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DETERRITORIALIZATION
OF THE WORLD AS A CHALLENGE
FOR CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

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Abstract: Human societies have traditionally had clear territorial foundations. People knew and interacted with others within their community and, to a lesser extent, with people from neighbouring communities. Geography and distance mattered. Globalization, however, has led to the rise of "supraterritoriality" or deterritorialization, through which the constraints traditionally imposed by geography and distance have been substantially overcome. Some authors have associated contemporary globalization with a tendency towards deterritorialization, so that social space can no longer be wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances and territorial borders. Deterritorialisation is a name given to the problematic of territory losing its significance and power in everyday life. Territory, the concept suggest, is no longer the stable and unquestioned actuality it one was. Rather than it being an assumed given, its position and status now in question. Term deterritorialisation is one among many other – globalization, glocalisation, postcolonial, postnational, transnational, cyberspace – that have been coined to try to describe the rearranging and restructuring of spatial relations as a consequence of the technological, material and geopolitical transformation of the late twentieth century. For political geographers interested in conceptualizing the changing world political map, discourses of deterritarialization are significant as sings and symtoms of geopolitical change.

Key words: state, borderless world, globalization

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IT revolution and globalization processes have led to a deep transformation of our social life and the change of relations between human activity and space in which this activity takes place. A growing correlation on a global scale, mutual conditioning of this what is global (external) and what is local (internal), high mobility of people, capital, ideas flowing freely on a global scale affect the increasing permeability of borders, which to a lesser extent perform their functions. The process of erosion of the present borders constitutes a challenge for contemporary political science due to the fact that borders understood as various barriers (political, geographical, cultural) dividing the global space were

the main interest of political geography and its most popular subject of discussion in the 20th century. Above all, it was connected with the influence which Fredrich Ratzel - one of the German scholars - had on political geography. His political geography was devoted to the analysis of the country in relation to space, geographical location and borders. Furthermore, for a long time the phenomena of political geography were regarded as so closely connected with the functioning of the state power that in some previous works devoted to politics its every study was associated with the study of the machinery of the state power.

First political geographers focused on the state and attached importance to the role of borders and processes of establishing and reproducing the borders of a nation state. Borders were regarded as a factor determining territory where the state exercises its authority. It was commonly assumed that the essence of the nation border consists in the fact that it defines the scope of territorial authority of particular states and unacceptability of an activity on this territory of authority and the rights of another state, and it separated the territory of one state from other states. During the period of domination of new geopolitical order along with the principle of sovereignty of nation state, the borders determined the space of the state and its authority over it. Sovereignty meant the independence of the authority from any other authority in relations with other states and international organizations as well as from any other authority within the state. Borders constituted to a greater or lesser extent a barrier limiting the flow of financial resources, goods, human migration as well as cultural influence. Political geographers and also other representatives of political sciences regarded borders as solid, stable, empirical reality dividing global space into limited parts, which transform mostly as a result of conflicts.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st century a debate on the problems of borders and their functions suddenly revived. It was connected with transformations which occurred on the political map of the world and together with the dissolution of multiethnic states of the Eastern Bloc which brought about the change of nationalistic and separatist moods and also the territorial change of configuration of sovereign territories and - what is even more essential – it was associated with the changing role of the borders and their understanding in the world which was becoming more and more globalised. Along with the political changes, IT communication and revolution the world was becoming more and more interdependent and "open", and the borders more and more "permeable" to the flow of goods, finances, services, people and also to ideas and cultural values. The changes occurring in the world caused that present cognitive categories of political geography which were appearing in the world of the primacy of modern nation state, efficient borders, clear sovereignty and territorial identity turned out to be inadequate for the understanding of modern world and their application was insufficient to explain the occurring phenomena.

Researchers dealing with the globalisation issues always remark that globalisation is a multidimensional process which comprises many aspects of our daily life. One of the key elements of globalisation processes is the reconfiguration of social space of man which means the growth in transplanetary connections between people (*globalization as respatialization*). All social analyses should include the spatial aspect. Human relations always occur "somewhere", that is they have a place, a location, a domain or a website. Space and place are one of the crucial elements – both in case of causes and effects - of social life. Therefore, the analysis of social reality cannot be complete without taking spatial

component into consideration. The term itself – globalization (globality) – has its spatial connotations because it draws our attention to the character of the arena of human activity and experience: the whole social life. One of the characteristic features of the beginning of the 21st century was the fact that people interact not only at the local, provincial, national or even macro regional level but also on a scale of the whole planet which has become "one place"[1].

One of the specific features of globalization is a particular "deterritorialization" of some phenomena and social processes which means that the globalization processes contributed to the formation of bonds and interactions relatively separated from a specific location and due to this specific, transnational, economic, social and political space started to form. Globalization causes that places become less and less important in a social environment, present barriers and distances are being removed and people accept transnational lifestyle more and more often. It has been remarked that the present world, which was structured by the existence of clear borders, underwent corrosion and there has been deterritorialization of the occurring phenomena and social processes which more and more often go beyond all the political, social, cultural and economic barriers and borders. According with this mechanism some social processes occur without a clear location in a territorially defined space of the globe. Moreover, the existing distances do not matter for their functioning, which means a radical departure from the principle of territoriality characteristic of modern social and political order; according with this principle phenomena and processes are assigned to a particular territory. Globalization has activated interactions and bonds without distances and relatively departed from a particular location[2].

The impact of globalization on the reconfiguration of social geography of man has become the subject of the debate attempting to understand spatial consequences of globalization processes. Some authors started to identify modern globalization with a tendency to deterritorialized social phenomena. As Geraroid O'Tuathail remarked the term deterritorialization was introduced to the discussions (similarly to other terms such as globalization, glocalization, cyberspace, post national, transnational) in order to enable an attempt to describe rearrangement and reconstruction of spatial relations as a consequence of technological, material and geopolitical transformation of the end of the 20th century. O'Tuathail wrote that the term deterritorialization was used to analyze the problem of the loss of meaning of territorial assignments, so in other words the loss of its meaning and authority of territory/space in daily human activity. The notion of deterritorialization suggests that territory or affiliation to a particular territory is no longer something stable and unquestionable[3]. Progressive deterritorialization of the world constitutes one of the basic problems undertaken by the researchers of modern social environment. This notion suggests that together with the appearance of post-industrial society/IT civilization, there have been fundamental changes in the relations man-space. The discourse devoted to deterritorialization of the modern world is to a greater extent a discourse concerning the issue of disassembly of complex relations

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[1] J.A. Scholte, *Globalization. A critical introduction,* New York 2005, 60.

[2] M. Pietraś, *Istota, ewolucja i czynniki międzynarodowych stosunków politycznych,* (in:) *Międzynarodowe stosunki polityczne,* ed. M. Pietraś, Lublin 2006, 33-34.

[3] G.O' Tuathail, *Borderless world. Problematising discourses of deterytorializacion,* "Geopolitics" 1999, vol.4, nr 2, 139.

between geography, authority and identity which have defined and divided the world for most of the period of modern history. The issue of deterritorialization is often considered in the context of the consequences of IT revolution (Manuel Castells), formation of new global economy and free movement of goods and capital (Kenichi Ohmae), cultural globalization and free movement of people, ideas and lifestyles (Arjun Appandurai), and formation of risk society (Urlich Beck), and also creation of new global system of authority (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri).

One of characteristic megatrends of the development of modern civilization is the economization of social life connected with the process of re-orientation of national economies towards global economy. Economic globalization has become a permanent tendency on a worldwide scale. Some researchers believe that economic globalization of the world and neoliberal political thought play an important role in the processes of deterritorialization. There is commonly assumed opinion that the fall of communism at the beginning of the 1990s all over the world meant a definite victory of capitalism as the only form of economy on a global scale. At the beginning of the 1990s an American political scientist Francis Fukuyama wrote that a liberal state and a market economy proved their superiority over any other authoritarian system and eventually prevailed in the world, which constitutes a particular "end of history". The domination of the Western liberal model opened the way for a deepened economic globalization of the world and formation of post capitalistic global economic order often defined as "hyper capitalism", "super capitalism" or "turbo capitalism". This new, neoliberal economic order gained its full legitimacy at the time of the fall communistic ideology and the fall of the Eastern Bloc, which was connected with acceptation of free market principles and its institutions by the states creating it. It brought about the ultimate domination of capitalistic economy and formation of new economic order comprising the whole world.

While analyzing the character of modern global economy it is indicated that the development of post-industrial society brought about great changes in the economy system. At present great economic powers have a transnational character and they get out of control of the state. Economy management moves to a regional, supranational or global level because national level cannot guarantee the effectiveness and efficiency to numerous economic activities. Global economy is regulated by scattered decisive system consisting of various geopolitical and geoeconomic actors[4]. Some modern economists, supporters of globalization of the world, think that in a global world dominated by market logics and supranational enterprises, nation state becomes an outdated institution hindering the adjustment of a given society to the functional requirements of global economy logics[5]. New principles of market economy force the state to resign from its present status, "commercialization of regulation sphere", that is agendas, tasks, functions of the state, which, in principle, changes the character of political processes, authority tools and also relations. Decentralization of the state connected with the movement from hierarchical structures to scattered, network ones is deepened. Therefore, we deal with the rivalry between postmodern global economy logics which does not respect any present borders and divisions and modern logics of sovereign nation state trying to keep its control over a given territory establishing barriers for free business activity.

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[4] C. Jean, *Geopolityka,* Wrocław 2003, 210.
[5] K. Ohmae, *The Bordeless World,* London 1990, 8.

One of the greatest supporters of the thesis on deterritorializing influence of global economy on modern social and political order is a Japanese-born economist Kenichi Ohmae. Since the beginning of the 1990s Ohmae indicated that forming global economy ("new economy") brings about the process of erosion of present borders established according with the logics of functioning of bureaucratized nation state arrogating to itself the right to exercise authority over a given territory. The formation of global economy causes that we live in a borderless world. Ohmae introduced the term borderless economy to the scientific discourse. He pointed that present borders become less effective and less closed that it was in the past. It is caused mainly by IT revolution but to a greater extent it is a result of multilateral and bilateral agreements in the sphere of economic exchange. Owing to this the world has become"borderless" space. Market logics prevails over all the other aspects of social and political life. Ohmae remarked that in the modern world four basic elements of economic life function beyond the present borders creating *borderless economy* and *borderless life.* These four basic elements are as follows: communication, capital, corporations and consumers – so as Ohmae wrote these are four great C's of economic life: communication, capital, corporations and consumers[6].

Hyper-globalists, such as Kenichi Ohmae, identify globalization with the expansion of liberalism and capitalistic economy. They emphasize that in the era of global capitalism being created modern institutions such as a nation-state and modern ideological conflicts lose their meaning. Globalization is associated with the appearance of global economy which is shaping borderless world with a homogenous global market functioning by means of production, trade and finance networks. It is often indicated that progressive globalization is a result of IT and communication revolution which enables an instant access to information in every sphere of activity. Therefore, a focus on the consequences of IT revolution for the spatial organization of a modern world is an important element of the discourse around deterritorialization of modern world. Globalization of the world is indirectly connected with IT revolution. Characteristic "tightening of time and space" is the effect of the fact that modern technologies entangle the world with the networks of communication and telecommunication connections forming a dense network of channels which are used by people and information to move around the world. In the conditions of existence and functioning of electronic means of communication territorial distances have lost its present meaning which causes deterritorialization of activity and human experience, which to a lesser extent are connected with a specific spatial location. Modern technologies "pull out" the social activities from a located context and organize social relations over significant time and space distances from the beginning. As Anthony Giddens wrote in the conditions of late modernity place becomes more of a phantasmagoria, which means that the places of action are under social influences located remotely and are formed by them[7].

It was Manuel Castells – a Spanish sociologist – who placed a special emphasis on this aspect of deterritorialization processes. He assumed that the starting point to analyze the complexity and changes of modern world should be IT revolution. New communication and information technologies create a global electronic network, practically without any control from the bureaucratic

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[6] K. Ohmae, *The next global stage. Challenges and opportunities in our borderless world,* New Jersey 2005, 20-22.

[7] A.Giddens, *Konsekwencje nowoczesności,* Kraków 2008, 13.

machinery of the state. As Manuel Castellas wrote the state is not able to control the information any longer and at the same time its control over the citizens weakens. Globalization of media and electronic communication is equal with denationalization of information which causes that humanity gradually enters the era of non-territorial, independent from the state communication[8]. The thesis of a Spanish scholar states that the IT revolution causes that the spirit of our times is the spirit of the network: the basic principles of the network have become the driving force of individual, social, economic and political life. Network society is a society in which network form of organization replaces other forms, crosswise to present political, economic and cultural categories.

To a greater extent information technologies have a global and territorialized character and in a post-modern society they define the shape of conceptual connections between communication and geography, because, as it has been indicated, modern "network society" is a society "without a place". The functioning of communication networks contributes to the deterritorialization of political, social and economic life[9]. Societies undergo structural transformation and as a result new forms and spatial processes emerge. What is interesting from the point of view of geopolitics, while writing about deterritorialization of the world influenced by information technologies, a Spanish scholar paid attention to the fact that network (and therefore, also an emerging network society) has its own geography – the geography of networks and nodes which manage the flow of information created in different places[10].

Another element of a modern civilisational development, which has an influence on the progressive deterritorialization of the international environment, is the appearance of global problems. Civilisational development of a mankind has led to the emergence of global problems comprising all continents and societies. Emerging global problems have a character of critical threats (causing many disruptions in the lives of human societies), have a worldwide character (concerning all people), and furthermore solving them requires a wide international cooperation.

Modern man lives, according to Urlich Beck's definition, in the world of "globalised risk" going beyond any borders, from which we cannot be isolated. A German scholar pointed that in a modern development of international environment global threats assume civilisational threats such as: nature devastation, the spread of weapon of mass destruction, depletion of natural resources or international terrorism. It means that we live in so-called risk society, in which the risk crossed the borders of the countries and enables the creation of supranational and super-class global threats having new social and political dynamics.

In modern world there has been a globalization of risk, firstly in the meaning of intensity (e.g. nuclear war may threaten all people) and secondly in the meaning of increasing number of accidental occurrences, which concern everybody or at least a great number of people on our planet. Risk has undergone universalisation, going beyond all the limits and territorial barriers – at present these are the events which territorial effects are unlimited. The emergence of global problems and deterritorialized risk constitute an important element of modern discourse devoted to the condition of modern world.

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[8] M. Castells, *Siła tożsamości,* Warszawa 2008, 289-293.
[9] D. Barney, *Społeczeństwo sieci,* Warszawa 2008, 77.
[10] M. Castells, *Galaktyka Internetu,* Poznań 2003, 233.

Global threats constitute the effect of modernization and force various social actors to coordinate their activities on a global level. In modern world the deterritorialization of threats to the safety and security of human societies is even more visible and therefore it requires a totally different way of describing the world and defining threats to safety and security of geopolitical entities, especially the state[11]. Risk society is the society of global risk. Its basic principle are the threats predicted and created by people, which cannot be limited in space, time and socially. They bear basic conditioning and institutions of the first industrial modernity (including nation states)[12] contributing to the progressive deterritorialization of the world.

Anthropology has played an important role in the discourses concerning deterritorialization of modern world. It indicated that the process of globalization and accompanying phenomena change the conditions defining forms and functions of culture. A term "end of history" appeared in anthropology and it shows the depreciation of place and location and constitutes a synonym of freeing modern man from the limits and spatial assignments[13]. For anthropologists, such as Arjun Appandurai, one of the features of post-modern world is the process of deterritorialization, which means that in modern world cultures are less determined locally, and remote events enter the sphere of daily experience even more strongly. The factor which is responsible for this phenomenon is eclectic media and mass migration connected with the processes of globalization. Migrations free people from spatial relations and assignments and by participating in this mobility they are included in the stream of human circulation allowing them to meet new cultural experiences. Media build extremely permeable and effective transterritorial channels of communication by which endless stream of information, contents, and cultural forms moves from various places to different destinations. These two mechanisms separate culture from geography, creating the world full of drifting cultures without specific space and people separated from places[14]. At the same time it is noteworthy that the idea of deterritorialization in anthropology does not directly imply the destruction of locality but rather "de-anchoring" of cultural experience from its traditional local ports. Places where we live are increasingly penetrated by external contents as a result of connecting them to the global channels of broadcasting. It causes that the most important indicator of cultural experience of an individual are the commercialized standards of global culture[15].

Globalization is connected with a dynamic movement of ethnic groups, techniques, financial transfers, media images and ideological conflicts. Such status quo means departing from a linear model and going towards a model in which the pace, scope and cultural influence are separated and incoherent. Globalization of cultural trends cannot be put into the frames of arranged systems of linear conditioning. It is better to understand them as categories of sets of conditionings overlapping each other, multiply determined, complex and chaotic, which at best assemble near the key "node points"[16]. Anthropologists

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[11] G. O'Tuathail, *Post-cold war geopolitics,* (in:) *Geographies of global change,* ed. R.J. Johnston, P. Taylor, M. Watts, Malden 2002, 187-188.

[12] U. Beck, *Na ile realna jest katastrofa klimatu,* (in:) *Ekologia. Przewodnik krytyki politycznej,* Warsaw 2009, 76.

[13] A. Appandurai, , *Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy,* "Theory, Culture and Society", nr 7, 1990, 295-310.

[14] A. Appandurai, *Nowoczesność bez granic. Kulturowe wymiary globalizacji,* Kraków 2005, 37-39.

[15] Z. Pucek, *Tożsamość przestrzeni wielokulturowej,* "Państwo i Społeczeństwo", nr 3, 2004, 25-42.

[16] Ch. Barker, *Studia kulturowe. Teoria i praktyka,* Kraków 2005, 193.

think that modern communities are characterized by "a lack of the feeling of location"[17] and there is a need to focus on cultural dynamics of the deterritorialization phenomenon. This term is applied not only for obvious examples such as transnational corporations, but also for ethnic groups, political formations which more and more often function based on the methods which go beyond particular territorial and identity borders[18]. Nowadays civilizations move and mix, remote nations and tribes meet and permeate and their views exist next to each other creating a collage of values, meanings, traditions, customs and institutions. We live in the world where, thanks to communication revolution, people and experience travel and mix creating a great global network (patchwork) of connections. At present we rather have a phenomenon of "mesh civilization" instead of national societies which are separated and assigned to a particular location.

