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Linking Borderlands: Dynamics of Cross-Border Peripheries

Conceptual and empirical insights from an interdisciplinary perspective

CONSORTIUM OF THE LINKING BORDERLANDS PROJECT



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Linking Borderlands: A Linking Analysis of Borderlands in Transition

Florian Weber, Alexandra Lampke, Tobias Schank

With the ending of the Second World War Europe began to move step by step toward greater exchange and integration, culminating in the ongoing processes of today's European Union (EU). In the 21st century, cooperative cross-border projects in many peripheral areas of EU member states have steadily gained in importance; but, as the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated, they can by no means be taken for granted. Borderland cooperation involves many actors, and complex as well as varied background conditions. Funded by Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research (project key 01UC2104), the network project 'Linking Borderlands: Dynamics of Cross-Border Peripheries' undertakes a comparative analysis of two borderland regions, one in south-western, one in eastern Germany: the so-called Greater Region on the borders of Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg, and the Brandenburg-Lubuskie Region straddling the German-Polish border. The following introduction to our collection of project working papers outlines the background to EU borderland cooperation and sketches some central lines of development taken by border studies, before presenting the aims and key structures of the project and summarizing the main trajectories of its five constituent perspectives.

Border regions, borderlands, concepts, methods, Greater Region, cross-border region Brandenburg-Lubuskie voivodeship

Linking Borderlands: Eine verbindende Analyse von Grenzregionen im Wandel

Nach Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs haben sich in Europa Schritt für Schritt wachsende Austauschprozesse und Integrationsformen hin zur heutigen Europäischen Union (EU) entwickelt. Im 21. Jahrhundert kommt in diesem Zuge grenzüberschreitender Kooperation in vielen Randlagen von Nationalstaaten in der EU hohe bzw. wachsende Bedeutung zu, die gleichzeitig keineswegs als taken for granted genommen werden sollte, wie eindrücklich bspw. die Covid-19-Pandemie illustrierte. Zusammenarbeit in Grenzregionen bzw. ‚Borderlands‘ geschieht unter komplexen Vorzeichen und unter Beteiligung vielfältiger Akteure. Mit dem Verbundvorhaben ‚Linking Borderlands: Dynamiken grenzregionaler Peripherien‘, das aus Mitteln des deutschen Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) gefördert wird (Förderkennzeichen 01UC2104), rücken in vergleichender Perspektive zwei Grenzregionen in den Fokus: die sog. Großregion (Grenzlage Belgien, Deutschland, Frankreich und Luxemburg) und die Grenzregion Brandenburg-Lubuskie (Grenzlage Deutschland und Polen) am südwestlichen und östlichen Rand Deutschlands. Der Einleitungsbeitrag zum Working Paper skizziert zunächst Hintergründe grenzüberschreitender Zusammenarbeit in der EU, beleuchtet einige zentrale Entwicklungslinien der Border Studies und führt danach in Ziele und Ausrichtungen des Verbundvorhabens ein, bevor die Schwerpunkte der fünf thematischen Beiträge vorgestellt werden.

Grenzregionen, Borderlands, Konzepte, Methoden, Großregion, Grenzregion Brandenburg-Lubuskie

Linking Borderlands : une analyse des liaisons entre les zones frontalières en renouvellement

Après la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, des processus d'échange et des formes d'intégration croissantes se sont progressivement développés en Europe pour aboutir à l'Union européenne (UE) actuelle. Au 21^{ème} siècle, la coopération transfrontalière dans de nombreuses régions périphériques d'États nationaux au sein de l'UE revêt une importance élevée ou croissante, ce qui ne doit en aucun cas être pris pour acquis, comme l'a illustré de manière visible la pandémie Covid-19. La coopération dans les régions frontalières ou 'borderlands' se déroule sous des auspices complexes et avec la participation de nombreux acteurs. Le projet collectif « Linking Borderlands : Dynamiques des périphéries frontalières », financé par le ministère fédéral allemand de l'Éducation et de la Recherche (BMBF) (code de subvention 01UC2104), met l'accent sur deux régions frontalières dans une perspective comparative : la Grande Région (frontières de Belgique, d'Allemagne, de France et du Luxembourg) et la région frontalière Brandebourg-Lubuskie (frontière d'Allemagne et de Pologne), situées à la frontière sud-ouest et est de l'Allemagne. La contribution d'introduction au Working Paper esquisse tout d'abord le contexte de la coopération transfrontalière dans l'UE, met en lumière quelques lignes de développement centrales des études sur les frontières et amène ensuite vers les objectifs et les orientations du projet commun avant de présenter les points forts des cinq contributions thématiques.

Régions frontalières, borderlands, concepts, méthodes, Grande Région, région transfrontalière Brandenburg-Lubuskie

European Borderlands – living labs of European integration

In light of the decisive historical break caused by the Second World War in Europe, the subsequent path of reconciliation taken especially by France and Germany must count as exceptional (Defrance, 2021; Hüser, 2017). Within a very few years, first steps had been taken to launch a process of European integration which, despite all challenges, was seen by many as offering widespread hope and opportunity (Marks et al., 1996; Urwin, 2014), right up to the idea of “European Union as a project of political community building” (Böhm 2019, p. 59). On the macro-level the many crises of the early 21st century have raised key questions on the future of Europe involving the clash of integrationist strategies with a counter-insistence on national sovereignty and autonomy. At the same time, however, the EU continues to be experienced in particularly impressive and palpable ways in border regions where national states meet. On the one hand the nation-state has – despite forward-looking postulates of deterritorialization and a borderless world (Ohmae, 1999 [1990]) – by no means lost its traditional power and relevance as a source of political order; on the other, the 1995 Schengen Agreement’s abolition of permanent border checks among its signatories, and the implementation of EU principles of free movement of persons, goods, services, and capital, have boosted cross-border exchange and cooperation. All this makes borderlands ideal research objects. At the interface of sovereign states they reveal the positive as well as negative aspects of the confrontation between European thinking and existing national rules, regulations, and competencies (Klatt, 2021, p. 145; Kuhn, 2012 [online 2011], p. 95; Weber and Dörrenbächer, 2022, p. 182).

Borderlands tend by virtue of their very position to be regarded as crossover regions to neighboring countries and hence as marginal – which makes them easy to overlook. Further from the political center, they may easily become of peripheral concern (Böhm, 2021; Jańczak, 2020). In the words of the European Commission’s resolution for the intensification of support for such regions:

[P]hysical and/or geographical barriers also contribute to restricting economic, social and territorial cohesion between border regions, both within and outside the EU [...]. [O]bstacles – consisting of mainly administrative, linguistic and legal barriers – still persist and hamper growth, economic and social development and cohesion between and within the border regions. (European Commission, 2019, p. 25)

But at this micro-level, as Böhm notes (2019, p. 70), cross-border cooperation is seen precisely as a parameter of European integration. As “hot spots of intense cross-border interaction” (European Commission, 2021, p. 1), these regions are regarded as laboratories and living labs of European integration and have been politically and financially supported as such for the past 50 years and more. The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)¹ was founded in 1971, and the Madrid Outline Convention of 1981 established a legal framework for fostering binational agreements; moreover, since the 1990s, European funds like Interreg have been specifically tasked with promoting cross-border initiatives (Decoville and Durand, 2018; Perkmann, 2003; Sousa, 2013). Established in 1993, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) allows specific border-region concerns to be considered in EU legislative processes (Klatt, 2021, p. 144; Weber and Dörrenbächer, 2022, p. 185).

Today the relevance of EU border regions on many levels is abundantly evident: “these regions cover 40% of the Union’s territory, account for 30% of the EU’s population and produce almost one third of EU GDP” (European Commission, 2019, p. 25). The European project, as e.g. O’Dowd (2002, p. 32) remarks, has brought about a reconfiguration of national borders as both barriers and bridges (Scott, 2012, p. 84). In the first decades of the present century a tight network of cross-border interdependencies was established – a situation highlighted by the rigors of the Covid pandemic, when increased border checks and restricted crossing points severely undermined the notion of a Europe of open internal borders and, indeed, the very idea of a united Europe (Brodowski et al., 2023; European Commission, 2021, p. 2; Medeiros et al., 2021; Wille and Kanesu, 2020). Coming on top of the refugee crisis of 2015, which had already shed harsh light on both these concepts, the effect of the pandemic on the ‘European idea’ was considerably exacerbated (Hess and Kasperek, 2012; Mau, 2021; Wille et al., 2023).

These events vividly illustrate that the borderlands of nation states are complex structures (Haselsberger, 2014; Gerst et al., 2018; Wille, 2021). Reacting to external influences and at the same time developing from their own internal impetus, they are subject to many different processes and undergo regular, far-reaching change. Thus they are contact zones of heightened intensity and ever-increasing interdependence, but for that very reason they are also zones of ongoing negotiation and potential conflict (Durand et al., 2017; lossifova, 2019; Kolossov and Scott, 2013; Newman 2003, pp. 18–19; Paasi 2003).

¹ <https://www.aebr.eu/>.

Funded by Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the network project 'Linking Borderlands: Dynamics of Cross-Border Peripheries'² (2021-2024) focuses on two of these regions. Diverse and many-faceted, their political, cultural, social, and administrative parameters meet and interact on many levels. On the one hand we look from the center to the periphery, on the other from our own position on the periphery to the borderlands themselves, which we view as laboratories of a present and future European Union. The regions we have selected for comparison are situated on the south-western and eastern borders of Germany respectively. Given the complexity of the subject-matter, our approach is emphatically interdisciplinary, combining linguistic, political, and geographical perspectives with those of cultural studies in order to do justice to the requirements of modern borderlands research. In the following pages, this introduction to the working paper will outline the field of border studies itself before sketching the key structures of the network project and presenting the individual essays on five different aspects of current borderland dynamics.

Border studies – perspective and framework

The origins of border studies can arguably be found in the first half of the 20th century, when a clear focus lay on the extent and limits of influence of nation states (Hartshorne, 1936; Jones, 1943; Minghi, 1963; esp. Redepenny, 2005; Scott, 2011), and the territorial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic factors involved were addressed in the characteristically descriptive manner of the age (Newman, 2011; Weber et al., 2020). Modern border studies, on the other hand, arose in Europe and North America in the 1990s, when the falling boundaries of Cold War Europe created new subject matter in this area, and the constructivist turn in Western philosophy and the humanities created new ways of looking at it (Newman and Paasi, 1998; Sidaway, 2011; Wastl-Walter, 2011). The traditional focus on spatially fixed limits gave way to dynamic concepts of 'bordering,' 'debordering,' and 'rebordering' (Kolossoff and Scott, 2013; Newman, 2006, 2011; Paasi, 2005) – a processual shift (Brambilla et al., 2015b, p. 1) that viewed borders as phenomena of ongoing development and change (Newman, 2011; Paasi, 1991; Scott, 2011; van Houtum and van Naerssen, 2002). Accordingly, for Rumford (2006, p. 155), "thinking about borders" led to the conclusion that far from being natural phenomena, they were the product of (in many cases repetitive) historical contingency (see also Johnson et al., 2011; Paasi, 2012). In this postmodern view, borders are conceived not simply as demarcation lines separating territories but rather as virtual lines that can also be thought of as connecting peoples and territories (Böhm, 2019). Introduced by Schiffauer et al. (2018), concepts of durability, permeability and liminality have added further refinement to these categories. 'Durability' refers to the firmness – i.e. stability and permanence – of a border; 'permeability' to the varying population flows characteristic of specific borders; 'liminality' to the self-constituting ability of border zones and their typically in-between phenomena (Schiffauer et al., 2018; Ulrich, 2021). The relation between linguistic and political borders is relevant in all these respects.

Postmodern constructivism has brought a marked shift in the fundamental research perspective of border studies. Thus Kolossoff and Scott (2013, § 2) argue that

the study of borders has moved from a dominant concern with formal state frontiers and ethno-cultural areas to the study of borders at diverse socio-spatial and geographical scales, ranging from the local and the municipal, to the global, regional and supra-state level (see also Balibar, 2002; Lyon, 2005).

Redepenny (2015, p. 81; see also 2018, 2019) confirms that this broadening of the concept has brought social phenomena radically within the remit of border studies on various spatial scales. Or, as Scott more generally puts it: "The bordering perspective provides a powerful link between and among processes of social and political transformation, conceptual change and local experience" (2012, p. 87). Accordingly, modern border studies differentiates not just physical, political, and administrative, but also economic, functional, social, and cultural borders, as well as those that are linguistic, symbolic, or mental: all of these are open to stringent analysis (Breitung, 2011; Iossifova, 2013, 2019; Gibson and Canfield, 2016). In recent decades, border studies has in this way developed into a multifaceted and in certain important respects interdisciplinary field of research (Newman, 2006; Brunet-Jailly, 2005).

The concepts of 'borderlandscapes' (Brambilla, 2015; Brambilla et al., 2015a; Rajaram and Grund-Warry, 2007) and 'borderlands' (Anzaldúa, 2012 [1987]; see also Anderson and O'Dowd, 2003; Boesen and Schnuer, 2017; Brunet-Jailly, 2011; Fellner, 2006; Iossifova, 2019; Pavlakovich-Kochi et al., 2004) reflect this shift from clear lines of demarcation to a web of cross-border interactions, and with it the development of a perceptible cross-border region that draws attention away from the line of the border itself (Biemann and Weber, 2020; Newman, 2003, p. 18, 2011, pp. 37–39; Zorko, 2015; Blake, 2000; Blatter, 2004, p. 532). As already noted,

² www.linking-borderlands.eu.

such relations can be of many shapes and intensities and by no means preclude conflict (Boeckler, 2012; Iossifova, 2019; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Newman, 2003).

Scott's concept of "practical bordering" (2012, p. 88) calls specifically in this context for cross-border cooperation and governance, and for the negotiation of political coalitions in which national boundaries are recast as resources for economic, cultural, and social exchange and regional development (Popescu, 2008; Sohn, 2014). This simply reflects current EU goals for overcoming regional disparities and reinforcing cohesion (Fricke, 2014, p. 64; Noferini et al., 2020, p. 35; Ulrich, 2020 [online 2019], p. 59). Again with Scott, one can see the concept of borderlands – consistently adopted in our present network project – as linking directly to overall EU development policies: "Cross-border cooperation is seen to provide ideational foundations for a networked Europe through symbolic representations of European space and its future development perspectives" (Scott, 2011, p. 135).

Practical bordering takes place on the subnational level in regional and local contexts (Fricke, 2015; Jańczak, 2018; Kramsch, 2003; Perkmann and Sum, 2002; Reitel, 2006). As well as formally designated areas of cooperation, these have included since the 1990s an increasing number of what Haughton et al. (2013, pp. 217–218) call "soft spaces of governance: [...] 'in-between' spaces [...] that exist outside, alongside or in-between the formal statutory scales of government, from area masterplans to multiregional growth strategies" – spaces, in other words, that can be associated with "fuzzy boundaries" (Haughton et al., 2010). Conversely, at every level – whether European, supranational, regional, or local (Huemer, 2018; Jańczak, 2018; Klatt and Herrmann, 2011, p. 66; Pallagst, 2018, pp. 355–358; Schöne, 2006, pp. 41–64; Scott, 2000; Reitel, 2013) – informal cooperations often trigger more formal modes of collaboration (Pallagst, 2018, p. 354).

As outlined above, the conceptual framework and development processes of border studies provide an appropriate analytical tool for interdisciplinary application in the context of the Linking Borderlands project.

Linking Borderlands – comparative research perspectives

The comparative research approach informing this project enables closer examination and systematization of individual as well as common factors, and the identification and specification of differences, creating a structured and differentiated picture of the development processes in European borderlands. As such, it implements the European Commission's policy statement in this matter:

[T]he problems and challenges faced by the border regions are common to some extent, but also vary from region to region, or between Member States, and depend on the particular legal, administrative, economic and geographic specificities of a given region, which makes an individual approach to each of these regions a necessity [and] acknowledges the shared development potential of cross-border regions in general (European Commission, 2019, p. 26).

Among the common obstacles to cross-border cooperation are multi-level mismatch, inadequately agreed joint strategies, divergent administrative cultures, language differences, and shortfalls in funding (Chilla et al., 2012). As already observed, our investigation of such complexities – on the one hand of the close cross-border relations and on the other of obstacles to those processes – will necessarily be interdisciplinary, covering such diverse fields as language, politics, culture, and geographical space. Focused comparatively on two regions on opposite sides of Germany – on the one hand the 'Greater Region' straddling the borders of Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg, on the other the German-Polish border region joining the Federal State of Brandenburg and the Voivodeship (Province) of Lubuskie – our analysis is governed by the following overall questions:

- How do borderlands constitute themselves as zones of contact and interaction? How do they develop and change over time? What influences affect them? What conflicts arise?
- What convergences and divergences do borderlands reveal?
- How do selected players cope with the challenges of change? Where do they see opportunities and/or obstacles to cooperation?
- What fundamental insights and/or learning processes are generated in these processes?

First, however, we will sketch some key characteristics of the two areas under consideration with regard to their differing levels of involvement in European integration processes – a central issue in our comparative analysis.

Over the centuries, the Franco-German border has been the site of many wars and resultant moving of frontiers (Scholz, 2016, p. 95), displacements to which Alsace-Lorraine bears eloquent witness. After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 it was incorporated into the German Empire, only to return to France in 1918 after the First World War. The coal and iron-ore deposits on each side of these shifting national boundaries gave rise to a spatial network which – extending to Luxembourg – became known as the 'Iron and Steel Triangle' (Wille, 2011). Here cross-border relations ranged from a commuting workforce, through

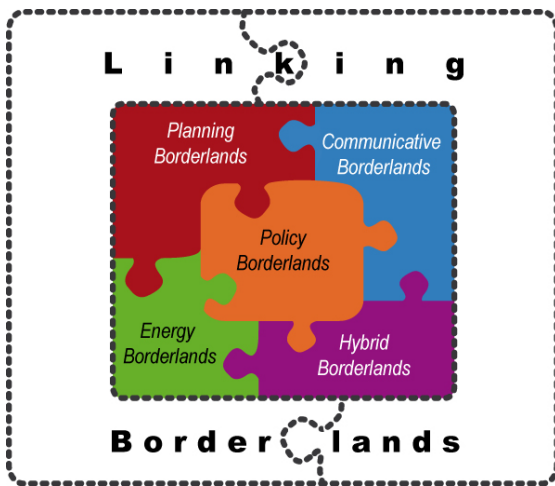
goods deliveries, to entrepreneurial cooperation (Dörrenbächer, 2015). Formalized in the Élysée Treaty of 1963, the process of Franco-German reconciliation in the aftermath of the Second World War brought an increasing institutionalization of cross-border cooperation, beginning with the establishment of a Franco-German Governmental Commission in 1969 and the extension of this in 1971 to include Luxembourg. Intensification of regional contacts, first at core 'SaarLorLux' level (i.e. German Saarland, French Lorraine, and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg), and then spreading east and north to include Trier and the Western Palatinate and finally the entire Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate as well as parts of Belgium, led to the growth of a cross-border 'megaregion' (Niedermeyer and Moll, 2007; Wille, 2015; Weber, 2022). Renamed the 'Greater Region,' this today covers more than 65,400 sq km, has a population of some 11.6 m, and provides the EU's biggest cross-border labor market (Evrard, 2016, pp. 523–524), with some 250,000 people commuting to work across national boundaries, 80% of them to Luxembourg (IBA-OIE 2022). Since 1995, the regional and/or state executives of the Greater Region have held regular summit meetings, and in 2014 the secretariat of that body was formalized as a 'European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation' (EGTC) – a further step in the institutionalization of cross-border relations.

