**УДК 316.334.52(1-04):332.135+327.7**
**DOI: 10.24144/2078-1431.2019.1(22).87–102**

***Olesia Benchak,***
*Lecturer of the Department for International Studies and Social Communications*
*Uzhhorod National University*

# BORDERS AND TRANSBOUNDARY PROCESSES: NEW TRENDS OF STATE-SPACE DISTRIBUTION

*Держави і кордони не є сталими ні за змістом, ні за формою. Не існують вічні держави, і не існують вічні кордони. Істинність цих постулатів підтверджують як історія, так і сучасність.*

*Важливим елементом небаченого загострення всієї системи міжнародних відносин стали так звані «гібридні війни». Розгортаються масштабні інформаційні диверсії на основі поширення фейкової інформації. Зростаючу загрозу для безпеки держав становлять кібератаки з-за кордону. Час від часу відбуваються жахливі терористичні акції, за якими зазвичай стоять транскордонні екстремістські організації.*

*Феномен державно-просторових розмежувань та пов'язаних з ними явищ знаходить своє відображення у двох основних, дихотомних поняттях: кордони і транскордонні процеси.*

*У зв'язку із складністю об'єкта дослідження в колі вчених дедалі більше утверджується усвідомлення необхідності переведення теоретичних та практичних розробок проблем кордонів і транскордонних процесів на якісно новий рівень – від переважно мононаукового аналізу до міждисциплінарних досліджень.*

*У статті через призму соціологічного аналізу розкриваються сутність та форми існування сучасних кордонів і транскордонних процесів. Ідентифікується новітня тенденція до «розмивання», а то й повного нівелювання бар'єрної функції кордонів у зв'язку із трансформацією природи транскордонної діяльності.*

*У зв'язку з цим обґрунтовується необхідність уведення в науковий обіг поняття «міждержавні просторові явища» з його наступною політико-правовою імплементацією.*

*Автор окреслює коло найважливіших теоретико-методологічних та емпіричних проблем соціологічного аналізу кордонів і транскордонних процесів в їх новітній подобі та представляє власне бачення наукових та практичних способів вирішення цих проблем.*

*Особливу увагу приділено актуальності питання кордонів і їх розмежування для України, перед якою сьогодні постало завдання відновлення своєї територіальної цілісності та контролю за кордоном на Сході. Виникли серйозні проблеми і на Заході країни, у відносинах України із Польщею та Угорщиною.*

***Ключові слова:*** *міждисциплінарні дослідження,соціологічний аналіз, кордони, транскордонні процеси, соціальні загрози, системна методологія.*

*States and borders are unstable both in terms of content and form. Therefore, there are no eternal powers, and there are no eternal borders. These postulates are true being confirmed both by history and modernity.*

*The so-called "hybrid wars" became an important element of the unprecedented exacerbation of the entire system of international relations. Massive information subversions distributing fake information were staged. Cyber attacks from abroad pose an increasing threat to the security of states. From time to time there are terrible terrorist attacks that are usually inspired by cross-border extremist organizations.*

*The phenomenon of state-space demarcation and their associated phenomena is reflected in two main, dichotomous concepts: borders and transborder processes.*

*Due to the complexity of the research object the circle of scientists is more and more aware of the need to transfer theoretical and practical developments of the problems of borders and transborder processes to a qualitatively new level – from predominantly mono-scientific analysis to interdisciplinary research*

*In this article through the prism of sociological analysis the essence and forms of existence of modern borders and transborder pro-*

*cesses are revealed. Identified the newest tendency towards «blurring», and even a complete leveling of the barrier function of borders, in connection with the transformation of the nature of cross-border activities. In this regard, the necessity of introducing into the scientific circle the concept of «interstate spatial phenomena» with its subsequent political and legal implementation.*

*The author outlines the range of the most important theoretical, methodological and empirical problems of sociological analysis of borders and transborder processes in their newest form and presents their own vision of scientific and practical ways of solving these problems.*

*Particular attention is paid to the urgency of the issue of borders and their delineation for Ukraine, which faced today the task of restoring its territorial integrity and control abroad in the East. There were also serious problems in the West, in relations between Ukraine, Poland and Hungary.*

***Keywords**: interdisciplinary research, sociological analysis, borders, transborder processes, social threats, system methodology.*

States and borders are unstable both in terms of content and form. Therefore, there are no eternal powers, and there are no eternal borders. These postulates are true being confirmed both by history and modernity.