Another important element of the discourse on the problems of deterritorialization of the world is a dispute on the character of the authority in a global, post-modern society. Some scholars think that we deal with scattered and decentralized authority. Countries located on a political map have only a formal, decorative character. They do not govern in the societies and their legal status hides actual relations of governing and international hegemony. At present global hegemonies are realized by the global logics of the market which create electronic group consisting of anonymous, international investors who trade stocks, bonds and currencies by means of computers and networks. Countries have to accept the international logics of the functioning of global capital due to the fact that exclusion from the capital circulation means lack of profits and opportunities to develop which delegitimize the authority of political elites which will resist against global logics of the markets. Zygmunt Bauman indicated that we live in the era of post-panoptic order and the essence of panoptic relations lies in the fact that people who have authority tools which determine the destiny of less mobile partners of these relations can "vanish into thin air" – become unavailable and unapproachable. Bauman wrote that during the period of liquid modernity the majority is governed by a wandering and extraterritorial elite. *Modern global elite models itself on previous institution of "absentee landlord. This elite may govern not claiming responsibilities connected with administration, management and providing social welfare (…) Active participation in the life of vassal people is undesired (moreover, it is avoided like the plague because of unwanted costs and generally little efficiency), that is why "bigger" does not mean "better", but it means "unreasonable" or rather "deprived of rational sense". At present the reduction of sizes and weight as well as the increase in mobility are the synonyms of improvements and "progress". A privilege of the people of the authority is the freedom of movement and not tightly holding onto the things which are considered attractive because of their reliability and solidity – massiveness, weight and durability[19].*

Scholars Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri gave one of the most interesting answer to the questions concerning the character of post-modern system of authority. In the book *Empire* they attempted to analyze the essence of post-modern global hegemony. Referring to the notion of modern authority of a French philosopher and historian Michael Foucault, Hardt and Negri wrote that

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[17] A.Appandurai, *op. cit.,* s. 45.
[18] Ibidem, 76.
[19] Z.Bauman, *Płynna nowoczesność,* Kraków 2006,23.

in Empire *there is no place of authority – it is everywhere and nowhere. Empire is u-topia; as a matter of fact it is no-place*[20]. Supranational, post-imperialistic authority does not originate from any specific place and it does not serve the interests of any particular nations.

Post-modern sovereign authority has assumed a new form becoming a national and supranational system of organisms connected with a common logics of governing. Hardt and Negri describe this new, global form of sovereignty as Empire at the same time indicating that its arrival is connected with the fall of modern sovereignty and the Empire itself is a centralized and not territorial mechanism of governing gradually comprising the whole global domain with its open and widening borders[21]. As opposed to a present worldwide system in a global era there in no leader in the form of a country; however, there are certain supranational disciplinary and control mechanisms thanks to which present competition of imperialistic superpowers has been replaced with the idea of one centre, which decides for all the countries, including them in one structure, treating them with one, common law of supranational and post-imperialistic character[22]. As Hardt and Negri indicated Empire has some surprising features of character. A basic feature of Empire is lack of limits: its authority is borderless. It is a system of government engulfing the whole imaginable space and ruling over the whole civilized world. No territorial borders may dam its power and therefore it constitutes a system of government separated from a specific location and specific territory.

In their publication Hardt and Negri attempted to analyze new structure of international order and they suggested an interesting vision of global geopolitical structure. It is a description different from those offered by traditional geopolitical ideas. Above all, there are few references to spatial location – Hardt and Negri do not create a world map, which results from the character of post-modern geopolitical condition, in which authority and hegemony have centralized and non-territorial character. Researchers point out the diversity (pluralism) of the imperialistic international environment where global elements, such as nation states, nation state organizations and any other international organizations, are divided according to their functions and contents into political, monetary, health and educational structures and various kinds of productive activity roam among them[23]. The highest part of the pyramid of imperialistic power consists of three levels. At the top of the pyramid there is one superpower controlling global use of power. At the lower level the pyramid widens and it consists of a group of countries controlling the basic global monetary tools and therefore being able to regulate global exchange. These countries are included in various worldwide intergovernmental organizations such as G-8 or the Paris Club, London Club, Davos etc. At the third level there is a variety of associations locating the cultural and biopolitical power at global level. The highest level is comprised of powers and entities which have reached the hegemony at military, economic and cultural level. Below the first level which is made up of entities dominating in global order, there is a second level which is responsible for spreading orders and providing the communication of global power structure. The structure of this level consists of networks of flows

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[20] A.Negri, M. Hardt, *Imperium,* Warsaw 2008, 207-208.
[21] Ibidem, 9.
[22] Ibidem, 23.
[23] Ibidem, 329.

(flows of capital, goods, technologies, people etc.) spread on the global market by supranational capitalistic corporations. At this level there are also sovereign nation states comprising of local, deterritorialized organizations and these nation states are often subject to the authority of supranational corporations. Nation states take over and distribute the flow of wealth to and from global power and discipline, if possible, population on its territory. The last and the broadest level of the pyramid of power, according to Hardt and Negri, consists of groups representing the interests of the total population in the global system. These are nation states which represent their citizens internationally as well as relatively organizations independent of countries and capital which are often perceived as structures of global civil society. Hardt and Negri claim that independent non-governmental organizations, so-called NGOs, such as Amnesty International or Americas Watchs, are the last branches of modern networks of power constituting a wide foundation of a triangle of global power.

The discussion on deterritorialization and creating "borderless world" is currently one of the crucial elements of political geography, which as a scientific discipline focusing on the spatial aspects of human activity must find an answer to the question how to analyze spatial systems in their relation to power in the world where majority of processes assume global character, spatial distances in their present meaning lose their importance and human activity is often separated and independent of a specific location in space. For contemporary political geography the deterritorialization of the world is one of the most significant consequences of the processes of globalization because it forces a critical revision of all present definitions and theories which to a greater extent referred to the world in which borders and sovereign nation states played an important role. Moreover, political geographers must face with an emerging thesis on "the end of geography"[24]. In academic discourse this controversial thesis on "the end of geography", to a lesser or greater extent, is based on the conviction that the time and space compression connected with the development of information technologies and globalization of the world cause that spatial distances in geographical sense lose their meaning. Many analysts state that we cannot talk about "the end of geography" but only about the changes in the relations space-man. Jan Scholte wrote that, regardless of the fact that as a result of globalization processes, "supra-territorial relations" were created and they contribute to the deterritorialization of social phenomena, "geography still has its significance" because every Internet user has an access to the network from a specific territorial location. Global products, global finances and global communication always belong to a territorial location and "global cities" such as London, New York or Tokyo still have latitude and longitude[25].

Political geographers observe that time and space compression and the shrinkage of the world being the result of ICT revolution and the processes of globalization do not mean "the end of geography". The processes of globalization change our daily experience; transform the character of human interactions and forms of communication creating "new human geography". The statement that as a result of ICT revolution spatial distances lose their meaning does not mean that such terms as space, place, scale, and locality does not constitute an important element of human experience and therefore an important element of analysis. The fact that as a result of globalization spatial distances in an

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[24] Cf. W.E. Murray, *Geographies of globalization,* London-New York 2005, 5-7.
[25] J.A. Scholte, *op. cit.,* 77.

absolute understanding have shrunk does not mean that the spatial analyses have lost their significance. Political geography should consider the aspect of deterritorialization of the world and the fact that a majority of social and political activity occur in transnational space and also in cyberspace and is relatively separated from a specific territorial location. Conducted research should review the issue of relations occurring between politics and space in which political activity of man occurs and objectivizes.

The discussion on deterritorialization and formation of "borderless world" is one of the key elements of the discourse concerning the future of geopolitics as a scientific discipline. Changes in the organization of our social life connected with deterritorializing activity of communication networks are real, not virtual, and they affect the formation of complex relations between network technologies which serve the deterritorialization of human communication and activity and the world in which geography still plays an important role. As it is indicated, network society shows a deep tension between abstract lack of network location and human desire to settle their life in specific space.

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THE SETTLEMENTS FROM THE PLAIN BIRDA-MORAVIŢA.
A GEOGRAPHICAL EVALUATION

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Abstract: The existence of early forms of settlement on the territory of the Plain Birda- Moraviţa dates back to prehistory. The historic record of many villages in the studied area is done starting with the papal taxes and the historic periods of intense colonization, especially those of Habsburg rule, led to the establishment of new settlements and made it possible the current detailed classification of settlements by age. However, the regressive demographic trend characteristic for the studied area, a trend reflected in the high level of mortality and the increased migration to other countries and regions, has made possible a classification of settlements by the number of inhabitants, classification whose purpose is to identify areas characterized by a steady decline in the number of inhabitants. These settlements, which were considered large and very large settlements during the migrations, suffered a drastic transformation after 1990, currently falling within the category of small settlements. The position the analyzed region in a plain area also requires a classification of settlements according to form, structure and texture, which show certain features depending on the position against major rivers but also by socio-economic or political influence reflected on the settlements from the Plain Birda-Moraviţa.

Key words: human settlements, historic record, colonization, classification, structure, texture

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The analysis of the evaluation of the socio-economic impact on a region is a common way in international human geography. I had as a reference point the Anglo-Saxon literature (Taylor, Bryan, Goodrich, Canter, 1996; Barrow 2000; Goodman, 2004), and I have applied these theoretical elements in the complex settlements from the Plain Birda-Moraviţa, in order to achieve some classifications of human settlements as relevant as possible and the presentation of the type of impact that they may have at the regional level.
Equally, a particularly important role in the completion of this article belongs to the specialized Romanian literature (Vert, 2000/2001; Ana Ianas,

2011; L. Nicoara, 1999) which gave me the opportunity to classify the studied settlements in the categories proposed in the analyzed papers.

In order to identify the documentary record, we had as source of documentation the collection of Nicolae Iliesiu from the country archives.

The diversity of classification typology of settlements in the Plain Birda-Moravița can be considered as a factor in producing a strong social impact on the whole regional system. Of major importance is the detailed analysis of each element that highlights the specific features of the classification of the settlements from the Plain Birda-Moravița. Analyzing such a number of natural factors, especially social, economic, cultural or political, we can accurately determine the structural and textural typology of settlements, which is a consequence of the specific political regime of that period. Equally, if we realize an analysis of the historic situation before the war and interwar and the demographic changes that have seen a gradual growth, but also the massive emigration abroad or increased mortality, it is possible to establish a typology based on the number of inhabitants and the determination of some major differences from the censuses of 1900, 1930 and 2002. In order to achieve a typology of settlements by age, a detailed analysis of the main factors is also required (natural, historical, social) that generated a differentiation of settlements according to this criterion.
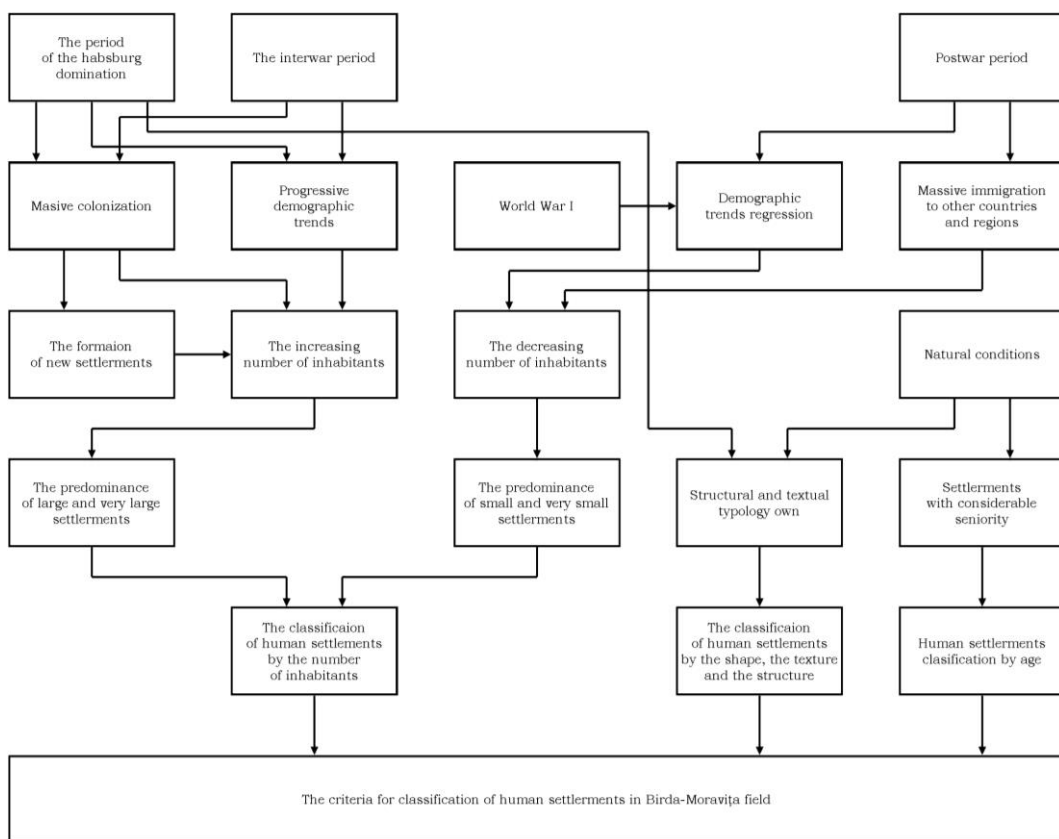

Figure 1. Establishing the connections between the factors that led
to the existence of the classification criteria of human settlements
(Source: Raluca Covaci, 2012)

In the classification by number of inhabitants the most appropriate method was that of the comparison method by which we have tried to highlight some of the causes which led to a sharp increase in the number of small and very small settlements at the expense of large or very large settlements.

In the classification of settlements by form, structure and texture, an important role was played by the processing of aerial photographs in order to establish a structural and textural specific at the entire regional system, for this case being specific the cartographic method. This method was also used in the other classification criteria for plotting geographic realities and the changes in the human settlements over time and the number of inhabitants in a longer period of time.

The age of the settlements in the studied area present a historical and cultural impact at a regional level, certain historical or cultural elements being preserved since the Middle Ages or from the Habsburg rule (certain archaeological finds, evidence of villages, the structure and texture of settlement - consequence of Habsburg rule etc).

The deductive method has equally a major role in establishing the connections between the natural, political, economic, social and demographic factors, the relationships between them resulting in the classification criteria of human settlements (Figure 1).

CLASSIFICATION OF SETTELEMNTS BY FORM, STRUCTURE AND TEXTURE

"*The relations between the morphology of the territory and the social and economic factors in a given historical period are given by setting the physiognomy and structure of the centres of the villages, the latter reflecting the development stages of settlements over time*" (Vert, 2000, 236).

Regarding the form of the settlements from the Plain Birda- Moravița, we should mention that they were influenced by factors such as the position on the main rivers of the region, the influence of Habsburg rule, certain economic, social, cultural factors, etc.

The settlements from the Plain Birda-Moravița "*fall into specific lowland villages, most of them having a linear form, with streets intersecting at 90, with semi-detached houses and with the facade oriented to the street*" (Ianăş, 2011, 292). However, there are settlements which have an elongated shape, some of which are situated along rivers (Lățunaş, Berecuța, Birda, Giera, Gad, Sângeorge, Ferendia).

However, the settlements from the Plain Birda- Moravița present the most representative types of villages in the Banat Plain. Thus, among the villages with a rectangular shape, we can mention: Cerna, Birda, Brestea, Rovinita Mare, Ferendia, Stamora Germană, Mănăstire, Dejan, Ofsenița, Macedonia, Livezile, Opatița, Gaiu Mic.

Although fewer in number in the Plain Birda- Moravița, there are several villages with square shape: Soca, Liebling, Voiteg, Partoş; however, most of the settlements have an irregular polygonal geometric shape (rectangular) such as Banloc, Giera, Toager, Graniceri, Ciacova, Cebza, Obad, Petroman, Ghilad, Gad, Jebel, Pădureni, Parta, Folea, Deta, Berecuța, Sângeorge, Denta, Jamu Mare, Clopodia, Lățunaş, Moravita. The classification of settlements by form, structure and texture is shown graphically in figure 2 and figure 3, as a result of processing aerial photographs.
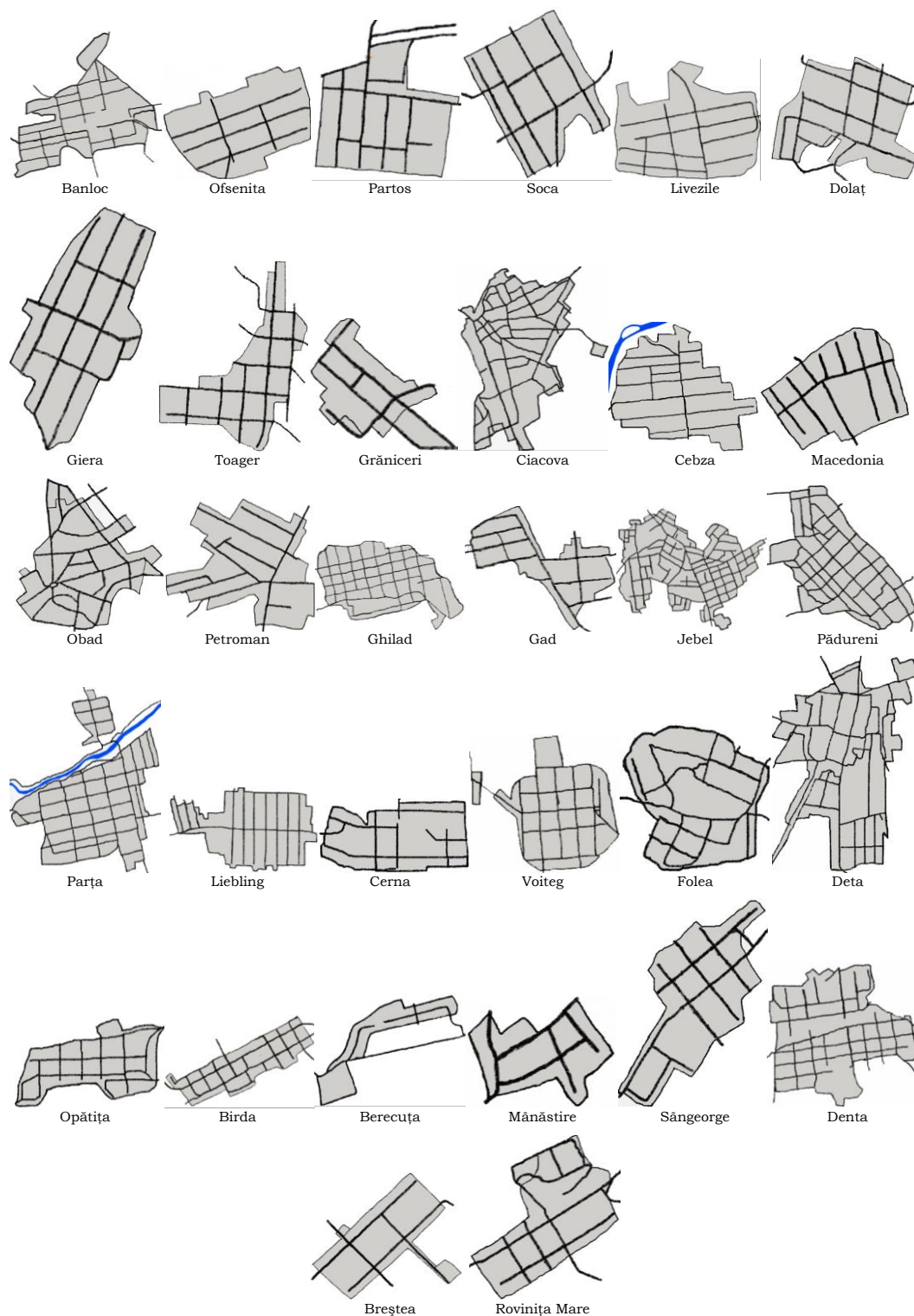
Figure 2. The shape, structure and texture of the settlements from the Plain Birda
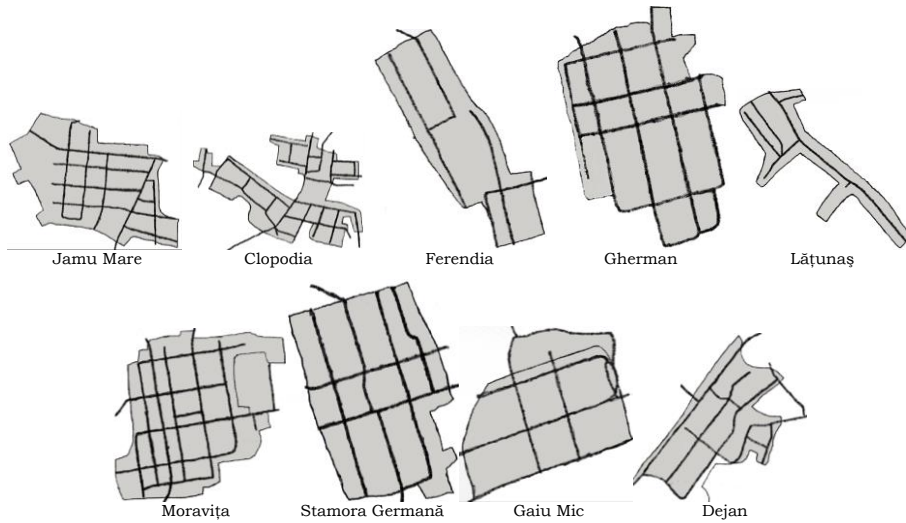(Source: Processing after aerial photographs, 2012)

