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LEVELS OF ANALYSIS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION AT THE EASTERN BORDERS OF THE EU

Based on summarizing current research methodology precedents, historical experience of Europe and the current situation on the eastern border of the European Union, possible approaches to the study of cross-border cooperation are specified.

This is the basis for the formulation of levels of analysis that can be used for the design of social research in the borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation, social institution, level of analysis, research methodology, the European Union.

Despite the extensive array of research and subordinate publications on the theory and practice of cross-border cooperation at the borders of Ukraine and in Europe in general, which does not make sense to enumerate, the question of its levels, defined by object basis, i.e. the criterion of direction of joint “across-the-border” actions is not conceptualized enough. Therefore, the purpose of this analysis is to formulate the list of objective levels of cross-border cooperation,

including approval of organizations and socio-demographic groups at the borderland of Central and Eastern Europe, among which it is necessary to conduct sociological and other fieldwork. The accepted definition among managers and experts on CBC is the one proposed by the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (from May 21, 1980), namely that “transfrontier co-operation shall mean any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties and the conclusion of any agreement and arrangement necessary for this purpose.”[1]. That is the subject of this interaction is determined by activity, the aim of which is the establishment of partnership sufficient in the context of international legal documents.

At the same time, theorists of cross-border cooperation have tried to provide a more focused task (objective level), for the purpose of which it is necessary to establish “good neighbourly relations”, using for their concept the experience of post-war Europe.

The first approach can be defined as socio-economic, and according to it, the main purpose of cross-border cooperation is to create quality living conditions for citizens on both sides of the border. Living space of citizens residing in border regions is not limited to the national territory, but is also provided with cross-border markets in goods and services, and cross-border contacts (according to N. Mikula) [4, p. 63].

Another aspect of cooperation provides a sociocultural approach, according to which cross-border region is a complex multi-layered socio-cultural space with features and patterns of development within the national cultural institutions. In the cross-border area is possible dialogue of cultures, resulting in erasing the boundaries between them, even cultural assimilation, however, the adverse effect of this interaction could be “dissolution”, the disappearance of a particular culture (according to N. Zimina) [2].

The political approach perceives the above form of international communication as a manifestation of cross-border regionalism, by

which we must understand “spatially integrated form of political cooperation and resolution of problems that crosses national boundaries and administrative practices despite of these boundaries, trying to create awareness of connectedness, interdependence and common interests” (according to J. Scott, I. Studennikov) [7].

Finally, noteworthy is the sociological approach, in which the emphasis is on the perception of cross-border cooperation as a social institution; subjects of social interaction are local communities, which, in this way, want to meet common needs for safe and comfortable living environment. As for understanding the essence of concept of “institutions”, we use the definition of D. North, who perceived them as rules in a society, or rather devised by people limitations that may be formal (organization) or informal, which include traditions, customs, moral values mutual agreements.

If formal rules can be changed quickly by adopting legal or political decisions, customs, traditions and codes of conduct evolve in the process of institutionalization, which is predefined by previous development [5, p. 11, 15]. It should be pointed out that all of the above approaches are complementary, and only in combination form the matrix of the generalized cross-border cooperation and potential directions of development. However, in order to facilitate the formation of tools of social research of this phenomenon, it is worth to clearly indicate what level of interaction is the subject of attention.

Researchers from various European countries who during the recent years conducted field studies on cross-border cooperation at the Eastern borders of the European Union, adhere to this precise initial methodological position that can be considered a precedent for building tools for the project, which is being implemented by the Institute for CBC (Uzhgorod, Ukraine).

A. Slonimsky and A. Pobol, exploring trends of CBC of western regions of Belarus with partners from the “other side” of the border of the European Union in the field of business (economic approach) for purposes of the survey included in the sample representatives of:

- 1) The local authorities;
- 2) Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other business support organizations;
- 3) Non-governmental organizations;
- 4) Expert community that directly participated in cross-border contacts, or was aware of the current practice of interaction across the border.