In the relatively recent historical past, in 1975, an unprecedented political forum – the Helsinki Conference on Security in Europe – took place. At the meeting, the leaders of the 35 states, including the leaders of the then supranational powers – the United States and the Soviet Union – signed a document in which it was pathetically noted that since then the borders of the states of Europe, which are known to have been the cradle of two terrible world wars, become inviolable, i.e. eternal [1]. However, this social myth, which, incidentally, was far from being worse than all other existing ones, lasted for a short time. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, one of the initiators of this document's adoption, the USSR, disappeared from the political map, and state-building processes took place, including those in Ukraine. At that time, a massive and bloody ethno-national confrontation

unfolded in the Balkans, which led to radical redrawing of borders on this long-suffering peninsula.

When, after the last enlargement of the European Union, the territorial boundaries of its member states became symbolic, many signed a social obituary to the European borders. However, now, in a context of strong transboundary diffusion due to poorly controlled illegal migration to Europe, a number of countries consider it necessary to restore border control. At some borders, there appeared even relict barriers, to say nothing about walls.

What else is to be said about Britain's powerful blow in the form of BREXIT, one of the main goals of which is to stop the free inflow of the EU citizens.

The so-called "hybrid wars" became an important element of the unprecedented exacerbation of the entire system of international relations. Massive information subversions distributing fake information were staged. Cyberattacks from abroad pose an increasing threat to the security of states. From time to time there are terrible terrorist attacks that are usually inspired by cross-border extremist organizations.

These difficult processes also threaten this country, which today faces the task of restoring its territorial integrity and control over its abroad in the East. There also occurred serious problems in the country's West, in relations between Ukraine on the one hand and Poland and Hungary on the other. The question about the nature of these problems is asked by many: aren't they deeper than they appear on the surface, that is, that they are only related to the problems of history and language?

We have identified only some of the serious challenges of the state-spatial development of modern societies, which determine the need for the in-depth study of the phenomena of modern borders and transborder processes.

Obviously, this study should be multidisciplinary. But a very important role in it should be played by sociology, which will apply for this its characteristic toolkit of analysis – both on the theoretical and methodological level, as well as on the empirical level.

Abroad, the essence of modern transborder phenomena was closely analysed by the growing number of researchers. Among the most famous of them are O. Martinez, G. Dijkink, E. Berg, S. Oras, A. Paasi, E. Brunet-Jailly, V. Kolosov and others.

There was established the Association for Borderlands Studies, which brings together more than one hundred academic institutions and government authorities, non-governmental organizations in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa [2]. The specialized periodical "International Journal of Migration and Border Studies" carries out vigorous activity [3].

The author noted with sadness that, despite the urgent relevance of the problems concerning modern borders and transborder processes, the expansion of sociological research in this area, neither theoretically nor empirically, is hardly noticeable in Ukraine. There is an interesting work by Evgen Magdy about the modern hybrid war [4], yet it is more politically journalistic than scientific.

Attention is mainly paid to such an important form of cross-border processes as cross-border cooperation. Active work in this area of research is carried out, in particular, by the research institutions of Uzhhorod, L'viv, Odessa. Famous experts I in these problems are V. Pryhodko, O. Peredrii, I. Artyomov, Ye. Kish, M. Lendel, S. Mitryayeva, V. Kravtsiv, N. Mikula, I. Studennikov.

The purpose of this article is *to outline the most important theoretical, methodological and empirical problems of sociological analysis of borders and transborder processes in their newest form and to present the author's own vision of scientific and practical ways of tackling these issues*.

In interpreting the essence of borders and cross-border processes, we share the research stand by S. Ustych, a specialist engaged in developing theoretical issues and in solving practical tasks to optimize cross-border processes for about 30 years. This stand has been made public in many domestic and foreign scientific and political forums, formulated in the works published in Ukraine and abroad [5, 6, 7]. It can be maintained that, in gen-

eral, it is supported both on the scientific and expert level and by practitioners – representatives of public authorities and local self-government, diplomats, heads of civil society institutions. The system theory of borders and transborder processes, proposed by S. Ustych, boils down to the following.

The phenomenon of state-space demarcation and their associated phenomena is reflected in two main, dichotomous concepts: borders and transborder processes.