Figure 3. The form, structure and texture of the settlements from Plain Moraviţa
(Source: Processing after aerial photographs, 2012)

The structure and texture of the settlements is largely a consequence of the regime adopted by the Habsburg authorities who ordered the systematization of old villages by merging small settlements and the organization of villages according to urban and economic criteria. Following these steps, "*many settlements have lost the traditional characteristics of a scattered village, becoming the type of village with a geometric aspect which was kept until nowadays*" (Ianăş, ibid).

All the settlements from the Plain Birda- Moraviţa fall within the type of agglomerated village with a compact structure, which have a high density of households in the centre of the village. Here we can mention some old Romanian centers such as Banloc, Partos, Soca, Livezile, Toager, Ciacova Cebza, Obad, Macedonia, Petroman, Ghilad, Gad, Pădureni, Parta, Cerna, Voiteg, Denta, Gaiu Mic, Jebel and the mixed or German villages such as Graniceri, Liebling, Jamu Mare, Moravita, Stamora Germana, Dolaţ.

"*The texture of settlements refers to how the networks of streets are arranged together with the constructions along them*" (Nicoară, 1999, 38). The considerable age of the settlements from the Plain Birda-Moravita is the factor that determined the predominance of irregular or complex texture. However, we can distinguish several types of textures of the centres of the settlements:

- Village with linear simple textured centres, they having a simple structure: one street. Here we introduce the villages from the eastern part of the Plain Birda-Moraviţa (Berecuta, Ferendia, Dejan)

- Villages with rectangular textured centres, whose streets form right angles. This category contains a large part of the villages, both Romanian villages with old documentary attestation and the new villages which were founded with the arrival of German and Bulgarian settlers (Banloc Ofseniţa, Soca, Partos, Livezile, Dolaţ, Giera Toager, Ghilad, Pădureni, Parta, Liebling, Opaitat, Birda, Gherman, Moravtia, Stamora Germana, Sângeorge, Brestea, Grăniceri, Macedonia, Cerna, Jamu Mare, Denta, Deta, Gaiu Mic, Dejan, Cebza).

- Villages with irregular texture: Jebel, Folea, Clopodia, Ciacova, Obad.

Depending on rural systematization problems and how they can be solved Prof. Constantin Vert distinguishes several categories:

- Villages with geometric texture and high density of constructions in the centre. This includes larger settlements, centres of parishes and towns that have a relatively high degree of socio-economic development or are developing (urban facilities, technical and urban facilities, sewage). For this type, the representatives are the towns Ciacova and Deta, and the villages Banloc, Denta, Liebling, Jamu Mare, Moravița.

- Villages with irregular texture but of clustered type, the best example is the village Jebel, where, for the systematize to be possible in the future, the streets need to be redrawn.

Small villages located along a road or valley with sparsely constructions. "*Their systematization is difficult due to the remoteness of economic flows*" (Vert, 2001, 254). As examples we can take: Sângeorge, Rovinita, Berecuța, Dejan, Graniceri, Toager, Mănăstire.

CLASSIFICATION BY NUMBER OF INHABITANTS OF SETTLEMENTS

The positioning of settlements in a plain area offered the inhabitants, since the earliest times, vast possibilities of exploitation of the natural resources (fertile soil, large expanses of land). Regionally, the prewar and interwar periods are characterized by a considerable number of people in most villages from the Plain Birda-Moravița, owing to massive waves of colonization that took place during these years, while the postwar period is marked by a wave of emigration to other regions in search of jobs and a low birth rate, which led to the presence of a large number of small and very small villages.

The censuses of 1900, 1930 and 20002, the villages from the Plain Birda-Moravița can be divided by the number of residents in several categories: Very small villages (less than 500 inhabitants),small villages (500-1,000 inhabitants), medium villages (1,000-1,500 inhabitants), large villages (1,500-3,000 inhabitants), very large villages (over 3,000 inhabitants)
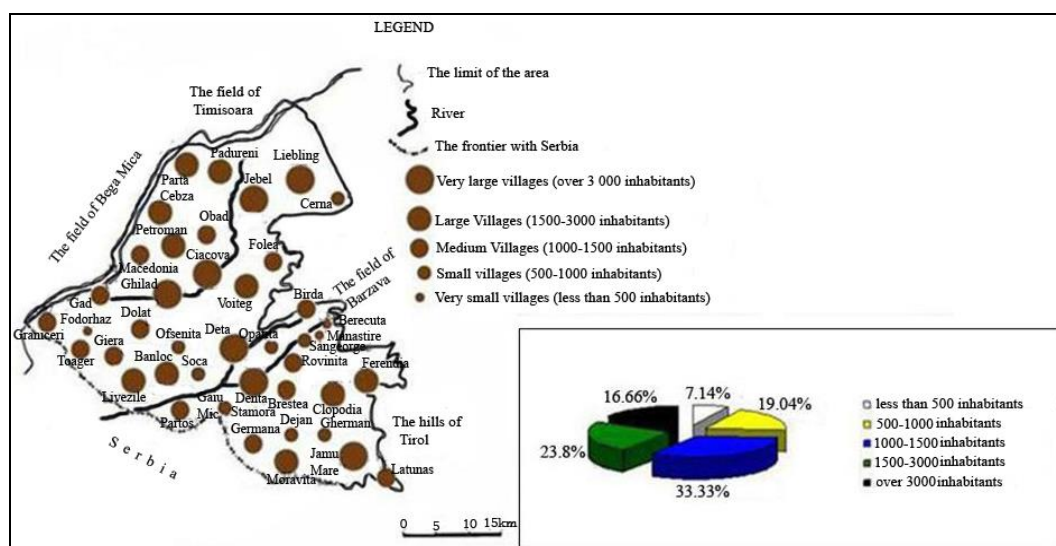

Figure 4. The classification of settlements by the number of inhabitants in 1900
(Source: Census of 1900)

Thus, in 1900 (Fig. 4) there is a predominance of medium and large villages at the expense of small and very small, due to the presence of German, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Italian, Spanish settlers in the region and the high birth rate for that period. Equally, emigration recorded very low percentages. Medium-sized villages held a quite large percentage, followed by the large and very large settlements. Very small villages recorded a rate of only 7.14%. Spatially, most of the large and very large settlements were in the central-western region (Deta, Denta, Ciacova, Ghilad, Petroman, Cebza) but also in the south (Banloc, Livezile), north (Jebel, Pădureni, Parta, Liebling) or southeast (Jamu Mare, Clopodia, Ferendia).

In the year 1930 there is an increase in the number of small villages (Fig.5) which come to have a share of 33.3%, followed by large villages (26.19%) and medium (21.42%). The maintenance of a high percentage of medium and large villages is due to the presence of settlers in the area which maintains a surplus of the population and the increase in small villages is due to World War I that made many victims.
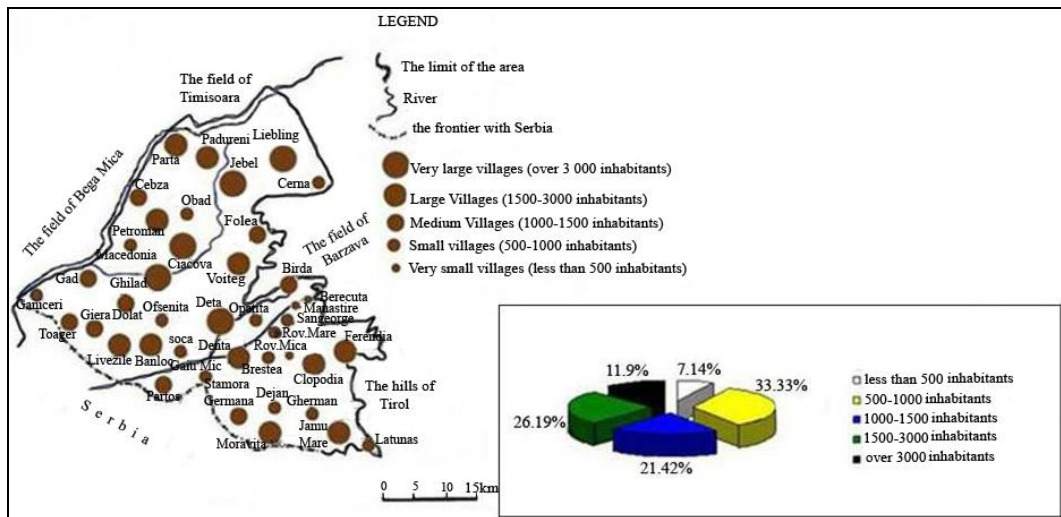
Figure 5. The classification of settlements by the number of inhabitants in 1930
(Source: Census of 1930)

2002 (Fig. 6) brings instead a substantial change in the size of settlements. The increase of the migration phenomenon and the negative demographic balance have led to an increasing in very small villages, which hold the largest share, followed by small villages (32.5%) and large villages (16.2%). Very large villages had only a share of 6.97% in 2002.

In 2002, the small villages occupy the western and eastern or southern parts, replacing medium and large villages. We have to mention that some villages underwent a sharp decrease in the number of inhabitants, becoming in 2002 small and very small villages, compared to 1900 when they fell into the category of medium or large villages. It is about some Romanian villages such as Macedonia, Petroman, Cebza, Toager that registered a decline in population due to migration of the Romanian inhabitants and the high mortality rate, but also some mixed or German villages (Gad, Giera, Graniceri, Clopodia, Ferendia) due to the emigration of Germans or Hungarians.
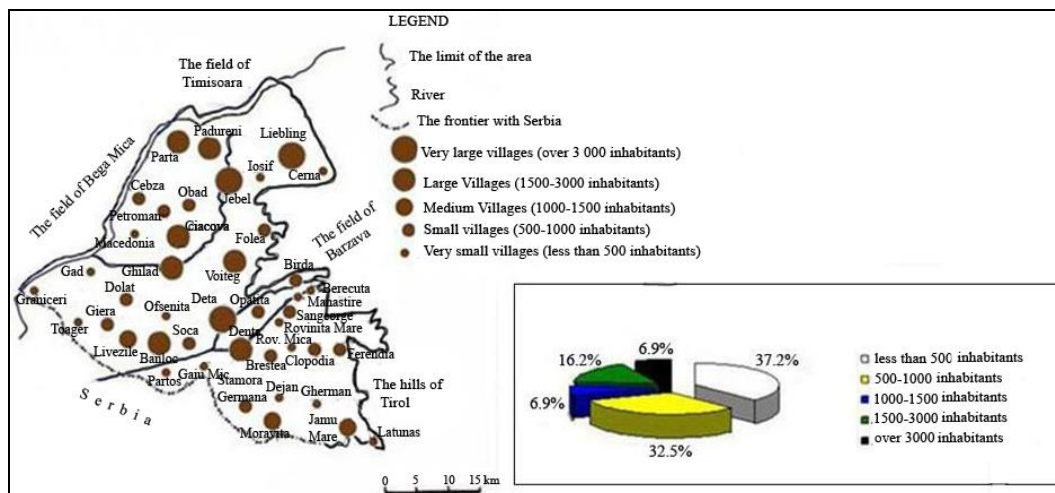
Figure 6. The classification of settlements by the number of inhabitants in 2002
(Source: Census of 2002)

CLASSIFICATION OF SETTLEMENTS BY AGE

Due to the plain region with vast opportunities for exploitation of the natural environment, the settlements from the Plain Birda- Moravița were inhabited since prehistoric times (the proof consists in the variety of archaeological discoveries made since the Bronze Age and Iron Age). We may consider the Middle Ages as the period of documentary record for the settlements from the Plain Birda-Moravița, most of which are recorded for the first time during the papal taxes (1332-1337), and even before this period (Table 1).

Table 1. The historic record of settlements in the Plain Birda-Moravița
(Source: Figures based on data from the National Archives, the collection of Nicolae Ilieșiu)

No.	Settlement	The year of first documentary record/ The year of reestablishment
1	Ghilad	1212
2	Ciacova	1220/1335
3	Grăniceri	1256
4	Opătița	1256/1333
5	Sângeorge	1319
6	Denta	1322
7	Giera	1322
8	Voiteg	1322
9	Gherman	1323
10	Banloc	1332/1717
11	Padureni	1332/1761
12	Liebling	1332/1828
13	Cebza	1333
14	Dolaț	1333
15	Gad	1333
16	Livezile	1333
17	Moravița	1333
18	Obad	1333
19	Partoș	1333
20	Petroman	1333
21	Soca	1333
22	Jamu Mare	1334/1343

23	Jebel	1334
24	Macedonia	1334
25	Parţa	1334
26	Folea	1341
27	Roviniţa Mare	1341
28	Deta	1360
29	Cerna	1373
30	Berecuţa	1458
31	Mânăstire	1485/1909 (recorded in statistics)
32	Gaiu Mic	1517
33	Clopodia	1598/1717
34	Birda	1690/1717
35	Ofseniţa	1690/1828
36	Dejan	1717
37	Ferendia	1717
38	Lăţunaş	1717
39	Toager	1761
40	Stamora Germană	1789/1828
41	Breştea	1846
42	Iosif	1870/1954 (recorded in statistics)
43	Roviniţa Mică	1895
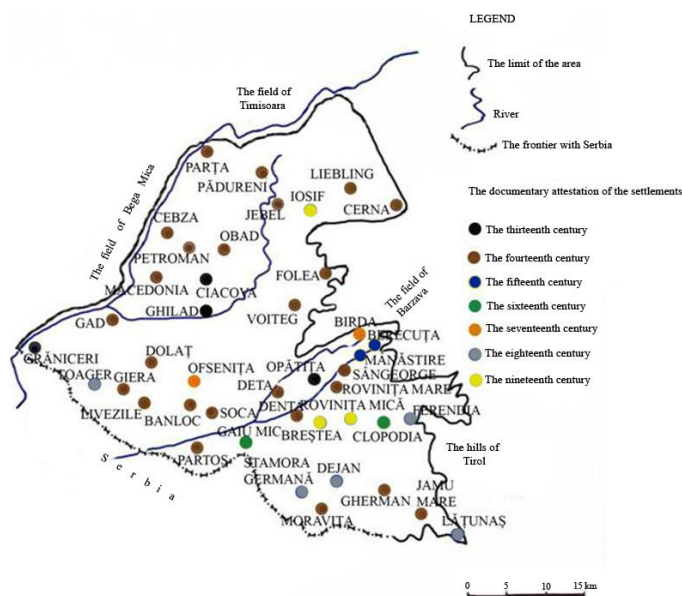
Figure 7. The classification of settlements by age
(Source: Processing by Nicholas Collection Ilieşiu 1943 National Archives of the State)

Since the Middle Ages, most of the settlements from the Plain Birda-Moravita belonged to some well-known noble clans, which is why most settlements date back to this period. Thus, the oldest settlements have been documented in the 13th century and these are Ciacova, Ghilad (Galad-certified in the notes of the historiographer Budinski) and Graniceri (possession Chewas). In the 14th century, 58% of all settlements were documented. It is period 1332-1337, when settlements (Banloc, Soca, Partos, Livezile, Giera, Dolaţ, Macedonia, Cebza, Obad, Petroman, Jebel, Pădureni, Parta, Voiteg, Folea, Liebling, Cerna, Deta, Denta, Moraviţa, Jamu Mare, etc) are mentioned in the lists of tithe, being also mentioned by Hungarian historians as Samu Borovszky and Bodog

Milleker. The 15th, 16th and 17th centuries are characterized by a small number of documentary recorded settlements, found in the Turkish defterleri after 1500. (Berecuta, Manastire- 15th century; Gaiu Mic, Clopodia 16th century; Birda, Ofsenița 17th century). The 18th and 19th centuries were dominated by the Habsburg rule; in this period some settlements were founded in the Plain Birda-Moravita because of the consistent waves of colonization (Brestea- founded by the pahliveni coming from Dudeştii Vechi; Rovinita Mica was founded by the 80 German families that arrived from Becicherecul Mic; Stamora-Germana- was founded due to the German colonization settlers; Iosif- founded by Hungarian settlers; Toager- founded by the Romanians brought from the Mures area from Banat). The classification of settlements by age is plotted in figure 7.

CONCLUSIONS

Taking as starting point both the Anglo Saxon literature (Taylor, Bryan, Goodrich, Canter, 1996; Barrow 2000; Goodman, 2004) and the Romanian one (Vert, 2000/2001; Ana Ianăs, 2011; Nicoara, 1999) we can draw some conclusions that highlight the required type of regional impact of each criterion for the classification of settlements.