Cross-border integration in the German-Polish border region has a rather more recent history, dating from the fall of the Iron Curtain and the signing of the German–Polish Border Treaty in 1990 and the Treaty of Good Neighbourship and Friendly Cooperation in 1991. These two documents present the basis for the subsequent development of bilateral relations between the two countries (Opiłowska and Sus, 2021). Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 and to the Schengen Area in 2007 has further boosted cross-border cooperation and exchange, and this development has continued despite a certain slowdown in Poland's EU integration process since the change of government in Warsaw in 2015 (Opiłowska, 2021). In the meantime four 'Euroregions' have been established with the intention of promoting cross-border agreements and cooperation at local and regional levels (Ulrich and Wassenberg, 2021).

The Linking Borderlands project views these two border regions from five different angles, giving rise to the following five focal areas: policy, communications, hybridity, planning, and energy (see Fig. 1):

- Policy borderlands: National policies on the one hand establish overall frameworks for action and on the other leave their imprint on the multilevel governance complexes involved in cross-border development (Crossey and Weber, 2022; Hooghe and Marks, 2002; Špaček, 2018).
- Communicative borderlands: A key factor in overcoming hurdles is learning mutual trust (European Commission, 2019, p. 27, 2021, p. 6), and a key to mutual trust is multilingual and multicultural competence, gained ideally from an early age. The European Commission urges that: "People living in cross-border regions should be granted access to education and training on both sides of the border" (European Commission, 2021, p. 11) – a principle implemented in the funding of cross-border vocational training (Dörrenbächer, 2020; Polzin-Haumann and Reissner, 2018a, 2018b).
- Hybrid borderlands: To understand the present one should know the past. The industrial history of the two borderlands at the center of our project has been captured, for example, on film, where its intricate mesh of cross-border relations is rendered accessible via the cultural studies concept of 'bordertexturing' (Fellner, 2021; Weier et al., 2018).
- Planning borderlands: The influence of national decisions and parameters on the one hand, and the potential and limits of cross-border cooperation on the other, are vividly illustrated in the field of public planning – specifically in the provision of services of general interest (Knieling and Othengrafen, 2009; Mangels and Wohland, 2018; Pallagst et al., 2022). For, as the European Commission observes: "People living in border regions often find themselves located far away from services within their national boundaries and digitally insufficiently connected, but close to proximity services on the other side of the border" (2021, p. 9).
- Energy borderlands: Recent years have seen rapid change in the social relevance of energy supplies. Hence a focal area of our investigation is the energy transition in the (western) SaarLorLux and (eastern) German-Polish border regions. Despite EU initiatives like the Green Deal, energy policies remain strongly national in character. Yet significant cross-border energy projects still take place, and it is on these that we shall focus here.

Figure 1: Linking Borderlands Project: five focal areas.



Source: Own graphics.

The Linking Borderlands project – contributions

The articles presented in this working paper provide an insight into tentative research results in the project's five mutually related focal areas:

In "Policy Borderlands: borders and governance in political science," Stefanie Thurm, Peter Ulrich, and Georg Wenzelburger exemplify the perspectives of political research on border regions, distinguishing between realist, liberal, and postmodern approaches to some advanced forms of cross-border cooperation. In light of the governance debate they introduce concepts of multi-level governance, before turning to an empirical analysis of borderland strategies, specifically those of the Saarland toward France and Lorraine toward Germany, and the mutual strategies of Brandenburg and its Polish neighbor. It becomes clear from the analysis that a policy transfer has occurred, the eastern borderlands borrowing from the experience of the west. In both cases much remains to be done if strategic goals are to be achieved as formulated.

In "Communicative Borderlands: language use and social practice in vocational training – comparing west and east," Konstanze Jungbluth, Leonie Micka, Claudia Polzin-Haumann, Nicole Richter, Dagna Zinkhahn Rhobodes, and Sara Bonin examine different levels of language usage and multilingualism in the two border regions. Applying their concept of 'co-constructing communicative borderlands' (CCCB), they shed light on the development of both shared and divergent lexical and semantic features. They focus not only on borderland language practice and policies in west and east (the latter involving a multilingual concept developed in 2021), but also particularly on cross-border vocational training. Reflecting the different timescales of EU integration, this seems to be of more one-sided interest in the east than in the west. An empirical example from a multilingual classroom illustrates the growth of intermediate spaces and innovative forms of communication with concomitant erosion of language barriers – a typically liminal borderland phenomenon.

In "Hybrid Borderlands: on borders, from borders, borderland experiences in film," Tobias Schank, Astrid Fellner, Isis Luxenburger, and Eva Nossem deploy the concept of bordertexturing in a theoretical and methodological approach to the elucidation of borders from a cultural studies perspective. This conceives borders as complex multimodal cultural and social constructs, the product of multiple discourses, whose dynamic interweaving is revealed in their very genesis. Exemplified in films that focus broadly but effectively on border regions, the perspective aligns the creative vision of the filmmaker vis à vis border phenomena with that of the academic critic as one that not only often has to do with border discourses but also artistically enacts their complex multimodality. After all, the medium of film can itself be seen as border-transgressing experience translated onto celluloid. Viewed through the lens of bordertexturing, recent work on film phenomenology (after Vivian Sobchack) issues in a plea for complexity in scholarly practice for which the Linking Borderlands project paradigmatically stands.

In "Planning Borderlands: Conceptualizing Territorial Development in Cross-Border Regions", Karina Pallagst, Benjamin Blaser, Kirsten Mangels, and Nino Pfundstein investigates cross-border territorial development with particular reference to services of general interest. Starting from the observation that political and social borders still possess meaning today, and that the concept of cross-border territorial development seeks to address transnational issues in border regions, the paper emphasizes the widely varying durability and permeability of borders and the impact of this on planning, especially with regard to the provision of services.

In “Energy Borderlands in comparison: on the empirical productivity of the concepts around interconnected areas and conflict zones,” Alexandra Lampke, Kamil Bembnista, Florian Weber, Ludger Gailing, and Peter Dörrenbächer address current negotiations on energy supplies in the project’s two key border regions. That common efforts at the European level cannot outweigh the strongly national character of energy policies is above all clear where dominant sources of energy clash. The French nuclear power plant Cattenom and the Polish opencast lignite mine Turów stand for such conflict zones. The hydrogen network Grande Region Hydrogen and the climate-neutral German-Polish twin city of Görlitz-Zgorzelec, on the other hand, reveal a permeability of borders and a complex interweave of structures that justifies their systematic designation as transition zones or interlinked areas. Current negotiation processes remain largely hegemonic, but possess a dynamic potential that calls for ongoing observation and analysis.

Together, the five articles show that, from its inception, the Linking Borderlands project has unmistakably demonstrated the complexities (Wille, 2021) of the two borderlands under consideration. Our overall aim is to shed further light on these complexities by interrelating work, in both content and methodology, within the project’s five focal areas. This promises not only to actively link insights into the two disparate borderlands but also to develop profitable synergies between the perspectives of the different disciplines concerned. Graphically expressed in our logo (see Fig. 1), the intermeshing of focal areas and approaches is the driving impulse of our project. Exemplified in the present collection of articles, Linking Borderlands is a vital laboratory, a space of interdisciplinary experiment and dialogue. In its emphasis on pluralism and complexity it reflects the European principle of negotiating impermeable barriers.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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Policy Borderlands: Borders and Governance in Political Science

Stefanie Thurm, Peter Ulrich, Georg Wenzelburger

The article outlines the debate revolving around the concept border, cross-border and multi-level governance in political science and political geography. First, it discusses the interlinkage of the concepts of border and the nation-state. Second, it presents the theoretical model of governance. Third, it differentiates the political science concept of multi-level governance and the concept cross-border governance from political geography. Finally, it sketches first empirical results from the research project „Linking Borderlands“ and links it to theory.

Cross-border cooperation, multi-level governance, cross-border governance, nation state borders, *Frankreichstrategie, Stratégie Allemagne, Nachbarschaftsstrategie Brandenburg-Polen*

Policy Borderlands: Grenzen und Governance in der Politikwissenschaft

Der Beitrag beleuchtet die Debatte um die Konzepte Grenze, Cross-Border und Multi-Level-Governance in der Politikwissenschaft und der Politischen Geographie. Eingangs wird das theoretische Modell von Grenze und des Nationalstaats aufeinander bezogen, bevor im nächsten Schritt das Governance-Konzept vorgestellt wird. Im Folgenden wird eine Unterscheidung zwischen dem politikwissenschaftlichen Multi-Level Governance-Ansatz und dem politgeografischen Verständnis von Cross-Border Governance vollzogen. Abschließend werden erste empirische Ergebnisse aus dem Forschungsprojekt „Policy Borderlands“ auf die theoretischen Konzepte bezogen.

Grenzüberschreitende Kooperation, multi-level governance, cross-border governance, nationalstaatliche Grenzen, Frankreichstrategie, *Stratégie Allemagne, Nachbarschaftsstrategie Brandenburg-Polen*

Policy Borderlands : Frontières et gouvernance en science politique

Cet article résume le débat autour des concepts de frontière, de la gouvernance transfrontalière et de la gouvernance multi-niveaux en sciences politiques et en géographie politique. Dans un premier temps, nous discutons les relations entre les termes scientifiques de la « frontière » et de « l'état-nation » avant d'établir les liens avec le concept de la gouvernance. Ensuite, nous élaborons sur la distinction entre l'approche de la gouvernance multi-niveaux en science politique (*multi-level governance*) et de la gouvernance transfrontalière (*cross-border governance*) en géographie politique. La dernière partie de notre article contraste ces concepts théoriques avec quelques premiers résultats empiriques du projet de recherche « Policy Borderlands » sur la « Frankreichstrategie » et la « Stratégie Allemagne » développées dans la Sarre et le Département Moselle en France ainsi que la « Stratégie de voisinage » (*Nachbarschaftsstrategie*) qui a été établie par la région du Brandenburg envers la Pologne.

Coopération transfrontalière, multi-level governance, gouvernance transfrontalière, frontières des États-nations, *Frankreichstrategie, Stratégie Allemagne, Nachbarschaftsstrategie Brandenburg-Polen*

Introduction: Borders in political science

Cross-border cooperation and borders in general have for a long time been no major research area in political science. However, borders, as we know them today, are part of the very core DNA not only of our contemporary political order but also of modern political science. This is true for the (comparative) analysis of political systems, one of the major subdisciplines of political science, because the existence of borders delineates national political systems with their own respective political cultures and institutions. And it is true for the study of international relations, as borders are not only objects of international disputes in times of conflict and war, but also a site of increasing cooperation between nation states, with the rise of international organizations and globalized trade (Keohane & Nye, 1977; Rosenau, 1990). Especially in the European Union (EU), an extraordinary transnational project of political and economic cooperation, a process of debordering has taken place over the past decades: Through the single market with its free movement of goods, services, capital, and people, nation state borders lost part of their function as barriers (Schimmelfennig, 2021).³ Hence, while political science has a long tradition in the study of nation states delineated by borders and of cooperation beyond borders in international organizations, the discipline has usually taken borders themselves for granted and only started to question their nature and effects more systematically.

Starting from this observation, this short contribution aims at gaining a better understanding of the perspectives that political science can offer on borders and cross-border cooperation. To this end, we will first sketch out central characteristics of the modern nation state and explain the relevance of borders for the contemporary political order. Subsequently, the concepts of multi-level and cross-border governance will be introduced as a framework to analyze politics in border regions beyond classical hierarchies of nation state governing. While doing this, we will lay out how the subproject *Policy Borderlands* uses these concepts to better understand current developments and political measures in two cross-border regions: the Brandenburg/Lubuskie area and the Greater Region.

Theoretical background: Borders and the nation state

With the establishment of the Westphalian order in the 17th century, the modern nation state was born. What now appears as natural – states with clearly delineated territorial borders in which they have exclusive sovereignty – is distinctive of the Westphalian system. While the concept of a state has been defined in multiple ways (Giddens, 1987; Mann, 1986; Weber, 1980), the existence of a fixed territory delineated by borders is usually seen as central. Most definitions therefore include as elements “centralized institutions that impose rules, and back them up by force, over a territorially circumscribed population; a distinction between the rulers and the ruled; and an element of autonomy, stability, and differentiation” (Scheidel, 2013, p. 7). According to a classical definition by Georg Jellinek, a state is defined by three elements, namely a national territory, a state people, and state power (Jellinek, 1905). The state power is exercised by a set of institutions, encompassing among others the administration, head of state and government. The state itself is more stable than the government which can (and in democratic states regularly does) change, while the state borders stay the same. This concept of the state has been the cornerstone of the traditional view of political science: For instance, grand theories of international relations – such as realism or neo-realism (Morgenthau, 1948, Waltz, 1979), but also liberal theory (Moravcsik, 1997) – analyze power relations based on the nation-states and national governments. And similarly, comparative studies of political systems and public policies who emphasize cultural heritage and cultural differences between nations, generally refer to the state as unit of analysis (Castles, 1993).

While political science mainly focuses either on the barrier function of borders by which neighboring administrative territories are separated or on border regimes as well as border security governance e.g. at the outer EU borders, state borders also manifest in the form of psychological, linguistic and cultural boundaries (Böhm, 2019; Gerst et al., 2021)⁴. These border dimensions are constructed and constantly reproduced by societies’ discourses, narratives, and practices (Paasi, 1999). Importantly, state borders serve as identity markers for the people inheriting a state territory and can be related to beliefs about an alleged ‘natural’ unity of these people (Anderson, 1996).

³ Nevertheless, the nation state barrier function has not ceased to exist and can be revived. This is especially visible during crises, for example in the case of border closures during the Covid pandemic. At the same time, the EU internal debordering was not paralleled by an external debordering.

⁴ For an overview over the multiple perspectives on borders, boundaries, barriers and frontiers see for example Gerst et al., 2021; Schmieder, 2021.

This relates to the fact that when we speak about states in the international system today, we often mean *nation states*. The term nation state includes important ideological connotations that exceed the state concept. A nation can be conceived as “body of people who possess some sense of a single communal identity, with a shared historical tradition, with major elements of common culture, and with a substantial proportion of them inhabiting an identifiable geographical unit” (Robertson, 2002, p. 329). If these elements coincide with the existence of a state as defined above, this can be seen as an ideal-type nation state. Both *nations* and *states* can, however, exist independently. Prior to the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, multiple sub-states with shared linguistic and historical ties existed, but not yet a single nation state. On the other hand, the development of a nation state can occur in a more top-down manner, such as in the case of France, where cultural and linguistic homogeneity was rather a product of the nation state founding (Hobsbawm, 1992). Many nation states do not fulfill the criteria defined above. Belgium, for example, encompasses French-speaking, Dutch-speaking, and German-speaking population groups. These cultural and linguistic differences also find their way into the country’s political system with a very distinct construction of the federal state: It encompasses two different kinds of subnational levels: One representing the three language communities and another representing three administrative regions (Brussels, Wallonia, and the Flemish region), which differ geographically from the language communities. Where a sufficient cultural foundation is lacking and nation states are created artificially, conflict, instability, and even failed states can be the result (Robertson, 2002).

Over time, there have been significant changes in how states relate to each other in the international arena and which functions have been ascribed to their borders. While, traditionally, maintaining sovereignty and protecting borders have been central to state action, recent decades have seen a strong increase of cooperation, interdependence, and opening of borders also through Europeanization and thus regionalization processes. Global trade and the increased importance of global concerns like climate change has led many states to cooperate in international institutions and coordinate their policies internationally, thus giving away part of their sovereignty (Levy, Stephens, and Leibfried, 2015). Building on the work of Moraczewska (2010), Böhm (2019) proposes a classification of border functions through the lens of international relation theories. He distinguishes between a realist, a liberal, and a postmodern perspective (see Table 1). In the realistic tradition, borders are of high importance and function as a barrier against threats and as a central element of sovereignty. According to liberal thinking, cooperation and interdependence become more relevant, with borders serving as bridges not only between states but also to non-state actors. Lastly, following the postmodern paradigm, borders partially lose their barrier function and activities of transnational actors as well as the transfer of state functions to the subnational and international level increases (Böhm, 2019; Kolossov, 2015).

These tendencies are very visible when we observe current political developments in European border regions. In line with the liberal perspective, cross-border cooperation between state- and non-state actors has long become a reality in the Greater Region and alongside the German-Polish border. Through ongoing promotion by the European Union and institutional innovations like the EGTC – in concurrence with the postmodern paradigm – competences shift from the national to the supra- and subnational level. Moreover, borders partially lose their barrier function through policies developed in the observed border regions: For example, with the France strategy of 2014, the Saarland launched an extraordinary initiative of strengthened multisectoral cross-border cooperation (Crossey and Weber, 2022). One major focus of the France strategy aims at improving language skills amongst the population which is supposed to eventually lead to the establishment of “an efficient multilingual area of Franco-German character” (Staatskanzlei des Saarlandes, 2014, own translation). Thus, the strategy actively works at reducing the border’s barrier function and, noticeably, does not only tackle administrative and economic aspects but directly aims at diminishing cultural and linguistic boundaries. While such initiatives certainly do not erode the power of the nation state altogether or lead to an upheaval of the international order, we definitely witness efforts to find new ways of governing cross-border territories and of expressing transnational identities through language and culture.

Table 2: Border functions according to International Relations paradigms

Paradigm	Realistic	Liberal	Postmodern
Border perception	Dividing line, determination of nationality	Porous line, an element of system enabling states' penetration	Virtual line, demarcating line seen only at the maps
Border importance	Very important: border as barrier against threats, sovereignty guarding, disintegrative function	Border as bridge between states and non-territorial actors, fragmentative function	Not important: barrier function for international flows barely present, integrative function
Action at Border	Infrastructure building, securitization, and militarization of border	Infrastructure, opening of channels for flows of goods, people, money, information	No infrastructure or not important, making heterogeneous market systems and legal systems

Source: Adapted from Böhm, 2019.

Multi-Level and Cross-Border Governance

Especially in the context of the EU, the role of borders has undergone significant changes. With the European Single Market, people, goods, services, and capital are no longer restricted by state borders. Thus, while borders have geographically stayed the same, their functions have very much changed. The state power which is contained by them has partially been transferred to the European level, while subnational jurisdictions have gained more competences at the same time as well (Hooghe et al., 2010). In this context, Gary Marks was the first scholar to use the term multi-level governance to refer to "a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers [...], as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decision reallocation that has pulled some previously centralized functions of the state up to the supranational level and some down to the local/regional level" (Marks, 1993, p. 392).

Government and governance: Conceptual clarifications

To better understand the scope of the multi-level governance concept it is useful to first offer a definition of the term *governance* and sketch out what makes it differ from the terms *governing* and *government*. In a traditional government perspective, the state is the central focus: Decisions in a democratic polity are made through legislation by a democratically elected government and are influenced by competing parties, interest groups and public opinion. Decision-making and implementation are thus based on clear (bureaucratic) hierarchies within the state apparatus. Shifts in modern societies gave rise to the *governance* perspective, which focuses more strongly on compromise and co-production of collective goods. In general, governance can be defined as the "sum of regulations brought about by actors, processes as well as structures and justified with reference to a public problem" (Zürn et al., 2010, Grande, 2012). While governance thus is also concerned with addressing public problems through policies – just as government does – private actors and public-private partnerships are an important factor in the provision of public goods. Moreover, the political processes leading to decisions tend to be more informal and depend upon the negotiation processes between involved actors (Benz, 2004).

The concept of *multi-level* governance is one specific form of governance that was coined mainly by political scientists Hooghe and Marks. Importantly, what makes it differ from other governance perspectives is that it focusses on the dispersion of governance across multiple levels. While this is not entirely new – in federal states, regional governments work together with the national level or other subnational levels – multi-level governance is closely linked to governance in the EU. A specific feature of multi-level governance in the EU is, for instance, that subnational governments can form coalitions with the European level and thus bypass the power of the nation state (Hooghe, 1996; Hooghe and Marks, 2001).