The border is one of the most significant *social regulators of spatial activity of a human*. The introduction of the border institution, that is, *real or imaginary lines on the earth's surface, which determine the boundaries of the land and water territory of the state (state territory)*, has become *a radical human invasion into the natural organization of the world,* in particular *its spatial characteristics*. The border, having established artificial inter-state delineation, "tore" the space politically. Moreover, *this invasion is very large-scale*. In addition, *the phenomenon of the border is one of the most paradoxical, controversial phenomena of social existence*, since it strongly expresses *the philosophical unity of finitude and infinity (discreteness and continuity)* of the being.

The border is a static phenomenon. The dynamic form of the borders' existence is transboundary processes (flows). *Transborder processes (TP) are subjectival and natural interaction that occurs across the border.* Transborder processes exist since the boundaries appeared. They may be limited by one or another part of the space (in particular the territory) of the states, but may cover all of their depth [5, art. 9].

*Due to the complexity of the research object the circle of scientists is more and more aware* of the need to transfer theoretical and practical developments of the problems of borders and transborder processes to a *qualitatively new level – from predominantly mono-scientific analysis to interdisciplinary research* [8, 9].

The sociological mapping of borders and cross-border flows is also carried out. It occurs both at the level of theoretical analysis of these phenomena, and at the level of applied specific sociological research. As for theoretical sociological developments,

today, as S. Ustych maintains, they are closely intertwined with other areas of knowledge studying the occurrence of transborder phenomena (history, political geography, geopolitics, economics, etc.) and have not yet been singled out into a separate branch of sociological knowledge.

Interdisciplinary, multivariate analysis requires a reliable methodological support. Otherwise, it will not succeed. In order to adequately reflect the essence of modern transborder processes, *it is expedient to apply the methodology of systematic study of society (system methodology), that is, a set of methods, techniques or operations aimed at systematic theoretical and practical comprehension of social reality*.

This choice, according to S. Ustych, is determined by three main circumstances.

1. System methodology as an integrative analysis tool is capable of adequately reflecting the natural, organic unity of factors, very different in nature, affecting the boundaries – from subjective to physical.

2. System methodology, which provides analysis of objects' both functional and dynamic characteristics, is able to reveal the complex mechanism of transborder processes' operation and development.

3. Finally, a systematic methodology with a powerful collection of applied research can transfer the study of borders and transborder processes from the category of mainly descriptive research in the category of practically necessary one [5, p.14].

*The systemic understanding of transborder processes implies taking into account the comprehensive interaction of heterogeneous factors* associated with crossing the state border line.

Such an approach seems productive. First of all, it allows *clear differentiation between the concept of cross-border processes (cross-border flows) and other established categories* that characterize the borders and their related phenomena.

Thus, according to this approach, cross-border processes should be *distinguished from international relations*. The formeris broader in their content than the latter, since they cover not only

a wide range of *subjectival and institutional interaction across the border* (which constitute the content of international relations), but also *a large variety of natural transborder phenomena*–transfer, exchange of water and air resources, migration of animal populations (a kind of objectival interaction), etc.

Naturally, transborder processes are richer in content and in comparison with *interstate relations, whose subjects comprise only public institutions*.

According to S. Ustych, the systemic methodology, in particular, the level understanding of the social system, *also allows gradual calibration, typologization of cross-border processes.*

*According to the criteria of the depth of the territory coverage by the transboundary action and its spatial volumes (scales) four levels should be distinguished* in a multifaceted, systematic phenomenon of "transboundary": *micro, meso, macro and inter*. The micro level of cross-border processes is connected with the crossing of the state border (organized or spontaneous, legal or illegal) by specific actors (representatives of government bodies, public organizations, groups or individual citizens), or commodity exchange, natural phenomena *at the local level*.

The meso-level is represented with the transboundary phenomena that *extend to the regions* (for example, the cooperation of regional state bodies and territorial communities, commodity exchange, natural processes, etc.).

The macro-level comprises cross-border processes, which in their scope *cover the territory of the entire state* (for example, interstate relations, international relations of national entities, interstate commodity exchange, etc.).

The inter-level of cross-border phenomena is associated with crossing the borders of several, or even many, states. In general, in the opinion of S. Ustych, the transboundary phenomena of the inter-level by their scope can be considered identical to transnational, globalization processes [5, p.141].

Finally, S. Ustych considers it necessary to identify the systemic nature of transboundary phenomena as a separate concept – *the "transborder system of society". He defines this concept as*

*a self-organized set of components of objective and subjective origin, which interact with each other in connection with the special spatial delineations (borders) established by the states.*

*The horizontal section of the transborder system* makes the main component range, which includes cross-border needs and interests, subjects of transboundary activity, this activity itself, its objects and means, as well as transborder relations.