Thus, the structural and textural physiognomy of the settlements from the Plain Birda-Moravița, fall within the typology of the Banat plain, most of which have a rectangular, square or geometric form, a compact structure and linear texture, rectangular or irregular, therefore, the consequences of the regime ordered by the Habsburg rule.

The historical and demographic phenomena before the war and even the interwar, represented by massive waves of colonization and a positive population growth rate represented the cause of a high share of large and very large settlements, their percentage decreasing with increased migration and a sharp decline in birth rates, thus imposing a negative demographic impact at regional level by the increasing in number of small and very small settlements.

The favorable natural conditions and the landscape features were factors that favored the existing documentary records from the Middle Ages. At the entire regional system can be observed a clear predominance of settlements with a considerable age (13th, 14th and 15th centuries), at the expense of settlements established during the Habsburg or Austro-Hungarian periods through the intake of Bulgarian and German population.

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*** The Archives, the National Archives of the Country, the Collection of Nicolae Ilieşiu.

CAUSES AND RESPONSIBILITY SHARED
IN THE SYRIA CONFLICTUAL OUTBREAK

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Abstract: Started in March 2011, the conflict in Syria produced numerous casualties, severe human rights abuse and extensive material damage. The causes of its outbreak and development are not limited to politics but include economic and socio-demographic factors (social unrest was accentuated by the restrictiveness of the natural environment). The parts involved in this conflict (the Bashar al-Assad regime, the opposition, the international community), all share the responsibility. The inefficiency of the Security Council in managing this conflict proved, once again, that it should be reformed. The Conflict in Syria is, unfortunately, just another example to ponder upon.

Key words: conflict in Syria, consequences, causes, responsibilities

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INTRODUCTION

The Syrian Arab Republic is located in a region faced with socio-political unrest over the last half century. Its good geographic and geo-political location entailed significant commercial benefits but, over the time, it also caught the eye of different influential powers. Less than two centuries after the proclamation of their independence, in 1963, the Baath Party (of socialist orientation) came to power, and so did the Assad Family (Hafez al-Assad and Bashar al-Assad), later, in 1970. Delayed political and democratic reforming, the government's inefficiency in managing socio-economic issues and the events in Tunisia, Egypt or Libya triggered ample pro-democracy protests first in Deraa, later in Baniyas, Latakia, Homs, Hama, Alep and Damask (figure 1). Protests erupted in March 2011 after a group of teenagers was arrested and tortured for having written revolutionary slogans on the walls of their school in south Deraa. Next, security forces opened fire during a march against arrests, and killed four people (BBC News, 8.06.2012).

Since the conflict began, as per the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (December 2013), 126 thousands have died, out of which 44 thousands civilians (6600 children and 4400 women). Besides these documented casualties, it was estimated that another 40 thousands army suits, rebels and non-Syrian fighters also died, 16 thousand people were arrested and detained by the regime and 5

thousand military and pro-governmental militia were captured by the rebels. To these add 6.8 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance, out of which over 2 million are refugees and the other 4.2 million had to move within the borders of the country (Canadian Red Cross, 2013). The number of refugees registered in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt increased over time from a mere 8000 in December 2011 to 567 thousands in January 2013 and 2.3 million in January 2014, and more than half of them are children. (UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, 2014).

Furthermore, the conflict brought forth human rights abuse, war crimes and crimes against humanity (Amnesty International, 2013) causing severe disruption of the socio-economic environment as it limited access to even the most elementary products (water, food, medicine, electricity). The economy was tremendously affected, the tourism and oil industry in particular, two vital sectors, not only by the conflict itself but also as a result of the sanctions imposed by the Arab League, USA and EU.

Figure 1. General map of Syria

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the current analysis is to find answers to a series of questions that might prove useful in relatively similar cases. Identifying and analysing the causes that led to the outburst and development of the conflict and particularly understanding the responsibility of each of the actors involved

was given great importance. The study interprets and analyses data available from different sources relying also on specific bibliography.

REZULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although the trigger was political, alimented by an authoritarian and inefficient government, the roots of this conflict go much deeper and have a lot to do with the socio-economic realities and with the restrictiveness of the natural environment, quite vulnerable and undergoing great pressure. All these factors contributed to a deterioration of the living standards generating unemployment and poverty and ultimately unrest.

The Economic Factor. The unsuccessful economic policies and its limited natural resources, in particular energetic (compared to other countries in the region), affected greatly Syria's economy, poorly developed and incapable of providing for the population's needs. Taking over the most important economic sectors (major industries and the banking system) the state, through its leaders – the Baath Party (McGowan et al., 1987), proved inefficient in the long run. Furthermore, oil production, which contributed significantly to the state's income, began to decrease. Oil was discovered in 1956 in the north-west part of the country whereas a more intense exploitation began in 1970 reaching a peak in mid-1990's (583 thousand barrels/day) and gradually decreased to 332 thousand barrels/day in 2011. Its oil resources were estimated to 2.5 billion barrels (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2012). In the context of diminished oil incomes, the Assad Regime was forced to initiate economic and financial liberalization reforms including a reduction of subventions. The measures taken were not well received by the common folk who had to withstand increasing prices therefore decreasing living standards.

The agricultural sector faces equally serious problems: lack of water, frequent drought and soil degradation. Most of the terrains are arid and semi-arid, only 6 million hectares, 32% of the surface, meet the conditions for agricultural use, wheat (1.6 mil hectares) being the main culture (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Animal breading is nomad and semi nomad using the 8.2 mil ha of pastures, 44% of the country, and there are also specialized farms. During these past decades, the agricultural production failed to provide for the rapidly growing population. Successive years of drought are common in Syria and they impact the whole economy. Precipitations, ordinarily low in quantity, vary considerably from one year to another, under these circumstances agricultural activities are highly vulnerable given the lack of an irrigation system. Therefore, extreme draughts, pushed 2-3 million people on the verge of extreme poverty, the population in the north-east of the country being the most affected. As a result, thousands of people left their homes heading for Damasc and other big cities (Rivlin, 2011). Under these circumstances, the state's capacity to provide food to the population was severely threatened.

The socio-demographic factor. Over the last half century, Syria's population increased from a mere 4.5 million inhabitants in 1960, to 22 million nowadays, the state proving inefficient in adopting family planning measures to reduce population growth. The Alep Governorate, inhabited by 5.9 million people, is the most populated administrative division in Syria, Homs, Hama and Idlib follow, each with around 2 million inhabitants (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Although the number of births decreased to a mere half its values are still high, life expectancy is currently over 75 (increased significantly)

and the young population, under 25, is quite numerous (table 1). These indexes demonstrate not only an increased need for food, water or energy but also a greater demand for jobs and social assistance.

Table 1. Syria, main demographic indexes
(Source: Population Division of the United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Total population (mil. inhabitants)	4.5	6.3	8.9	12.3	15.9	20.4	24.0
Annual population growth rate (%)	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.0	2.4	1.9	1.6
Birth rate (‰)	50.1	46.8	45.4	38.4	29.7	23.9	20.7
Mortality (‰)	18.1	12.5	8.3	5.3	3.8	3.5	3.6
Life expectancy at birth (years)	51.0	58.1	64.8	70.0	73.5	75.3	76.8
Population under 25 (%)	61.4	65.8	68.3	67.3	62.5	57.3	50.4

The Arabs, present all over the country, represent over 90% of the population. They are divided into several religious communities the most numerous of which are the Sunnite Muslims (74%). The Kurds represent the main ethnic minority in Syria, over 6% of the population. Generally, non-Arab populations (Kurds, Armenians, Turkmens, Circassian, Assyrians) live in communities, north of Alep and in the Al Jazirah region, preserving their own distinct cultural elements. Ever since Hafez al-Assad came to power, all political and security decisions were placed in the hands of the Alawite community, representing only 12% of the population, which generated a lot of discontent among the Sunnite Muslims. Located mostly along the Mediterranean coast in the port cities of Latakia and Tartus, Alawites are Shia and they moved in the region around the IX and X centuries as supporters of Ali, son in law to Muhammad, the Prophet. Alawites are regarded by the other Muslims in the Middle East as very liberal and sometimes even as heretics.

Restrictive natural environment. Syria, has a restrictive natural environment which affects its socio-economic development. More than half the country is semiarid and arid with precipitations that range between 200mm/year to under 50 mm/year in some areas (Ali et al., 2007). Summertime temperatures rise above 40⁰C and the sand storms, common in February-May, affect significantly agricultural activities. The water resource is scarce, the Euphrate River, originating in east Turkey with an average flow of 583 m^3/s (the longest and most important river), provides over 80% of Syria's resources. Most of the surface is covered in desert and semi-deserts vegetation: grass, bushes and dispersed trees. Forests, present in areas that receive more rain, only cover around 3% of the country's surface. The soils are also influenced by the amount of precipitations therefore a large part of the country (47.5% with precipitations under 250mm/year) is covered in arid soils, greatly affected by erosion. Underdeveloped soils (entisol), occupy 16.9% while immature soils occupy 21.7% (incipient soil) (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2007). Human activity, especially grazing and farming affected considerably the soil cover. Therefore, according to FAO (2003), 17.3% of Syria's surface is affected by soil degradation.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NUMEROUS HUMAN DRAMA?

Bashar al-Assad Regime. The Bashar al-Assad regime is considered in many ways the main responsible for the outbreak and long-term development of this conflict as it did not take proper measures in promoting democracy, respect for human rights, socio-economic development and a wise protection of natural resources. On the other hand, the use of excessive force against the protesters

was faced with a violent response. Later, while the conflict was developing, according to Amnesty International, representatives of the government committed numerous war crimes by attacking settlements, where the opposition was supposed to have sought refuge, from the Homs, Idlib, Hama, Damasc or Alep Governorates, killing or wounding thousands of civilians. Many of the casualties were the result of an improper use of weapons in densely inhabited areas or of some internationally forbidden ones, including chemical (used on 21st of August 2013 in the Ghouta Suburb of Damasc). Hundreds of people, among which human rights activists, journalists, humanitarian activists and children were detained, killed or wounded during the marches or raids. Despite this, the regime does not seem willing to give up power.

The opposition. The opposition can be blamed for having reacted so violently to the actions of the Syrian regime instead of manifesting calmly and attempting negotiations. The forces of the opposition are guilty of abuse, violation of human rights and war crimes against the people known/suspected to be part of the governmental forces who were tortured and killed after apprehension. They also threatened and kidnapped civilians, used suicide and other types of attacks in populated areas (Amnesty International, 2013).

A resolution of the Syrian conflict is rendered difficult by the lack of unity of the political and military opposition which is made up of numerous groups, around 100 thousand fighters (Lister, 2013), whose ideologies and motivators vary tremendously - including Jihadist groups associated to al-Qaeda, such as the Al Nusra (Jabhat al-Nusra) Front and Islamis State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). ISIS, formed primarily of foreign fighters, was accused of many atrocities during the conflict including of having attacked other forces of the opposition such as the attack in north Azaz (BBC News, 25.09.2013). ISIS is also accused by the Syrian activists of not acting in the spirit of the Syrian revolution.

In 2012, in Doha, the Syrian National Coalition was formed, aiming to stand for a viable and believable political alternative with the capacity to channel international efforts. Its founders are part of the moderate Syrian opposition, based in Turkey, and militate against the Assad Regime and for the instauration of a democratic state. The coalition, supported by the Free Syrian Army is considered to be the only legitimate representative or the legitimate representative of Syria/the Syrian people by countries such as: USA, France, Italy, Germany, UK, Turkey, Spain, Saudi Arabia, EAU or Qatar. On the other hand, several other representatives of the opposition, especially Islamic groups, and also the Syrian activists, are very much against the coalition considering it to be a product of the Western World. An alternative to this coalition was founded in November 2013 – the Islamic Front, which resulted from the union of seven important Islamic groups: : Ahrar al-Sham, Liwa al-Tawhid, Suqour al-Sham, Al-Haqq Brigades, Ansar al-Sham, Army of Islam and Kurdish Islamic Front (Al Jazeera, 22.11.2013). The resulting military force has taken upon itself to fight against the Assad Regime and to build an Islamic state based on Sharia.

Given that the moderates and the Islamic have different views on what the future of Syria should look like represents a risk factor very likely to manifest beyond the ideal of democracy and therefore, should the Assad Regime be defeated, the population might still not be free to choose for itself.

The international community. The international community is guilty for failing to mitigate the conflict. There is enough ground to state that this conflict is no longer just an internal matter based on the attitudes and actions of the

international community. Furthermore, this conflict bears a clear religious component: the Shia, representing the government, the Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon and the Iranian military support (Sharp and Blanchard, 2013) and the Sunni supported by the Arab States around the Persian Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar, but also by Turkey.

As per the first article in the UN Charta, one of the fundamental purposes of UNO is to preserve the international peace and security. To this end UNO endeavors to take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace. In order to ensure rapid and effective action, the members of the organization delegated the Security Council with the responsibility of maintaining peace and international security (Article 24). Under certain circumstances, should the recommended methods and peaceful means for the resolution of a conflict prove ineffective, the Council can sanction or even authorize forceful interventions in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The international community failed to find a solution to end this conflict despite the actions taken. From the very beginning of the conflict, the Security Council initiated several resolutions condemning the extensive violence and human rights abuse carried out by the Syrian authorities and the rebel military groups including their breach of some international agreements such as the use of chemical weapons. The resolutions against the Syrian Regime such as the ones in October 2011, February 2012 and July 2012 did not pass as Russia and China vetoed them. Similarly unsuccessful was the peace plan proposed by the Action Group for Syria (constituted from representatives of the main international states and organizations, including Russia and China) united in Geneva, in June 2012, which targeted the instauration of a transitional government and organization of free elections.

The international actors understand differently Syria's current realities and the possible ways out of this conflict, Russia and China being the main supporters of the Syrian Regime along with Iran. Regionally, Iran, a former ally of Syria, is the greatest supporter of Assad's Regime and of the state structure in place (with the Alawites occupying and controlling the most important functions) and provides economic and military assistance (Sharp și Blanchard, 2013). Internationally, though, Russia was Syria's main supporter, providing it with weapons. This happens because Syria has been an important ally of Russia ever since 1970's when Hafez al-Assad came to power not only through its geopolitical position but also as a commercial partner (military included). As a matter of fact, Russia continued to provide the Syrian Regime with weapons and military equipment even after the conflict broke out.

China's position can be explained by the main principle of its external policy - no interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states, and appears to be more of a stand against the Western World's critiques related to China's human rights breaches. On the other hand, China's external policy is influenced by its economic interests and ignores the conflicts and crises outside of its borders. Although China's interests in Syria are limited, the region as a whole, the Middle East, is important for its oil resources which China is dependent upon.

In February 2012, in response to China's and Russia's veto, several states, among which USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, formed a group called Friends of

Syria which aimed to find a solution for the initiation of a political transition in Syria. In October 2013, they met in London with the Syrian National Coalition and unanimously agreed that the President Bashar al-Assad shouldn't be part of the future Syrian government.

From the very beginning of the conflict, USA took attitude against the violence in Syria asking for Assad's resignation (starting august 2011), extended sanctions and militated for the consolidation of the opposition with the purpose of achieving a political transition. In December 2012 USA acknowledged the National Coalition of Revolution and Opposition Forces as legitimate representative of the Syrian people providing humanitarian and non-lethal assistance (medicine, food, communication devices). After the chemical attack in August 2013 USA initiated discussions for the launch of a military response against the Syrian Regime. Some of the most important states in the EU (UK, France, Germany, and Italy) supported USA's efforts and initiatives, yet, except France, they were all in favor of a political plan instead of other actions. Starting March 2011, the EU adopted many sanctions against Assad's Regime. In July 2013, EU declared the military branch of Hezbollah to be a terrorist organization for having supported the Syrian Regime.

From the very beginning, the Arab League was actively involved in the conflict. In November 2011, the League removed Syria from the organization as Assad's Government refused the proposed peace plan, and later, in January 2012, formally requested Bashar al-Assad's resignation. In March 2013, the 22 members of the organization offered Syria's place to the Syrian National Coalition and decided to allow the members to provide the rebels with weapons (Al Jazeera, 1.09.2013). Yet, some influential member states (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia and Algeria) were against a foreign military intervention in Syria.

IS A REFORMATION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL NECESSARY?

At present, the Security Council includes fifteen member states with the following permanent members: USA, Russia, China, France and UK. The other members are elected for a period of two years based on their contribution in maintaining international peace and security in such a way that an equitable geographic distribution is preserved. There were serious discussions and critiques against the Council's permanent members which have a right to veto. These states were accused of taking decisions in view of their geostrategic interests especially when it comes to military and humanitarian interventions.

In the current geopolitical and economic waters, characterized by a balanced distribution of power and a globalized market, many states might place their national interests ahead the need for international peace and security, as such, the right to veto, might constitute an instrument to this end. Therefore, having a healthy decision making process should be a priority rather than deciding on whether increasing the number of permanent members or totally dismissing the concept. Increasing the number of permanent members and imposing a two thirds favorable quota for decisions to pass might prove a better solution than the current.

CONCLUSIONS

The current political crisis, the result of various tensions, was determined not only by the mishaps in the political system but also by an inefficient management of the socio-economic issues, including population growth, in the

context of a restrictive natural environment, prone to degradation and with limited resources. This conflict could have been avoided should the Regime had taken measures and actions towards the instauration of democracy, the preservation of human rights, and socio-economic development through employment creation (especially for young people), family planning and the protection and rehabilitation of the environment. Also, the conflict wouldn't have resulted in so many casualties should the Syrian opposition have chosen to protest in a peaceful way and if the international community had responded more rapidly. The inefficient response of the Security Council is a clear sign that it should be reformed to become an organization capable to stand by the international need for security and peace and not by the interests of the member states.

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THE SOUTHERN UPPER RHINE AS A EUROREGION? CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF INTRA AREA INTEGRATION

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Abstract: The Southern Upper Rhine border region, also known as Regio Trirhena, is often considered in the scholarly literature as a model of transborder Euregio. Based on extensive analysis of existing literature, of data and documents available within the existing legal-institutional frameworks and on the utilisation of a number of diverse theoretic constructs, the aim of this paper is to reflect on whether the Southern Upper Rhine borderland can be qualified as a Euroregion by addressing its context, dimensions and underpinnings of area integration. First, it provides a brief background on the evolution of cross-border cooperation in the region. Second, it offers a theoretical framework for a conceptual definition of Euroregion. Third, it analyses elements of continuity and discontinuity in the Southern Upper Rhine Valley including the physical, functional and political dimension. It concludes that the degree of intra area integration does not depend only on the level of institutionalization of cross-border cooperation and on the number of cross-border projects and cross-border organizations but on different sets of symmetries/asymmetries.

