ISSN 2351-6712 (Online)
Socialiniai tyrimai / Social Research. 2019, Vol. 42 (2), 17–29

State Border as a Boundary Object in Cross-border Cooperation Network: A Case of Latvia-Estonia-Russia Border

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The article has been reviewed.
Received on 5 November 2019, accepted on 16 December 2019

Abstract

The aim of the article is to reveal the functioning of the state border as a boundary object in a cross-border cooperation network in the case of the internal and the external border of the EU. The author uses case study approach in the Latvian-Estonian-Russian border area, including both qualitative and quantitative data obtaining methods. The author uses S. L. Star and J. Griesemer's boundary objects theory to analyze national border as a boundary object which is involved in cross-border cooperation network as the main actor which has both unifying and separating features.

Keywords: boundary objects, cross-border cooperation, actor-network, territorial development, border area.

Introduction

Despite the development of regional policy and efforts to 'revitalize' peripheral and rural areas, indicators of development of peripheries (business activity, population, accessibility of services, number of workplaces, development of innovations, etc.) in Latvia still show too great disproportion both between planning regions and municipalities compared to other EU countries. This indicates the need to search for new solutions to reduce disproportion (VARAM, 2013).

Most border areas are also rural areas of Latvia. Cross-border cooperation is almost inevitable when territories are adjacent to each other: regular or occasional cooperation; institutional or individual cooperation; communicating with inhabitants and cooperation partners or visiting neighbour country, based on cross-border cooperation projects or on personal contacts; cooperation with economic or social goals (for example, culture exploration in another country). It is clear that life in the border area differs from life in other rural areas, because of conditions created by the border and because of several types of cross-border cooperation. The crucial question is whether and how these differences are used to promote territorial development of rural areas. Whether and what potential is in promoting the development of rural areas through cross-border cooperation? In this context the type of border – the internal or the external border of the EU – to which the territory adjoins is relevant. Thus, conditions for cross-border cooperation and territorial development created by different border crossing rules are also relevant. For example, Regional Development Guidelines 2013–2019 (2013) created by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development describe the development of areas of the external border of the EU as limited due to the proximity of the border and restrictions on its crossing, as well as due to population density and low purchasing power. Meanwhile, area of the internal border of the EU is described as much more similar to other territories in the periphery of the country.

The conditions for crossing the external border of the EU (Latvian-Russian or the Estonian-Russian border) are different from the internal border of the EU (the Latvia-Estonia border). Since 2007, when both countries joined The Schengen Area, border controls at the Latvian-Estonian border have been lifted. Latvia and Estonia joined the EU in 2004, as well as Estonia in 2011 and Latvia joined the Eurozone in 2014, thus introducing the euro as the national currency. Concerning crossing the Russian

border – although border crossing conditions are eased for residents of the border area – they do not necessarily require a visa, still a special permit and border controls are required.

In this article the author discusses the applicability of boundary objects concept in the analysis of the border as a social phenomenon, as well as identifies the differences between the internal and the external border of the EU in the context of cross-border cooperation. Boundary objects theory was firstly developed by Susan Lei Star and James Griesemer (Star and Griesemer, 1989). Boundary objects theory has been used mainly to analyze two or more social groups in the context of scientific, technological or organizational changes (e.g. boundary objects between different fields of science) (e.g. Poehls, 2011; MacEachren, 2011; Schneider, 2009; Henderson, 1998; Aibar and Bijker, 1997), while the theory has been little used in studies of border and border area (e.g. Häkli, 2015; Häkli, 2012; Häkli, 2009; Wilder, Scott, Pablos, Varady, Garfin, and McEvoy, 2010; Grygar, 2009). Finnish geographer Jouni Häkli has used border object theory in analysis of several objects – passports; the Tornio River as a boundary object between Finland and Sweden; the Pyrenees as a boundary object between France and Spain. Using description of history of the passport and description of development of its meaning and functionality, J. Häkli has analyzed it as a boundary object in the context of border crossing. Similarly J. Häkli has analyzed the region of Catalonia and the border in the Pyrenees between Spain and France as a boundary object (Häkli, 2012). In another study, using a cross-border cooperation project documents, J. Häkli analyzed the Tornio River as a boundary object between Finland and Sweden (Häkli, 2009). However, in all these studies J. Häkli uses an anthropological approach based on an analysis of existing documents or historical facts, as did S. L. Star and J. Griesemer in their study (Star and Griesemer, 1989). The author further develops this approach by proposing to use boundary objects theory as a basis for the analysis of data obtained through quantitative and qualitative sociological data obtaining methods (interviews, surveys).

The aim of the article is to reveal the functioning of the state border as a boundary object in a cross-border cooperation network in the case of the internal and the external border of the EU.

The empirical research is based on two case studies in Latvia-Estonia-Russia border area – Aluksne Municipality in Latvia was selected as the main case and Voru County in Estonia as a complementary case. Both territories have direct access to the internal and the external border of the EU.

Boundary objects theory and international environment

Theoretical framework of the article consists of boundary object theory – further development of actor-network theory – developed by S. L. Star and J. Griesemer in their work "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology" (1989). In their work S. L. Star and J. Griesemer develop actor-network theory used by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and John Law – they analyze scientific work and its actors in the museum of vertebrate zoology – professionals, amateurs, administrative employees and other. S. L. Star and J. Griesemer believed that actors with different views from different social worlds are involved in this scientific work and that they must cooperate to find solutions and conclusions. Authors describe two main factors that help actors from different cultures and with different viewpoints to come to an understanding – methods standardization and boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989).