Hooghe and Marks distinguish two ideal types of multi-level governance, as summarized in table 2. Type I multi-level governance corresponds to the institutional structure of federalism: Each citizen is located "in a Russian Doll set of nested jurisdictions" (Hooghe and Marks, 2001, p. 17). At each level, there is only one responsible general-purpose jurisdiction. Memberships are non-intersecting, which means that for example a city cannot be member of two states at the same time. Type I systems typically encompass a limited number of levels which is visible in the federal structure of EU states with the number of levels varying

between two (in Malta) and six (in Germany). Lastly, type I systems encompass a system-wide structure which is typically based on an elected legislature, an executive, and a court system. As opposed to that, type II multi-level governance is organized in a task-specific way and often has one specific issue it deals with. A good example for this governance form is a general-purpose association (*Zweckverband*), which deals for example with waste management or environmental protection. Intersecting memberships are possible, so jurisdictions (e.g. municipalities) can be part of multiple type II structures. Moreover, they are designed in a flexible manner and can be terminated easily when they are no longer needed, as opposed to type I structures which are usually way more durable (Hooghe and Marks, 2011).

Table 3: Types of multi-level governance

Type I	Type II
General-purpose jurisdictions	Task-specific jurisdictions
Non-intersecting memberships	Intersecting memberships
Jurisdictions organized on a limited number of levels	No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
System-wide architecture	Flexible design

Source: Hooghe and Marks, 2011, p. 18.

Multi-level governance in border regions

How does multi-level governance relate to cross-border regions and cross-border cooperation? Intensified cooperation between subnational jurisdiction has been especially prominent in North America and in the EU (Blatter, 2001). In the EU, cross-border cooperation has been supported extensively, especially through the creation of the Interreg program which is part of the EU's cohesion policy and provides funding for cross-border initiatives. This has led to the development and institutionalization of cross-border cooperation structures, mostly in the form of so-called Euroregions and Eurodistricts alongside European borders. In order to implement the Interreg programs, local, regional and sometimes national actors collaborate with the support and funding of the European Commission. For example, in the Greater Region, German, French, and Belgian regions as well as the state of Luxembourg are represented. The specific collaboration projects are then executed by public actors from different levels as well as by private and civil society actors. Clearly, this complies with the notion of multi-level governance, as different political levels as well as non-state actors are involved. With the establishment of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2006, the EU has even strengthened the possibilities of subnational and non-state actors to work together (Medeiros, 2020; Nadalutti, 2013; Ulrich, 2020; 2021).

Interestingly, however, the classification into type I or type II multi-level governance is not that straightforward (partially of course due to the fact that they represent ideal types). On the one hand, cross-border cooperation structures like Euroregions are task-specific insofar as cross-border cooperation is their principal goal. And clearly, they do not fit the *Russian doll* architecture, in which each jurisdiction has non-intersecting memberships in the higher levels. Some jurisdictions are even part of multiple Euroregions (Klatt and Herrmann, 2011). Thus, some authors classify Euroregions as being type II multi-level governance (Perkmann, 2007). Nevertheless, especially cross-border cooperation in Europe has many type I features: According to Blatter (2001), Euroregions are organized following a traditional territorial logic with more or less fixed borders that build on existing jurisdictional borders. Regarding the range of tasks that Euroregions are dealing with, it is evident that many of them do tackle a wide range of issues, from social to cultural policies, and environmental protection. Insofar, while all these tasks are performed under the umbrella of cross-border cooperation, cross-border regions in Europe develop into the direction of general-purpose type I jurisdictions (Crossey and Weber, 2022). Against this background cross-border regions can be seen as an additional layer in the overall EU multi-level governance architecture and be captured as *spaces of place*. In contrast, cross-border cooperation in North America rather can be seen as *space of flow*, with flexible, issue-specific cooperation structures which clearly follow a type II logic. These spaces of flow are less focused on pre-existing administrative territories but more on functional networks of people, goods, or natural flows. Regions of cross-border cooperation have for example been built around watersheds or the migratory route of salmon (Blatter, 2001; Hooghe and Marks, 2011).

Cross-border governance in EU border regions

Besides multi-level governance, the notion of cross-border governance has entered the stage in political science and political geography as a concept to describe and analyze governance processes across national borders – mostly in bigger transnational contexts but also in coherent border regions, transborder urban agglomerations, or local contexts like twin cities or divided towns (Gualini, 2003; Jańczak, 2011; Leresche & Saez, 2002; Pikner, 2008; Scott, 2002; Veggeland, 2004; Ulrich and Scott, 2021). Parallel to multi-level governance, the concept of cross-border governance highlights similar attributes of governing: Not a single government is responsible for politics but several different actors at the same time on different levels. They interact and are involved in opinion-formation, decision-making and jurisdiction. Type of actors vary from public actors to private/economic and civil society actors (Jańczak, 2011; Ulrich and Scott, 2021). The issues negotiated concern public matters – in this context cross-border regions such as functional territories, or Europeanized institutions across borders such as Euroregions and Eurodistricts (Pikner, 2008). In contrast to multi-level governance, which focusses on different levels of jurisdiction, cross-border governance is rather concerned with the transborder cooperation context and the specific challenges and circumstances (Scott, 2002). Especially, cross-border contexts are not only characterized by vertical (supranational, national, and subnational) and horizontal dimensions as in multi-level governance, but also have a diagonal dimension of governance (Ulrich and Scott, 2021). Different levels of competences on a specific policy on both sides of the border may challenge cross-border forms of cooperation and lead to asymmetries, when different levels feel responsible or when it is not clear who is or when national actors are eager to cooperate with the adjacent national level and not with the regional one. Cooperation in (cross-border) institutionalized governance arrangements can be inter-institutional, intra-institutional, cross-border inter-institutional and cross-border “supraregional” intra-institutional (Ulrich and Scott, 2021, p. 164). The literature on cross-border governance is dominated by case studies, and mostly so in EU border regions. Moreover, the concept is also linked to processes of Europeanization represented in EU multi-level governance and jurisdictions as Veggeland (2004, p. 161–162) states: “As partners, the cooperating regions, the states, the private actors, and the EU, as indicated above, have all subordinated themselves under the legal rules of negotiated treaties, agreements and contracts. Thus, the building of EU-regions and the Euro-regions are intimately linked to EU Governance, to the arising territorial multilevel Governance and partnership structures in Europe”.

Multi-level and cross-border governance in border regions: the example of the *Frankreichstrategie*, the *Stratégie Allemagne* and the *Nachbarschaftsstrategie Brandenburg-Polen*

The central case study of the subproject Policy Borderlands revolves around the development and implementation of the *Frankreichstrategie des Saarlandes*⁵, the *Stratégie Allemagne de la Lorraine*⁶ and the *Nachbarschaftsstrategie Brandenburg-Polen*⁷. These strategies are telling examples of multi-level and cross-border governance as well as the challenges and opportunities thereof.

The France strategy of 2014 is a large-scale multisectoral initiative to increase cross-border cooperation with a strong focus on strengthening the necessary cultural and language skills in the Saarland. The policy process explicitly made use of a multi-level governance approach. In order to capture as many voices as possible and to gain popular support, the architects of the policy initiated a broad consultation and participation process (Staatskanzlei des Saarlandes, 2014). While participatory governance styles have spread in many areas, they seem to be of special importance for policies such as the *Frankreichstrategie* which touch upon questions of national and cultural identity. As one of the interviewees phrased it: “Because, what happens if you develop such a comprehensive strategy? You basically interfere with people’s identity... it concerns society as a whole. That’s why it was clear to us from the beginning that you could not impose something like that” (Interview 1 West, own translation). While criticism did indeed arise, the governance approach helped to secure a generally favorable assessment in the population (Krämer, 2019).

With the response of Lorraine in form of the *Stratégie Allemagne*, a complementary initiative of strengthening cooperation has been launched. Nevertheless, there is an interest in rendering the existing cooperation structures more binding, for example in the form of a partnership agreement, which one of the interviewees told us. The interviewee however brought up concerns that the other side would not be interested in taking cooperation one step further and expressed that actors on “his” side of the border had put more energy in

⁵ cf. Staatskanzlei des Saarlandes, 2014.

⁶ cf. *Stratégie Allemagne de la Lorraine*, 2015.

⁷ cf. *Ministerium der Finanzen und für Europa des Landes Brandenburg*, 2021.

strengthening cooperation (Interview 3 West). While close and trusting relationships have been established in the area, it became evident that cross-border governance demands ongoing communication and commitment by all actors. If not, there is a risk of perpetuating an insider-outsider logic based on nationality. On the German-Polish border, the challenge of deepening cross-border governance is even more pronounced. As the political cooperation between Germany and Poland in a European context only exists since the fall of the Iron curtain, the cooperation between these states only began in the 1990's. With the German-Polish Border Treaty (1990) and the Treaty of Good Neighbourship (1991) the freshly re-united Germany and the newly established Republic of Poland started to experience and implement multi-level and cross-border relations and cooperation structures. On different levels, cooperation has been strengthened to various degrees. Thus, in 2016 with the Joint Future Concept 2030 for the German-Polish Border Region, a spatial planning vision and concept has been defined by a bilateral forum of a governmental committee composed of national, regional and local actors. This vision is non-binding and serves as spatial development guiding principle on an overarching level. Since the 1990s, moreover, euroregional and local initiatives have been developed and therefore, several levels have been cooperating. What has been missing is the level in the middle – the regional layer.

The Nachbarschaftsstrategie Brandenburg-Polen developed in 2021 has tried to fill this gap on the regional level. It serves as a strategy of the federal state of Brandenburg for the "Neighbourhood" cooperation in the German-Polish cross-border area and aims mainly at cross-border cohesion, sustainable growth and life quality. The Brandenburg Strategy has been developed due to a commitment by the Brandenburg governing coalition captured in the coalition agreement from 2019. In terms of the development process and in comparison to the Frankreichstrategie of the Saarland, however it did not involve a broad participatory approach, but was worked out rather top-down under guidance of a specific unit within the Brandenburg Ministry of European Affairs. In the negotiation process of this strategy, several "European" and "international" units of other Brandenburg Ministries were involved and asked to contribute to the strategy by providing information on their specific work and policy field, but stakeholders from civil society were partially involved. The cross-border elements of governance have been visible in the elaboration of the study, when prime examples of the euroregional and cross-border local level have been surveyed in the strategy. Here cross-border actors and institutions from the local level like the cooperation center Frankfurt (Oder)-Słubice, Guben-Gubin and the German-Polish European New School of Digital Studies in Słubice have been involved. Here, a cross-border approach in the development of the strategy is visible as well as a multilevel elaboration between the federal state regional ministry and the local level institutions.

In terms of content, the Nachbarschaftsstrategie has been inspired by the Frankreichstrategie des Saarlandes, which has served as an important reference. At the same time, also other strategy papers, also from the Polish side, were considered: "[The Frankreichstrategie des Saarlandes is] exactly what we had looked at before, of course. So of course that was a bit of a reference, although the result is, I think, very different from what the Saarland has put together. [...] But of course we also looked at the strategies of the Euroregions, so to speak one level deeper, that we looked at it again, because they had actually worked it out in parallel. [...] There are also development concepts of the voivodeships, which we have looked at in part, especially those of the partner voivodeship. And, of course, there are also strategies of the ministries, now here in Brandenburg" (Interview 12 East). In this regard, in terms of content, it becomes obvious that there has been a policy transfer in an inter-regional context: The "West-German" strategy served as a reference document.

Conclusion

In this article, we have discussed different concepts from political science and political geography to shed light on empirical examples studied in the context of the "Linking Borderlands"-project. In order to allow for a systematic analysis, we have first outlined key concepts that have been used in the literature, and shown that the term of cross-border governance is enlightening in this respect as it encompasses EU (multi-level) governance on a micro-scale but also takes into account the differences, opportunities, and challenges that are created due to the specific territorial, political, institutional, socioeconomic, sociocultural, and cultural arrangements and peculiarities across national borders.

Our empirical case studies from the Western and Eastern part of German cross-border regions, the multi-level and cross-border dynamics in border regions have been illustrated. They have shown that, while some similarities in the overall structure of the cross-border cooperation exist between the two regions – e.g. the existence of local cooperations, Euroregions, Eurodistricts and Interreg-funded projects – notable differences are also visible. This is apparent, for instance, in the case of the strategies adopted on the regional levels, the Frankreichstrategie and the Nachbarschaftsstrategie Brandenburg-Polen, that have been developed in quite different ways although they aimed at similar goals (and although the Eastern border region

has inspired its own strategy by looking at the Saarland). Whereas the Saarland government engaged in a broad participatory process involving the political levels and civil society as well as private actors on both sides of the border – that is in a process that can be seen as governance – the Brandenburg government developed the strategy mainly top down and only involved local actors. Studying the reasons for these differences, the extent to which horizontal transfer and learning between the Eastern and the Western border regions actually occur, and how these learning processes are actually influenced by a broader multi-level governance framework on the European level that enhances exchange between border regions, are therefore important research questions that will enrich our understanding of cross-border governance and learning processes.

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Communicative Borderlands: Language Use and Social Practice in Vocational Training Comparing West and East

Konstanze Jungbluth, Leonie Micka, Claudia Polzin-Haumann, Nicole Richter, Dagna Zinkhahn Rhobodes, Sara Bonin

The paper focusses on the phenomenon of plurilingualism in borderlands and border regions. We describe the concepts of several terms known from border area research such as boundaries, border regions and borderlands theoretically as well as functionally. The functional aspects refer to observations of social practice and cross-border communication in vocational training. The paper concentrates on two border regions – the German-French and German-Polish border – with respect to their specific language policy in order to explain characteristic cross-border communicative strategies.

Plurilingualism, co-constructing communicative borderlands/CCCBL, cross-border vocational training, language boundaries, language policy

Communicative Borderlands: Sprachgebrauch und soziale Praxis in der Berufsausbildung im West-Ost-Vergleich

Der Artikel ist dem Phänomen des Plurilingualismus in Borderlands und Grenzregionen gewidmet. Konzepte einiger grenzraumforschungsbezogener Begriffe wie boundaries, Grenzregionen und Borderlands werden theoretisch und in Bezug auf ihre Funktionen beschrieben. Die funktionalen Aspekte basieren wir dabei auf Beobachtungen der sozialen Praxis und der grenzüberschreitenden Kommunikation in der Berufsausbildung. Es werden zwei Grenzregionen – eine deutsch-französische und eine deutsch-polnische – mit ihrer jeweils spezifischen Sprachpolitik betrachtet, um charakteristische grenzüberschreitende Kommunikationsstrategien zu erläutern.

Plurilingualismus, co-constructing communicative borderlands/CCCBL, grenzüberschreitende Berufsausbildung, Sprachgrenzen, Sprachpolitik

Communicative Borderlands : Usage des langues et pratiques sociales dans la formation professionnelle, comparant l'Ouest et l'Est

L'article est consacré au phénomène du plurilinguisme dans les borderlands et les régions frontalières. Les concepts de certains termes liés aux recherches sur les frontières, tels que boundaries, régions frontalières et borderlands, sont discutés d'un point de vue théorique et fonctionnel. Les aspects fonctionnels sont basés sur des observations de la pratique sociale et de la communication transfrontalière dans la formation professionnelle. Deux régions frontalières – une franco-allemande et une germano-polonaise - avec leurs

politiques linguistiques spécifiques sont traitées, afin de dégager les stratégies de communication trans-frontalières caractéristiques.

Plurilinguisme, co-constructing communicative borderlands/CCCBL, formation professionnelle trans-frontalière, frontières linguistiques, politiques linguistiques

Introduction

Border regions have long since moved from the periphery to the centre of interest of scientific research. More than one third of EU citizens live in border regions. The national view that considers these regions “at the periphery” of the country often does not correspond to the cross-border realities that have emerged in these areas. Today, there is a general consensus that border regions are important for the development of Europe; sometimes they are even considered as laboratories of European integration (cf. Europäische Kommission, 2022). European integration concerns many aspects, such as labour markets, tourism, mobility, to name only a few. Language plays a central role in all these areas. Since the 1990s, languages, multi- and plurilingualism as well as plurilingual education have been systematically promoted by the European language policy. This policy has been echoed on the national and even, in some countries, the regional level. This contribution takes a comparative look regarding languages and multi-/plurilingualism at two border regions and: the Saarland-Lorraine region within the so-called Greater Region and the region Brandenburg-Lubuskie Voivodeship. Its aim is to shed light on the different levels on which the linguistic cross-border character of these regions is rooted and established. We will also see that, on the one hand, they share some characteristics (e.g., language policies concerning the learning and teaching of the neighbouring language), but, on the other hand, they differ from each other concerning several aspects. In order to appropriately describe the complex architecture of the two border regions, we suggest to distinguish three levels: the institutional, the metalinguistic, and the interactive level. The first comprises frameworks and structures that have been created over time (cf. chapter 3.1). But as structures themselves cannot automatically generate the politically desired realities on their own, it seems important to also take into account attitudes and opinions of the people who act in these structures (e.g. stakeholders in educational or economic institutions). And finally, there is the level of concrete everyday action of citizens and their collaborative interactional practice by crossing language and hierarchical boundaries, which may lead to the emergence of liminal spaces. It seems of interest to consider how these different levels interact and affect language use, teaching, and language learning.

Co-Constructing communicative borderlands – theoretical and methodological considerations

For our analysis (interview data, survey data, and interactional data) we have introduced the term Co-Constructing Communicative Borderlands (CCCBL). The term has evolved from studies, analyses, and discussions within pragmatics, particularly in the field of interactional linguistics (cf. Auer and Zima, 2021; Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018; Radford, 2009), conversation analysis (cf. Firth, 1996; Heritage, 1997; Lind and Sønnerud, 2014), and second language acquisition (cf. Brouwer, 2003; Eskildsen and Markee, 2018; Tarone, 2002), all working with data, be they spontaneous conversations or considerations made available in interviews. In our research the focus is on language use of borderlands and the question of why communication both in and on borderlands is involved in the phenomenon Co-Constructing Communicative Borderlands. Since speakers make use of more than one variety or language in everyday communication and easily handle these in their conversations and interactions, it seems necessary to use a term aiming at these skills that can be studied and observed more frequently in border regions. Linguistically, we shall speak of a competence speakers have learnt and are able to use actively. Moreover, this CCCBL competence is regularly part of the discussions because we will benefit from the term in the analyses of interviews with experts, accordingly.

To sum up, Co-Constructing Communicative Borderlands means that speakers and their interlocutors collaboratively construct their utterances. In doing so, they develop shared meanings and different linguistic levels are affected: the lexical and semantic level, so that new words are created ad hoc, but also syntactic and morphological components can be changed and adapted spontaneously. In order to be pragmatically successful in the cross-border context, speakers communicate using more than one language or variety building upon their experience and knowledge of their borderlands. Border regions are usually larger, refer to the political context and include the outskirts, whereas borderlands are generally much closer to the actual border and smaller than border regions. In this paper, we particularly compare the two border regions Brandenburg-Lubuskie and Saarland-Lorraine. People living and working in these border regions cooperatively shape their living space and can undoubtedly be described as experts performing the CCCBL competence to an advanced degree.

Communicative borderlands – an institutional and individual perspective

The institutional level

Strengthening contact with neighbours and promoting the neighbouring language should be an important task of language policies in border regions with the objective of making learners aware of the proximity to the neighbouring country and the benefits of the neighbouring language already from childhood (cf. Polzin-Haumann et al., 2019, p. 8). According to Albert Raasch, one of the first linguists who has underlined the importance of learning and teaching the neighbouring language, language tuition should not only teach language skills but also open hearts and doors, so that borders can be broken down and a neighbourly relationship can be created (cf. Raasch, 2003, p. 36).