The study was carried out in the form of interviews, which were only partly structured, as a defined purpose was primarily qualitative, not quantitative. Simultaneously, there was studied socio-economic situation of households, whose members are involved in cross-border business, especially “shuttle” trade, or in cross-border dialogue at the level of family, friendship and other social-humanitarian relations.

Thus, the levels of analysis of cross-border cooperation were:

- 1) Households as primary subject of capital accumulation and acquisition of competence in cross-border social relations (such a position shares the already mentioned N. Mikula) [4, p. 78];
- 2) Small and medium-sized enterprises;
- 3) Specialized institutions for cross-border business (trade and industry organizations, business incubators, etc.) [6].

At the same time, international research project “Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities: nations between states along the new eastern borders of the European Union”, which was implemented by a consortium of organizations from different countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 2008-2011, was aimed at collection of social data on 8-12 ethnic groups in Eastern Europe, which after World War II or earlier were separated by boundaries (sociocultural approach).

Under cross-national studies was conducted formal survey of about 8 thousand respondents, representatives of ethnic groups, which allowed a detailed cross-national comparison, and its instruments were

coordinated with standardized international surveys procedure (ISSP, ESS, Eurobarometer).

In addition, there were proposed a series of qualitative research, purpose of which was to collect non-statistic data that helped to explain the political, social, economic and cultural contexts of ethnic minorities living in Eastern Europe, their main methods of socialization, historical and social memory of their members. Within qualitative research were offered instruments for in-depth interviews (with representatives of ethnic minorities), expert interviews (with officials of local and regional authorities, leaders of non-governmental organizations), and the analysis of works of pupils, content analysis of local and regional press [3].

Thus, at the level of analysis of cross-border cooperation were identified following representatives:

- 1) Ethnic minorities of adult age living across the border from the parent state, and ethnic majority;
- 2) Children and youth, representing ethnic majority and minorities;
- 3) The leaders of the national-cultural societies;
- 4) Authorities operating in the border areas with a multi-ethnic population.

CBC studies on the eastern border of the European Union in the light of political and sociological approaches still wait for their researches. Contributing to this initiative, we would like to provide a summary table of levels and objects, which is formed on the basis of summarizing the methodology of the above mentioned research projects and our own vision of design analysis of political and social aspects of interaction on “cross-border” at the frontier between Eastern and Central Europe. We believe that professionals in the field of sociology can develop the most appropriate and effective tools that can be applied to the realization of the project of the Institute for CBC.

TABLE 1.

Levels and objects of the CBC analysis

Approach to the interpretation of the purpose of cross-border cooperation	Objects of analysis	Organizations and social groups, positions of which are studied
Socio-economic	Households	Local authorities
	Small and medium enterprises	Chambers of Commerce and Industry, business incubators
	Specialized institutions for cross-border entrepreneurship	Nongovernmental organizations
		Experts
Sociocultural	Ethnic minorities	Ethnic minorities (adults)
	Ethnic majority	Ethnic majority (Children and Youth)
		National and cultural associations
		Regional and local authorities, working in multi-ethnic regions and communities
Political	International Organizations	International Organizations
	National level of governance	National level of governance
	Regional and local authorities	Regional and local authorities
	Ethnic minorities	Leaders of the parties created along ethnic lines or national-cultural societies
		Experts
Sociological	Local communities living in border areas	The main socio-demographic groups living in border areas
		Regional and local authorities
		Experts

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The existing research precedents, as well as the European historical experience and the current situation of the European Union eastern borders constituted the preconditions for the formulation of the possible approaches towards the cross-border cooperation study. On this base, the levels of the analysis are defined that, in one's part, can be used for the sociological research design.

Key words: *the cross-border cooperation, the social institute, the level of the analysis, the methodology of the research, the European Union.*

На основани обобщения методологии существующих исследовательских прецедентов, исторического опыта Европы и современной ситуации на Восточных границах Европейского Союза определены возможные подходы к изучению трансграничного сотрудничества. Это является основанием для формулирования уровней анализа, которые можно использовать для проектирования социологических исследований на территории приграничья Центральной и Восточной Европы.

Ключевые слова: *трансграничное сотрудничество, социальный институт, уровень анализа, методология исследования, Европейский Союз.*