The standardization of methods meant such management system of scientific work where specialists from different fields can all participate in museum's development process and where interests of different actors are translated in the best possible way (Star and Griesemer, 1989). Author of this article is specifically interested in boundary objects concept – its adaptation for cross-border cooperation studies in context of territories' development. Boundary objects as a theoretical concept was created based on interaction of different social worlds and on point where different social worlds require a mutual translation (Worrall, 2010). Boundary objects can be defined as objects that cross borders of two or more social worlds and that are being used and adapted in several social worlds simultaneously (Star and Griesemer, 1989). They are in between group of actors with different views (Star, 1989). Boundary objects involve diversity and cooperation. It is an analytical concept that describes objects that overlap in different social worlds and that creates communication between them (Star, 1989). Boundary objects are flexible to adapt to local needs and interests of different social worlds, and robust enough to maintain unified identity in different social worlds at the same time (Star and Griesemer, 1989). It can be any specific or abstract element that individuals can use as a reference point for interaction, it may have different understanding depending on the social world, but the common structure allows them to be recognized. The creation and management of boundary objects is the main condition for development and maintenance of

link between intersecting social worlds (Star and Griesemer, 1989). Not every object can become an actor within the actor network, but only those that can be identified as boundary objects, that is – those who are recognized in more than one social world and form the basis for interaction between them.

Boundaries of the boundary objects themselves may vary depending on their elasticity and permeability. They can be abstract, concrete, or simultaneously abstract and concrete, and they can be somewhere in between (Star and Griesemer, 1989). For example, in the work of S. L. Star and J. Griesemer, maps of California created by amateurs were traditional and would be familiar to all of us, meanwhile maps of the same territory created by professional biologists seemed quite abstract to other specialists that were unfamiliar with "ecologically-based series of shaded areas representing 'life zones, an ecological concept'" (Star and Griesemer, 1989, p. 411).

Swiss theorist Etienne Wenger describes border objects as units that connect communities, because they allow different groups to work together on a common task. A border object does not necessarily have to be an artifact or information – the forest can also be a border object through which travelers, biologists, forest owners and other groups can organize their activities. Boundary objects serve multiple parties, so each can have only partial control over the interpretation of the object, for example, an author is responsible for what he has written and a reader is responsible for the meaning he perceives from what is written. As the interpretation and perception of a boundary object is shared between all intersecting social worlds, or all parties involved, then coordination and interpretation is needed to arrive at a complete understanding of the object (Wenger, 1998).

Another essential concept used in the boundary objects theory is "social world", created within the framework of symbolic interactionism. The concept focuses on issues of social change and on wide-range interaction. According to Anselm L. Strauss, social worlds can be defined based on four characteristics – one or several primary activities; sites where activities occur; technologies (inherited or innovative modes that enable activities and creation of the social world; organizations that continue and develop activities of social world. Different social worlds may vary considerably in size, boundaries, structure, and subject matter (Strauss, 1978), but each can be identified based on location, activity, actors and technologies involved. Meanwhile, Japanese American sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani yet before A. Strauss's definition of social worlds wrote that every social world is also a cultural space and its boundaries are not determined by territory or membership of a formal group. More important is the structure and effective communication or communication system whose symbols and assigned meanings reinforce the differences between the social world and the rest of the world. In every social world there are norms, a set of values and a unified view of the world (Shibutani, 1955). A. Strauss points out that in every social world, at least one main activity is clearly visible, such as climbing, exploring or collecting. Also there must be a place where the activity occurs. Initially, only a short-term division of labour can exist in the social world, but later organization of work evolves to further develop one of the activities of the social world (Strauss, 1978).

There can exist innumerable social worlds at the same time – some small, some large; some international, some local; some indistinguishable from their location, while others primarily connected in some other way, but less spatially identifiable; some are public, some almost invisible. Some social worlds may be difficult to see, others are clearly visible and well structured. Their boundaries are also different – in one case the boundaries can be clearly defined and rigid, in another case the boundaries can be floating. Some social worlds may have a strong hierarchical structure and may be related to social status, while in others it may be irrelevant. Communication and action in social worlds may be differently focused on various relevant areas, such as employment, politics, religion, art, sexuality, science and others (Strauss, 1978).

Most studies, where boundary objects theory is used, are related to interdisciplinary dialogue and identification of boundaries between different scientific fields. However, how can boundary objects be explored in the context of intercultural dialogue and cross-border cooperation? Definition of the concept indicates that a boundary object is a tool that serves at least two hosts at the same time, a tool for an interaction which enables the coordination of members of different social groups (according to A. Strauss – social worlds) (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2014). J. Häkli, using anthropological approach and analysis of documents and historical facts, has applied boundary objects concept for a number of cases involving an international and cross-border dimension (Häkli, 2015; Häkli, 2012; Häkli, 2009). J. Häkli points out that nature objects can become actors in a larger and more complex network that unites human and non-human actors, meanings, locations, objects and materials, by analyzing the Tornio River as a boundary between

Sweden and Finland (Häkli, 2009). The concept of boundary objects can help to understand the success or failure of cross-border cooperation by identifying a mechanism that promotes trust in international cross-border networks. J. Häkli associates boundary objects with building of mutual trust, which helps to come to agreement and to resolve potential conflicts that may arise due to different considerations of several interacting communities of practice (Häkli, 2009). Cooperation and boundary objects in the case of cross-border cooperation networks should be analyzed as a unique case, as it involves the diversity created by cross-border interactions between international actors (e.g. different cultures and languages). Cross-border cooperation through boundary objects is complex; it involves both macro and micro level actors, as well as it involves location of actors as an important element in its interaction.