In the border region of Saarland-Lorraine as well as in the border region of Brandenburg-Lubuskie Voivodeship there are political efforts with the goal to promote multi- and plurilingualism, especially of the neighbouring language. With the *Frankreichstrategie* (equivalent to: France strategy) (Staatskanzlei Saarland, 2014) and the *Sprachenkonzept Saarland 2019* (equivalent to: Language concept Saarland 2019) (Ministerium für Bildung und Kultur Saarland and Universität des Saarlandes, 2019), Saarland is pursuing the objective of becoming a multilingual communication area by 2043, with French as second vehicular language. A corresponding counterpart also exists in the former department Lorraine, on the French side of the border. With the *Stratégie Allemagne de la Lorraine* (equivalent to: The Germany Strategy of Lorraine) (Conseil régional de Lorraine 2015) and the agreement *Pour une vision stratégique commune du développement des politiques éducatives en faveur du plurilinguisme et du transfrontalier* (equivalent to: For a common strategic vision of the development of educational policies in favour of plurilingualism and cross-border issues) (Dossier de presse, 2019), the region also wants to promote the German language (cf. Polzin-Haumann, in prep.). Concerning the domain of vocational education, in 2014, an agreement on cross-border vocational training was created to offer young people a perspective for their future. This gives them the opportunity to complete the theoretical part as well as the corresponding final examination at a vocational school in their home country and to attend the training company for the practical part of their education/apprenticeship in their neighbouring country. Also, the apprentices may take an external examination in the neighbouring country and thereby obtain an additional qualification (cf. RVSL, 2014, p. 6). As a result, various programmes and structures have developed. In addition to some institutions, there are also vocational schools in Saarland and Lorraine who offer cross-border training courses. One of them is the vocational training centre Willi-Graf in St. Ingbert, which cooperates in the automotive sector with the Lycée André Citroën in Marly (cf. Polzin-Haumann 2020, p. 59–60).

With the objective of understanding how cross-border cooperation takes place in the above-mentioned language policy framework conditions and to learn more about how the different actors in cross-border vocational training (institutions, companies, schools, teachers, trainers, interpreters, trainees) experience and co-construct the cross-border situation, field research is conducted. One part of this field research consists in interviews, in which contact persons described their experiences in relation to (language) policy efforts. Since the beginning of cross-border training in 2014, a total of 77 training contracts have been signed, especially by French adolescents who completed the practical part of their training in a company in Saarland (cf. B1, paragraph 58). However, different obstacles and challenges have arisen/emerged over the recent years. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new training reform in France holds a new challenge for recruitment agencies. Vocational training is now regulated at the national level, which prevents mediators from concluding new cross-border training contracts⁸ (cf. B1, paragraph 30). Nevertheless, one interviewee is optimistic about the future and hopes that with the renewal of the framework agreement between France and Germany some new solutions for cross-border training will be found (cf. B1, paragraph 138).

In the Brandenburg region, an application for a multilingualism concept was submitted in 2021 with the goal of strengthening ancestral regional and minority languages (cf. Landtag Brandenburg, 2021). A corresponding draft concept was presented by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in June 2022 and will be adopted at the beginning of 2023 (cf. Bildungsklick, 2022). Also, a cross-border vocational training exists in this border region to ensure mobility on the cross-border labour market.

⁸ The recently published “Ordonnance du 22 décembre 2022 relative à l'apprentissage transfrontalier” (equivalent to: Decree of 22 December on cross-border training) addresses conditions for the implementation and financing of cross-border training (cf. République française, 2022).

The comparison of institutional offers in the cross-border vocational training sector shows a strong asymmetry between the Brandenburg-Polish border region and the Saarland-Lorraine border region. Many offers in the region of Lubuskie Voivodeship are designed to cater primarily to young adolescents from Poland. There is less asymmetry⁹ in the offers of the Saarland-Lorraine region. The majority of offers are directed at young people from both Saarland and Lorraine. This obvious imbalance between the German-French and the German-Polish border regions¹⁰ mirrors a historically quite different time span of cross-border cooperation. However, initiatives such as the twin towns Frankfurt (Oder)-Stubice are very much engaged in lobbying for German-Polish collaborations. This includes initiatives for education at all levels, from Kindergarten to University, as well as double diploma in vocational training, with the aim to develop their cross-border cooperation and an open German-Polish labour market.

Collaborative construction, overcoming hierarchy and language borders

The following lines illustrate how co-constructing (CCCBL) is achieved in a multilingual group as a result of collaborative interactional practice by crossing language and hierarchical boundaries. The audio excerpt transcribed below was recorded during a training camp for young German and Polish rescue workers organised in Strausberg (Brandenburg), which was a part of a cross-border training in the rescue service and which aims to lay the foundation for sufficient language skills for cross-border rescue.¹¹

The following excerpt was recorded during a lesson in a multilingual classroom carried out by a German native speaker trainer. Besides the trainer, Polish native speaker interpreter and German and Polish native speaker trainees were present in the classroom. The German trainer uses colloquial German, a variety dialectally marked as the local Low German (Brandenburgisch). He has a basic knowledge of Polish and teaches the theoretical content in a way which is fundamentally co-constructed referring to language resources present in the classroom, thus encouraging all participants to actively participate in the collaborative meaning-making activity. He initiates a word search inviting the participants to find the technical term in Polish by turning this interactional practice into a collaborative achievement (cf. Gülich, 1986; Jungbluth, 2016):

Example 1:

- 01 #00:01:37-8# TR¹²: (->de) *wie würde es //auf POLNISCH hei/ //*
 02 #00:01:38-9# TR: (->de) *wie würd es //auf POLNISCH heissen (.) RICKE WURFSACK//*
 03 #00:01:42-1# TSG1: *m/ ähm (->pol) rzuć (->de) war WERFEN oder ne (->pol) rzu / rzu (->de) irgendwas*
 04 *(.) war WERFEN //glaube ich ja//*
 05 #00:01:46-7# INT: *//hm (bejahend)// (.) ja (->pol) to znaczy taki WOREK do rzucania*
 06 #00:01:50-1# TSG1: *(->de) ah das der substantiv dann*
 07 #00:01:51-6# INT: *(->pol) WOREK DO RZUCANIA (->de) du kannst nicht wie ein deutsche sagen //so//*
 08 #00:01:54-9# TSG1: *// ??okay//*
 09 #00:01:54-9# INT: *(->pol) wo / rzu / rzut workowy*
 10 #00:01:57-3# TSP1: *rzutka ['Wurfsack'], 'throwbag'*
 11 #00:01:58-5# INT: *rzutka tez (unv.) 2 #00:01:58-9# AUSZP1: rzutka hm (bejahend) RZUTKA, RZUTKA*
 13 #00:02:00-5# INT: *(->de) achso 'ohso'*
 14 #00:02:01-9# TSP2: *(*husten*)*
 15 #00:02:02-2# INT: *//(->pol) rzutka //*
 16 #00:02:02-8# TR: *//mal gucken ob sie es RICHTIG haben//*
 17 #00:02:02-9# TSP1: *//rzutka // (.) nie //wiem// (.) hm (bejahend)*
 18 #00:02:09-2# TR: *//RZUTKA ['WURFSACK'], 'THROWBAG' //*

⁹ The asymmetry of institutional offers in cross-border vocational education and training does not necessarily correspond to the acceptance by the students. This must be considered separately at a later date.

¹⁰ In this paper use the term border regions in the sense of Euroregions.

¹¹ The training camp had been carried out within a cooperation between the University of Zielona Góra, the Lubuskie Voivodeship Office and the non-profit rescue service Märkisch-Oderland (Gemeinnützige Rettungsdienst Märkisch-Oderland).

¹² Abbreviations: TR – trainer, TSG- German native speaker trainee, TSP – Polish native speaker trainee, INT – interpreter.

19 #00:02:10-8# TR: RZUTKA
 20 #00:02:11-8# INT: //hm (bejahend) (ER ZET) 'affirmative' //
 21 [...]
 30 #00:02:37-1# TR: //(->de) bitte// EINMAL AUFSCHREIBEN 'please WRITE DOWN ONCE'
 31 #00:02:39-1# TRSG1: ja das //(unv.)//
 32 #00:02:39-6# TR: //damit wir uns det so// HALBWEGS MERKEN 'so that we can REMEMBER it HALF-WAY'
 33 [...]
 43 #00:02:59-4# TR: hm (bejahend) (.) (->pol) RZUTKA 'THROWBAG'
 44 #00:03:01-8# INT: hm (bejahend) (.) (-> pol.) tak 'yes'
 45 #00:03:03-3# TR: (-> pol.) tak (.) (->de) ne also wir WOLLEN ja ganz einfach (.) die die ERFAHRUNG
 46 //die ich// hier immer so gemacht habe
 47 #00:03:08-4# TR: mit EINZELNEN BE//GRIFFEN// 'with SINGLE TERMS'
 48 #00:03:10-4# TR: polnisch ist SCHWIERIG für MICH jedenfalls
 49 #00:03:12-2# TRSG1: //(flüstern*)//
 50 #00:03:12-9# TR: //wenn aber zu MIR jemand sagt (*husten*)// (->pol) RZUTKA (.) (->de) dann
 WEISS ich doch ja WURFSACK (.) der will den Wurfsack haben höchstwahrscheinlich
 52 #00:03:20-1# TRSG2: hm (bejahend) 'affirmative'

The trainer involves the German trainee in the search for a Polish technical word (cf. Eskilden and Markee, 2018, p. 79)¹³: he asks her what *Wurfsack* 'throwbag' would be called in Polish (line 1 and 2). The trainee makes her real-time thinking audible to her co-participants and begins with the imperative form of the verb *rzucić* 'to throw', namely *rzuc* 'Throw!' (line 3). Through sharing her process of word formation, she invites other participants to assist and correct her and thus makes the word search an activity for all interactants. In response to that the interpreter supports her and continues the trainee's train of thought formulating the nominal phrase *worek do rzucania* 'a bag to throw' (line 7). However, this suggestion of the interpreter is questioned and corrected by the Polish trainee (for discussion about correction as an interactional resource cf. Jefferson, 1974). The Polish trainee introduces the technical term *rzutka* 'throwbag' (line 10) and the interpreter accepts his correction (line 13 same term and line 15) through affirmative particle *achso* ('ohso') communicating her alignment as co-participant two times thus closing the conversational efforts of the word search. Finally, the agreement on the collaboratively achieved shared meaning is underlined by the request of the trainer to write down the Polish technical term (line 30) performed by the Polish trainee on the blackboard.

The sequence is closed by a meta-linguistic utterance of the trainer, in which he emphasizes the importance of technical vocabulary in the German-Polish rescue service. Furthermore, he stresses that even in the case of low language proficiency, the knowledge and use of technical terms is an extremely efficient strategy in the work of rescue services under time pressure. Thus, the trainer highlights the significance of efficiency and context sensitive language learning in vocational training by mentioning the crucial goal: successful understanding.¹⁴

In this excerpt, we see how the interactors collaboratively struggle for a technical term to coordinate in real interaction outside the classroom their reciprocal interaction. Several participants with different (hierarchical) roles in the classroom are involved in the shared goal of achieving intersubjectivity¹⁵ having in mind to establish a collaborative meaning suitable for the coordination of their joint task in an emergency case.

¹³ Word searches are defined by Eskilden and Markee (2018, p. 79) as follow: "they constitute a general and very frequent collaborative interactional practice that concerns how speakers initiate and carry out repair in the face of lacking vocabulary. Repair is a well-described phenomenon; it is the interactional organization of orienting to problems in understanding and restoring intersubjectivity (Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 1992). Word searches can be carried out through the use of a lingua franca and/or explicitly marked through a request for help (e.g. how do you say (x)?, is it ok to say X?), or implicitly marked through turn-design (e.g. pauses and try-marking through rising intonation) (Brouwer, 2003; Eskildsen, 2011; Kurhila, 2006; Mori, 2010; Mortensen, 2011; Theodórsdóttir and Eskildsen, 2011)".

¹⁴ This aspect of context sensitive learning is highlighted by Knopp and Jentges (2022) as follows: „Mehr noch, wir sind der Auffassung, dass der Nachbarsprachenunterricht par excellence vor Augen führt, dass jeglicher Sprachunterricht – ob nun Unterricht in der Erst- oder Zweitsprache, in der Fremd-, Herkunfts- oder eben Nachbarsprache – kontextsensibel vorgehen sollte, also nur entsprechend der Rahmenbedingungen der konkreten Unterrichtssituation und der jeweils angestrebten Ziele erfolgen kann“ (Knopp and Jentges 2022, p. 8).

¹⁵ Co-constructing as collaborative effort was discussed in Dausendschön-Gay et al. (2015, p. 24) and Hobbs (2012, p. 39–40).

Through the trainer's initiation of the word search (lines 1-2), the German trainee's attempt of word formation (lines 3-4), the interpreter's suggestion of an expanded three-part phrase (line 5), the Polish trainee's correction in form of the single term *throwbag* (line 10) already in use among experts, the follow up of its comprehension check by all, and its repetition (lines 11-20), the word searching process is the result of a joint effort, e.g. co-constructed.

This collaborative achievement cannot be traced back to one particular turn of one of the participants. The elaborated meaning is a result of the interactional work and several turns which build on one another and lead to the agreement of finding a shared meaning (cf. Brouwer, 2003, 2004; Eskildsen and Markee, 2018, p. 81).

A very interesting aspect is the suspension of hierarchies during the collaborative act as social action. On the one hand, the instructor asks the student to help him search the word he does not know, and, on the other hand, the Polish interpreter is corrected by a Polish student delivering the technical term which the interpreter did not know. Thus, hierarchical boundaries on different levels between trainer versus trainees, interpreter versus trainees, but also regarding knowledge of technical language are suspended in order to co-construct shared meaning.

In such highly dynamic contexts as communication in the multilingual classroom there is a great potential for new hybrid forms, often showing a liminal character (cf. Zinkhahn Rhobodes, 2016, p. 181–189, 281–312). In this case, language boundaries are blurred and become border zones which understood as “in-between spaces” (Dost et al., 2020). In such overlap spaces “neue Räume der Mehrsprachigkeit” (equivalent to: ‘new rooms of multilingualism’) (Erfurt, 2003, p. 6) or “der dritte Raum der Sprache” (Gugenberger, 2005: 358, equivalent to: ‘the third space of language’), hybrid linguistic forms emerge and generate new third codes.¹⁶

In doing intersubjective meaning making, this example shows how social and language boundaries are crossed and blurred in these cross-border performative acts. We observe the interplay, mixing and reinforcing of different ways of co-constructing mutual understanding beyond language boundaries. Recognizing this overcoming of language and social boundaries in the process of co-constructing is itself a dynamic and performative act representing a widely used feature of border complexities (Wille et al. forthcoming).

Conclusion

As we have seen in this paper, a multilingual class can be understood as a laboratory, wherein a community of practice through the implementation of different strategies establishes new forms of communication. During their hands-on exercises the students use particular strategies built upon their different language repertoires to communicate and to successfully solve the challenges of perfectly coordinated interaction. In order to overcome language boundaries, they spontaneously bind linguistic resources of different languages together aiming to co-construct a shared meaning. We argue that these performative acts and the interplay of different strategies are innovative forms of communication emerging in borderlands that can be observed in vocational trainings. However, their use is not limited to this special kind of interaction nor to these interactants.

The Frankreichstrategie and the politics pursued in Saarland provide important impetuses to change the cross-border reality. However, comparing the still young language policy framework at the German-Polish border and the historically already well-established German-French Saarland-Lorraine border region, these and other similar incentives are currently pushed forward by the multilingualism concept (‘Mehrsprachigkeitskonzept’) for Brandenburg (Landtag Brandenburg, 2021) and should be implemented by actors of both Euroregions.

Both the German-French and the German-Polish border region are sometimes struggling with insufficient language skills, little motivation for some age groups and also limited interest in learning the neighbouring language. So, even if cross-border interaction in the borderlands is often challenging due to the language repertoire that is still developing, the research is undeniably beneficial. That is why it is so useful and essential to continue working on this issue not only at the language policy level, but also in the field of language learning and teaching and to promote the neighbouring language and cross-border projects in educational contexts and beyond.

¹⁶ „Es handelt sich vielmehr um einen hybriden Code, um ein Oszillieren zweier Sprachen, immerfort sowohl die eine Sprache als auch die andere präsentierend, aber gleichzeitig etwas Eigenes, drittes konstruierend: nämlich, gemischt sprechen“ (Hinnenkamp, 2002, p. 136).

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Hybrid Borderlands: On Borders, from Borders – Borderland Experiences in Film

Tobias Schank, Astrid M. Fellner, Isis Luxenburger, Eva Nossem

In this working paper, we discuss the meaning of borders and of doing (cultural) border studies. That is, we try to reflect upon the challenging task of fixating a term as elusive and complex as ‘borders,’ as well as the similarly challenging endeavor of instilling the way we go about studying borders with an awareness of that very complexity. We propose ‘bordertextures’ and ‘bordertexturing’ as rigorous implementations of decolonial, counter-hegemonical, and anti-hierarchical thinking to our research practice as cultural border scholars. As such, Hybrid Borderlands also provides the testing ground for a first application of ‘bordertexturing’ to film, which we consider a medium that lends itself perfectly to bordertexturing because we see filmic experiences to be in many ways structurally and conceptually tantamount to borderland experiences. We are confident that this exercise will provide productive results that will enhance our understanding of what it means to live in borderlands.

Identity, diversity, complexity, power, borderlands, bordertexturing, film, phenomenology

Hybrid Borderlands: Von Grenzen – Grenzland-Erfahrungen im Film

In diesem Working Paper schildern wir unser Verständnis des Grenzbegriffes und der Praxis kulturwissenschaftlicher Border Studies. Das heißt, wir versuchen uns einerseits an der herausfordernden Aufgabe, ein so flüchtiges und komplexes Konzept wie das der Grenze zu definieren, und stellen uns andererseits der nicht minder herausfordernden Aufgabe, uns die Komplexität unseres Untersuchungsgegenstandes für unsere Praxis als Wissenschaftler:innen der Border Studies zu eigen zu machen. Dahingehend schlagen wir ‚Bordertexturen‘ und die Praxis des ‚Bordertexturierens‘ als rigorose Anwendung dekolonialen, antihegemonialen und antihierarchischen Denkens für unsere eigene Wissenschaftspraxis in den kulturwissenschaftlichen Border Studies vor. Darüber hinaus stellt das Projekt Hybrid Borderlands, in dessen Zuge dieses Working Paper entstand, gleichermaßen ein Labor für den Versuch einer ersten Anwendung des Bordertexturierens in einem speziellen kulturwissenschaftlichen Feld – Film – dar, da wir einschlägige strukturelle und konzeptuelle Parallelen und Überlappungen zwischen dem Wirken von Filmerfahrungen und Grenzerfahrungen sehen. Wir sind zuversichtlich, dass diese Übertragung von Erkenntnissen aus verschiedenen Bereichen der Cultural Studies produktive Ergebnisse hervorbringen wird, die unser Verständnis davon, was es bedeutet, in Grenzregionen zu leben, bereichern werden.

