et al, 2018). The EGTC is a permanent and autonomous structure with legal personality and subject to public or private law according to the national jurisdiction governing the place where the headquarters are located (Regulation /EC No 1082/2006). The EGTCs' main advantages derive from: a) long term political commitment of its members; b) greater visibility with respect to third parts; c) the ability to enter into contracts and to compete for external and European funding (Dura et al, 2018).

Borders in Central Europe

In case of Central Europe, the transboundary spaces play a big role as they cover large percentage of overall area. It is because barely any other part of the world features a comparable density of sovereign states (Leibenath et al, 2008). They defy assumptions of hierarchical scalar neatness (Deas & Lord, 2006) and they illustrate the potential for vastly altered economic and political geographies from the dominant forms of the last few centuries (Johnson, 2009). Central Europe is a very specific area as it consists of many gaps. To this day, there are vast economic disparities between countries, East and West, peripheries and centers (Leibenath, 2008). This diversity became particularly visible in border areas. The differences are not merely in level of economic or social disparities, but also in people's mind and their ideas, in views of actors in the regions on participation and cooperation.

All these developments have significant impacts on cross-border regions in the EU. Leibenath (2008) summarizes and identifies four trajectories of change:

- Higher permeability of EU internal borders and significantly increased security and decreased permeability of external borders of the EU
- Several instruments resulting from Europeanization for cross-border areas, including financial tools, legal pressures, spread of paradigms and ideas
- National governments losing their gatekeeping roles in transboundary relations and shifting and spreading this function among other actors and networks
- Traditional hard or thick borders being subject of overlapping functional spaces individually delineated

Majority of the research on urban governance and analysis of policy networks had been focused on national policies or on EU and US metropolitan areas, while little focus had been put on cross-border metropolitan region (Walther & Reitel, 2013). However, these areas are interesting and important to study at least for three reasons (Walther, Reitel, 2013):

- These regions make us rethink the relationship between city and border, as traditionally border regions are rather peripheral, but these regions are highly central
- Similarly to the above point, these sites are privileged for globalization and are not national peripheries anymore
- These regions considerably benefitted from de-bordering of Europe and making the border thinner leading to increasing cross-border functional interdependencies

One of the reasons for implementation mostly smaller projects and lack of large-scale and long-time projects and strategies fall behind is that most of the projects and initiatives have strong bottom-up orientation what leads to fragmentation of already limited resources (De Vries, 2008).

Cross-border cooperation is a complex effort and should go beyond coordination of actors and include (Deppisch, 2008):

- Building stable structures capable of making decisions and taking action
- Developing cross-border understanding of the cooperation process including wide range of themes relevant to regional development
- Producing internal and external effects impacting the position and importance attributed with cross-border region

The major factors influencing cross-border cooperation are listed in Table 2. These can be grouped under three overarching terms – situation, actors and social capital (Deppisch, 2008). Situation consists of topographic structure with focus on barriers in topography and on the centers of population. Shared interests, including shared problems, are the second aspect and the structures of political opportunity in regards to cross-border cooperation are the last aspect. Actors as a factor need to be analyzed in terms of their interests and orientations also with focus on their cost-benefit appraisal and problem perception. In other words, their preferences, opinions and incentives need to be mapped out. Key actors are crucial as process drivers, power players or professional experts. Their position and interactions are particularly challenging in cross-border areas (institutional asymmetries, different languages and culture, lack of information on other actors), what stresses the role of the process manager. Last factor, social capital, is of crucial importance as it can help overcome uncertainty among actors by moderating interactions, mediating conflicts and continuous motivation. It has also impact of mobilization of actors within the region for action (Paraskevopoulos, 2001).

Table 2: Factors influencing cross-border cooperation (based on Deppisch, 2008)

Factors	Aspects
Situation	Topographic structure
	Shared interests
	Political opportunities
Actors	Presence of personal difficulties among actors
	Presence of key actors from the past or current projects
Social capital	Transboundary social capital
	Social capital on either side of the border

Nevertheless, the trend of lessening the barrier effect of the borders is being changed in the face of the ongoing disintegration processes in the EU. This is visible in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in particular reflecting the recent threat of migration and rising nationalist tendencies in CEE countries. This can be observed in both hard measures (building a fence at the south of Hungary) and softer measures (reintroduction of border checks at Austria-Slovakia national border). This temporary reintroduction of border control on EU internal borders underlines the need for deliberate and careful management of borders.

Conclusions

The paper discusses and argues what a multifaceted phenomenon the borders are. At first glance they signify line on a map, beginning/end of an administrative unit or perhaps a stopping point when leaving one country. Nevertheless, borders possess a number of characteristics according to what they mean for both the institutions managing them and the space and people living in their vicinity. The role of borders is changing and affecting cross-border areas – in some cases it limits them, in others it enables better functionality of the spaces separated by hard borders in the past, as is the case in the Central Europe. Cross-border cooperation is not anything new, but it has to be treated as a great opportunity to unite spaces and people and improve the quality of life in these areas. As Medeiros (2014) concludes, the border is still there and affects many aspects of lives of people living in close proximity of the border area, and also the commuters that cross it on a daily basis, thus preserving a psychological and material separation. Borders remain dynamic and their role is often shifting, but they still matter. The key for planners and geographers is to accept and include all these new characteristics into the toolboxes of the profession and the practice.

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