In another article, J. Häkli focuses on the theoretical analysis of the Spanish-French border in the Pyrenees as a boundary object in the context of cross-border cooperation between the two countries (Häkli, 2012). Boundary objects approach focuses on material objects and artifacts, including national borders, which may be important in cross-border cooperation (Häkli, 2012). He also points out that although boundary objects theory has some general settings that can be applied in any case, each border context is somewhat unique, so the theory is adaptable to each individual case and serves as a guide rather than a ready-made tool for creating new research approaches for cross-border cooperation studies (Häkli, 2012).

In another article, when using a description of the history of the passport as a document, a development of its meaning and functionality, J. Häkli concludes that nowadays the passport serves as a boundary object facilitating communication and mobility between countries. It has a high identifying power and can therefore lose its function as a boundary object and become a problematic object for the individual if its authority is revoked or restricted, thereby limiting the individual's opportunities for international mobility (Häkli, 2015). Depending on the context and the purpose of use, the boundary object can serve as both unifying or separating object at the same time.

Research methodology

The author has chosen a case study approach. Two case studies in the Latvian-Estonian-Russian border have been selected – Aluksne Municipality in Latvia as the main case and Voru County in Estonia as a complementary case (see Fig.1). The author carried out fieldwork in the Latvian-Estonian-Russian border area between May 2016 and August 2018. Both selected cases are located in the border area and in the rural territory in periphery of the country. Both territories have direct access to the internal border of the EU (the Latvian-Estonian border), as well as to the external border of the EU (the Latvian-Russian or the Estonian-Russian border).

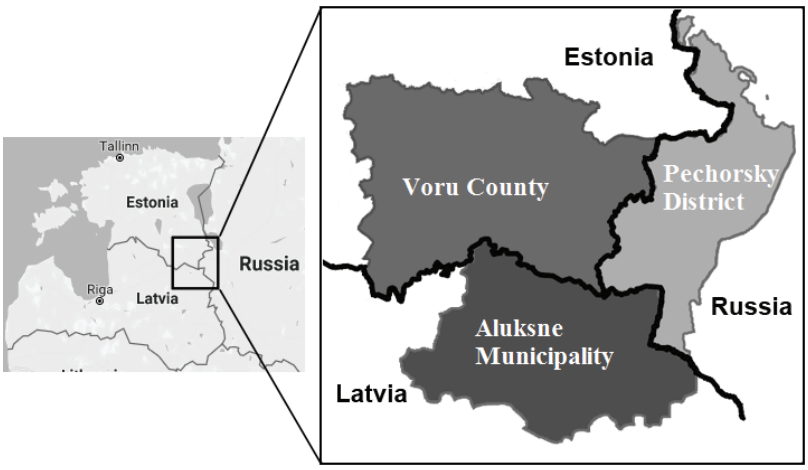

Fig. 1. Case study

Aluksne Municipality has an area of 1 698 km^2, and 14 896 permanent residents according to the data of 2017 – 14,896 (LR Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2018a). The population of Aluksne Municipality has decreased by more than 7 thousand since 1990, and since 2000 the number of inhabitants has decreased by approximately 400 annually on average (LR Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2018b). According to the data of 2016, the development index of territory of Aluksne Municipality was negative -0.569, placing the municipality in the 85th place out of 110 municipalities (VARAM, 2017). Such statistics make Aluksne Municipality, which is located in the North-East part of Latvia about 200 km from the

capital city, one of the typical cases of peripheral territories of Latvia, and encourages the search for appropriate solutions to promote their development.

Voru County has an area of 2 305 km^2. According to the data of 2017, there were 33 505 inhabitants in Voru County at the beginning of 2017, which is more than six thousand less than in 2001 (Statistics Estonia, 2017).

According to the case study approach, the author used both qualitative and quantitative data obtaining methods. Semi-structured interviews with experts involved in territorial development and in cross-border cooperation (head of municipality, development specialists, NGO sector representative, specialists from culture and tourism sphere, etc.) of Aluksne Municipality (six interviews) and Voru County (seven interviews) were used as the main data collection method. In order to get a comprehensive view from all sides involved, three interviews were also conducted in Pskov region of Russia. Guidelines of interviews consisted of four main blocks: description of represented territory (including economical development, availability of services, challenges and potential solutions, local initiatives, etc.); meaning of border for territorial development; cross-border cooperation at institutional level; individual cross-border contacts of local inhabitants. Guidelines were slightly adjusted based on sphere represented by each interviewee. Quantitative survey of inhabitants of Aluksne Municipality (n=200) and semi-structured interviews with inhabitants of Aluksne Municipality (three interviews) and Voru County (two interviews) were used as a complementary method.

The author used three stages of coding of qualitative data. At the first stage the author used structural coding and at the second stage – pattern coding (Saldaňa, 2009). At the third stage the author created joint structure for all data by connecting created codes and categories to the cross-border cooperation. For quantitative data analysis, the author used frequency distribution and cross tabulation.

Analysis or research results

Considering S. L. Star's reflection on the use of boundary objects concept, its limitation, and settings when it is applicable the best, the author analyzes state border as a boundary object within institutional level cross-border cooperation network. S. L. Star pointed out that the concept of boundary objects is best suited for analysis of organizational level processes (Star, 2010) and cross-border cooperation at institutional level, which in the context of this article mainly involves an implementation of cross-border cooperation projects funded by the EU or other external sources, is closely related to a regular organizational process involving both local and supranational actors and their interactions.