Identität, Diversität, Komplexität, Macht, Borderlands/Grenzregionen, Bordertexturieren, Film, Phänomenologie

Hybrid Borderlands : A partir les frontières – les expériences frontalières dans les films

Dans ce document de travail, nous discutons de la signification des frontières et analysons l'étude (culturelle) des frontières. En d'autres termes, nous essayons de réfléchir au défi de définir le terme flou et complexe de « frontières », ainsi qu'au défi de modeler la manière dont nous étudions les frontières, prenant en compte la conscience de cette complexité même. Nous proposons « *bordertextures* » (textures frontalières) et « *bordertexturing* » (texturation frontalière) comme des applications rigoureuses de la pensée décoloniale, contre-hégémonique et anti-hiérarchique dans notre pratique de recherche en tant que spécialistes des frontières culturelles. À ce titre, *Hybrid Borderlands* constitue également un terrain d'essai pour une première application de « *bordertexturing* » au film, que nous considérons comme un médium qui se prête parfaitement à la *bordertexturing*, car les expériences filmiques nous semblent, à bien des égards, structurellement et conceptuellement équivalentes aux expériences dans les espaces frontalières (*borderlands*). Nous sommes convaincus que cet exercice fournira des résultats concluants et productifs qui amélioreront notre compréhension de ce que signifie vivre dans des espaces frontalières.

Identité, diversité, complexité, pouvoir, borderlands, bordertexturing, frontières, film, phénoménologie

Introduction

To scholars in cultural (border) studies, the matter of approaching, let alone defining the term ‘borders’ is challenging. Some have even called it “absurd” (Balibar, 1994), for the idea of breaking down to a simple definition the meaning of borders flies in the face of our general understanding of how we do border studies from a cultural studies’ perspective (cf. Bossé et al., 2019). This is because we conceive of and investigate borders (as well as artifacts and practices linked to their existence) as complex cultural phenomena that shape and affect everyday life. As such, following the recent epistemological turns toward performance, processuality, and complexity, doing border studies as cultural studies first and foremost means conceiving of borders as multidimensional social constructs that comprise a plethora of variegated and interconnected discourses, which are continuously in flux and subject to change, and which are best understood by such approaches that are designed to reflect that very complexity.

On borders

First, this means that that the functional areas of our research are inseparably intertwined. Consequently, they fundamentally require to be contextualized and related to one another. It is imperative to our research as interdisciplinary border scholars to investigate how and under which conditions people experience borders and inhabit borderlands. They are the ones that shape and are shaped by the borders and borderlands that surround them; they are the key actors in our research, alongside those who are in whatever shape or form involved in the process of representing their experience. Because it is our goal to study – and make as transparent as possible – the practices and performances involved in the construction of identity in all its diversity, as well as the conditions under which identities come into being, we not only look at the asymmetrical power structures and the various identity markers (race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, ability, age, etc.) that encompass borders, but also, crucially, how they intersect.

Second (and much to that point), we argue to retain complexity because the field of cultural border studies, as one specific interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, is fueled and impelled by the “commitment to progressive social change” (Miller, 2001, p. 69). We strongly believe that the separation or isolation – in other words, reduction or essentialization – of the various discursive strands of borderland identities would run counter to our intention as cultural border scholars of facilitating a better and more genuine understanding of human coexistence. We want our research methods to reflect – more so, embody – the counter-hegemonical, anti-hierarchical, and decolonial ethos so fervently adjured in so much of critical theory and post-colonial thinking.¹⁷ To that end, we intend our research to reflect the complexity of identity constructions, which we believe we can achieve by transcending the dualistic conceptualization of borders and promoting intercultural and transnational communication beyond the perpetuation of differences and solidification of binaries (AG Bordertexturen, 2018; Fellner, 2021).

From (the) border(s)

Therefore – to do justice to the complexity of border networks – we advocate thinking “from the border” (Bossé et al., 2019 our emphasis; also cf. Fellner and Kanesu, forthcoming), zooming in on the diverse agglomeration of perspectives that shape and are shaped by borders as well as the bodies wherein such experiences manifest, in an attempt to make visible and re-experienceable the hybrid nature of borders (cf. Brambilla et al., 2015) and decenter Western hegemonic epistemological viewpoints (cf. Castro Varela, 2018). Consequently, we imagine their surrounding politico-social, cultural, and geographical landscapes as ‘borderlands,’ as the peripheral territory near or around international borders, comprising regions that constitute culturally identifiable units and zones of cross-border interaction, in which – because of a heightened sense of transnational awareness – special borderland identities emerge.

The term/concept ‘borderland(s)’ has gained significant traction in both spatial and cultural border studies. It was originally coined by Chicana author, theorist and activist Gloria Anzaldúa in her 1987 book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* with the intention to conceptually reflect her effort of muddying and breaking down the dualisms that are ostensibly incumbent upon borders. Fortifying her argument as well

¹⁷ To the authors of this paper and our research, the most influential authors include, among others, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Antonio Gramsci, Raewyn Connell, Stuart Hall, Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gloria Anzaldúa (in no particular order).

as the embryonic discipline of cultural border studies with critical theory, Anzaldúa thus shows that while borders are (ubiquitously portrayed and received as) the sites of divisive, normative *power*, they equally function to connect (cf. Hanna and Sheehan, 2019).

Put differently, borders express normative power as much as they simultaneously produce the possibility to displace, disrupt, dismantle that power. A nation state's attempt to univocally affirm and unilaterally stabilize the construct of a homogenous national identity by rigorously guarding, securing, and sealing off its borders must fail in face of forms of migration (actual or medially constructed) that perforate the imperviousness of both actual borders and the ideological construct upon which they are erected – while maintaining, of course, the hegemonic power to still enforce (selective, oppressive) policies tied to their existence that potentially harm those challenging their legitimacy. Employing a Foucaultian understanding of discourse and power, Anzaldúa thus reveals the discursive “productivity” of borders (Foucault, 2002 [1969], p. 194), showing the interrelations of normative power and subversive contingency as “possible forms of freedom” inherent to forms of power (Strüver, 2021, p. 72; translation TS). The social construct of borders, we might say with Foucault and Anzaldúa, “transmits and produces power [...], but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (Foucault, 2020 [1976], p. 101).

Rejecting and contesting the binaries enforced by borders, Anzaldúa therefore suggests to conceptualize borders and the space that surrounds them – topographically as well as discursively speaking – as sites of hybridization and cross-fertilization. Consequently, Anzaldúa speaks of ‘borderlands,’ a term intended to capture the multidimensionality and complexity of the space enveloping and enveloped by borders, and to redress the binaries that have hitherto informed it, while acknowledging their roots in a specific locale. It is the locus for alterity to emerge, for – among others – queer subject positions which struggle for “massive uprooting of dualist thinking” (Anzaldúa, 2012 [1987], p. 102). To Anzaldúa, borderlands constitute (with Homi K. Bhabha) “a third space between cultures and social systems [...] in which antithetical elements mix, neither to obliterate each other nor to be subsumed by a larger whole, but rather to combine in unique and unexpected ways” (Cantú and Hurtado, 2012, p. 6). As such, they are “stubborn, contradicting, and unnatural” places, indefinable spaces that defy unambiguous attributions, which take pleasure in the moment of irritation (Boeckler 2012, p. 49; translation AMF).

Following Anzaldúa's example, the study of borders and borderlands means interacting with an interlaced, meshed discursive tapestry that is as much subject to topographical realities and social norms as it is contingent upon their destabilization, irritation, and subversion through performances and representations that mirror, mimic, and mock the construction of normative realities (cf. AG Bordertexturen, 2018; cf. Fellner, forthcoming; cf. Weber et al., 2020). Social practices – cultures – are birthed from the (border)land(s) (and the sociopolitical landscape impressed upon it) as much as they are written into it.

Bordertexturing

Expanding on the metaphor of a “tapestry” and amalgamating our object of study with our methodology, we propose to conceive of bordertextures and to practice ‘bordertexturing’. This takes a great deal of inspiration from the rhizomatic structures laid out by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in that we analogously propose to imagine borderlands and its enveloping discourses as amorphous, ever-expanding, non-hierarchical constructs with multiple nodes from which to approach and latch on. In very broad terms, this entails acknowledging the complex interwovenness of our field of research by showing how several discursive threads are intertwined, and – crucially – by factoring ‘the doing’ and ‘the doer’ of said research into the equation, weaving the process of producing meaning into the fabric of whatever meaning may be discerned and considering whichever aspects of positionality may be relevant (cf. Bossé et al., 2019). It follows that as border researchers, we too are *actors* in the (de-)construction of borderland(s) discourses.

Moreover, while multiple discursive threads converge on the border, we argue it should not be our objective as scholars to unravel them, in order to analyze and interpret them as simplified, isolated occurrences. Instead, we should aim for investigations that respect the interwovenness of those threads, which is something that can be achieved by retaining the complex, often associative, sometimes mercurial structure of our respective fields and objects of study. This may sound to be at odds with conventional, established academic procedures, and to some extent it deliberately is; because it is precisely this “experimental dimension” (Fellner, 2020, p. 291), blending “the methodologies of the human sciences and artistic practices” (Bossé et al., 2019, p. 8), through which we are convinced borders and borderlands are most authentically made understandable and re-experienceable without sacrificing or jettisoning too much of the intricacies that characterize them. Thus, the premise of ‘unknowing’ established, discursively dominant patterns is applied rigorously both to our field of inquiry and to our practice of inquiring.

Film

In this joint venture, our field of inquiry is constituted of films that – in the broadest sense possible – deal with and make re-experienceable borders, borderlands, and borderland experiences specific to the German-Polish borderlands and the SaarLorLux region, which comprises parts of Germany, Luxembourg, and France. Film lends itself perfectly to bordertexturing because film itself can be considered, as James S. Williams remarks, “a kind of borderspace,” by which he means “a shifting site of experimentation and conceptual border-crossing (trans) at once open and fluid, porous and provisional, where change and identity may be continually negotiated and reconfigured and artificial boundaries of inclusion and exclusion [...] directly contested” (Williams, 2021, p. 22; emphasis in original). It is our intention to survey, archive, and interpret border films (of the borderlands in question) as artifacts that conserve and make re-experienceable the complexity and often competing layers of borders and borderlands.

Film, in this sense, functions very much as a medium, the experience of which prompts an affective response that synchronizes the borderland experiences we intend to zoom in on (cf. Bossé, 2019). Centering the experience of – that is, the sensorial response to/immersion in – a film, we adopt the language and conceptual premises put forth by, among others, Vivian Sobchack (2004) in her theorizations of a film phenomenology, because we see it to be conceptually and methodologically tantamount, and therefore productively applicable to bordertexturing. In the words of Monica Hanna and Rebecca A. Sheehan (2019, p. 17; emphasis in original):

Sight and sound are senses that have been traditionally used to reify rather than challenge borders in that they are used to assign, designate, and essentialize markers of identity such as the color of a subject’s skin, her accent, or her gender. [...] In contrast to sight and sound, the realm of haptic aesthetics has proven generative in challenging borders by replacing the inclination of assigning an onscreen other an identity based on these sensory indexes with an inclination to feel with and for that other. Thus, with the haptic image, experience and performance are invited to replace stabilizing (and confining) designations of identity. The haptic as a third sense thus performs like Anzaldúa’s borderlands in continuously rupturing and undoing the border in its role as a third space.

We believe that fusing the two approaches – film phenomenology and bordertexturing – promises to reveal both filmic experiences and border experiences as processes and practices that construct and make re-experienceable human identity more comprehensively as “a perpetually changing terrain that does not accumulate clearly differentiated units but creates a new texture of corporeal and other disciplinary discourses from the performative interweaving of different moments” (AG Bordertexturen, 2018, p. 75; translation TS).

Conclusion

In sum, borders, to us, function as productive loci of discourse that distill the complexity of identity construction and, more generally, human co-existence. Film provides us with a great and palpably diverse pool of artifacts that enable us to re-experience this complexity. Each provide nodes for research to latch on to, in an effort to contextualize – and therefore do justice to – the complexity of both subject and medium, respectively.

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Planning Borderlands: Conceptualizing Territorial Development in Cross-Border Regions

Karina Pallagst, Benjamin Blaser, Kirsten Mangels, Nino Pfundstein

Due to increasing cross-border interdependencies in the European Union, cross-border territorial development is becoming increasingly important. Especially regarding services of general interest, a better understanding of borders and their effects on borderlands is needed to improve the status quo. Borders are understood as complex entities and borderlands as cross-border regions. The latter are examined as functional spaces, laboratories of integration and transition zones, and units of cross-border governance. Against the backdrop of initial analytical findings, the concepts are illuminated through the case studies.

Cross-border territorial development, planning cultures, public services, borders

Planning Borderlands: Zur Konzeptualisierung von Raumentwicklung in grenzüberschreitenden Regionen

Aufgrund zunehmender grenzüberschreitender Verflechtungen in der Europäischen Union, gewinnt die grenzüberschreitende territoriale Entwicklung immer mehr an Bedeutung. Um diese insbesondere im Hinblick auf Daseinsvorsorge zu verbessern, bedarf es eines besseren Verständnisses von Grenzen und ihrer Auswirkungen auf Borderlands. Grenzen werden als komplexe Gebilde und Borderlands als grenzüberschreitende Regionen verstanden. Letztere werden als funktionale Räume, Laboratorien der Integration und Übergangszonen sowie als Einheiten grenzüberschreitender Governance untersucht. Vor dem Hintergrund erster Analyseergebnisse werden die Konzepte anhand der Fallstudien beleuchtet.

Grenzüberschreitende Raumentwicklung, Planungskulturen, Daseinsvorsorge, Grenzen

Planning Borderlands : Conceptualiser le développement territorial dans les régions transfrontalières

Face à l'augmentation des interdépendances transfrontalières dans l'Union européenne, le développement territorial transfrontalier devient de plus en plus important. Afin d'améliorer ce développement, notamment en ce qui concerne les services d'intérêt général, il est nécessaire de mieux comprendre les frontières et leurs effets sur les zones frontalières. Les frontières sont considérées comme des entités complexes et les zones frontalières comme des régions transfrontalières. Ces dernières sont examinées en tant qu'espaces fonctionnels, laboratoires d'intégration et zones de transition, et unités de gouvernance transfrontalière. Sur la toile de fond des premiers résultats analytiques, les concepts sont éclairés par les études de cas.

Développement territorial transfrontalier, cultures de l'aménagement, services publics, frontières

Introduction

The subproject Planning Borderlands is concerned with cross-border territorial development (CBTD). It analyses planning cultures in cross-border regions (CBR) along the French-German and German-Polish borders. The specific focus of this project lies on *Daseinsvorsorge*. This term, while integral to the German planning culture, has no direct equivalent in the French or Polish planning cultures. Put succinctly, *Daseinsvorsorge* is the provision of essential services and goods to the population through private and public actors. There is no uniform definition of what is considered essential. In this paper, the terms *Daseinsvorsorge* has been translated into Provision of services of general interest.

CBR are integral to the territorial development of the European Union (EU). The EU's territory is marked by 40 internal land borders (European Commission, 2017b). While some of the regions neighbouring these borders are among the more peripheral and economically underdeveloped areas within the EU (INTERACT Programme Secretariat, 2007), according to the EU's definition, they make up 30% of its population, 30% of its GDP and 40% of its overall territory (European Commission, 2017a). The advent of CBR in their current form in the EU is intrinsically linked to the process of European integration. This process has mitigated the impact of internal borders on the EU's territory, especially in terms of economic activity through the Schengen agreement. For work and education alone, two million people cross these borders on a daily basis (European Commission, 2017a).

With intensified linkages, there is increased demand for cross-border cooperation on territorial development. Cross-border commuters, for example, have induced greater demand on cross-border transportation infrastructure. But whereas territorial entities within nation states have formalized planning processes in place to develop such infrastructure, CBR that are integrating economically do not have the same politico-administrative structures in place. Borderlands are therefore spaces with specific conditions and present territorial development with specific challenges and barriers (Caesar and Pallagst, 2018b). Yet, the EU has declared the cohesive development of the overall territory a main goal of its policy (Hippe et al., 2023) and CBR have an important role to play in achieving that goal (EU, 2020). Territorial development is understood, for the purpose of this project, as a method of anticipatory problem solving. It is meant to steer the usage and design of the territory in general and specific areas in particular in a way that safeguards a maximum of individual and collective interests and prevents conflicts (Bächtold et al., 2012, p. 35). CBTD can also be defined as "all actions aiming at the coordination of [territorial] development of the cross-border area" (Fricke, 2015, p. 850).

In modern states, territorial development is democratically legitimized and bound to its political processes. Both are mostly organized at the national level (Bächtold et al., 2012, p. 36). As such, territorial development is an internal sovereign right (Lezzi, 1994, p. 186). Therefore, in CBTD, institutions and actors operate within differing systems of law and according to specific political goals and strategies. Cooperation between two such systems can only occur through negotiation or through a specifically legitimized institution. If negotiation fails and no such institution exist, cooperation fails, and problems prevail. As stakeholders engaged in CBTD face asymmetrical competencies and highly complex issues (Evrard, 2017, p.219), cross-border governance is key in enabling its success. However, creating CBR as spatial and institutional entities "touches a sensitive aspect of states: territorial organization" (Caesar and Evrard, 2020, p. 850; Fricke, 2015, p. 850).

Understanding cross-border territorial development through the lens of borders as complex entities

Through the process of European integration many borders have lost their economic barrier function, but have retained it in regard to the political (different laws and regulations) and social dimensions (i.e. linguistic border, differing cultures) (Schönwald et al., 2018, p. 132). This function of the border limits the full realization of the endogenous potential of CBR (Guillermo-Ramirez, 2018; Medeiros, 2018). Territorial development interrupted by borders also leads to fractured and sometimes even conflicting territorial development within CBR (Caesar and Pallagst, 2018a). In order to better understand and frame the phenomenon of borders' impact on these efforts, it is helpful to regard borders as "complex phenomena" (Haselsberger, 2014, p. 505).

In planning, borders are often understood as mere lines in spaces separating units of territory, economy or culture (Haselsberger, 2014). Haselsberger, therefore, urges an understanding of borders that is more com-

plex. Specifically, borders should be regarded through the institutions and processes that create and regulate them, as confirming or disrupting units, and as expressions of power relations (Haselsberger, 2014). Whereas the term border traditionally refers “the outer edge of particular things” and later meant “a ‘fixed’ line both on the map and on the ground”. In Haselsberger’s concept, borders unite several boundaries within themselves. A boundary is “a linear concept, demarcating one particular facet” such as “national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, legal or security differences” (Haselsberger, 2014, p. 509). The same border might include the boundary between two nations, different cultures and might also constitute a natural boundary in the form of a river (Haselsberger, 2014). Therefore, borders can also produce “contradictory functions, meanings and roles” (Haselsberger, 2014, p. 523). The definition of boundary helps us to better frame how the same border can have various impacts on CBTD (Haselsberger, 2014). Through the process of European integration, borders have become semi-permeable membranes. Wherein the economic boundary is all but dismantled, enabling flows and “overcoming negative border effects” (Haselsberger, 2014). At the same time, other boundaries at the same border persist. Flows are regulated, for example, by immigration policy. While border societies suffer the impact of persisting border effects, they also use this semi-permeability of borders to their advantage. They profit from possibilities of free flow and use disparities to their advantage (e.g., higher wages on one side of the border, lower housing prices on the other). Describing a border as a two-dimensional space, offers an important addition to the understanding of borders, namely borderlands. The term borderland “means the area in closest geographic proximity to the state border within which spatial developments affected by the existence of the boundary” (Newman, 2003, p. 18). For the use of this project, an area which neighbours a border is referred to as a border region whereas “two adjoining border regions [...] constitute a ‘cross-border region’” (Haselsberger, 2014, p. 509).