Key words: cross-border cooperation, Euroregion, France, Germany, governance, Switzerland

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SUMMARY

Transfrontier cooperation is already a well established phenomenon in international relations. Its modern origins can be traced back to the aftermath of World War II. Characterized first by elements of spontaneity and flexibility, transfrontier cooperation has taken over the years a series of more institutionalized forms, leading to the creation of Euroregions, which could be called a 'region of regions' and are in principle engaged in a comprehensive approach to cross-border cooperation, i.e. they not only deal with problems that are similar but they also create common structures and extend their cooperation to other fields which are deemed as significant by the civil society. The best – known example of this type of cross-border cooperation is the Regio established on the three borders between Switzerland, France and Germany. The originality of Regio Trirhena resides in the fact that, due to the long experience it has gained in cross-border cooperation, it may be seen as a paradigmatic case for the development of euroregional bodies and cross-border dynamics at different levels.

Based on extensive analysis of existing literature, of data and documents available within the three legal-institutional frameworks and on the utilisation of a number of diverse theoretic constructs, the aim of this paper is to provide a theoretical framework regarding cross-border cooperation in the Southern Upper Rhine Valley region and to discuss whether the region could be qualified as a Euroregion. The concept of Euroregion will be analysed through different perspectives; in particular, the importance of terminology will be stressed by underlying the difference between the different conceptions of the term. We shall then see how the term applies to the case study. It will be shown that intra area integration does not depend only on the level of institutionalization of cross-border cooperation and on the number of cross-border projects and cross-border organizations but on different sets of asymmetries.

PATTERNS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE SOUTHERN UPPER RHINE REGION

Cross-border cooperation can be defined as a relational strategy aiming at developing synergies and solve problems which are common to two or more areas along the state border. Cross-border cooperation has three main goals: generating participation, generating transparency and elaborating strategies (ISIG, 2010). Besides, cross-border regions can be qualified as political laboratories on the micro level and as laboratories for international institution building (Hall, 2008; Beck, 2009). According to Perkmann (2003), a cross border region is a bounded territorial unit composed of the territories of authorities participating in cross-border cooperation initiatives.

Cross-border cooperation in the Southern Upper Rhine region coincides with the perimeter of the old Regio Trirhena, situated on the Southern end of the Upper Rhine Rift Valley and stretching over part of three countries - Germany's Southern Baden, France's Upper Alsace and five cantons of Northwest Switzerland.

Figure 1. Spatial perimeter of the Southern Rhine valley cross-border region
(Source: http://www.synergyofcontadiction.wordpress.org)

It is particularly difficult to define when cross-border cooperation started in the Upper Rhine region where contacts and relations between the different sub- regions never really stopped throughout history (Duvinage, 1996). However, it is commonly accepted that transborder cooperation in the area has been explicitly developing since the early 1960s and, since then, a large number of institutions and cross-border bodies have been created at the institutional level as well as at the political level. Informal contacts across the national borders were established already in the 1950s by business actors and local authorities, in order to make everyday life easier and to solve those problems that the local authorities were not able to cope with. (Ferrrara, 2002, 24). The pioneer phase of cross-border cooperation was marked by the creation of the Swiss association Regio Basiliensis by private and para-political actors in 1963, following the example of the Euregio on the German-Dutch border. Functional scopes, such as enhancing development and growth within a European and supranational context and making the total area a central one in spite of its peripheral location with respect to the national systems (Maurer-Feder, 2001, 192) were the priorities during that phase. Nevertheless, the wish to heal the scars of history and to safeguard peace and create a common regional identity for the Regio can be also mentioned among the driving forces (Wassenberg, 2010a, 115).

On the official side, an institutional cooperation was developed by the creation of similar associations in the French and German territories: the Regio of the Upper Rhine in 1965 and the Freiburger Regio-Gesellschaft in 1985, which together formed one single Regio. Transborder cooperation was then further institutionalised through tri-national congresses and conferences; in 1975 the Bonn Treaties made the relations between the three states official, which led to the creation of official bodies of transborder cooperation with a legitimisation at the national level; in 1976 an international German-French-Swiss intergovernmental commission, which replaced the Tripartite Conference, was established. Besides, cooperation was gradually extended outside the traditional perimeter, including the North Alsace and the Karlsruhe region (also called Upper Rhine Euregio) and thus giving birth to a polycentric system of cross-border cooperation.

In 1980 an approach based on the development of functional policies was pursued, with the definition of six priority axes developed within separated work groups and regarding the following domains: economy and transports, environment, energetic policy, culture, media and territorial planning. Over the years, the number of cross-border institutions and societies has grown, their individual territorial range differing greatly (Sandtner, Eder, 2002b, 151). Biannual conferences with representatives from all three border nations have been regularly organized since 1988. In parallel, cross-border cooperation has deepened at the informal level too, among firms, business organization, local actors, leading to grassroots demands for further cross-border interaction.

The phase of institutionalization was completed at the beginning of the 1980s, when the Upper Rhine region complied with a number of conditions that seem to foster the creation of a euroregion: a delimited perimeter, identified institutional actors and an established operative framework (Wassenberg, 2007, 154). The process gained momentum when the policy of decentralization was introduced in France in 1982, allowing French regions to deal directly with Swiss cantons and German Länder as counterparts (Wassenberg, 2007, 335). This way, cross-border cooperation in the area became what could be defined as

an association between frontier regions. The institutional level of cooperation was reinforced and the Conference of the Upper Rhine was established in 1991 with the aim of fostering institutional relations at the regional level.

During the 1990s, the framework for cross-border cooperation in the area was completed thanks to two processes: partial rationalization of existing structures; Europeanization of objectives. In 1995 the Council of the Regio Trirhena was founded with the aim of coordinating transborder cooperation in one single body and of representing the (cross- border) regional interest and in 1997 the old Regio Basiliensis was included in it. The Council functions as a network of cities, communities, regional administrative bodies and associations.

During the 1990s, finally, European objectives also appeared on the agenda when the Community Initiative Interreg was introduced and cross-border cooperation was linked with European integration. Whilst the first programming period was directed to the PAMINA area (the Northern part of the Upper Rhine region), the Regio Trirhena was later integrated into the Interreg programme South-Centre Upper Rhine (Wassenberg, 2010b). During the 1990s the Regio became what calls an actual regional association of cooperation (Balme, 1996, 132).

Furthermore, the new goal was that of bringing the Regio concept to the everyday citizen. In 1996, the Karlsruhe Treaty formally authorised transborder communities to carry out common projects. At the local level a Conference of the mayors of the Upper Rhine was established in 1990 (Maurer-Feder, 2001, 195) which led to the creation of numerous micro-scale projects involving such fields as education, bilingualism, tourism, transports and culture and carried out firstly at a bi-national level and later extended to the tri- national region. The main strategic project for cross-border cooperation at the micro level was the creation of two information centres for the inhabitants.

The early 2000s saw the emergence of sub- national and supra-national dynamics in the framework of cross-border cooperation in the Southern Upper Rhine Valley and, at the same time, the deepening and integration of various forms of collaboration. First of all, the Bonn Treaties were revised, which marked the beginning of a new phase of cooperation characterized, in principle, by a comprehensive approach and by the involvement of all kinds of local and regional actors, including citizens; as a matter of fact, several initiatives in favour of citizens have been put in place during the 2000s and numerous tripartite congresses have been entirely dedicated to the issue of linking cross – border cooperation projects with a more local dimension centred on the participation of citizens. However, this did not lead to a further rationalization of existing practices, as projects of contiguous cooperation started to be realized and financed both within and outside the Interreg framework (Wassenberg, 2012, 89).

Likewise, in 2003 a new concept was introduced for the whole Upper Rhine region: that of eurodistrict (Wassenberg, 2010a, 111). The eurodistrict is a space of local cooperation taking place around the main urban agglomerations with the objective of creating basins of common lives (Frey, 2005, 450). Since then, four eurodistricts have been created, two of which are situated within the Regio Trirhena: the trinational district of Basle and the eurodistrict Mulhouse-Colmar- Freiburg. RegioTrirhena, together with the Trinational Agglomeration Basel merged into the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel in 2007. In 2004, the tripartite congress introduced the concept of Metropolitan Region, a project which aims mainly at fostering the economic development and at deepening joint territorial planning.

TOWARDS A EUROREGION?

According to the Association for European Border Regions (AEBR) there are four principles which define successful cross-border cooperation: partnership and subsidiarity; the existence of a common strategy; joint structures; independent sources of financing (Gabbe, 2004, 30).

Regio Trirhena was built upon a bottom up approach, founded on mutual trust and researches win-win situation and on different scales of cooperation; nevertheless, it does not dispose itself of all the necessary criteria. Though, the new concept of Metropolitan Region, with the new principles adopted, seems to match the above mentioned requirements, so that the medium-scale level, i.e. the Regio, disposes of a common plan and of joint structures and scale economies (Frey, 2011, 178).

The institutional framework of cross-border cooperation in the Upper Rhine region complies also with the criteria laid down by the Council of Europe for evaluating the existence of an actual Euroregion, i.e.: joint decision-making procedures; joint determined objectives; the involvement of actors from the local, regional and national level; governance structures.

Among the cooperation network initiatives for joint development and European integration, the term Euroregion identifies a form of cross-border cooperation which has been more and more often adopted. Different sources list Regio Trirhena among established euroregions (Proto, 2008; Sandtner, Eder 2002a; Gaunard, 2000; Del Bianco, 2008). However, it is necessary to define what a euroregion actually consists of and, accordingly, to evaluate whether the concept can be applied to the analysed case of transboundary regionalization.

With respect to the general term cross-border cooperation, the Euroregion represents a phase of greater integration between border regions belonging to contiguous states. The Euroregion is made operational in an agency institutionally aiming at creating favourable conditions for cross-border co-operation legitimizing operators and associations with determined goals, providing expert support and services to gain from the opportunities created by EU programmes, and, finally, elaborating strategies orienting civil society to create and/or support cross-border co-operation (Del Bianco, 2006).

The Upper Rhine region, and in particular Regio Trirhena, in spite of the misleading name Regio (Euregio or Regio has usually been taken as a Euroregion benchmark) and its long tradition of cooperation, has never been officially addressed to as a Euroregion. It is possible to state that, under some profiles, it can be considered a Euroregion, though it cannot be called as such (Wassenberg, 2010b; Reitel, 2010).

One explanation might be sought in the fact that, in concrete, there is no univocal or commonly agreed definition for Euroregion, but several ones, that widen or narrow the meaning on a case-by-case basis (Proto, 2008, 5). Nevertheless, several scholars and institutions have tried to define or classify euroregional bodies.

A taxonomy of Euroregions can be found in Proto (2008, 24) who identifies three different typologies of Euroregions according to the fundamental objectives that led to their creation: the model of euregio/regio, the working communities (which are not Euroregions in strict sense), and the euroregional model emerged along the former Iron Curtain. The first model is represented by the case of cross-border cooperation between Germany, Switzerland and France (and between Germany and the Low Countries) and, by contrast with the other two, is

characterised by a strong political mobilization that, since the beginnings, involved both the policy-makers and the social base: the momentum is bottom-up, or mixed bottom-up and top-down, the structures manage the territorial policies at various levels and they are less related to individual project activities funded by the European Community).

The Association of European Border Regions has also set the some criteria for the identification of Euroregions: (1) an association of local and regional authorities on either side of the national border, sometimes with a parliamentary assembly; (2) a transfrontier association with a permanent secretariat and a technical and administrative team with own resources; (3) of private law nature, based on non-profit-making associations or foundations on either side of the border in accordance with the respective national law in force; (4) of public law nature, based on inter-state agreements, dealing among other things, with the participation of territorial authorities. The Euroregion may therefore take on a configuration that varies over time according to the objectives being pursued by cross-border co-operation players, according to legal consideration and according to the public and/or private actors belonging to it, as confirmed by Gasparini (2005). This definition can be applied to different types of associations including Regios, though they it appears rather vague and, while it has a juridical relevance, it does not appear very useful at the practical level. Moreover, in the Upper Rhine space, several association of both public and private nature coexist.

Different definitions and models have been proposed by scholars especially during the 1990s and 2000s. Strassoldo (2005:9) defines the Euroregion as an instance of collaboration among local authorities residing in contiguous areas but belonging to different states. According to Balme (1996, 122), the Euroregion can be defined as a regional association of transborder cooperation. Olivesi (1996, 132) defines the Euroregion as a transfrontier space of cooperation whose aim is to enhance European integration in broad sense. Deutsch (quoted in Dupeyron et al., 1999) sees the Euroregion as a group of political units which are more strictly connected to each other than to any other unit, which leads to the creation of a new, autonomous political unit.

Another definition is supplied by Alberto Gasparini (2003), who considers Euroregions as 'the drive of cross-border areas towards institutional autonomy, fostering cooperation and development in those areas otherwise doomed to be marginal', resulting in an association which has the function of coordinating the activities carried out in the field of transborder cooperation.

In this sense, the Euroregion is considered as the most advanced form of institutionalization of cross-border co-operation given the following four characteristics: (i) it deals on an institutional level with cross-border co-operation involving areas relatively contiguous with borders; (ii) it tends to favour complete cross-border co-operation, comprising support for local players in the use of European and local funds, the creation of reciprocal knowledge and the promotion of the formation, activation and transformation of actions and organisation for cross- -border co-operation; its work extends to economic, social, cultural, educational, service provided and institutional activity – all involving trans-national players (Gasparini, 2005). Nevertheless, it is also commonly argued that Euroregions do not represent a new local or regional institutional-administrative level, but rather an exchange and governance point for already existing public and private institutions (Gasparini, 2003; Perkmann, 2003).

If the transborder region Regio Trirhena complies with the neutral definition given by Strassoldo, and with the general definition given by Balme, based basically on a joint development of a spatial planning in order to heal the scars of history, the other models bring forward several problems. Deutsch's definition certainly cannot be applied to the model of cross-border cooperation in the Upper Rhine region, as it implies the idea of a 'Europe of regions'. If the Swiss and German partners could envisage a sort of political autonomy of the euroregional structure, for the French ones it is simply not conceivable and incompatible with the very structure of a unitary and indivisible state.

The model proposed by Olivesi is even more complex and can be only partially applied to transborder cooperation in the analysed area. Switzerland, as a non- member of the EU, is only partly associated to the process of European construction. The country is generally considered to be as a passive member of the EU (Nomes, 2008). In a way, however, the Regio Trirhena can be considered as a structure of mediation between the local communities of belonging, becoming an instrument to foster and develop the feeling of a European belonging (Ferrara, 2000, 25); in turn, for the EU the Regio can be considered as test region where it can see its possible evolution and model lab for cross – border integration at the EU internal and external frontiers.

On the one hand, since 1972, it has signed more than 120 bilateral agreements with the EU, which allow the country to have a privileged access to the European market and to take part in numerous European programs which are in principle reserved only to the member states. In addition, Switzerland is responsible for a sort of 'autonomous alignment': it reproduces several European norms and laws even without having an obligation to do so.

On the other hand, it has to be argued that the process of European construction surpasses the mere economic aspect. If negative integration aims at abolishing different types of barriers between the member states, positive integration aims at establishing a system of regulation within the supranational actor and involves also EU external borders. Switzerland is therefore associated to the process of European construction in the sense of contributing to the abolition of some border functions (Reitel, 2010, 295). In spite of the fact of being external borders, Swiss frontiers with Germany and France can be considered as largely open: not only because Switzerland belongs to Schengen area but also because the intra –area borders have undergone a process of dematerialisation and defunctionalisation (Reitel, 2010, 297).

CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

And yet, whereas EU border no longer impose any restraints, the Swiss border is still a confining factor in many respects and still constitutes an obstacle to full intra-area integration, in spite of the liberalisation process brought forward by the practice of bilateral treaties between Switzerland and the EU and Switzerland and single EU member states.

Another reason why Regio Trirhena could not be called a proper Euroregion can be sought in the fact that regional integration, although quite advanced, is not complete. Different studies conducted during the 2000s (Reitel, 2010; Sandtner, Eder, 2002a and 2002b) show that the growth of cross-border relations has not reduced the difference between the regional identities living on either side of the border. Cross-border relations have created a system of interdependency which has been structured by the border itself; nevertheless, in spite of numerous factors of continuity, important discontinuities persist.

It can be argued that the region presents several elements in favour of continuity: from a geographical standpoint, Regio Trirhena belongs to a coherent natural space; although it constitutes a trinational region, it belongs to great extent to a common cultural and historical Germanic space (Dollinger, Oberlé, 1985). Nevertheless, the region is situated at the core of a zone of interference of influence sphere between different European states (Sandtner, Eder, 2002b), leading to a delicate balance of power in the transborder region. The (relative) linguistic unity is challenged by a political, but to some extent also cultural, fragmentation which stems from the scars of history: the territories belonging to the classical core of the Regio have changed nationality several times, alternating their belonging to France and Germany: for example, whereas the Basle and Bade regions have always remained Germanic, Southern Alsace, was incorporated into a centralised France during the XVII century, except for the Mulhouse republic which was allied to Swiss Confederation.

In order to verify the hypothesis of regional integration, we derive three main dimensions from the model proposed by Van Houtum (2007), who has defined three approaches in order to determine the intensity of transfrontier relations: functional, cultural and political. On this basis, it can be argued that elements of discontinuity in the Southern Upper Rhine cross-border region include the physical (geographical), the functional and social (flows and networks), the cultural (linguistic issues) and the political dimension (forms of government).

From a geographic standpoint, the Rhine constitutes a circulation axis which spatially organizes the region in an unbalanced, the city of Basle being the main circulation 'knot' in the space of Regio Trirhena. Functional relations appear to be asymmetric too: transfrontier flows, constituted to great extent by commuters, are oriented primarily towards Switzerland, and, secondarily, towards Germany. By contrast, residential migrations are oriented towards Alsace. These phenomena can be easily explained one the one hand with the differences in the level of salaries (highest on the Swiss side) and on the other hand in the costs of living (lowest on the French side).