According S. L. Star's (2010) instructions, in the center of boundary object analysis should be a concerted collaborative effort where the key actors involved can be clearly identified. The second point is that analysis should focus on joint efforts to achieve something, not just analyzing any interaction between different social worlds (Häkli, 2012). Cross-border cooperation and actors involved in it can be identified, and the goals of cross-border cooperation are aimed at achieving common results, and are therefore in line with Star's instructions.

Before analyzing boundary object itself, the author identifies the social worlds in which the boundary object operates – in this case, bordering countries as separate social worlds. Following Strauss's definition of social worlds (Strauss, 1978), the state as a social world can be characterized according to four basic features – one or several primary activities, sites where activities occur, technology (inherited or innovative modes that enable activities and creation of the social world), organizations that continue activities of the social worlds.

One or several primary activities – in the national context, the author extends A. Strauss's understanding of activities as a particular activity (such as climbing or collecting), and based on empirical data also considers belonging to the state (sense of belonging, different norms and behaviour), culture (as cultural objects, architecture, events, etc.) and use of language as the main activities. T. Sibutani has pointed out that every social world is also a cultural space and that defining it, the communication system, symbols, meanings, norms and values reinforce the differences between the social world and the rest of the world (Shibutani, 1955), thus including such cultural and social aspects in defining the social world is consistent with theoretical settings.

Sites where activities occur – despite T. Sibutani's claim that social worlds are not defined by their territorial boundaries (Shibutani, 1955), the author identifies the country, and thus a particular territory, as one of the defining features of the social world. The inclusion of territory in the definition makes it possible to determine borders of the social world more clearly, and in the national context, points to the existence of activities mentioned above and their distinction from the rest of the world. Given that a country is characterized by a particular territory, public administration, traditions, culture, language, as well as other social aspects that

point to a different social world, then inclusion of territory in the definition of the social world makes it more precise and clear. The author also considers expatriate individuals as members of the state as a social world, if they can be characterized by other features of particular social world – if they engage in main activities of the social world, if they are affected and influenced by the ways how the social world performs its activities and by activities of organizations of the social world.

Technology (inherited or innovative modes that enable activities and creation of the social world) – in the analysis of the state as a social world, legislation can be considered as such technology or way that ensures the emergence and existence of the social world, and that determines how to operate within a particular social world (employment, cultural and social, road traffic, business and other areas). Empirical data suggests that different national legislation affects the process and documentation of cross-border cooperation and, in some cases, the ability to provide co-financing by partners to ensure successful and equitable implementation of a cross-border cooperation project.

Organizations that continue activities of the social world – nowadays, public administration can be considered as the main organization, which binds and connects all members of the state or the social world. Further one can talk about specifiable subworlds (Strauss, 1978), such as administrative-territorial subdivision or municipalities – only declared individuals or those who in fact live there are members of it. While, generally these subworlds are binding for all members of the state or the social world. And also administrative units of different sizes depending on the state may indicate the existence of a different social world. In empirical data this appears as more difficult cross-border cooperation, coordination of activities and objectives due to disproportionate areas (administrative units) or subworlds of cooperation partners across border.

In addition to the four main features, A. Strauss also points to the importance of historical development of the social world (Strauss, 1978). Also in the context of cross-border cooperation in the case of Latvia-Estonia-Russia border area, empirical data lead to conclusions on the impact of the development of states and their borders on cross-border cooperation – changes in border crossing rules – both restrictions and facilitations have influenced the intensity of cooperation. Latvia-Estonia cross-border cooperation at institutional level, as well as individual border crossing, has increased because of open borders policy of the EU, and the intensity of Latvian-Russian and Estonian-Russian cross-border cooperation and border crossing has decreased because of implementation of visa regime.

Next, after defining social worlds, we can focus on analyzing the actor-network and the boundary object. As a result of analysis of process of cross-border cooperation and identifying actors involved, the author has developed an institutional level cross-border cooperation network model for cross-border cooperation between two or more countries (see Fig.2). Border in the network does not separate but unites countries and enables cross-border cooperation. The developed model proposes that national border reveals as a boundary object, which serves as a reference point for interaction between different social environments and which has a definite role in the agent network (Star and Griesemer, 1989).

The main actors involved in cross-border cooperation on each side of the border are local actors (municipalities, NGOs, etc.), acting under the influence of national actors (such as legislation, regulations, decision-making power, public policy, etc.). Municipalities, NGOs, private companies and other organizations are eligible to participate in the INTERREG cross-border cooperation programs, however, in the case study analyzed in this article, the most active partners (the main local actors and partners in the cross-border network) were local governments. Meanwhile, required audit, financial flow and its control, as well as concerns about the time invested in preparing the application with no guarantee of further benefit are the main concerns that discouraged private companies and NGOs to participate as a cooperation partners.

National actors in the actor-network are mainly related to regulations and administrative structures of each country that must be respected also when cooperating across border. These are actors that affect the ability of local actors to cooperate, such as tax and salary calculations, different administrative-territorial divisions and, consequently, different decision-making and executive power, differently regulated co-funding options at national level.