Borderlands as cross-border regions

While the broader term borderland covers a wide range of spaces, this project focusses specifically on cross-border regions (CBR). CBR have emerged in increasing numbers and in various forms all over the globe (Sohn, 2018; Caesar, 2018; Fricke, 2015). There are many definitions and concepts of cross-border regions (Fricke, 2015). Deas and Lord define cross-border regions as “unusual regions” (Deas and Lord, 2006, p. 1848) as they often seem arbitrarily demarcated (Deas and Lord, 2006, p. 1862). As Fricke puts it, they are “independent of preliminarily defined administrative borders” (Fricke, 2015, p. 852). However, Deas and Lord (2006) posit that there is a twofold logic at play. On the one hand, the creation of regions that transcend national borders is seen as “[harmonising] land use planning regimes” and “[bolstering] the power of sub-national territorial units” (Deas and Lord, 2006, p. 1856). On the other hand, the unusual delimitation reflects “the view that size is critical,” the belief that CBR had to be of a certain size to be able to compete with other global cities and regions. Sohn in his definition focusses on a specific boundary when defining CBR as regions spanning across political boundaries (Sohn, 2018). The prevailing view may be that the national border came first and the cross-border region second. While this may be true of some regions, it is important to remember that this is not a universal rule. As national borders have changed or were only established in recent history, there are also territorial entities that were broken up by national borders. Taking a view that is more critical of the nation-state centric vision, cross-border regions can also be defined as „regions with a national border separating their territory into spheres of different national administrative governance“ (INTERACT Programme Secretariat, 2007). Aside from intensified economic, political, and cultural relations, cross-border regions can be marked by some degree of similarity or common centre (Lundén, 2018). As social spaces, cross-border regions can also serve as an expression of trans-state communities with relative spatial proximity and cultural similarities (Faist, 2000). “Nevertheless, in terms of their spatiality, border areas are not necessarily realms of homogeneous conditions, but they might display spatial bottlenecks and challenges such as: polarized economic, social and demographic development, gaps in traffic and transportation (in particular transit), social requirements and infrastructure needs in terms of education and health care” (Pallagst, 2016) and their delimitation is ambiguous and therefore comparison often difficult (Opilowska, 2021).

Cross-border regions as functional areas

As the analysis of the case-study cross-border regions in the Planning Borderlands project focuses on CBTD with a specific focus on the provision of services of general interest, functional areas form a key concept. Jakubowski et al. define them as spaces located on at least two sides of state borders that are not defined

by administrative boundaries but rather by their functional linkages (2021). In Germany, formal spatial planning policy has recognized the importance of functional areas as these spaces most align with the lived experience of people and the economic linkages of companies (Bächtold et al., 2012). A conference of ministers responsible for spatial planning concluded that in order for Germany's territorial potential to be realised, there should be more cooperation in functional and cross-border spaces (Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung, 2016). Jakubowski et al. categorize cross-border functional areas in two groups. Type A refers to monocentric or polycentric spatial structures that "cluster around nodes." They represent spaces of flows. Key conditions for such spaces are, among others, spatial proximity, accessibility, and intensity of exchange. Type B describes cross-border functional areas that are "delineated according to some defining criteria". In this type actors' interactions are based on "appropriate spatial concentration of certain assets or features" (Jakubowski et al., 2021). Sohn et al. see the functional dimension of cross-border regions as the impetus for the initiation of cross-border cooperation (2007). Fricke points out that cross-border functional areas have to deal with "problems stemming from the border situation" and that CBTD is often a means to mitigate the "limits imposed by national planning systems" (Fricke, 2015). The redrawing of borders based on functional areas is what is also referred to a "rescaling of planning power" (Getimis et al., 2014, p. 300). Others warn that while the delimitation of cross-border regions may mitigate the negative border effects for some functions, it could create new border problems when cutting across other functionally linked spaces (Bächtold et al., 2012).

In CBR, the various fundamental functions of existence (living, working, providing, education and training, leisure, etc.) are often satisfied on both sides of the border. Due to different quality standards, price levels or simply better availability on different sides of the border, infrastructures in the neighbouring country can become an alternative (Caesar and Pallagst, 2018b). The Planning Borderlands project examines the extent to which these realities of life find their way into territorial development. The following interim results of the previous studies can be stated: The German-Polish study area is a polycentric area that lies in the catchment area of several centres with metropolitan or "higher-ranking functions" (e.g., Berlin, Zielona Góra, Dresden) and in which centres with medium-centre and basic-centre services are located.

There is no joint cross-border spatial monitoring for the German-Polish CBR, and the documents examined do not provide any cross-border analysis (e.g., commuter movements, educational migration, etc.) as a basis for conceptual considerations. Nonetheless, the "Common Future Vision for the German-Polish Interaction Area" refers to the polycentric settlement structure and envisions that in the future "the practice of sharing social and technical infrastructure resources along the Oder-Neisse line will have become common" (GPSPC, 2016). The vision also aims to "[strengthen] metropolises and urban centres as geographic anchors" [...] "taking into account the implications of neighbourly relations for local and regional development". While there is little at the cross-border level to support the claim that the concept of CBR as functional areas is well established, both German and Polish authorities of territorial development use this concept in their planning to some extent.

To ensure the provision of services of general interest, spatial planning in Germany generally relies on the designation of central places at different hierarchical levels with specific lists of facilities and defined catchment areas from which the central places can be reached in an appropriate manner. In most cases, centres of a higher hierarchical level are designated at the state level and centres of a lower hierarchical level are designated at the regional level. The central place concept is thus intended, among other things, as a supply concept with which, on the one hand, the viability of the facilities for the provision of services of general interest is to be ensured by sufficient demand and, on the other hand, an appropriate accessibility of the central places for the population is to be guaranteed. In general, this designation is not based on actual supply patterns, but population figures of administrative units (national). Therefore, cross-border use of the services of general interest is not considered.

In the "Plan zagospodarowania przestrzennego województwa lubuskiego", the spatial development plan for the Lubuskie Voivodeship, interdependence areas are defined by designating urban and rural functional areas. In this system, which is similar to the central place concept, development principles are assigned to the different functional areas, which serve as a basis for the utilisation of subsidies. The development principles are formulated in abstract terms and serve, for example, to "strengthen the functional and spatial connection with the city centre" or to "strive for accessibility of the city centre by public transport". The designation of functional areas is not based on the definition of amenities or accessibility standards (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Lubuskiego w Zielonej Górze, 2018). The subsequent planning levels are thus given some leeway in implementing the development principles, while the voivodeship only makes recommendations and provides financial incentives. In addition to the functional area designations, the voivodeship plan also identifies border areas, which are again assigned development principles such as the "implementation of a common spatial planning policy" or the "development of cross-border transport and other infrastructure networks".

Even if the definitions and contents around the provision of services of general interest laid down in the spatial planning documents differ considerably, the underlying basic ideas are, firstly, the concentration of facilities in certain municipalities and, secondly, complementary considerations on the accessibility of these facilities in both planning systems. Therefore, cross-border cooperation for the development of such a concept for the CBR could build on a common basis due to the similar basic approach in this thematic field.

Cross-border regions as transitions zones and laboratories of integration

Cross-border regions can be described as “zones of cultural overlap and political instability where the national identity and loyalties of the people often becomes blurred” (Augelli, 1980, p. 19). Schönwald et al., referencing Michel Foucault and Walter Benjamin, summarize that borders can only be experienced when they are crossed and that where border crossings take place transitions zones are produced. Hence, borders become spaces of interaction (Schönwald et al., 2018, p. 133). Newman mirrors the notion of borderlands with the term transition zone. While he understands the term borderlands to focus on the existence and the impact of the border, he writes that “the notion of ‘transition zone’ assumes the opening, if not removal, of the border so that it ceases to have any sort of impact” (Newman, 2003, p. 19). He argues further that by setting up cross-border regions borderlands can become transitions zones (Newman, 2003, p. 19). This view of cross-border regions is often due to a national perspective. Through the same lens, border regions are often seen as peripheral or remote from the “national centre” (Opilowska, 2021). However, there are many examples of cross-border regions, where national borders were drawn across previously cohesive territories or cases where national borders have historically changed many times. Within the specific context of European integration, cross-border regions are often described as laboratories of integration (Opilowska, 2021). This means placing this form of regionalisation in context of European institutionalisation as well as territorial Europeanisation. In terms of the territory of the EU, European integration is often linked to the increasing economic integration of the EU which in turn led to internal European borders all but losing their function as economic boundaries (Paasi, 2011). This aided in turning border regions from peripheries to connected and economically active spaces (Paasi, 2009). European integration is therefore intrinsically linked to the emergence of European cross-border regions (Sohn, 2018). As small-scale versions with similar conditions such as “linguistic diversity, cultural traditions and regional knowledge”, they can generate the evidence needed for European territorial development that focusses on the existing territorial capital (Bächtold et al., 2012). Cross-border regions are therefore not isolated forms of regionalisation but also “microcosms of Europeanness” (Opilowska and Roose, 2015).

For territorial development, this raises the question of the extent to which the development of a CBR is seen as a field of activity and played out as a spatial “laboratory” for integration. Therefore, the Planning Borderlands project examines the extent to which actors in spatial planning and development create ideas of development beyond the border, or the extent to which they engage in (model) projects, processes, or structures.

In the field of spatial planning, the German-Polish Committee for Spatial Planning deals with regional and border cooperation. The committee, which is made up of members from four voivodships, four federal states as well as the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany, has drawn up an informal document for the cross-border area of the four voivodships and the four federal states in the form of the “Common Future Vision for the German-Polish Interaction Area”. As a laboratory of integration, it allows planning actors from different planning cultures to cooperate, possibly exchanging different values, attitudes, and concepts. They also came together to adopt a common concept (albeit with a high degree of abstraction).

Another example in the case-study CBR is the “RailBLu Future” project. The objective of this project was to develop a vision concerned with the accessibility of the INTERREG A programme area covering Brandenburg and Lubuskie by public transport. This included a concept for the improvement of cross-border local rail passenger transport. While this is again not linked to concrete measures of implementation, the project enabled project partners to envision a future that looks dramatically different from the status quo.

Within the framework of Interreg A funding, the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina and the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober manage project funds. These could be considered laboratories of integration as they experiment with the implementation of concrete projects. From 2016 to June 2023, the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober, for example, had 8.2 million euros (ERDF) at its disposal for the management of this small project fund on the one hand and for the funding of small projects on the other. Equipping a cross-border institution with the competence and means to fund and implement small cross-border projects forms a laboratory for similar approaches at a larger scale.

Cross-border regions as structures of cross-border governance

Cross-border regionalisation can be understood as territorial institutionalisation processes (Caesar and Palagst, 2018b). The first cross-border regions in Europe were established in 1958 (Caesar, 2018; INTERACT Programme Secretariat, 2007). Many of them were based on initiatives between municipalities. With the introduction of the Interreg initiative in 1990, the number of cross-border regions increased (Caesar, 2018). Interreg with its financial resources is not only a crucial factor for the stimulation of cross-border cooperation, but it has also been instrumental in the formalization of cross-border institutions (Blatter, 2004). Cross-border regions as structures of governance of cross-border cooperation are operating outside of politico-administrative entities. Therefore, they operate based on cooperation, good will and informal instruments. Instead of government, CBTD is organised in a form of governance. While there are many definitions of the term governance, this paper defines it as the „collaboration between actors from the public, private and non-profit sectors, as well as [...] levels of the politico-administrative system based on exchange and negotiation among equals (Blatter, 2004). Weak institutionalisation of functionally tightly linked regions is increasingly seen as a threat to territorial development (Wiechmann, 2009), not least because territorial development, formal or informal, “depends on the existence of political and legal institutions for it to be implemented” (Jacobs, 2016, p. 69).

Therefore, Planning Borderlands studies the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation pertaining to the provision of services of general interest in the case-study CBR. The project not only examines the extent to which spatial development actors are directly involved in cross-border cooperation processes, but also the extent to which indirect cross-border consultations take place. Therefore, this study conducted interviews with actors responsible for the preparation of planning documents of politico-administrative entities as well as with actors from cross-border institutions whose work affects spatial development and the safeguarding of services of general interest.¹⁸

In general, mutual cross-border participation on relevant planning documents is required by law during the drafting process of the plans. The draft documents are submitted to the neighbouring planning authorities for their information and their commenting. Thus, an institutionalised exchange of information on the guiding principles, objectives and contents of spatial planning documents exists across all administrative levels of planning. However, the interviewees consider this influence on the neighbours planning to be marginal. More concrete cross-border cooperation on territorial development takes place through different fora. Cooperation between the German Länder, the Polish voivodeships and their national governments is organised through the German-Polish Committee for Spatial Planning (GPSPC), which is part of the German-Polish Governmental Commission for Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation. In addition to regular exchanges, this committee developed the “Common Future Vision for the German-Polish Interaction Area” (GPSPC, 2016). This document provides common guidelines for territorial development for the planning authorities in the German-Polish CBR.

In the realm of actual implementation of CBTD, the INTERREG A programme Brandenburg-Poland plays a vital role. Through it, cooperation projects are financed for fixed periods of time. For the years 2014-2020, the programme established a specific objective aiming at “Strengthening cross-border cooperation between institutions and citizens in all aspects of public life”. Under this umbrella, projects of, among others, local authorities, and public agencies for cooperation in the topic of services of general interest were financed. However, there was no participation of the Brandenburg or Polish state and regional planning authorities in projects of this specific objective.

Two Euroregions exist in the Brandenburg-Lubuskie CBR, the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina and the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober. Both are cross-border registered associations with the corresponding bodies. Their membership consists of municipalities as well as social and business associations, societies, clubs, and private individuals. Though not equipped with competences pertaining to spatial planning, the Euroregions adopt development concepts and action plans in which they set out objectives and projects for territorial development. Through participatory processes, they are also active in formal planning activities of spatial planning authorities, while regional authorities are on the boards of both the planning authorities as well as the Euroregions. Thus, an intensive pattern of exchange and influence insures that Euroregions and with them the cross-border perspective are part of the wider governance of cross-border territorial governance.

¹⁸ Interviews were conducted with actors from the following institutions: *Gemeinsame Landesplanungsabteilung Berlin-Brandenburg, Regionale Planungsgemeinschaft Oderland-Spree, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Lubuskiego - Departament Geodezji, Planowania Przestrzennego i Gospodarki Nieruchomościami, Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina, Euroregion Spree-Neiße-Bober.*

Conclusion

Being concerned with CBTD, this paper has shown that borders are complex entities and possess different dimensions. Borderlands are understood as cross-border regions which can be analysed through the lens of several concepts. While some are territorially fixed, others can be seen as soft spaces – spaces that shape shift in accordance with specific perspectives or subjects considered. Considering this ambiguous nature of cross-border regions and in absence of formalized planning, CBTD is organised through cross-border governance.

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Energy Borderlands in Comparison: On the Empirical Productivity of the Concepts around Interconnected Areas and Conflict Zones

Alexandra Lampke, Kamil Bembnista, Florian Weber, Ludger Gailing & H. Peter Dörrerbächer

With the increasing importance of renewable energies, far-reaching changes in energy production and supply are taking place at the beginning of the 21st century. However, the transition follows different paths in different countries. This becomes especially visible in border regions. The paper aims to identify specific features of the energy transition(s) in two European border regions. With the help of Border Studies and a borderlands systematics, upheavals in energy production and related negotiation processes can be analysed and classified. Our paper focuses on the border regions of SaarLorLux (Germany-France-Luxembourg) and Saxony-Lower Silesia (Germany-Poland). We classify the French nuclear power plant Cattenom on the border to Germany and Luxembourg and the Polish opencast mine Turów on the border to Germany and the Czech Republic as conflictual examples, while the hydrogen initiative *Grande Region Hydrogen* and the twin city of Görlitz-Zgorzelec can be considered interlinked areas. With the help of borderlands systematics light can be shed on comparable energy paths in the two border regions. This will also demonstrate the added value of the developed systematics.

Energy transition(s), energy borderlands, German-French-Luxembourg border, German-Polish border, West-East comparison

Energy Borderlands im Vergleich: Zur empirischen Produktivität der Konzepte um Verflechtungsräume und Conflict Zones

Mit dem Bedeutungsgewinn erneuerbarer Energien vollziehen sich zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts weitreichende Umbrüche in der Energiegewinnung und -versorgung. Die Umbrüche verlaufen jedoch von Land zu Land unterschiedlich. Dies wird besonders in Grenzregionen deutlich. Das Ziel dieses Beitrags besteht darin, die Spezifika der Energietransition(en) in zwei europäischen Grenzregionen herauszuarbeiten. Mithilfe der *Border Studies* und einer *Borderlands*-Systematik können Umbrüche in der Energieerzeugung und in ihren jeweiligen Aushandlungsprozessen analysiert und eingeordnet werden. In unserem Beitrag beziehen wir uns konkret auf die Grenzregionen SaarLorLux (Deutschland-Frankreich-Luxemburg) und Sachsen-Niederschlesien (Deutschland-Polen). Als konflikthafte Beispiele ordnen wir das französische Kernkraftwerk Cattenom an der Grenze zu Deutschland und Luxemburg und den polnischen Tagebau Turów an der Grenze zu Deutschland und Tschechien ein, während die Wasserstoffinitiative *Grande Region Hydrogen* und die Doppelstadt Görlitz-Zgorzelec verflechtungsraumorientiert gerahmt werden können. Mithilfe der Borderlands-Systematik wird es möglich, vergleichbare Muster der Energiepfade in den beiden Grenzregionen in den Vordergrund zu rücken, womit sich auch der Mehrwert der entwickelten Systematik zeigt.

Comparaison des Energy Borderlands : sur la productivité empirique des concepts autour des espaces interconnectés et des zones de conflit

Avec l'importance croissante des énergies renouvelables, le début du 21^e siècle est marqué par des bouleversements majeurs dans la production et l'approvisionnement en énergie. Ces transformations se déroulent toutefois différemment d'un pays à l'autre. Cela est particulièrement évident dans les régions frontalières. L'objectif de cette contribution est de mettre en évidence les spécificités de(s) transition(s) énergétiques(s) de deux régions frontalières européennes. A l'aide des *Border Studies* et d'une systématique des *borderlands*, les bouleversements dans la production d'énergie et leurs processus de négociation respectifs peuvent être analysés et classés. Dans notre contribution, nous nous intéressons concrètement aux régions frontalières SaarLorLux (Allemagne-France-Luxembourg) et Saxe-Basse-Silésie (Allemagne-Pologne). La centrale nucléaire française de Cattenom, située à la frontière avec l'Allemagne et le Luxembourg, et la mine à ciel ouvert polonaise de Turów, située à la frontière avec l'Allemagne et la République tchèque, sont des exemples conflictuels, tandis que l'initiative *Grande Region Hydrogen* et la ville jumelle de Görlitz-Zgorzelec peuvent être considérées comme des espaces d'interdépendance. Grâce à la systématique des *borderlands*, il est possible de mettre en avant des modèles comparables de voies énergétiques dans les deux régions frontalières, ce qui démontre également la plus-value de la systématique développée.

Transition(s) énergétiques, energy borderlands, région frontalière franco-allemande-luxembourgeoise, région frontalière germano-polonaise, comparaison ouest-est

Introduction

Beginning with the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952, and gaining momentum with the foundation of the European Union (EU) in 1992, the process of European integration – i.e. the “ever closer union of the peoples of Europe” (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1992, p. 4) – has developed intensively, bringing with it many different forms of exchange and cross-border cooperation. This is also the case in the energy sector. The EU aims to build a more integrated, competitive European energy market, a so-called energy union. The establishment and expansion of the Trans-European Network for Energy, (TEN-E) as well as the constant dismantling of technical and regulatory barriers at EU level, has led to an ever-increasing flow of energy across national borders, laying a basis for pan-European cooperation at least with regard to electricity. Yet despite recent progress towards a common energy transition, notably with the EU Green Deal and EU Taxonomy Regulation, cross-border cooperation in the energy sector as such remains restrained.