Economic cross-border relations, which are usually established outside the framework of institutional cooperation, have been the motor of cross-border regional development, and have been conducted especially by means of investments and creation of branches on the other side of the border. Switzerland appears to be the motor of this kind of transborder relations, with enormous capitals directed to the Alsace industry. Micro-scale integration, that means contiguous or local cooperation among inhabitants of the border territories, has also had a great impact on the development of intra-area integration. Among the most important activities it is possible to recall commuting relations, commercial habits and real estate markets (Sandtner, Eder, 2002a). Figure 2 gives an outline on the nature and intensity of transborder flows.
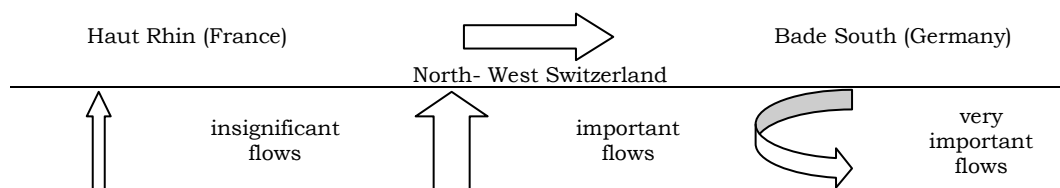

Figure 2. Asymmetrical transborder flows in Regio Trirhena
(Source: figure adapted from table contained in Sandtner, Eder (2002) 'Une identité régionale transfrontalière: la regio Trirhena dans la prise de conscience de la population', in Révue géographique de l'est, vol. 42, 1-2)

In spite of the large number of transborder projects which have been constantly developed (above all in the field of environmental protection and transports), both the Regio Trirhena and the macro Upper Rhine region dispose neither of a common representation nor of autonomous financial means. Therefore, political bodies do not actually act as such, but have limited competences which are in most of cases reduced to coordination, which also results to be stunted due to the large number of existing institutions.

If intra-area integration has undoubtedly enhanced transborder relations and cross-border crossings, the latter reveal the existence of the above mentioned asymmetries existing in the Upper Rhine region. Even though it is not directly relevant to the classification of the Upper Rhine region as a Euroregion, it is worth mentioning that discontinuities exist also as regards transfrontier networks (border crossings). Although several improvements have been carried out during the last ten years, some shortcomings still exist in circulation axes connecting Alsace to Baden Württemberg (some *cul de sac* can be found for example from Colmar to Breisach and from Mulhouse to Müllheim). Connections are better between Switzerland and Germany with more than 145 trains per day, whereas connections between Switzerland and France are weaker (ranging from 46 to 96 trains per day) (Reitel, Moine, 2005). The reasons for these asymmetries cannot be sought only in the geomorphology of the territory but also in a disagreement between different kinds of policies inspired by different models of urbanisation: a model of urbanisation with a structured offer of collective transports privileging certain axes but taking into consideration also secondary knots, and a model aiming at linking the main knots with high speed.

At the political level, it can be argued that the main geographical organizations emerging in the region are cross-border urban regions centred on their metropolises. From a comparative analysis of projects elaborated within the framework of Interreg programme, in the Upper Rhine space and in the Transjura space, it appears that the number of cross-border projects is much higher in the former than in the latter; however, the argument of a regional polarised space finds a confirmation in the consideration that, in the Upper Rhine region, projects of contiguous cooperation, i.e. aiming at strictly linking territories close to the border (especially border towns, which are situated not further than 25 km from the political border), constitute a rare occurrence (Reitel, Moine, 2005): they are rather linked with the size and population of agglomerations; accordingly, the city of Basle, which has always been the main promoter of cross-border cooperation initiatives, since the establishment of Regio Basiliensis, still appears to be situated at the political core of the transborder region. This is also confirmed by the establishment of the 'Trinational Agglomeration of Basle', (ATB), which took the name of 'Trinational Eurodistrict of Basle' in 2007.

Already during the late 1990s, it became clear that the Euroregion, intended as an association between frontier regions, has been replaced by the concept of regional association of cooperation (Wassenberg, 2010b, 449). This appears to be strictly linked with the process of European construction, since the transborder instance does not aim at creating an actual political unity by replacing the national states.

The actors involved in the process of cross-border cooperation in the region have recently adopted the concept of Metropolitan Region, which responds more to the definition of Euroregion given by Balme. The concept is obviously more

neutral and refers more to the establishment of spatial planning structure than to the prospect of a political unity: it aims at rendering the cross-border region competitive by increasing its ties and its economic potential. Furthermore, the Metropolitan Region benefits from European support, whereas the concept of Euroregion is not officially recognised by EU leaders. As a matter of fact, two main cross-border bodies benefit from European legitimisation: the EGTC and the Metropolitan Region.

The concept of Metropolitan Region was introduced at the highest political level of the EU within the framework of economic strategy which was defined at the Lisbon European Council in 2003. It is strictly connected with the concept of cluster economic development, which has always been the main goal of Regio Basiliensis first and Regio Trirhena later.

The 'European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation' (EGTC) is a new juridical tool for transborder cooperation which, following Regulation 1082/2006, has enabled regional and local authorities from different EU countries to set up co-operation groupings as legal entities for projects of cross-border and trans-European significance. This Regulation represents an important progress towards the institutionalization of territorial trans-border governance structures. The EGTC is understood as an example of multi-level governance since it has the capacity to create a network of transnational jurisdictions involving regional government leaders, national government leaders, associations of local authorities, regional council representatives and private bodies which can work on similar competencies and resources. The participation of members from non-EU countries is not excluded, provided that the law of such countries or the agreements between them and the Member States allow such participation. One of chief characteristics of Regio Basiliensis, and later of Regio Trirhena, is that it relies on and promotes public- private partnership (PPP); thus the EGTC, or a PPP – based juridical tool, would safeguard the best way the interests of entities and people taking part in transfrontier collaboration at the cross-border local/regional level. Up to date, prospects for the establishment of an EGTC between France, Germany and Switzerland, however, have not been discussed yet and no juridical tool has been envisaged for its construction.

The presence in the area of so many organs of cooperation (see *supra*) sometimes leads to unclear intersecting spheres of competences. The Regio Trirhena lays under the sphere of influence of the broader Upper Rhine area, that means that local and regional authorities, in charge of promoting cross-border activities under the umbrella of Regio Trirhena, are assembled in the macro-regional organ of the Intergovernmental Commission and of the Trinational Metropolitan region. Due to their large territorial scope and working methods, it can be argued that both represent a sort of supra-national bodies. In principle, the Trinational Metropolitan Region develops strategic orientations and coordinates both vertically and horizontally through the institutionalization of four sectorial working groups. However, in practice, it lacks executive powers. The political pillar, according to the Upper Rhine Council held in 2008, is constituted by the Upper Rhine Conference and by the Upper Rhine Council itself (Frey, 2010, 341), which, from an organizational standpoint, cover the whole territory and whose members are present at the various levels (governments, regions, cities, eurodistricts,...). Nevertheless, they do not constitute a political authority, as the intergovernmental level, through the presence of national authorities, is always present in decision-making.

Within the space of Regio Trirhena it is possible to identify not only one but different 'semic systems' which can be divided into three dyads (Reitel, 2010, 305). The first dyad, constituted by Switzerland and Germany, which share a similar form of political system (federal) as well as linguistic continuity, reveals a relative continuity. The second dyad includes Germany and France, which share the belonging to the EU, as well as traditionally strong economic ties due to the presence of a 'cold' frontier (*frontier apaisée*). The last dyad, constituted by France and Switzerland, shows the greatest discontinuity due to the very different political systems (unitary/federal), to the presence of a EU frontier, and, to some extent, to the linguistic cleavage (see *infra*).

TRINATIONAL INTEGRATED BORDERLAND: DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL CROSS-BORDER INTEGRATION

In general, five levels of institutionalization of transborder relations can be detected: 1) information; 2) consultation; 3) coordination; 4) cooperation; 5) integration (Frey, 2012, 72; ISIG, 2010). If coordination corresponds to what Schultz (2003, 12-13) defines cooperation in single projects and cooperation includes also the elaboration of a common 'mission' and definition of common goals in most of areas with regular meetings between the municipalities or sub- state entities, only the level of integration provides the institutionalization of an actual transborder body, be it a Euroregion or another type of association based on public of private law. Integration includes the elaboration of a common legal framework, the construction of independent institutions or joint agencies and own financial means.

It can be stated that, in spite of not being officially qualified as an Euroregion, the Regio Trirhena, – at least in comparative perspective with most of other established Euroregions – can be considered as a 'trinational integrated borderland' corresponding to the definition of integrated borderland given by Martinez (1994), i.e. an area where: stability is strong and permanent; economies of both countries are functionally merged; there is unrestricted movement of people and goods across the border; the borderlands perceive themselves as members of one social system. Nevertheless, these requirements are can be considered as the description of an ideal model which is not completely fulfilled in the practice. Therefore some clarifications are necessary.

Nobody would question that the Franco-Swiss-German border represents a 'cold frontier', at least since the mid '60s with the signature of the Elyseum Treaty in 1963 by France and Germany, and which was celebrated, as a symbol of reconciliation for the whole transborder area, also in Berne on the occasion of its 50th years. The strategy of foreign policy adopted by the Confederation in 2012 sees the relationship with its French and German neighbours as a priority of action (Burkhalter, 2013).

From an economic point of view, Switzerland is the most integrated non –EU member in the common market. Moreover, from a macroregional point of view, the Upper Rhine macro region is progressively evolving towards a common economic space. The structure of economic sectors is broadly complementary between the sub- regions, above all in the textile, chemical, agrochemical and pharmaceutical fields. Southern Alsace, Southern Bade and Northwest Switzerland constitute the biggest and most competitive cluster in the development of life sciences in Europe and one of the biggest in the world (BAK Basel Economics, 2006). Thanks to the joint initiative of BioValley, started in 1996, the trinational region has created a common image for the field of biotechnologies.

Unrestricted movement across the border is also a fact: in the Regio area roughly 33,000 commuters from France and 30,000 from Germany cross the border in direction of Switzerland (Frey, 2012, 65). The commuter movement from Southern Alsace towards Southern Baden is also significant, with almost 24,000 commuters per day. It can be said that the population of Trirhena benefits from the economic differences between the three nations in the region.

Whilst the first three requisites given by Martinez appear to be satisfied, the last one poses some critical reflexions. Moreover, a fifth criterion could be added to the definition: the balance of powers between the partners and the existence of an integrated political model.

Regio Trirhena does not seem to constitute a cross-border territorial unity if we take into consideration the fourth and fifth criteria for the evaluation of an integrated borderland due to the persistence of different kinds of asymmetries between the partners. One issue concerns the relationship between Switzerland and the Franco-German axis: the former, in spite of being and remaining the main promoter of Regio Trirhena, has a marginal within the EU system, with the consequence of scarce margins for extensively influencing EU cross- policies and regulations. The non-membership to the EU implies also differing competences at the local-regional level and differing applicable standard to a number of situation, ranging from environmental protection to antitrust regulations, etc....

Another aspect regards the reflexes of the relationship between a federal (Switzerland and Germany) and unitary model (France) upon the patterns of management of the cross-border region. Shortcomings still exist as far as regards the aims and expectation of the partners. Furthermore, while in Germany and in Switzerland the central states have never thwarted the development of cross-border contacts, France has always exerted, notwithstanding the formal declarations, a tight political, administrative and above all financial control on the activities of cross-border co-operation of its decentralised entities (Ferrara, 2003). As a result, it is clear the reason why there is a certain lack of balance between the partners of the area.

One other factor concerns the issue of regional identity. Empirical researches carried out in Regio Trirhena and regarding the identification of its inhabitants with different levels of space concepts (EU, national, regional, cross – border) reveal that, even though the Regio is well known by the majority of the population, transborder identity plays only a secondary with respect to the national, European and regional level (Sandtner, Eder, 2002a and 2002b). With one significant exception: whereas most of inhabitants of Southern Alsace and Southern Bade seem to consider the cross – border region in competition with the respective local part of each national side, the Swiss identify themselves more with the Regio than with North- East Switzerland. However, in general, the domination of the national states largely influences not only policies carried out in the Regio but also the issue of identity (in Switzerland and France almost 40 per cent of interviewees identify themselves primarily with their own country).

Bilingualism certainly constitutes the principal means in order to create one social system. Although bilingualism is quite spread in the territory of the Regio, it is worth noting that a discontinuity exist to this regard (Wassenberg 2001: 300): whilst in Upper Alsace approximately two thirds of the inhabitants can speak the language of the neighbour, as a result of its history and school system, in Southern Baden less than 35 per cent claim to have a good command of French (Sandtner, 2002, 147). According to Grossman (1999, 109),

transborder cooperation in the linguistic field is unilateral; nevertheless, the system of bilingual teaching in Alsace from the primary school has served as a basis for the development of a common linguistic policy as a tool for enhanced transborder cooperation. The establishment of a 'bilingual transborder zone' (Schäfer, 1996, 106) in the Upper Rhine region has been at the heart of several projects carried out within the last three Interreg programming periods, which led to the creation of a confederation of educational institutes.

The Upper Rhine region has proved a good example for testing a cross - border euroregional theory. This does not mean, however, that it is necessarily a model for successful cross-border cooperation. The case of the Upper Rhine illustrates that the evolution in cross-border cooperation structures and activities does not necessarily lead to greater clarity in the understanding of cross-border dynamics. In a multi – level approach, new forms of cooperation and efforts to insert them into a system of cross-border governance at several levels increases the complexity of border regions (Wassenberg, 2011b, 350) and reduce their margins for deeper intra – area integration.

CONCLUSIONS: THE TRIRHENA 'MODEL'

To conclude, it can be argued that, in spite of not being officially called Euroregion, the Regio Trirhena corresponds to several criteria generally laid down both by institutions and by scholars for its definition.

The originality of the Regio Trirhena, with its long-term experience in cross-border interrelations, resides in the fact that it has shown, long before the principle of subsidiarity was introduced by the EU documents, that cross-border cooperation should take place at a low level and may serve as an example for other border zones in Europe, facilitating the realisation of projects by reducing the number of involved decision - making powers (Sandtner, Eder, 2002b, 157).

Nevertheless, its political élite has chosen a different kind of legitimization for its cross-border projects, i.e. that of a macro Metropolitan Region. The area can be rather defined as a 'trinational integrated borderland', even though significant discontinuities persist between the partners and the three social systems. Discontinuities and asymmetries continue to persist at the functional, economic, political and social level. It appears that cross-border co-operation in the area, notwithstanding the strong aspiration of local politics to project itself in a broader and more proactive context external to national administrative frameworks, maintains a predominant functional-pragmatic nature, based on small-scale projects.

The example of cross-border cooperation in the Southern Upper Rhine show that political borders still matter and that, in the effort to overcome them, asymmetries between partners can lead to the creation of a plurality of boards. The strategy-oriented approach, introduced in principle with the concept of Metropolitan region, does not necessarily lead to greater clarity in the process towards the establishment of a Euroregion.

The Southern Upper Rhine Valley could be certainly be qualified as a regional association of cooperation at multiple levels; nevertheless, if we take into account Deutsch´s definition of Euroregion, we must conclude that the creation of the Trinational Metropolitan Region does not entail for the Southern Upper Rhine Valley the establishment of a new political cluster where units are – at the functional, political and social level, more connected to each other.

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HOW GERMANS NEGOTIATE.
LOGICAL GOALS, PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

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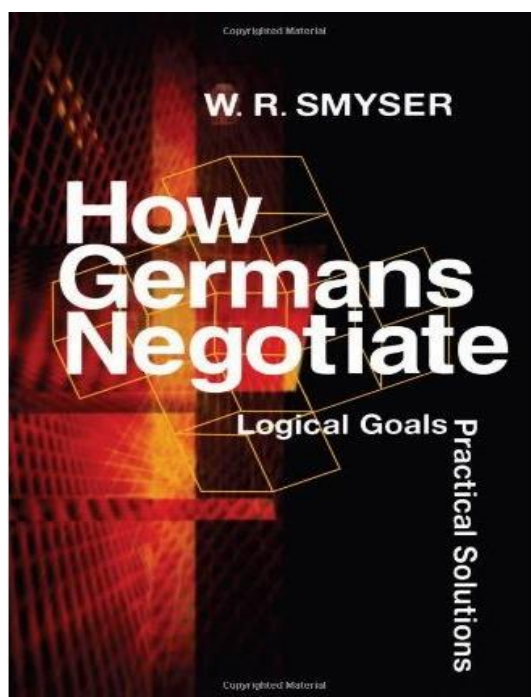
It is a book published by United States Institute of Peace (USIP); it belongs to a series of volumes issued by USIP about the negotiating styles of different countries. There were published volumes about Chinese, Russian, North Korean, Japan, France, and United States negotiating behavior. But Germany is a EU member, a key-member state in this union, whose influence has been rising constantly in latest decades.

Germany is *das Land der Mitte*; it is in the middle of the European continent, and due to its size, population, and economy, its influence can well be felt beyond Europe. It is a state which a lot of states are doing business with, being well connected to world economy, and international diplomacy. Furthermore, Germans are well aware of climate changes and their effects, and they are leaders in the fight carried against climate changes.

These being said, the effort of W. R. Smyser – a well-known analyst of German culture and state – is more than welcome; to know Germany and the Germans, and how they think, act, and negotiate, in the context of the evolution of world economy, the European and international diplomacy, and climate changes, is an endeavor which worth to be made.

"*How German Negotiate*" has 213 pages, written in a very logical and purposive manner. Even the way book is written reflects German thinking:

Germans are always aware of the context; which are its peculiarities, actors, their interests, and where stands, or should stand Germany in this context. The introduction of the book is exactly the context's role in German actions.

Then follow the presentation of the four elements which helps and determine Germans' actions – geography, history, philosophy, and economics. Chapter one is focused on them. All of them are important factors in determining German negotiating style, but the greatest impact upon Germans' cultural traits is history.

Geography constrains German state and German nation – they cannot escape from the center of Europe; they have the greatest number of neighboring states than any other European state, and its size makes it an important player on European continent. This location impels Germany to look constantly in at least two directions – east and west – seeing dangers and opportunities in both. This geographical peculiarity compels Germany toward diplomacy and negotiations, because the time when conflicting interests were solved using force has passed. For Germany diplomacy has become its main instrument of foreign policy; and negotiations have become an essential part of German security and stability.

History – is the most important single factor which shapes Germany's negotiating style and its culture of diplomatic policy. Germans were a nation located at the center of Europe for more than a millennium, but they formed a state only in 1871, before being under various forms of outside rule and suffered from divisions within their own nation. It was the last major European nation to form a united state and an independent government. The origins of Germany are to be found in the Holy Roman Empire. The greatest part of this empire was formed by German nation, but it consisted of a jigsaw puzzle of aristocratic and ecclesiastical possessions, running well into hundreds. As the Reformation started, a strong German national sentiment could have emerged in opposition to the Catholic Holy Roman Empire, it didn't spread over all of Germany. Although these administrative and religious divisions were core elements of German history, constant contact among them remained a constant and a guiding principle. In this context, the search for social peace and consensus permitted agreement even among widely differing nationalities and faiths, this becoming an important element of German cultural traits. This aspect only highlights the importance of hierarchy in German society, as an individual, or as an organization. Each knew where he or it belonged.