Needs of local agents are what drive their interest in cooperating and, if they are able to identify a common goal with their cross-border partners, the EU funding serves as a tool to facilitate this cooperation. Success of identification of common goals and needs is based on not only rational needs for development in their area, but also on successful previous experience, communication and familiarity with potential partners. When criticizing boundary theory, the professor of Berkley School of Information Nancy Van House points to the

insufficient consideration of the trust factor in the analysis of boundary objects theory. In her research on information technology and on digital library functioning as a boundary object, N. Van House concluded that social and information world of users of digital library was well integrated, so the digital library should function well as a boundary object, still the barrier to share information existed – N. Van House related these concerns to lack of trust among digital library users (Van House, 2003). The author of the article, based on the empirical data of her research, confirms the importance of mutual trust between actors involved in a network, applying it to actors that cooperate directly. There is less need to test cooperation partner and to question his way of work and ideas if previous experience has been successful and if communication has been smooth. Communication between stakeholders is another important aspect for identification of common needs and goals. Communication that involves cross-border aspect differs from communication within the same country mainly because of its international character – culture, norms and traditions – and because of language differences und usage. In addition, different languages and lack of knowledge of common language may create barriers for effective communication (for example, one partner speaks Russian and other English), but the ability and efforts to find a common language reflect the efforts of actors involved to achieve common goals. This is also one of analytical focus of the boundary objects focus proposed by S. L. Star (Star, 2010).

In the most cases of the case study of Latvia-Estonia-Russia border area, cooperation at institutional level (inter-municipal, NGO, etc.) involves the EU funding, which was attracted because of cooperation of border areas of several countries with similar needs. Accordingly, the EU cohesion policy and funding can be seen as a key precondition for cross-border cooperation. Empirical data show that nowadays cross-border cooperation between Latvia, Estonia and Russia in the case study is less frequent than it was a decade ago – the main reason for that mentioned by interviewees is the end of funding of the INTERREG IIIA Priority Latvia-Estonia-Russia of the Baltic Sea Region INTERREG IIIB Neighbourhood Programme co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In some cases this cooperation has been developed and transferred to other spheres of cooperation, such as exchange of information between municipalities on issues not related to the cooperation project or visits of pupils across the border to educational institutions. This is the way how the border maintains a link between the participating countries, or intersecting social worlds, by acting as a boundary object within the framework of cross-border cooperation.

Coordinating and managing institutions (as joint Secretariat and Monitoring Committee) of cross-border cooperation programs (as LAT-RUS cross-border cooperation program 2014–2020, INTERREG EST-LAT cross-border cooperation program, etc.) act as translators and intercessors within cross-border cooperation network. According to M. Callon, interessement can be described as a set of actions by which particular actors try to embody and stabilize the identity of other actors which is defined through their set of problems (Callon, 1986). While, S. L. Star and J. Griesemer's definition explains the concept of interpretation as the harmonization of the meaning of methods, objects, and concepts so that individuals from different social worlds can collaborate (Star and Griesemer, 1989). In addition, according to S. L. Star and J. Griesemer, the meaning and use of boundary objects must be coordinated and similar usage must be ensured in all intersecting social worlds to ensure successful collaboration between different social worlds (Star and Griesemer, 1989). In case of cross-border cooperation, the coordinating supranational institutions manage the process of using the border as a boundary object by consulting all stakeholders and by assessing the cross-border element, the long-term and resilience of results, innovations and closeness of interaction between social worlds in applications of projects. These institutions become the gatekeeper (points of passage, according to Bruno Latur) between different social worlds (Star and Griesemer, 1989).

After defining common objectives and after attracting the EU funding, the cross-border cooperation process implements actions and creates solutions to achieve the objective. The result of the cooperation should have an impact on all parties involved, as well as it should facilitate cross-border cooperation and communication.

Although local inhabitants are not considered actors within cross-border cooperation network at institutional lever, as their role and importance are mostly not identifiable as directly forming this network, however one cannot forget about interest and level of involvement or non-involvement of local inhabitants in cross-border cooperation (Häkli, 2012). From viewpoint of local community's benefit, cross-border cooperation is an intermediary between individual and institutional level, as cross-border cooperation diversifies the daily lives of local inhabitants through participation and attendance of concerts, festivals, creative camps and other activities. It also helps to create more enjoyable living environment in the countryside by renovating

existing or building new facilities. Such cooperation, creation of new opportunities and, consequently, creation of more attractive environment of everyday life can be considered as one of solutions for maintaining the population and economic development of the border areas.