One possible reason for this restraint, at least in the Central European energy sector, is the different energy paths taken by individual countries. While in Germany, for example, between 40% and 50% of electricity generated annually already comes from renewable energies (German Environment Agency, 2022; Federal Network Agency, 2022), France, the country’s western neighbour, relies on nuclear power for some 70% of electricity production (Bruns and Deshaies, 2018, p. 8). Luxembourg, on the other hand, only produces around 15% of its own electricity: 85% comes from imports whose (fossil, nuclear, or renewable) origin can only be marginally influenced (Government of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, 2019, p. 14). Germany’s eastern neighbour, Poland, generates 75% of its electricity in coal-fired power stations (Baran et al., 2018, p. 7). That the national energy mixes of the four countries still differ so widely indicates the radical differences in their underlying energy policies and the strongly national tendencies to which the energy sector is still subject.

Energy policies are still territorialized on the nation scale. This is rooted in the fact that the “making of a nation” in the 20th century was in all European countries closely linked with energy issues such as the development of a national grid, specific national energy legislation, and major infrastructural projects (Bridge et al., 2013, p. 336). The national energy mixes of the four countries France, Germany, Luxembourg and Poland show that energy policies have a strong territorial fix (Gailing, 2019, p. 472). This is also noticeable in the different approaches to energy transition. While the German *Energiewende*, the French *transition énergétique* and the Polish *transformacja energetyczna* all refer broadly to the same contextual situation, different definitions as well as associated political programmes and contents resonate in each terminology. While in Germany and Luxembourg the *Energiewende* – in Luxembourg also called *Energiewandel* (see e.g. Claude Turmes in Regierung des Großherzogtums Luxemburg, 2022) – refers to the phasing out of nuclear energy and the move away from fossil fuels with a growing expansion of renewable energies, the *transition énergétique* in France also refers to the withdrawal from fossil fuels and the expansion of renewable energies, but does not include any move away from nuclear energy. This is an important component of France’s decarbonised *transition énergétique*. In Poland, the *transformacja energetyczna*, as in Germany and France, refers to the phasing out of fossil energies. But in its transition from ‘old’ to ‘new’ energies, Poland intends to increase of its reliance on nuclear energy. Based on these different starting positions, there are also different views on the role of renewable energies and transition technologies within the framework of the respective energy transitions. Each of these energy transitions is clearly a national project rather than a joint European one.

The aim of this paper is to systematise the negotiation processes around different forms of energy in the border regions of Germany-France-Luxembourg and Germany-Poland: in other words, their ‘energy borderlands’. The comparison of the two regions, with all their similarities and differences, is of considerable interest, not least because the four countries – and hence their respective borderlands – have undergone far-reaching but widely different EU integration processes. Moreover, as already observed, the energy policies of these countries – and consequently ideas with regard to energy transition – differ significantly. This article will focus specifically on the SaarLorLux (W = western) and the Saxony-Lower Silesia (E = eastern) border regions. Where the different energy policies meet not only nationally, but also regionally or locally at (administrative) state borders, they lead to what we call an ‘encounter’ of neighbouring forms of energy. The negotiation processes resulting from this encounter may turn out to be conflictual, as in the case of the French Cattenom nuclear power plant near the France-Germany-Luxembourg border and the Polish coal power plant Turów near the borders with Germany and Czechia. However, particularly in recent years, productive processes of convergence can also be observed in both border regions, with attempts being made to achieve a joint energy transition under cross-border programmes. Notable examples of this are the hydrogen initiative *Grande Region Hydrogen* on the German-French-Luxembourg border and the climate-neutral German-Polish twin city of Görlitz-Zgorzelec.

In order to create a profile of these energy borderlands, we will draw on articles from major regional newspapers over the ten-year period 2011–2021. The year 2011 is taken as a starting point, because the German *Energiewende* entered a new phase in that year in the wake of the reactor disaster in Fukushima, Japan, with the governmental decision to phase out nuclear power generation. Fukushima also had a greater or lesser impact on the energy production question in other European countries. The newspaper articles for the German-French-Luxembourg border region are taken from the *Républicain Lorrain* (RL), the *Luxemburger Wort* (LW) and the *Saarbrücker Zeitung* (SZ), and for the German-Polish border region the *Märkische Oderzeitung* (MOZ), the *Lausitzer Rundschau* (LR), the *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW), and the *Gazeta Lubuska/Wroclawska* (GLW). The empirical basis of our investigation also includes interviews with local, regional, and national decision-makers and experts.¹⁹

In the following pages, the theoretical background, including borderlands concepts and systematics, will be presented before engaging in discussion of two examples of conflicting and converging borderlands. Key similarities and differences between the Western and Eastern energy borderlands will then be highlighted. The working paper will end with a conclusion and outlook.

Theoretical framework

The concept of 'borders' in Border Studies

Our analysis draws on considerations from the field of Border Studies whose basic assumption goes back to the so-called 'constructivist turn' that emerged in the social and cultural sciences in the late 1980s. This movement questioned the existence of 'prefabricated' and unchanging, rigid realities and assumed the active construction of social realities. In Border Studies, we speak of the so-called processual shift (e.g. Brambilla et al., 2015, p. 1), through whose lens borders are seen as social productions. In relation to borders, for example, this means moving away from the notion of spatial fixedness and replacing this with processuality and dynamisation. Thus instead of the 'border', we speak of 'bordering processes'. This constructivist approach does not conceive a border as an ontological, linear object located at a territorial margin, but as a process of border drawing through discourse and practice (Weber et al., 2020, p. 8). In recent years, the words 'bordering', 'debordering' and 'rebordering' have replaced the initial concept of 'border': a shift towards multiple concepts that can be understood as an extension of the processual shift. Bordering processes as social productions are still central here, but it is additionally assumed that they "rarely originate from only one actor with a clear agenda and identity or materialise in a specific place in an explicit way"²⁰ (Wille, 2021, p. 110). In reality they are more diverse: they are negotiated in many different ways, and they manifest themselves in just as many different ways. Consequently, we speak of a pluralisation of bordering processes. A further feature complementing both the processual and the multiplicity shift is the complexity shift. This refers to the fact that bordering processes can be seen as "effects of dynamic formations"²¹ (Wille, 2021, p. 113). In the context of the complexity shift, the attempt is made to think together the elements of discourse and practice, but also of knowledge and its objects (Wille, 2021, p. 113). Bordering processes are, then, processual, plural, and complex. These developments in scientific description illustrate how terms, concepts, and analytical categories are continuously being differentiated in border research in order to better grasp the 'nature' of bordering processes.

Borderlands concepts and systematics

Based on these fundamental considerations of processuality, plurality, and complexity, the actual 'state on the ground' must be depicted with different borderland concepts. From a Border Studies perspective, different political, social, and medial borderlands are constituted as 'in-between areas', in which the forms of discourse described above overlap or diverge (following Anzaldúa, 2012 [1987]; also Crossey and Weber, 2020). Accordingly, borderlands can appear in different forms – as contact, transition or hybrid zones, as

¹⁹ Within the framework of the joint project *Linking Borderlands* (funding code: 01UC2104), funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 16 interviews were conducted in the period from 16/11/2021 to 11/05/2022 for the study area France-Germany-Luxembourg (W) and 12 interviews in the period from 01/03/2022 to 31/10/2022 for the study area Germany-Poland (E).

²⁰ „selten [...] von nur einem*r Akteur*in mit eindeutiger Agenda und Identität ausgehen oder sich an einem bestimmten Ort in expliziter Weise materialisieren“

²¹ „Effekte von dynamischen Formationen“

interlinked areas, or as conflict zones. Categorising borderlands into one (or more) of these groups captures the actual state of the borders in question. However, constructivism warns us that the categorisation must not be regarded as final. Corresponding classification into one (or more) categories can also be discarded and changed in the course of historical, political or social (re)interpretation. We have developed the following systematics:

- Where borders do not serve as a barrier, borderlands can be classified as *contact zones*. Here, the (e.g.) administrative, cultural or linguistic systems that meet may be identical, similar, or different. For example, the construction of wind power plants along a (territorial) border not only affects the 'group', to put it in lossifova's (2019) words, on one side of the border, but – due to its proximity – also the 'group' on the other side, creating a contact zone.
- Insofar as contact zones not only allow contact to occur, but also promote a certain permeability (see Schiffauer et al., 2018), they are referred to as "zones of transition"²² (Boeckler, 2012, p. 45), "transition zones" (Newman, 2003, pp. 18–20) or "spaces of transition" (Nekula, 2021, p. 411). This permeability can take place in spatial as well as temporal and social terms (Schiffauer et al., 2018, 17f.). The "impact of the border is gradually diminished within these zones" (Newman, 2003, p. 18). Accordingly, those borderlands can be classified as *transition zones* in which people can commute across borders without major problems in the context of their work or education, or for family reasons.
- According to lossifova, *hybrid zones* can only emerge where the border "works as an interface and contact zone (rather than a barrier) and if contact between different groups is possible" (lossifova, 2019, o.S.). Hybrid zones are, then, borderlands "where people from different groups or territories begin to cross borders and where they experience processes of mutual adaptation" (Newman, 2003, p. 19). Mixtures and overlaps of discourse and practice will take place in this context, but differences will visibly remain. One example of this are the so-called 'atypical cross-border commuters'²³ (Roos et al., 2015), i.e. those who live in neighbouring countries but still commute regularly to their home country in order to work there.
- As with hybrid zones, according to Zathay, "linkages and relationships in an interconnected space can only be built when people come together"²⁴ (Zathay, 2021, p. 114). As soon as borderlands show connections and interdependencies in certain areas, and functional connections are pronounced across borders, or when interdependencies can be noted unilaterally due to these functional connections, we can speak of *interlinked areas*. Examples of this are the closely interwoven cross-border labour market, and the cross-border realities of life around education or consumption, in the SaarLorLux region.
- *Conflict zones*, for their part, arise due to cross-border conflicts. Conflicts and negotiation processes, so-called 'border struggles', can take many different forms (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p. 266). They can manifest themselves directly at the administrative border, but also have more far-reaching effects "that extend into [...] the very centre of formally unified political spaces" (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p. 265). For example, discussions about nuclear power plants or wind farms near national borders do not stop at the local level, but can be played up to the regional, national, or even European level, where they are also negotiated. However, a certain productivity can also be attributed to the conflictual nature of borderlands; for, as Boeckler (2012) observes: "Borderlands [...] thrive especially where national societies collide across borders"²⁵ (Boeckler, 2012, p. 45).

To put it in a nutshell, borderlands can be seen as contact zones, which can develop into transition zones in cases of greater border permeability. Hybridization also takes place in borderlands, 'creating' hybrid zones. And when more intensive interactions and interdependencies develop in certain areas, borderlands can be called interlinked areas. If there is a certain level of conflict in a borderland, one can also speak of a conflict zones. Conflicts can also occur at any time in borderlands that were not previously classified as conflict zone. The categorisation of borderlands is, however, inevitably subject to dynamics. Borderlands do not represent closed systems. The parallel existence of multiple borderlands is just as possible as the overlapping of complex borderlands. With our energy-related analysis, we start from national energy spaces that are initially strongly territorialised, as we have shown in the introduction. The borderlands systematics developed above allows us, however, to focus on cross-border development processes that transcend national borders.

²² „Zonen des Übergangs“

²³ „atypische Grenzgängerinnen und Grenzgänger“

²⁴ „Verknüpfungen und Beziehungen in einem Verflechtungsraum lassen sich nur aufbauen, wenn Menschen zusammenkommen.“

²⁵ „Borderlands [...] gedeihen vor allem dort, wo nationale Gesellschaften grenzüberschreitend aneinanderstoßen“

Examples of conflict: conflict zones

In this section, the French nuclear power plant Cattenom near the German and Luxembourg borders, will serve for a case study of negotiation processes around nuclear power, and the Polish opencast lignite mine Turów near the German and Czech borders for a case study of similar processes around a fossil energy source. Both studies will follow the categorisation developed above. A comparison between the two energy borderlands will be undertaken to identify similarities and differences in the negotiation processes concerned.

The French Nuclear Power Plant Cattenom on the German-French-Luxembourg border

When different national energy policies meet, this inevitably leads to different national discourses and negotiation processes. It is no secret that nuclear power is generally regarded as a ‘bone of contention’ between Germany (with Luxembourg’s endorsement) and France (Biemann and Weber, 2020). Particularly in the course of the two country’s energy transitions, their different views have clashed harshly, and this is already noticeable in the different definitions of *Energiewende* and *transition énergétique*. While both sides speak of decarbonised energy generation in the future, in Germany the focus is currently on electricity generation from renewable energies (German Environment Agency, 2022; Federal Network Agency, 2022), while in France most of the energy generated is from nuclear power – which is at the same time the main driver of decarbonisation (Bruns and Deshaies, 2018, p. 8). Along with these different ideas about energy transition, the French side lacks understanding concerning the denuclearised energy production in Germany (W-IP_6_FR_lok). From the French point of view, electricity generation from nuclear power already brings about the desired decarbonisation within the framework of the energy transition (W-IP_6_FR_lok), without having to resort on a wide scale to renewable energies. As an example, a French decision-maker says: “I don’t understand the German ecological strategy. You’ll excuse me, but I don’t understand it. [...] I find it damaging and I don’t think it’s a successful ecological transition from the electricity point of view”²⁶ (W-IP_6_FR_lok). Nuclear power generation is negotiated not only at the national but also at regional and local levels; for national political ideas also – indeed especially – meet in the ‘small’ regional or local context, at the ‘edges’ of national territories, where their conflictual nature frequently even gains strength. One can speak in this context of a downscaling of divergent national energy policies whose effects and negotiation processes culminate in the border regions. Thus the nuclear power plant on the German-French-Luxembourg border bundles the conflictual nature of nuclear power (see e.g. LW 30/03/2011), which can already be found nationally, and has become a permanent bone of regional and/or local contention (W-IP_4_DE_lok; W-IP_6_FR_lok; W-IP_9_DE_reg; W-IP_12_LUX_nat). In the German-French-Luxembourg border region, the most intense line of conflict revolves around the aspect of safety (W-IP_4_DE_lok; W-IP_9_DE_reg; W-IP_10_LUX_lok; W-IP_11_LUX_lok; W-IP_12_LUX_nat; W-IP_14_DE_reg). From a German and Luxembourgian point of view, the use of nuclear power in general and the Cattenom nuclear power plant in particular pose an (existential) threat due to the plant’s proximity to the border (see e.g. W-IP_12_LUX_nat), as the nuclear power plant is only some nine kilometres from the Luxembourg and twelve from the German border. A representative of Luxembourg’s Ministry of Energy and Spatial Development says with regard to this: “Cattenom is a threat to the existence of Luxembourg”²⁷ (W-IP_12_LUX_nat). A German spokesperson adds: “From a domestic perspective, the use of nuclear energy in the border region is in the end not acceptable for safety reasons. The French national government sees it differently. The point of conflict exists”²⁸ (W-IP_9_DE_reg). The German and Luxembourgian opinion is simply not shared by the French. Fuelled by the Fukushima disaster (2011), voices in Germany and Luxembourg against nuclear power have become louder – not only directly after the reactor disaster but also in subsequent years. In this context, German and Luxembourgian representatives regularly express their wish to have a say in matters relating to the Cattenom nuclear power plant – as well as other French nuclear power plants near the border (see e.g. SZ 24/09/2011; LW 17/05/2014; SZ 02/06/2014; SZ 26/04/2016; SZ 08/09/2021). The desire to shut down the nuclear power plant in Cattenom is regularly ‘played up’ to the national and European level by

²⁶ « [J]e comprends pas la stratégie écologique allemande. Vous m’excuserez, mais je ne la comprends pas. [...] Je trouve ça dommageable et là, je ne pense pas que ce soit une transition écologique réussie de ce point de vue d’électricité »

²⁷ „Also Cattenom ist eine Bedrohung für die Existenz Luxemburgs“

²⁸ „[A]us heimischer Sicht [ist] die Nutzung der Kernenergie in der Grenzregion, [-] letztendlich aus Sicherheitsgründen, nicht verantwortlich. Das sieht die französische Nationalregierung anders. Den Konfliktpunkt gibt es“

German and Luxembourg actors at more local levels, in the hope that this will enable them to exert a stronger influence on the energy policy of their neighbour (see e.g. LW 26/04/2011; LW 12/10/2012; SZ 16/03/2016; SZ 16/03/2018). This phenomenon can be seen as an upscaling of the discussion on nuclear power. While national decision-makers in Luxembourg are receptive to such pressures (see e.g. LW 07/03/2012; LW 08/03/2013; LW 28/03/2019), national decision-makers in Germany – with reference to France’s national sovereignty in energy matters – tend to keep a low profile (see e.g. SZ 20/03/2012; SZ 13/04/2016). In Germany, only the regional level, in the form of the federal states of Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate, is more persistent in asking French national decision-makers for more say in the matter within the framework of the possibilities available to them (see e.g. Reinhold Jost in SZ 02/06/2014; Reinhold Jost in SZ 29/04/2016). In France, however, there is a vehement insistence on national sovereignty and thus on decision-making sovereignty in the national territory with regard to energy issues (see e.g. French Government in RL 25/05/2011; Patrick Weiten in RL 18/10/2013; Jean-Luc Masson in LW 29/06/2013; Guy Catix in LW 14/03/2013). In this context, the border between Germany/Luxembourg and France has taken on a political as well as territorial dimension that seems to possess both durability and impermeability (see Schiffauer et al., 2018). Power relations in the energy sector are clearly distributed and seemingly impervious to change – which causes tensions.

Conflict-laden negotiations can take place on a small scale at the edges of nation states due to the culmination of national energy policies and, as in the SaarLorLux region, may give rise to a regional conflict zone. In this instance, cross-border cooperation at local and regional levels either avoids the topic of Cattenom altogether or handles it “with kid gloves”²⁹ (W-IP_9_DE_reg). Those involved are aware both of its conflictual nature and of the decision-making sovereignty that lies in other competencies (W-IP_9_DE_reg), and their energies can be better spent on topics that have a common denominator and can be dealt with in small scale cross-border cooperations (W-IP_8_GR). In this conflict-laden borderland one can speak in this context of the liminality of the border: of an overlap zone (Schiffauer et al., 2018, p. 18) in which the effects of nuclear power can still be felt beyond administrative borders.

The opencast lignite mine Turów on the German-Polish border

In the case study of Turów opencast lignite mine we can observe that national energy policies have – as in the case study of Cattenom – an effect on both supra-regional and national discourses. Since Germany and Poland have different energy strategies, the borderland has become an arena of conflict (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p. 266). The very language used – the German term *Energiewende* and the Polish term *transformacja energetyczna* – reveals significant differences. The German *Energiewende* is a holistic strategy (E-IP_7_DE_reg) including a complete nuclear phase-out by the end of 2022³⁰, the rapid acceleration of electricity and heat generation from renewable sources, and the intention to achieve “decentralization of electricity generation and energy governance, new opportunities, discourses and conflicts in local and regional development” (Gailing et al., 2020 [online first 2019], 1114), as well as new spaces of governance (see e.g. in Moss et al., 2015). While decarbonisation is therefore perceived in Germany as a “rapid national task” (E-IP_7_DE_reg), the strong coal lobby in Poland prevents rapid decarbonisation and conversion to renewable energies (Svobodova et al., 2021; E-IP_6_PL_reg). This is also the reason why Poland has declared its reliance on coal as an energy carrier until 2050 – the maximum period set by the EU. In order to diversify its energy strategy, Poland has opted for an energy mix including coal as the dominant resource, but at the same time increasing the role of renewable energies (see e.g. in Ceglaz, 2021) and of nuclear power. Nuclear power is seen as a solution for the future and an additional strategy – especially since the war on Ukraine and the determination to gain full independence from Russian energy resources: “The war on Ukraine provoked us to think and showed that the strategy of defending coal as our primary energy resource was not far-fetched”³¹. It also made clear for the Polish government that the German *Energiewende* was the “wrong paradigm for Poland, even if renewable energies are seen as resources of freedom”³² (E-IP_11_PL_nat).