German philosophy, lacking political focus, concentrated on the internal process of the mind, and on the logical rationalism. The most important philosopher which mad a synthetic correlation was Hegel, which saw the movement of the spirit and the whole progression of human history as an advance dominated by the dialectic, the notion that every idea (or thesis) contains within itself the seeds of its own contradiction (antithesis). Heine said that France and Russia controlled the land and England the seas, and that Germans owned "the realm of dreams". This only underscores the importance of idea in German culture, and as a consequence the role of *Gesamtkonzept* in any German action and negotiation. The nine centuries of German existence within Holy Roman Empire, and the legacy of the dialectic logic reinforced one another, sinking deeply into the German unconscious and the culture of German diplomacy and negotiating behavior.

German history with its peculiarities left Germans with a sense of structure and order, as well as a faith that diverse institutions could find ways of

working together; in the same time, constant cooperation with others and an accurate understanding of what might or might not be possible became a strong aspect of German character. And the role of multilateral diplomacy is a very important one in German national character.

German economy was an important center for production of high quality manufactured goods, Germans developing in time strong mercantilist leanings, always looking to export more that they imported, with the aim of making their trade profitable, a key-element for today's position in world economy.

As a consequence of these four elements, Smyser sums up 7 elements which are peculiar to any German negotiating process: three are *aims* such as rehabilitation (and a honorable place for Germany), security and stability, reliable associations and a sense of community; and four are means used to reach these aims: conceptual logic, tenacity and persistence, logically framed compromises, use of economic assets.

Chapter two presents the principal elements of a negotiation with Germans. The preparation for negotiation is a very tedious process, but it is heading to a very precise aim. The understanding of the context of an impending negotiation is a starting point in such an endeavor. After analyzing the points of view of those which would be involved in a negotiation, and even of those which would have an indirect interest in that peculiar negotiation, German government will define its own position, and the goals it wants to achieve in the negotiation.

Germany is a federal state, and in their way of organizing the state, Germans think it is for the better if there is created a collective body, which represents an important shield against an excessive accumulation of power by any single individual, or party. The structure of the German state is so made that each ministry functions in accordance with the *Ressortprinzip*. The foreign minister bears direct responsibility for foreign policy, or at least shares it with the chancellor, which has a very close interest in foreign policy, too. The federal structure of the state means that German lands have a voice in foreign policy, especially when their interests are at stake; they want to have some control upon what a chancellor or foreign minister does.

This chapter is divided in four parts. The preparation phase describes how a negotiation is prepared, which is the context in which that negotiation would evolve, which would be the interested parties in such a negotiation, and who will coordinate preparation and negotiation phases. Here it could be mentioned that there could be present over the minister responsible for guiding the negotiation process a lot of economic, environmental, military, diplomatic interests, and their representatives, and those from German lands, too.

Then follows the opening phase, which is usually regarded as the most important one – presentation. Presentation follows a methodical path, that moves coherently and logically from the beginning to the end; the first element is the philosophical basis for their position, which provides the foundation for a German negotiating position. It incorporates the essence of Chancellery, Foreign Office, government, lands, and other interested parties views. And the negotiation proceeds as German *Gesamtkonzept* is advancing, and this is the third part of a negotiation process. Germans do not abandon the conceptual objective, but they are ready to negotiate aspects of secondary importance more flexibly, in order to obtain agreement on the basic objective. The middle phase, or revision is needed as negotiation proceed; Germans do not seek agreement for its own sake, but through a negotiation they intend to establish, or to deepen a

relationship. Thus they try to avoid any breakdown in a negotiation. They are ready to make concessions or to arrive at compromises, but they are doing these not in a bazaar spirit, but measuring each concession against the total concept, and their basic objective.

The last phase – cutting a deal and implementing it – could come often long after it would appear that a deal should have been cut. On implementation, Germans take pride in being as good as their word; they carry out their agreements fully to the letter. They respect agreements, and they do not constantly reinterpret agreements in ways that appear intended to reopen or invalidate previous negotiations.

Chapter three deals with Germans' and personality and tactics which they use during negotiation; it goes into more detail about the process of a negotiation with Germany.

The negotiator (or the negotiation team) works under direct instruction emanated from Foreign Office (or other ministries which can have an authority concerning the matter which is debated).

Usually, German professional diplomats do the main negotiation effort, negotiate precise and painstakingly, but they do not seek dramatic breakthroughs; they pay careful attention to the needs and interests of other ministers or interested lands. They are dedicate and very serious and they rarely make mistakes.

It is presented the pipeline through which German diplomats come into German diplomatic service starts with a high school, pass through university (many have studies for a year or two in American or British universities, or in France or Italy). They pass into the senior years of their carriers with well-established and easy relationships across ten or more different countries or UN specialized agencies. But all German professional diplomats pass through the German Foreign Office diplomatic training academy (*die Aus- und Fortbildungstatte des Auswertigen Amtes*); each must take a two-year course there at the beginning of his or her career.

They do not encourage formality during negotiation process, and especially during opening phases of negotiations. And Germans do not usually use private and secret channels; but sometimes they initiate such contacts. And if there are used such channels, they would be used in contacts with Russia, than with the West, or especially with the leak-prone Americans.

They do not use delay for its own sake, even if they work slowly; but this is because they are thorough. And Germans use the press in order to influence any negotiation and to push forward for a successful result. And even they cannot proud themselves with the tradition of a remarkable cuisine, they use successfully what they have: wine, beer, food, and music. But they keep a very distinctive line between negotiations and entertainment.

Furthermore, Germans are committed to community: they work smoothly inside EU, NATO, UN, G8, OSCE. Here is important to be mentioned that using international forums Germany promote its interests in a strong and decisive manner. As German internationalism continues to develop, an international purpose can become a national purpose to a degree that is inconceivable for any other major state. This king of dialectic logic emerges out of Hegelian philosophy, which in its turn reflects German cultural traits, and which only reinforces it.

If the first three chapters are focused upon German society, and its organization, chapter four is focused upon how Germans are doing business and

German management style, and how those involved in business negotiations behave. There are presented two types of German business negotiating styles: the traditional one, with its characteristics, and the new and modern one, but which retains the core elements of traditional German negotiating style.

Main points are presented, which deal with three characteristics of German management style and business culture: Germans proud themselves that they deliver a high-quality product; they are focused always upon low production costs; and they provide excellent and reliable service. These characteristics made German companies and products globally sold and competitive.

In the same time, German employees avoid mistakes, looking for incremental improvements rather than dramatic solutions. The business structures are hierarchical and bureaucratic, but Germans are expected to commit themselves to one company for life.

A good recommendation point regards the fact that those who encounter German negotiator should be aware of the negotiator type which is involved: the old type is characterized by thorough preparation, considerable persistence, a desire to make a deal on the basis of *Gesamtkonzept*, and readiness to commit resources as necessary, but within well calculated limits.

The new type of German negotiator embraces somehow the "MBA culture", being prone to making more profits for the shareholders than in the past, but they are more risk-prone; they start to think less in collectivistic terms than their predecessors. This new situation can create or destroy careers overnight, which mean that this new type on negotiator embraces British or American style more – much of the negotiators belonging to the new type have studied in USA or Great Britain. The examples in the book (Daimler-Chrysler business; BMW-Rover; Deutsche-Dresdner; and Deutsche Telekom) only highlight these characteristics.

Chapter five is focused upon German official economic negotiations carried in EU family, the role Germany and France play in EU, how they use EU for promoting their policies (the agricultural one in the case of France and the industrial one, in Germany's case). One important presentation concerns the way Germany wanted to maintain stability for *Deutsche Mark*, the core idea backing this desire emanating from *Bundesbank* which had a firm belief that a stable currency is the best foundation for investment and growth. It could easy be observed that this aspect only reiterates the German desire for stability.

The aim of using economic incentives by Germany was the increase of Germany's influence is another aspect presented in the book. Aid and trade are the most important ingredients Germany can bring to a negotiating table, and it uses them very efficient without any hesitation.

Chapter six regards the future of German negotiating behavior. If there is to make a list of German agenda, it is easy to observe that it has grown larger, and it will expand in the future. The main points are the management of Europe, the management of transatlantic relations, the management of world economy. The latest point on Germany's agenda is fighting climate changes, where it stands very well, and has a very much respected position (in Bonn are located institutions concerning climate changes which are directly connected to UN system).

Furthermore, of all European and Atlantic states, Germany has the widest range of contacts and activities throughout all of historical and geographical

Europe. As European integration process evolves, the European organizations will wrap around Berlin, creating in the long run the prerequisites to make this city the center for communications, conferences, and diplomacy in Europe.

Looking at Germany's evolution after 1945 there could be noted some more and more distinctive traces in German strategic thinking: Germany wants stability; they promote multilateralism, using a network of cooperating organizations; influence – they want to have some weight is such frameworks, but they hesitate to be occupy the most visible and important positions in such multilateral forums; they are striving for normalcy; and acceptance

The last point in the book concerns advices for how to negotiate with the Germans. There is mentioned the importance of the essential preparation, and basic strategic and tactical points which are the core elements of each German negotiation. The argumentation made in logical terms is very important, backed by seriousness and respectfulness, careful listening and avoiding emotionalism, while trying to well understand what matters most for German negotiators. But always the context in which a negotiation process evolves is important, and there is needed an awareness of bureaucratic, political, and international pressures.

Some practical advices for those involved in a negotiation process with Germans regard: not asking for too much or too little, the attachment to formality, knowing the best moment to use social occasions, while always looking at the age and type of German negotiator is at the table.

As a conclusion, even the book was published ten years before, it is very actual; furthermore, it will help future negotiators which will be involved in negotiations with Germans to better understand the way a state which clearly will gain more influence at European level and globally, works and acts, and which motivations push Germany's actions and German negotiators behavior. It demands constant alertness and a readiness to pursue interests with the sense of purpose. And the negotiator should always be well prepared and logical, never weak and unfailingly polite.

THE NORTHERN SECTOR
OF THE ROMANIAN-UKRAINIAN BORDER.
POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY PARTICULARITIES REGARDING
THE WAYS AND MEANS OF BORDER-CROSS TRANSIT

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Abstract: The disestablishment of USSR in 1990, reallocated in the Romanian-Soviet border sector a new Romanian-Ukrainian sector (Ukraine becomes independent in 1990). The fall of the socialist system led to the opening of new border crossing points and implicitly to a growth in the number of border-cross. Gradually, the EU process of expansion towards the east, finished with the Romanian integration updated the weight of border effectives with major accent on military effectives (NATO external border), custom and especially the human flux control. Border-cross flux reduced considerably parallel with temporary closure of some border crossing points (pedestrian and railway). In the last years, because of the tightening laws, especially commercial ones, there has been a growth in organized crime, oriented on illegal smuggling of cigarettes and illegal international migration.

Key words: USSR, Ukraina, Romania, Borderland, Romanian-Ukrainian border, border flow, external border of EU and NATO

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INTRODUCTION

The Romanian-Ukrainian border is a consequence of the soviet territorial political system disestablishment in 1990 and acquisition of knowledge of the independence against USSR, of the new state, Ukraine. Inheriting the soviet patrimony, Ukraine also took the problems left by USSR at its borders with states from the central east European socialist territorial political system. We have to mention the fact that Ukraine existed also in USSR time as an independent state (from 1941), affiliated to UNO, but the main parts of its external politics attributions were delegated to the USSR. In this sense, we present the morphological and morphographical particularities of the terrestrial

and maritime sector and especially those referring to establishing the border line, mainly where the base is formed from hydrographical arteries (Ilieş et all., 2007). In 2001, because of some floods on Tisa River, especially in Crăciunesti village, for the first time it was determined the ill-fated consequences of the applied principles regarding the way in which the border line is traced on hydrographical artery. On this occasion and also regarding the situation on the Danube, Romania and Ukraine brought again into discussion the utility and efficiency of the principals that had been used until that date in those cases.

The actual border line between Romania and Ukraine is formed of two sectors: the North one, 440, 1 km long and the Danube-maritime one, 209, 3 km long (Stamate, 1997; Ilieş, 2003, 18). In time, from a "*precise delimitation through landmarks, barriers, fences with barbwire*" (Bodocan, 1997, 153) these "*elementary spatial structures of linear shape*" (Foucher, 1991), are brought out at the delimitation of Romanian and Ukrainian territorial politics through forms and modern means of surveillance and control of a border route materialized on a natural and complex support (Ilies et all, 2012), made of rivers, mountain ridges, banks, depressions, hills etc (Figure 1).

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

The spreading area under analysis matches the North sector of the current Romanian-Ukrainian border, 440.1 km long, complex under morphological aspect. According to specialized literature-*dyada,* includes several segments defined by morphology of the border line route (Foucher, 1991). The border line morphostructural diversity (Ilieş & Grama, 2010) is determined by the sequence from West to East of the following geographical elements and segments: Oaş Mountain, Tisa River and its meadow, Maramureş Mountains, Bucovina's hill, Suceava's plateau, Siret lane and Modavia's plateau (figure1).

Figure 1. Juxtaposed, morpho-functional and complex models of cross-border area according with functional connection of contiguous Romanian/Ukrainian borderland
(Source: Ilies & Grama, 2010)

In a structural classification, the Romanian-Ukrainian border line capitalizes geographical attributes like: ridge lines, rivers, plateaus, banks (Kleinschmager,

1993), all of them distinguishable in the border line route landscape (Ilieş, 2003). The technical particularities derived from a detailed analysis of the border sectors on types of base are reflected in the paper entitled *"Romanian state border"*, written by Grigore Stamate in 1997. From an administrative perspective, on both border sides, there are on a NUTS level 3 Transcarpathia, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernovtsy regions in Ukraine and Satu Mare, Maramureş, Suceava and Botoşani counties on the Romanian side (Figure 2).
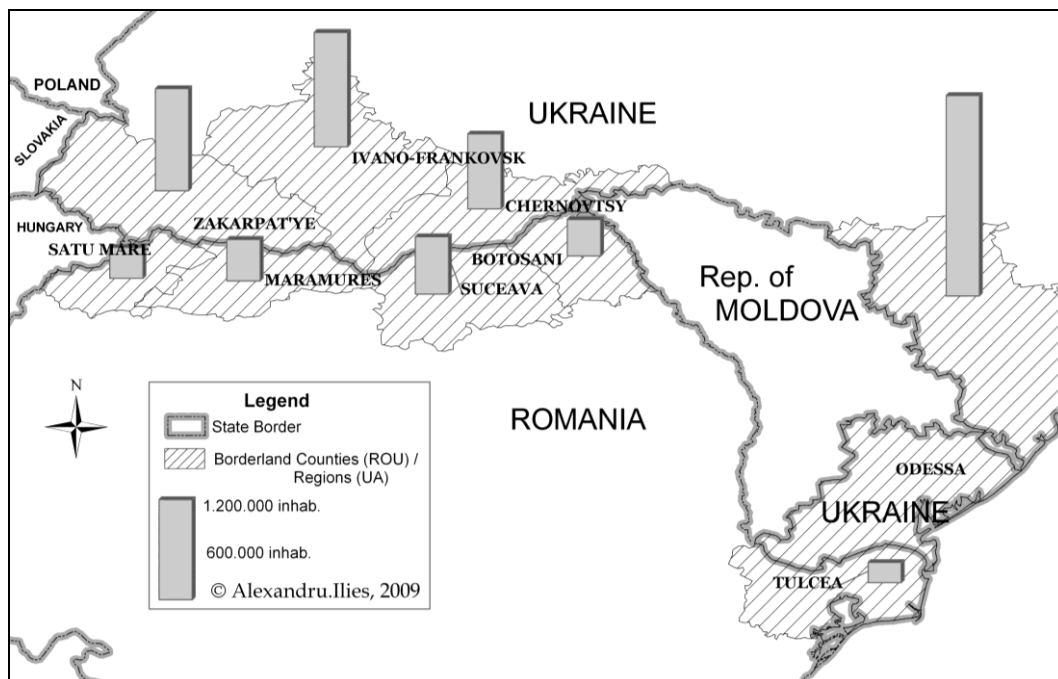

Figura 2. Romanian and Ukrainian borderland territorial-administrative division
at level NUTS 3 or equivalent (Counties – Romania and Regions – Ukraina)
and no of inhab in 2008 (Ilieş, 2003, 68)
(Data sources: Romanian and Ukrainian National Statistical Offices; www.insse.ro)

Tabel 1. Administrative-Territorial Units from Romanian
and Ukrainian contiguous borderlands (Counties level)
(Data sources: sursa: National Statistical Office of Ukraine and Romania; www.insse.ro, 2009)

No	Regions/Counties	Surface (sqkm)	Population (no.) 2008	Densities (inhab/sqkm) 2008	Residence	No. inhab 2008
1	Transcarpatia/Zakarpathia	12,800	1,258,300	98.3	Ujgorod	117,317
2	Ivano-Frankovsk	13,900	1,409,800	101.4	Ivano- Frankivsk	218,000
3	Cernăuţi	8,100	922,800	113.9	Cernăuţi	241,000
4	Odesa	33,300	2,469,000	74.1	Odesa	1,029,000
A	**TOTAL Ukrainian Borderlands**	**68,100**	**6,059,900**	**89.0**		
1	Satu Mare	4,418	365,535	82.7	Satu Mare	112,860
2	Maramures	6,304	511,828	81.2	Baia Mare	138,932
3	Suceava	8,553	706,407	82.6	Suceava	106,753
4	Botosani	4,986	451,199	90.5	Botosani	114,885
5	Tulcea	8,499	249,022	29.3	Tulcea	91,286
B	**TOTAL Romanian Borderland**	**32,760**	**2,283,991**	**69.7**		

This situation determines a border cross asymmetric system in favor of the Ukrainian side with 34.800 square kilometers over 24.259 square kilometers on the Romanian side. On an inferior level, on the Romanian side there is direct contact with the administrative-territorial unities (NUTS/LAU2) like municipium, towns and villages. On the spreading area under analysis there are no less than 37 such units, among which stands out Sighetu Marmatiei, Vişeu de Sus, Borşa, Vicovu de Sus and Siret towns. A high number of towns and villages and an ethnical diversity on both sides of the border, created in time a "constant human pressure" for the growth in an official manner and means to a permissive border. From a permissive border space until the Second World War, especially in the Bucovina and Maramureş sectors (Ilieş & Wendt, 2014) it came to an airtight border line in the socialist system (only one auto border crossing point at Siret and a railway one at Vicşani). After the fall of the socialist system, both the dynamic of border crossing points and that of the number of travelers has experienced fluctuations set by the international politics circumstances.