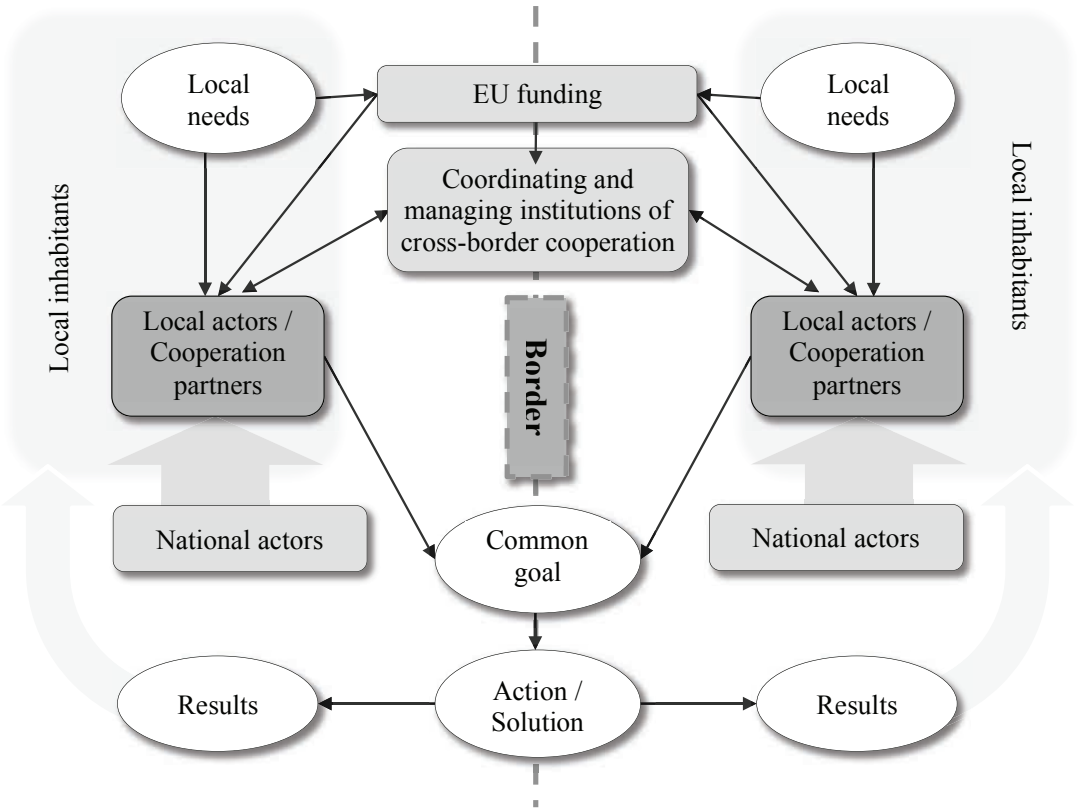

Fig. 2. Cross-border cooperation network at institutional level

Analyzing deeper features of the border in the network, one can see that the border itself can have different meaning and content depending on which countries or social worlds it separates. It is possible to identify the nuances (such as border crossing conditions, intensity of cross-border cooperation, cultural differences, etc.) that distinguish between the internal and the external border of the EU by analyzing the impact of a border on the development of border areas and on cross-border cooperation. It is also possible to identify cases where the proximity of the two borders can be assessed in a similar way, without differences depending on type of a border. All mutually bordering social worlds are involved in the creation, perception, and interpretation of boundary objects, they all form a common perception of the boundary object (Wenger, 1998), so the boundary object may play a different role depending on which social world it binds.

During analysis of differences between the internal and the external border of the EU applying boundary objects theory, the author distinguishes two main ways in which the border functions as a boundary object between social worlds or countries: first, meaning of the border itself and interactions and cooperation related to it; second, perception of bordering country and cooperation and interaction depending on it.

Regarding meaning of the border itself, the internal border of the EU (Latvia-Estonia border) can be described both as concrete and as abstract because of its functionality and perception. It can be crossed without border control or other procedures, so it is perceived mostly as an open border that does not limit crossing of it and interaction across it. Even more – everyday life of local inhabitants are frequently related to border crossing (e.g. for leisure and recreation, for shopping, for exploring nearest cities, etc.). Meanwhile, the external border of the EU (Latvia-Russia or Estonia-Russia border) is rather concrete and clear due to its separating characteristics. In the case study interviewed experts that are involved in cross-border cooperation usually do not consider the internal border of the EU to be a national border in its classical sense, but they do consider the external border of the EU as such. As a result, the use of concept of border has rather negative mood – stakeholders use border concept

when describing the external border of the EU, which they describe as restrictive of development. While the term "border area" is used more often, when talking about the internal border of the EU or about being near the internal border of the EU.

The main reason for differences in perception of the internal and the external border of the EU is that inhabitants are free to cross the internal border of the EU without any additional procedures or conditions, as well as that joint activities are regularly organized on both sides of the border, common traditions and communication system exist there – for example, information about culture events or fairs on one side of the border is prepared and shared in both languages – Latvian and Estonian. Interviewed stakeholders point to opportunity to work closely together with neighbouring territories, diversification of culture life and tourism opportunities and as the most important – opportunities for cross-border cooperation as the main opportunities created by closeness of the internal border of the EU. In this case the border successfully functions as a boundary object that links two social worlds and promotes interaction between them. There are more examples where the internal border of the EU can be identified as uniting rather than separating the two countries, for example, dance group of the Dance, Play and Song Non-Governmental Organization from the Haanja Parish in Estonia participated in the XXVI Song and XVI Dance Festival 2018 of Latvia as the dance group from the Veclaicene Parish of border area of Latvia.

In most cases the external border of the EU (Latvia-Russia or Estonia-Russia border) is perceived as rather a strict border that in fact separates two countries. Although there is also an active cooperation between Aluksne Municipality and Voru County with neighbors in Russia, still cooperation between Aluksne and Voru is more frequent. The main reason for that is the EU border policy – open border between the EU countries – Latvia and Estonia – eases crossing of it and therefore makes cooperation easier, while visa requirement and border control when crossing the external border of the EU with Russia makes the cooperation with it more difficult. One exception is the Pededze Parish of Aluksne Municipality in Latvia, which has a direct border with Russia and has a different ethnic composition from the rest of Aluksne Municipality (76.0% are Russians (Alūksnes novads, n.d.)). However, in the context of cross-border cooperation, the external border of the EU is rather restrictive and described as an obstacle for territorial development. Territorial development towards Russia is described as non-existent or severely restricted. Not only in terms of overall territorial and economic development, but also in terms of cooperation at institutional level, the Russian border is described as a constraint. Interviewed experts confirm that inhabitants who want to cross the Russian border for cross-border cooperation or other interests feel difficulty of crossing the border and its strict conditions. Such border is described as a limitation and as a circumstance that creates additional problems for cooperation and for territorial development.