However, the conflict between the two countries is evident not only in the different socio-linguistic interpretations of what is meant by an energy transition. There is also very real conflict over the Lower Silesian

²⁹ „mit Glacéhandschuhen“

³⁰ Due to the war on Ukraine and the diversification strategy to fully reduce dependency of Russian gas supply, the German government decided to keep two nuclear reactors on the grid until spring 2023 in case of an energy shortage.

³¹ „Wojna na Ukrainie sprowokowała nas do myślenia i pokazała, że strategia obrony węgla jako podstawowego surowca energetycznego nie jest czymś odległym od rzeczywistości“

³² „Energiewende to niewłaściwy model dla Polski, nawet gdy energie odnawialne mają być zasobami wolności“

opencast mine Turów, near the town of Bogatynia in the German-Polish-Czech border triangle. This is emblematic of the complex social spatiality of borderlands, which has local, regional, national, and even European implications. The multi-governmental conflict reached its climax here in May 2021, when the European Court of Justice ruled that the extension of the mining licence was an illegal act after hearing a Czech lawsuit against Poland for illegally operating the mine, and shortly afterwards the EU Court of Justice imposed a fine of €500,000 for each day the opencast mine was still in operation. Germany and Poland had two different attitudes towards the conflict: While Germany insisted that it had to be solved jointly (LR 29/04/2021), as the countries affected – Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic – were confronted at Turów with the same environmental problems (including contaminated groundwater and ground slippage), Poland saw itself as the victim (E-IP_11_PL_nat; E-IP_9_PL_reg; E-IP_7_DE_reg). The conflict has played out with the Polish government arguing that closure of a major power plant is a severe threat to the country's energy security and that energy policy is a sovereign competency, and Germany and the Czech Republic calling for an integrated approach to decision-making for Turów, mainly because of the environmental hazards, which remain a cross-border problem.

Moreover, socio-spatial strategies of up- and downscaling of the conflict by the Polish government can be observed around Turów: on the one hand, downscaling to the local level to take the discourse out of the line of fire of EU sanctions (GLW 21/05/2021); on the other hand, upscaling to underline the issue of threatened energy security for the whole country (GW 15/09/2021). Additionally, the residents of the nearest town to Turów, Bogatynia, feel patronized by the EU and Germany: "Keep your hands off the Polish economy and Polish workers. We live in a nation state, and we are not a colony of the German state," the chairman of Solidarność Trade Unions, Piotr Duda, said³³ (GLW 09/06/2021). The reference to "colonization" (E-IP_8_PL_reg) derives from the historical Polish heritage of invasion and occupation by its neighbours, including Germany and its predecessor states.

Finally, the Polish government insists on fairness and national decision-making sovereignty regarding its energy policy. This marks a hard and durable border (Ulrich, 2021, p. 146). Nevertheless, two aspects suggest a liminal or permeable quality in this border: first, the ecological (cross-border) consequences of the exploitation of the coal mine at the edge of the country; second, the overlapping cross-border discursive conflict (Schiffauer et al., 2018, p. 16).

Short Synopsis

Both examples, Cattenom and Turów, show that local and regional negotiation processes can turn existing energy borderlands into conflict zones. The examples illustrate that locally and regionally negotiated conflicts can be upscaled to national and European levels or can be triggered at the national level due to different energy policies. Up- and downscaling effects of this kind reveal in turn the diverging power relations of the various actors affected by the conflicts.

Examples of cooperation: transition zones and interlinked areas

In this section, the *Grande Region Hydrogen* initiative on the German-French-Luxembourg border will serve as a case study for the negotiation processes around hydrogen as an energy carrier, and the German-Polish twin city of Görlitz-Zgorzelec as a case study for the negotiation processes around renewable energies. Both will be viewed through the lens of the borderland categorisation developed in Section 2. Here, too, as in the previous comparison of the French nuclear power plant Cattenom and the Polish opencast lignite mine Turów, a comparison of the two energy borderlands will show the similarities and differences in negotiation processes around the various forms of energy in the different border regions.

³³ „Ręce precz od polskiej gospodarki i polskich pracowników. Żyjemy w państwie narodowym i nie jesteśmy kolonią państwa niemieckiego” - mówił przewodniczący NSZZ ‘Solidarność’ Piotr Duda”

The Hydrogen Network Grande Region Hydrogen on the German-French-Luxembourg border

Amid all the differences between Germany, Luxembourg, and France regarding the different forms of energy, hydrogen has in recent months been increasingly treated as a 'common denominator' of the Greater Region: "[Hydrogen] is a common denominator. Perhaps it can also become a common denominator that welds together rather than divides [...]. Hydrogen now [...] has definitely brought the regions together"³⁴ (W-IP_12_LUX_nat). The *Grande Region Hydrogen* initiative aims to establish and expand a cross-border hydrogen network in the heart of the Greater (i.e. SaarLorLux) Region (*Grande Region Hydrogen*, 2021). A network of various projects will guarantee the production, transport, and supply of hydrogen on both German and French sides of the border. Producers and consumers will be brought together and linked with each other, and the demand for hydrogen will be covered while at the same time reducing and finally eliminating the need for gas (*Grande Region Hydrogen*, 2021). The initiative has the agreement and support of all parties involved: "[I]t is a common understanding between all three countries [...] that they want to cooperate, and they want to cooperate in terms of hydrogen" (W-IP_7_GR). According to a participant in the hydrogen network, the construction and expansion of the pipeline system can be implemented without any problems from a technical point of view; the border in its geographical sense will not be noticeable, but permeable: "[W]e do not see the border in our project" (W-IP_7_GR). Due to this permeability, one can speak of a transition zone with a socio-cultural dimension.

In the context of the energy transition, hydrogen plays a particularly important technological role as a resource for all industrial sectors located in the Saarland and Lorraine that will in future no longer be able to produce with gas (W-IP_1_DE_nat; W-IP_3_DE_nat; W-IP_7_GR; W-IP_15_DE-FR_nat). In particular, it is a forward-looking decarbonisation path for the Saarland steel industry (W-IP_3_DE_nat; W-IP_15_DE-FR_nat) in the switch from old to new energies. In order to meet the needs of the industry, the production of hydrogen on both sides of the border will be necessary, together with a comprehensive, interconnected transport system. The *Grande Region Hydrogen* initiative aims to facilitate this interconnection (*Grande Region Hydrogen*, 2021). The common industrial heritage of the Greater Region will play an important role in this integration (W-IP_9_DE_reg). In the course of the advancing energy transition, hydrogen is the answer to the question of transforming the gas infrastructure: "Ultimately, all European gas grid operators have been faced with the same question, what happens to our infrastructure?"³⁵ (W-IP_1_DE_nat). It is precisely this well-developed network of gas infrastructure along the French-German border that is to be used in the context of the hydrogen initiative. The initiative envisages converting the gas pipeline system into a hydrogen pipeline system in those sections where this is technically possible, instead of building a completely new pipeline system.

Hydrogen is undoubtedly seen across borders as a technology of the future, and is being promoted accordingly (W-IP_7_GR; W-IP_3_DE_nat). However, the German side is concerned about the way in which the hydrogen will be obtained. While from the German point of view the focus should be on so-called green hydrogen, i.e. hydrogen from renewable energies, there is a fear that hydrogen could be produced on the French side from nuclear power – and thus be so-called red hydrogen. This does not meet German expectations and standards:

However, from the point of view of the Saarland, we have a relatively clear priority as far as the transformation is concerned, the keyword being hydrogen. The hydrogen that is needed for the transformation, in the steel industry, but also in the transport sector, should, in our estimation, come from renewable energy sources, if possible. [...] With regard to, let's say, the production of hydrogen from nuclear energy, the government of the Saarland is very sceptical and critical with regard to the risks of nuclear energy, especially here in the border region³⁶ (W-IP_9_DE_reg).

³⁴ „[Wasserstoff], das ist ein gemeinsamer Nenner. Vielleicht kann das auch ein gemeinsamer Nenner werden, der dann zusammenschweißt und nicht auseinandertrennt [...]. Wasserstoff jetzt, [...] hat auf jeden Fall die Regionen zusammengebracht.“

³⁵ „[L]etztendlich haben alle europäischen Gasnetzbetreiber vor derselben Frage gestanden, was passiert mit unserer Infrastruktur?“

³⁶ „Allerdings, so aus saarländischer Sicht, wir haben da, was die Transformation angeht, Stichwort beim Thema Wasserstoff, unsere Priorität ist relativ klar. Der Wasserstoff, der für die Transformation gebraucht wird, in der Stahlindustrie, aber auch im Verkehrssektor, der sollte nach unserer Einschätzung aus erneuerbaren Energiequellen nach Möglichkeit stammen. [...] Bei dem, sagen wir mal, der Herstellung von Wasserstoff aus Kernenergie ist die saarländische Landesregierung mit Blick auf die Risiken der Kernenergie, gerade hier auch im Grenzraum, sehr skeptischen und kritisch.“

The reason for these concerns is, on the one hand, the different national energy policies, with the persistent strong French focus on nuclear power in electricity production, and, on the other hand, current political developments. Thus, for example, the German – and also Luxemburgian – side takes issue with the new EU Taxonomy Regulation (W-IP_3_DE_nat; W-IP_10_LUX_lok; W-IP_11_LUX_lok), which aims to channel capital flows into environmentally sustainable, so-called ‘green’ economic activities and in this context classifies both natural gas and nuclear power as ‘green’ economic activities. This could open the door to a stronger French nuclear sector and a potential production of hydrogen using nuclear power (see e.g. W-IP_9_DE_reg; SZ 24/11/2022). It remains to be seen, therefore, whether the current ‘common denominator’ of hydrogen and the resultant (planned) transition zone/interlinked area might also give rise to a new conflict zone.

The climate-neutral German-Polish twin city of Görlitz-Zgorzelec on the German-Polish border

Despite all disparities and conflicts on the political level, actors in the Polish-German borderland also see that energy production in the future will be easier if countries act together across borders (E-IP_1_PL_reg; E-IP_9_PL_reg; E-IP_7_DE_reg). It seems obvious, that global challenges like climate change and CO₂ emissions “do not stop at a country’s border, [and] we can’t manage climate neutrality alone”³⁷ (E-IP_1_PL_reg). Accordingly, projects have been launched that view the border as a region of possibilities where cross-border alliances can be built, like the plan to generate a climate-neutral German-Polish city of Görlitz-Zgorzelec by 2030 or, at a different level, to inspire regional governments across borders to create interlinked hydrogen networks.

As one of several initiatives towards Polish-German Climate and Energy Cooperation (see e.g. Ceglaz, 2021), the idea of a climate-neutral twin city was inspired by the municipal climate protection initiative, an aspect of the European Green Deal representing a package of investments from the European Commission. The “European City of Görlitz-Zgorzelec” lies at the centre of the historic coal and industrial belt running from Zwickau to Katowice; the idea thus addresses the “tradition of a bridge building project in the energy sector”³⁸ (E-IP_7_DE_reg). As a first step, the mayors of both cities signed a declaration of intent in July 2020 for a project creating “Climate-neutral district heating for the European City”. This provides for the construction of a joint biomass heating plant in Zgorzelec, which will not only cover the future heating requirements of the Polish border city, but also supply the German district heating area of Görlitz-Königshufen via a cross-border district heating pipeline (Veolia, 2021). So, after the narrowly failed application for the European Capital of Culture Award, the self-proclaimed European City of Görlitz-Zgorzelec has a new common goal with well-founded prospects of success – not least because of the twin cities’ long-standing cooperation:

Feasibility studies have been carried out, which have also been supported in part by our ministry and these have also proven the effectiveness of this energy network from a technical point of view and also the possibility of covering the demand via regenerative energies. Very promising. When two cities are so close to each other, it would be fatal not to use this synergy. The other thing is that this project is not starting from scratch. There has already been preparatory work for several years and the cooperation between these two cities has been running for decades³⁹ (E-IP_7_DE_reg).

While this project is still in the planning phase and actors of both countries seem to be contributing to its feasibility, there remains a significant imbalance in establishing a hydrogen network, especially across the borders. At the moment, the Lusatia Hydrogen Network in the energy region of southern Brandenburg and eastern Saxony acts as a kind of role model for decision-makers on the Polish side (MOZ 20/01/2021, E-IP_2_PL_reg), especially in the Wielkopolska Region: “The Wielkopolska Region has learned hydrogen tech-

³⁷ „Emisje CO₂ nie kończą się na granicy państwa, z drugiej strony nie możemy sami zarządzać neutralnością klimatyczną”

³⁸ „Tradition eines Brückenbauprojekts im Energiesektor“

³⁹ „Es wurden Machbarkeitsstudien durchgeführt, die zum Teil auch von unserem Ministerium unterstützt wurden, und diese haben auch die Leistungsfähigkeit dieses Energienetzes aus technischer Sicht und auch die Möglichkeit, den Bedarf über regenerative Energien zu decken, nachgewiesen. Sehr vielversprechend. Wenn zwei Städte so nah beieinander liegen, wäre es fatal, diese Synergie nicht zu nutzen. Das andere ist, dass dieses Projekt nicht bei Null anfängt. Es gibt bereits seit mehreren Jahren Vorarbeiten und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den beiden Städten läuft schon seit Jahrzehnten!“

nology from Lusatia, where we understood how this technology is already applicable to citizens and companies”⁴⁰ (E-IP_2_PL_reg). Polish decision-makers in the Wielkopolska Region are thus calling for energy-solidarity and collaboration with Brandenburg administrators responsible for post-coal energy programmes (E-IP_2_PL_reg). Especially since “Putin attacked the Ukraine, attacked Europe, attacked Poland, attacked Germany”⁴¹, it has become essential to find cross-border solutions in order to move away from gas and oil and break European dependence on Russia (E-IP_2_PL_reg, MOZ 19/10/2022). The narrative of common European vulnerability thus underpins the topos of European-wide energy solidarity.

Short synopsis

The two examples in the western and eastern border regions illustrate how local and regional cross-border interconnections arise in the course of energy transitions. In both examples it becomes clear that the transition from old to new energies can call on long-developed structures, whether technical (as in the case of the gas pipelines between Germany, France, and Luxembourg) or cooperative (as in the case of the long-standing collaboration between Görlitz and Zgorzelec). However, while cooperation in the western border region seems to be proceeding more smoothly, it occasionally falters in the eastern border region. In both examples, existing connections represent a heritage ensuring that cooperation does not have to begin from scratch – a great benefit for an emerging interlinked area.

Conclusion and outlook

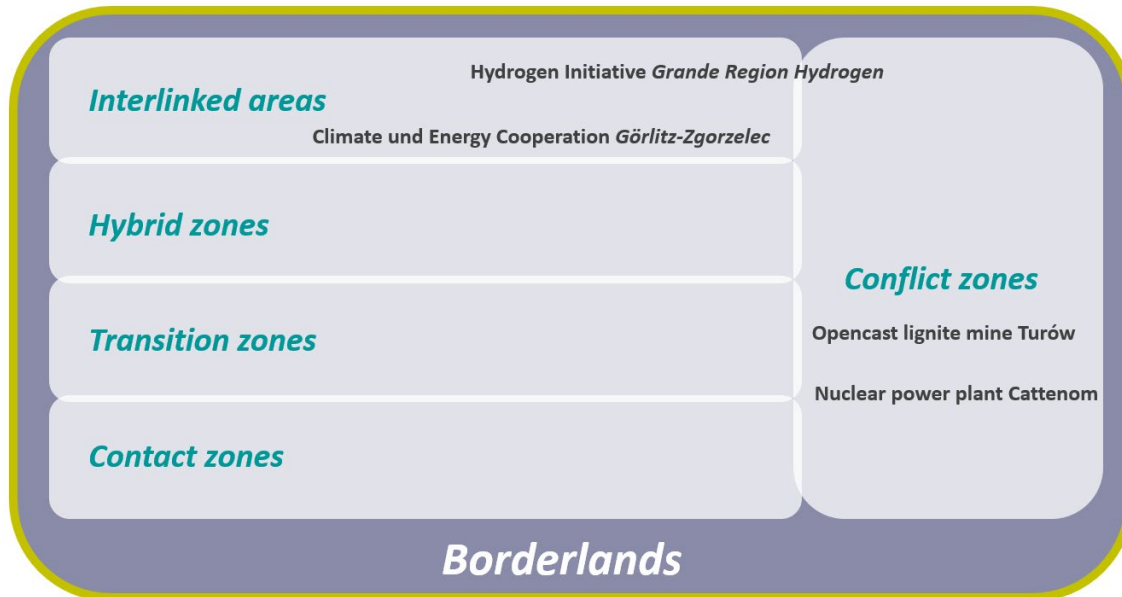
The main objective of this paper is to present an outline systematics of energy borderlands, using considerations from the field of Border Studies. The preliminary result indicates that borderlands systematics can be productively applied to examples from the energy sector on both the eastern and western borders of Germany. Thus both the French nuclear plant at Cattenom on the German-French-Luxembourg border (as an example of nuclear power) and the opencast lignite mine at Turów on the German-Polish border (as an example of coal power) can be classified as conflict zones. In contrast, the hydrogen networks *Grande Region Hydrogen* on the German-French-Luxembourg border and, to some extent, the Lusatia hydrogen network and the planned climate-neutral German-Polish twin city of Görlitz-Zgorzelec can be considered as interlinked areas (see also Figure 2). These borderland classifications do not establish rigid patterns, but may in new circumstances undergo upheavals and changes and thus be dynamically re-categorized.

Taking up a distinction made above, the East-West energy borderlands can be considered comparable with regard to their forms and levels of negotiation and cooperation, and hence be classified in terms of conflict zones and interlinked areas, but not regarding the forms of energy or energy carriers they involve. In the western border region, conflictual negotiation processes take place around nuclear power, while in the eastern border region similarly conflictual negotiations take place mainly with regard to coal. In both cases, however, the negotiations have a multidimensional socio-spatial impact involving, for example, mechanisms of up- and downscaling.

⁴⁰ „Województwo wielkopolskie nauczyło się technologii na wodór od Łużyc, gdzie dowiedzieliśmy się, że ta technologia jest już do zastosowania dla obywateli i firm.”

⁴¹ „Putin zaatakował Ukrainę, zaatakował Europę, zaatakował Polskę, zaatakował Niemcy”

Figure 2: Types of multi-level governance



Source: Own illustration.

Another aspect common to the western and eastern energy borderlands is the impact on other European countries of the Russian war against Ukraine in terms of energy supply and production. Due to its specific energy mix, with its newfound reliance on renewable energies and the shift away from nuclear power, Germany has until recently been particularly dependent on gas imports from Russia. But Russian gas is subject to political sanctions and can no longer be purchased. This severely impacts the energy policy and energy mix in countries formerly in receipt of Russian gas. Since the EU is an interlinked area in terms of an energy exchange system balancing fluctuations in the energy grid across Europe, many countries besides Germany are affected by this development. In Europe, the concern is consequently spreading that energy shortages and black-outs could occur in winter (e.g. MOZ 21/05/2022). To cite a single example: the call for energy solidarity within a so-called 'Green Weimar Triangle' – the reference being to the long-established Germany-France-Poland consultative group (Müller-Kraenner et al., 2021) – are getting louder. Against the background of all these developments, the effects of diverging national as well as European energy policies, whose impact can be observed with especial clarity in border regions, and the nature and course of the processes established to negotiate these divergences, must be examined more closely in future.

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