TOOLS, METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The usage of instruments, means and methods certified in specialized literature research focused especially on geography (Cocean, 2005; Petrea, 2005) and political geography (Foucher, 1991; Kleinschmager, 1993; Short, 1993; Glassner, 1995; Bodocan, 1997; Ilieş, 2004; Popa, 2006; Ilieş & Grama, 2010a; Ilieş et all. 2012), territorial planning (Cunha, 1998; Ianoş, 2000, Ilieş and all, 2011a; 2011b); and territorial order (Boar, 2005; Johnson et all, 2011) but also geopolitical and geostrategic (Wendt, 2003; Neguţ et all, 2004) represent arguments in favor of a believable scientific approach on one side and social utility on the other side. From several studies based on borderline (Bodocan, 1997; Ilieş, 2003, 2004; Boar, 2005; Popa, 2006; Violante & Vitale, 2010; Ilieş et all., 2011; 2011a; 2012; Ilieş & Wendt, 2014), or on borderline domain and especially on the meaning of borderline systems and functions (Ilieş M et all., 2010), there are only a few research directions that operate with a big variety of instruments and analysis methods. Temporal sequences defines by political decisions, facts and realities sets apart from this study the stressed dynamic of penetrating points and modifications on a structural functional base of the Romanian–Ukrainian border. The usage of a credible and official data base, statistics processing and knowledge, but also linked with morphological and morphgraphical set represents the system of this scientific approach.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

In the 20th century, the current Romanian-Ukrainian border has undergone constant juridical, political, structural and morpho-functional transformations (Figure 3).

After the First World War, through the unification of Bucovina and Transylvania with Romania, the current route was included in Romania, on the Bucovina sector (Figure 3). Regarding the historical Maramureş, the situation was reversed, until 1920, the current route was a part of the historical Maramureş (part of Transylvania), and from this date on appeared for the first time as the borderline on the current route with Czechoslovakia (Ilieş & Wendt, 2014). A return to the previous situation took place after the Second Vienna Awards (1940-1944), when the north-western part of Transylvania, including Maramureş was incorporated into Hungary. After the Second World War,

Romania became neighbor with the USSR and for the first time the current route was shaped (segmentation of Maramureş and Bukovina). Thus, from 1948 to 1990, the current Romanian-Ukrainian border sector existed on a secondary level because Ukraine was part of USSR, and on the main level was the Romanian-Soviet sector (Figure 3). With the independence of Ukraine and Moldavian Republic in 1991 we can discuss about a Romanian-Ukrainian sector, 440.1 km long.
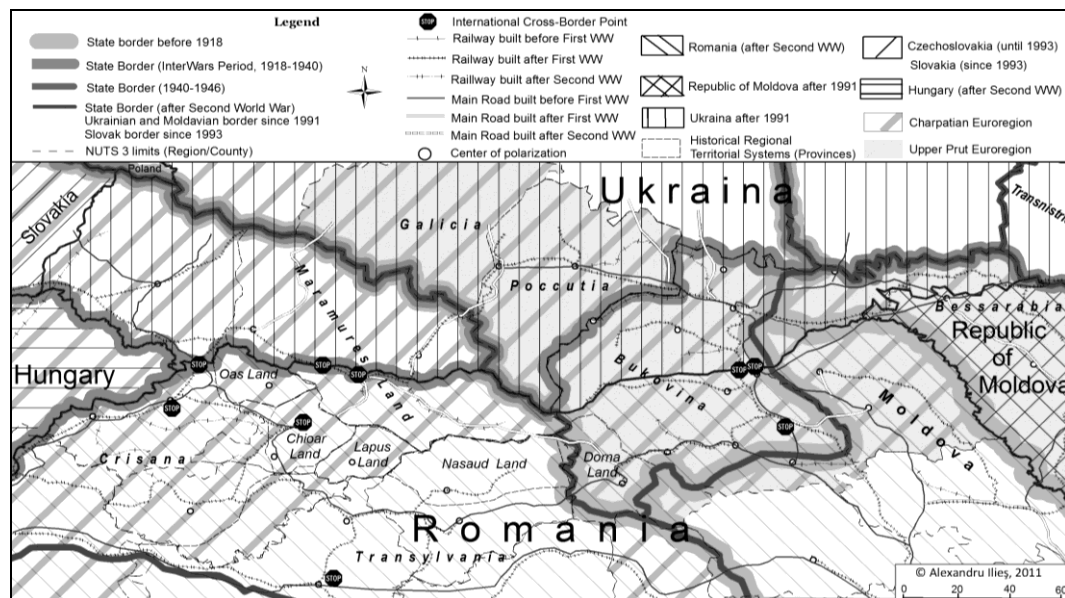

Figure 3. Borders, historical regions, euroregions and political territorial systems during the last Century (1916-2014) in the area of actual (2014) Romanian-Ukrainian border and borderlands (Ilieş & Wendt, 2014, 297)
(Data sources: Rey et al., 2002, p. 17; Ilieş, 2007; Ştefănescu et al., 2007a, p. 115-116; Ştefănescu et al., 2007b, 119-120; Smolyoi, 2007, p. 22; Kocsis, 2007, p. 29; Hajdu, 2009, p. 23)

The border permeability

The Communist period was characterized by closure and reduced contact between the two border spaces. From the four main functions prevails the military and that of human flux control (Ilieş, 2004). With the section of the two territorial regional systems (Maramureş and Bucovina) from the USSR border line, we assist to an almost total blockage of human border cross flux. For the entire communist period were opened five border crossing points, where from only two opened to persons transit: road at Siret and railway at Vicşani (fig. 4). The other three served for the transit of goods. Border crossing point Halmeu assured the mining products transit, from Romania to USSR, especially from the mining areas in the west of the country (example Băiţa, Bihor, Ştei). Due to their long line (fig. 4) the other two border crossing points, Valea Vişeului and Câmpulung la Tisa, both in Maramureş, insured exclusively the transit of Soviet merchandise trains from the superior Tisa River to the inferior Tisa River. This situation was due to the fact that in the soviet sector, on the right side of Tisa River, included between the two localities, because of the landscape conditions, instable hillside and subsidence, USSR had built this transit line on the Romanian side (left side of Tisa River; Figure 5).

Table 2. Romanian–Ukrainian cross-border points in 2014 (from East to West)
(Data sources: www.politiadefrontiera.ro, 2014)

no	Country	Cross-border point	Type of traffic	type
1		Siret/Stârcea	Internaţional	Auto
2		Vicşani/Bahrinivka	Internaţional	Railway
3		Climăuţi/Bila Krinitsa	Local	Auto
4		Vicovu de Sus/Krasniolsk	Local	Auto
5	Romania/Ucraina	Ulma/Rusca	Local	Auto
6		Izvoarele Sucevei/Şipot	Local	Auto
7		Valea Vişeului/Dilove	Local (temporary closed)	Railway
8		Sighetu-Marmaţiei/Solotvino	Internaţional	Auto / Railway
9		Câmpulung la Tisa/Teresva	Local (temporary closed)	Railway, pedestrian
10		Tarna Mare/Chyza	Local (temporary closed)	Pedestrian
11		Halmeu/Diakovo	Internaţional	Auto / Railway
65		Racovăt/Herta	Local	Auto
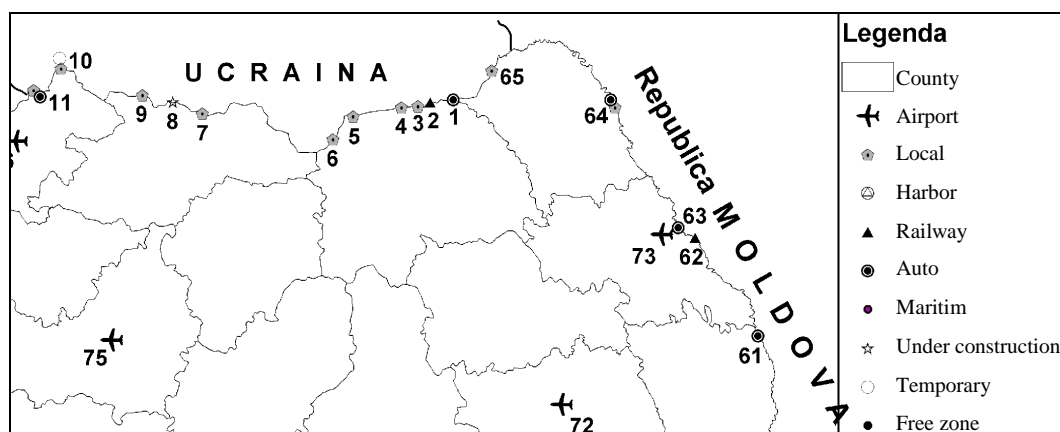
Figura 4. Romanian-Ukrainian cross-border points in 2014
(Data sources: www.politiadefrontiera.ro) (in the table 2 are number of points from figure)

In this situation they used international law, the agreements between the states and of course the "*soviet authority over the satellite states from socialist system*". In this way, merchandise trains transit the Romanian territory, some without stopping right, with checks only in the two border crossing points mentioned above. This was the only case in which Romania delegated the right to use its territory to the soviet state for the before mentioned railway sector (approximately 60 km long).

Consequently, on the 440.1 km long (actual correspondent sector) there were only two border crossing points designated to people's transit, geographically close to each other and characterized through asymmetric pattern. Practically, on 300 km distance there was no border crossing point with international regime (Figure 4).

The post-communist period has as its starting point the independence of Ukraine in 1990 and the beginning of a new stage regarding the opening of new border crossing points that should ensure the Romanian-Ukrainian interconnection of border systems. Thus, it came to a border crossing area with "two border crossing areas specific inconsistencies of socialist system" (Boar, 1999; Boar, 2000; Ilieş, 2003, 46; Boar, 2005; Ilieş et all., 2012) to a convergent internal relations one, materialized through a considerable growth in small (local) and international border crossing points number.

Regarding the international border crossing points number, according to our analysis, in 1990, it starts from the two existing ones in Bucovina sector (Siret and Vicşani). The main favorable elements of the first part of this period (1990-1994) were: the raise in volume small border cross connected with the "*lack*" of some products on a particular "*border hillside and price differences*"; lack of visa obligation and reduplication in border crossing points number, that in 2003 reached 12.

Thus, morphologically shifted, we attend from a border cross area similar to a hilly peak with border on the highest lines with diverging slopes, to a redrawing of a valley with converging slopes border line and merchandise and people fluxes towards interior (Figure 4). Border crossing points number rose to two in Satu Mare County (Halmeu and Tarna Mare), three in Maramureş County (Valea Vişeului, Câmpulung la Tisa and Sighetu Marmaţiei) and no less than six in Suceava County (along the two previous ones, there are also 4 small traffic new ones: Climăuţi, Izvoarele Sucevei, Ulma, Vicovu de Sus) and one (Racovăţ) in Botoşani County.

After a period of "*relatively calm and normal evolution*", taking into consideration the expansion of the integration process background towards the east of the ex socialist countries into NATO and EU, and the political decisions difficult to understand by the local population (case of localities near border line), after 2000 appeared the first signs of reevaluation of Romanian-Ukrainian border functions. In parallel, due to some natural disasters a few railway portions, including bridges, in Maramureş area, the "*ex-soviet*" railway that insured the border cross transit, especially Câmpulung la Tisa were affected. Although, the construction of the new wooden "*historical bridge*", Sighetu Marmaţiei-Slatina/Solotvino route (Figure 6), started in 1999, officially opened to the public in 2007.

Starting with 2004, through the integration of Romania in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Romanian-Ukrainian border became an external NATO one, and the majority of military functions became again (similar with the socialist period) an important, even dominant one. It can be noticed the fact that beginning with Romania's clear position, starting with the moment of the European integration (fact established in 2007), "*the border role became a filter of human and merchandise flux, framing itself in the communitarian-marginal typology*" (Ilieş, 2004, 52). Romania's integration in EU in 2007 determined the reappearance of the visa system for Ukrainians on their way to Romania (EU) simultaneously with a growth in illegal smuggling of merchandises (especially cigarettes and fuel).

Border check on the Ukrainian sector in 2014, is insured by Territorial Inspectorate with headquarter in Sighetu Marmatiei, having authority over 4 border counties (Satu Mare-partially, Maramureş, Suceava and Botoşani-partially), each of them organized under the shape of Border Police Territorial Departments. At the same time, at border cross level, the custom function is ensured by the specific authorities that perform their duties over the four border counties. We have to mention that the custom border unlike the military or political one that is linear, this one is "*determined by the state's laws or bilateral conventions where is transited or stored a big quantity of merchandise and where the custom check is performed and taxed accordingly*" (www.dgv.ro, 2003).

In 2003, the Romanian-Ukrainian border was under Border Police General Inspectorate and Customs Department subordination and had 12 border

crossing points (Ilieş, 2003; www.politiadefrontiera.ro). Of all, 3 were for international transit (Siret, Vicşani in the East, Halmeu in the West), and the rest for the small transit and access for the population living near the border. Gradually, due to technical problems, the two railway crossing points from the "*soviet end line on the Romanian territory*", Maramureş Land, Valea Vişeului and Câmpulung la Tisa closed in 2007. So, in 2014, through the reopening of international transit over the historical bridge on Tisa River between Sighetu Marmaţiei and Solotvino/Slatina, the number of international border crossing points reached 4.

Figure 5. Double railway in Maramureș area
(normal-European and large-Ukrainian ex-soviet)
(Photo: A. Ilieş)

The historical Maramureş case. Before the First World War, Maramureş area was unitary and it had never required the creation of a border-crossing, especially on Tisa River, crossed at that time by no less than 8 bridges over a 60 km distance. In 1920, as a consequence of world's crisis, the historical Maramureş was sectioned for the first time in its history by a political border whose route followed the Tisa River and the hights of Maramureş Mountains, toward East-West (Boar, 2005; Ilieş et all., 2007; Ilieş D.C., 2008; Ilieş and Grama, 2010b; Ilieş and Wendt, 2014; Figure 6).

In the Interbellum period, the South part of Maramureş (1/3) becomes part of Romania and the north part (2/3) went Czechoslovakia. Thus, there was a political border, whose history raises a lot of questions in the present, the 8 bridges assured the same transit possibilities without strict rules and there was also the mountain area possibility. One of this bridges connected Sighetu Marmaţiei town to Slatina/Solotvino, that was in fact "a Northern neighborhood over the Tisa River". After the Second World War, when Romania's new neighbor became USSR, the 8 bridges were gradually destroyed, the last ones in 1968, when the Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia (Figure 6).

Of all remained a metallic ruin, representing a half of a bridge in the Teceu Mic and Teceu Mare area (Figure 7). In parallel, USSR, built a wide railway between Câmpulung la Tisa and Valea Vişeului, transiting Romania that functioned in a strict regime until 1990 (Figure 5). The fall of the socialist system along with the Ukraine's independence led to the opening of new border crossing points, among them there is the "historical" one in Sighetu Marmaţiei/Slatina. Its construction lasted over 10 years and was opened for international transit,

small vehicles and pedestrians in 2007 (Figure 7). At the opening were also present the two presidents of that time: Traian Băsescu (Romania) and Viktor Iuşcenko (Ukraine). This border crossing point became the most transited of all in the Maramureş area, proved by the statistics. The bridge has a sentimental value and it is a historical symbol between the two parts of the historical Maramureş. Since 2007 the two railway border crossing points in Câmpulung la Tisa/Teresva and Valea Vişeului/Dilove have been closed. At the moment there is a new project for the construction of a mixed road/railway bridge between Sighetu Marmaţiei/Biserica Albă.
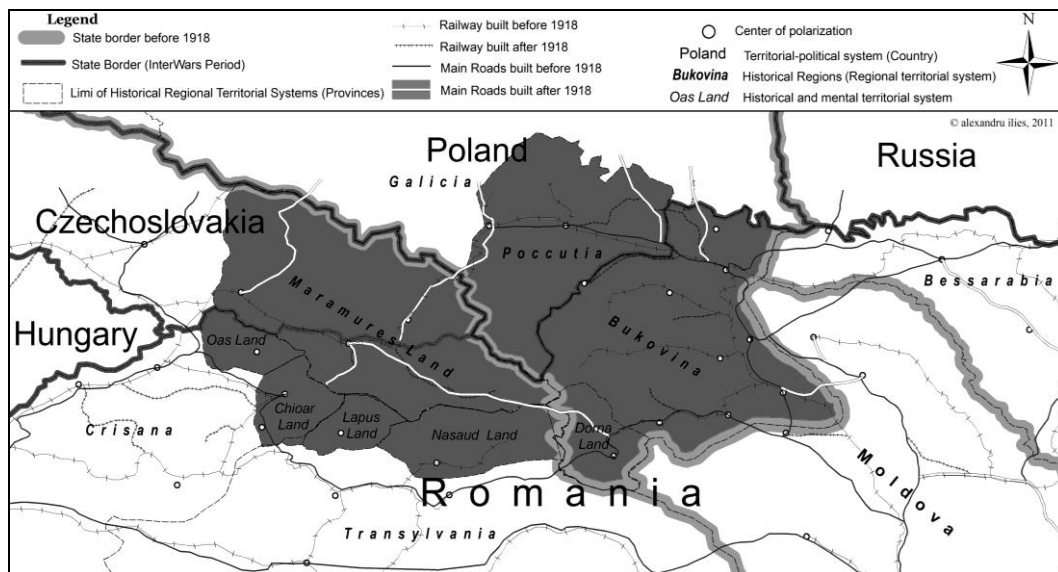
Figure 6. Borders, historical regions and political territorial systems before and after First World War in the area of actual (2014) Romanian-Ukrainian border and borderlands
(Data sources: Ştefănescu et al., 2007a, p. 115-116; Ştefănescu et al., 2007b, 119-120;
Smolyoi, 2007, p. 22; Kocsis, 2007, p. 29, Ilieş and Wendt, 2014)

Figure 7. Wooden historical bridge between Sighetu-Marmaţiei (Romania)
and Solotvino (Ukraina) – left; The rest of *historical iron bridge*
between Teacev (Ukraina) and Teceu Mic (Romania) – right
(Photo: A. Ilieş)

CONCLUSIONS

Through the geographical position of the border line between Romanian and Ukrainian that determines the route, it results a morphological (Ilieş, 2014)

variety of the border system included in some Euroregions (Ilieș, 2003). The mountain area lacks in localities and implicitly in population and this fact determined under the "colonization of border 'two distinct sectors: a Maramureş-Oaş one in the west and the Bucovina one to the east. Between these, there is a third part of the mountain border sector, which is unpopulated. The two extreme sectors have undergone a contrasting development, according to means and methods of international and small transit. This is an obvious fact according to the dynamics of person's transit, their purpose, the majority being concentrated on the trade of goods. Thus, in 2014, the northern sector of the Romanian-Ukrainian border fulfills a triple role: state border, EU external border and NATO external border, being one of the most complex political central and east European areas. Nowadays, one of the most stringent problems of this sector is the smuggling of cigarettes (determined by the difference in price and quality between the two countries).

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