Similar meaning can also be identified to border of the state regardless its type. It was observed by the author in the field of tourism and marketing, when proximity of the border is perceived as an advantage to promote border territories and to attract tourists. At municipal level this is the field of cross-border cooperation where the greatest potential for development lies. Interviewed stakeholders from Latvian, Estonian and Russian border areas point out that despite the need for visa in order to cross the Russian border, disseminating tourism information across the border and promoting the border area as a united region where three countries meet would add value to the border area, therefore would promote its territorial development. In the summer of 2017, Aluksne Municipality in cooperation with Vidzeme TV published a short movie about Aluksne Municipality titled "Aluksne Municipality/At the Crossroads of Three Countries" (Alūksnes novads, 2017). Work is also ongoing at the municipal level on the development and preparation of a joint tourism offer in form of booklets at the tourism information centers and on the municipal websites.

In the case of attracting the EU funding, proximity of the border is also generally considered as an advantage. Closeness of both types of borders and location at the crossroads of three countries can be identified as creator and facilitator of new opportunities. Experts involved in cross-border cooperation point out that in such case it is easier to find a cross-border partner, as well as to justify the need for cooperation due to adjacent territories, their similar problems and needs for development.

Regarding the perception of the border state and cooperation resulting from it, the author identified different perception of the EU countries (Latvia and Estonia) from Russia. Interviewees describe Latvia and Estonia as similar countries with similar culture. Interviewees on Latvian side of the border describe Estonia as a more developed and more European country, from which much can be learned. Meanwhile, both stakeholders from Latvia and from Estonia perceive Russia more cautiously, describe it as more unpredictable partner, and its culture as different from culture of Latvia or Estonia.

There are also cases where interviewees perceive both bordering countries similarly – the author observed this in a case when the intensity of cooperation between all parties is similar – similarly frequent or rare. In such cases the only limitation on the external border of the EU is the difficulty of crossing the border, but not the different culture, practice or experience of cooperation. For example, cross-border cooperation in the NGO sector is not intensive in the case study of Latvia-Estonia or Latvia-Russia border areas.

In general, differences of meaning of the border itself and differences of perception of neighbouring countries influence objectives and dynamic of cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cooperation between Latvia and Estonia's border area is closer and mostly with the main objective to balance development at both sides of the border, while cross-border cooperation with Russia is more formal and with the main objective to maintain contacts with a neighbouring country, but it rarely develops outside the framework of a specific cooperation project.

Conclusions

The state border can be analyzed using S. L. Star and J. Griesemer's border object theory in the context of cross-border cooperation at the institutional level, and also empirical data obtained by sociological data obtaining methods can be used within the theoretical framework of the boundary objects. However, some additions and appropriate interpretation is needed. State border analysis using boundary objects approach offers new perspectives for analysis of the impact of closeness of the state border on the development of the border areas. Despite border's function as a separator of different social worlds, it functions as a binding actor of them within cross-border cooperation network. This does not mean that the proximity of the border only positively influences the border area, but the theory allows the border to be viewed as an analytical concept from a new perspective and allows it to be included in a broader analysis focusing on the connecting features of the concept.

The state border has dual nature: on the one hand it functions as the separator of different social worlds, on the other hand it functions as the boundary object that connects social worlds that it creates. The border becomes the main actor within cross-border cooperation network that enables option to interact, to exchange experience and knowledge, to work on achieving common objectives and to implement actions for territorial development of border area.

The EU cohesion policy and border policy has a crucial role in shaping cross-border cooperation – the EU funding in general promotes territorial development through cross-border cooperation across both the internal and the external border of the EU, meanwhile the EU border policy promotes cooperation between the EU countries, but makes it more complicated across the external border of the EU.

The analysis of state border as a social phenomenon within the framework of boundary object theory has its own specifics and challenges that are different from those analyzed by S. L. Star and J. Griesemer. State border and social worlds that it connects are more ambiguous, than it is in the work of S. L. Star and J. Griesemer, where empirical evidence used for the research is relatively clear – materials used by scholars and specialists and the process of their collaboration. The border varies depending on its type, on the time dimension and on the context of the case, it is multifaceted and interdisciplinary, so in-depth analysis can be done only on a case-by-case basis.

The same actors are involved in the cross-border cooperation network and their motivation and tools for implementing the cross-border cooperation are the same, regardless of the internal or the external border of the EU involved. However, meaning of the border and circumstances for capacity of actors and intensity of interactions varies depending on type of the border. From actor that connects social worlds the boundary object can become an actor that separates them in the first place depending on the meaning of the border and depending on the perception of the neighbouring country. Although in both cases it has both a separating and connecting features simultaneously, the difference makes which of both stands out as the main feature – the border primarily functions as an actor that connects social worlds in a case of the internal border of the EU and in a case of positively perceived neighbouring country. Its separating features are rather passive. In case of the external border of the EU and in a case of rather cautiously perceived neighbouring country the border primarily functions as a separator of social worlds, which has also some connecting features. Given that the internal and the external border of the EU can have both similar and different functions in the context of cross-border cooperation, the author concludes that it is the most effective to analyze state border as a single boundary object with potentially different functionality and dominant features.

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Государственная граница как пограничный объект в сети трансграничного сотрудничества: случай границы Латвии, Эстонии и России

Резюме

Цель публикации – раскрыть функции государственной границы в качестве пограничного объекта в сети трансграничного сотрудничества в случае внутренней и внешней границы ЕС.

Теоретическое обрамление публикации составляет теория пограничных объектов – производное теории сети агентов, которую в своей работе «Институциональная экология, «интерпретация» и пограничные объекты: любители и профессионалы в зоологическом музее позвоночных в Беркли» (1989) развивали Сьюзан Ли Стар и Джеймс Гризмер.

Пограничные объекты как теоретическое понятие были созданы на основании взаимодействия различных социальных миров друг с другом и на точке, когда им необходима взаимная интерпретация (Worrall, 2010). Пограничные объекты определяются как объекты, которые пересекают границы двух или более социальных миров и которые одновременно используются и приспосабливаются в нескольких социальных мирах (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Они находятся посередине группы агентов с различными взглядами (Star, 1990). С помощью пограничных объектов объединяются разнообразие и сотрудничество. Это аналитическое понятие, обозначающее объекты, которые накладываются друг на друга в разных социальных мирах и формируют коммуникацию между ними (в случае исследования зоологического музея, например, виды млекопитающих и птиц, повадки собранных видов животных и другие) (Star, 1989). Пограничные объекты одновременно и достаточно гибки для того, чтобы приспособиться к локальным потребностям и интересам разных социальных групп, и достаточно устойчивы для того, чтобы сохранить единую идентичность в разных социальных средах (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Это может быть любой определенный или абстрактный элемент, который индивиды могут использовать в качестве точки отсчета взаимодействия, у них может быть разное понимание в зависимости от социальной среды, однако общая структура позволяет их распознать. Создание пограничных объектов и управление ими является главным условием развития и поддержания связи между пересекающимися друг с другом социальными средами (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Не каждый объект может стать агентом в рамках ТСА, агентами становятся только те объекты, которые можно идентифицировать как пограничные, а именно – которые распознаются более чем в одной социальной среде и являются основой взаимодействия между ними.

Еще одним центральным понятием, используемым в теории пограничных объектов, являются социальные миры. Это понятие возникло в рамках символического интеракционизма. Понятие фокусируется на проблематике социальных перемен и широкомасштабном взаимодействии. Согласно А. Страуссу, дать определение социальным мирам можно в зависимости от четырех признаков – одно или несколько основных видов деятельности; место, где осуществляется деятельность; технологии или способы (унаследованные или инновационные), которые позволяют выполнять действия и создавать социальный мир; организации, которые продолжают вести и развивать деятельность социального мира (Strauss, 1978).

Для получения эмпирических данных автор воспользовалась методом исследования случая в приграничной зоне рядом с латвийско-эстонско-российской границей: Алукснеский край в Латвии был выбран в качестве основного случая, а Вырумаа в Эстонии – в качестве дополняющего случая. Автор проводила работы в поле в период времени с мая 2016 года по август 2018 года. Оба выбранных случая находятся и в приграничной зоне, и на сельской территории на периферии страны. Обе территории имеют прямой доступ как к внутренней (латвийско-эстонской), так и к внешней (латвийско-российской, эстонско-российской) границе ЕС. В соответствии с подходом, основанным на исследовании случая, автор использовала методы и качественного, и количественного получения данных. В качестве основного метода получения данных использовались частично структурированные интервью с экспертами, вовлеченными в трансграничное сотрудничество и территориальное развитие (представителями самоуправлений, специалистами по развитию, представителями сектора негосударственных организаций и др.) в Алукснеском крае (шесть интервью) и в Вырумаа (семь интервью). Для получения всестороннего представления автор также взяла три интервью у представителей Псковского района России. Дополнительно был проведен опрос населения (200 респондентов) среди жителей Алукснеского края, а также взяты частично структурированные интервью в Алукснеском крае (три интервью) и Вырумаа (два интервью).

Государственная граница была проанализирована с использованием теории С. Л. Стар и Дж. Гризмера в контексте трансграничного сотрудничества на институциональном уровне, однако необходимы отдельные дополнения и соответствующая интерпретация.

Государственной границе в рамках теории пограничных объектов присущ дуализм: с одной стороны, она функционирует как разделитель разных социальных миров, с другой стороны – как пограничный объект, связывающий эти социальные миры. Граница становится главным агентом (пограничным объектом), создающим возможность взаимодействия, обме-

на знаниями и опытом, работы для достижения общих целей и принятия мер, направленных на содействие территориальному развитию. Финансирование со стороны ЕС играет решающую роль в установлении трансграничного сотрудничества и, таким образом – в содействии территориальному развитию.

Несмотря на то, что в сеть трансграничного сотрудничества входят одни и те же агенты, сотрудничающие через внешнюю и внутреннюю границу ЕС, а также их цели и мотивация в целом похожи, автор идентифицировала границы различий и созданные их значением условия деятельности вовлеченных в трансграничное сотрудничество агентов и интенсивности взаимодействия. Несмотря на то, что в обоих случаях в контексте трансграничного сотрудничества граница имеет как разделяющий, так и связывающий социальные миры характер, различие заключается в том, какой из них выходит на передний план в качестве главного свойства пограничного объекта – внутренние и свободно пересекаемые границы ЕС, а также позитивно оцениваемая в случае пограничного государства граница, функционирующая в первую очередь как связывающий социальные миры пограничный объект, соответствующий основным установкам теории и определению пограничного объекта. Внешняя граница ЕС, пересечение которой затруднено и которая в случае пограничного государства оценивается скорее негативно и с осторожностью, в первую очередь функционирует как разделяющий социальные миры объект, у которого можно идентифицировать и связывающие социальные миры признаки, хотя это может происходить с известными ограничениями. Принимая во внимание то, что у внешней и внутренней границы ЕС идентифицируется и схожее, и различающееся функционирование в контексте трансграничного сотрудничества, автор предлагает анализировать ее как один пограничный объект с вероятностью различающегося функционирования, а не как два разных пограничных объекта.

Ключевые слова: пограничные объекты, трансграничное сотрудничество, сеть агентов, территориальное развитие, приграничная зона.