*The vertical section of the of the transborder system* is formed by its main subsystems: techno-industrial, economic, political and spiritual-specialized.

In accordance with the volume of transborder processes, cross-border systems can also act on four *main levels*: micro (local), meso- (regional), macro (national) and inter- (transnational, global) [5, p.143].

It should be noted again that the author, in general, shares the research approach by S. Ustych. However, the analysis of the latest transborder phenomena shows *that the systemic understanding of borders and transborder processes, presented by this scholar, under the current conditions requires deepening and modification.* This is due to *the expressive self-identification and the growing tendency towards "blurring", or even a complete levelling of the borders' barrier function in connection with the transformed nature of the latest transborder processes. This transformation means the possibility of penetrating (invading) and committing certain actions by the subjects of one state in the social space of another state without the physical crossing (violation) of the latter's border.*

The radical change in the nature of the recent transborder processes is caused by the emergence and widespread use of modern communication systems, first of all, the Internet. It is these systems that create conditions for waging information wars, running cyber attacks, and preparing terrorist attacks from abroad.

The same is true of "hybrid wars". Like any other war, this phenomenon means the hostile activity of one state on the territory of the other. However, although an obvious reality, "hybrid wars" formally may not be related to the denial of existing boundaries or their physical violation.

The speed with which the nature of transborder processes has transformed and continues to transform has led to the society's unwillingness to respond adequately to this phenomenon. The fact is that over the centuries a political and legal system of relations among the states was formed, basing on the assessment of the act of the border's physical crossing. It is the basis of this system on which, in particular, the classical concepts of "aggression" and "war" are defined. Therefore, today it is obvious that actors in world politics feel confused while evaluating certain transborder "innovations" and demonstrate their delayed reaction to them.

All this means only one thing: *an in-depth, modified understanding of the nature of the borders and transborder phenomena should be achieved, taking into account the newest realia, and on this basis, their practical, political and legal regulation should be modified.*

For this purpose, it seems to be extremely important to "embed" the latest transborder phenomena into the existing system of social coordinates, *to reflect them by means of such a general notion that would cover both the classical understanding of borders and transborder processes, as well as an adequate reflection of the newest forms of their existence.* The definition of *"interstate spatial phenomena"* could become such a concept. This concept represents *a set of static and dynamic components of state interaction that arises in connection with the borders' physical crossing or the use of air space, namely:*

- *established state border line;*
- *subjectival actions, including those carried out with using communication systems (Internet, radio, television, satellite communication, etc.);*
- *natural processes (climatic, hydrological, exchange of fauna and flora, etc.).*

If display the meaning of the concept "interstate spatial phenomena" graphically, then it will take the following form.

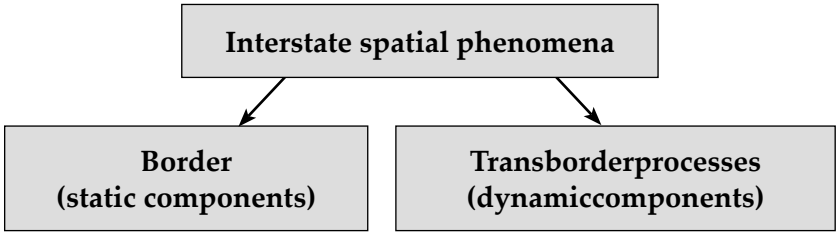


*Fig 1. The meaning of the concept "interstate spatial phenomena".*

The above-mentioned theoretical and methodological conclusions are also encouraged by the results of the projects carried out in recent years, in particular, empirical sociological research, including those with the author's participation.

Thus, while implementing the project "Borders for People" under the ENPI Program of the European Union (2010-2012, Applicant – Institute for Transborder Cooperation – ITS, Uzhhorod) experts from four countries – Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania –developed a system for indexation and monitoring of cross-border processes and cross-border cooperation [10, 11]. The innovative product developed was highly appreciated by the Program's Monitoring Mission and was recommended for implementation throughout the European Union's borders. For the work done the Institute received the award "For special achievements in developing European cross-border cooperation" from the Association of European Border Regions.

Subsequently, under the same Program, the Institute, together with partners from neighbouring countries, implemented a grant project "Borders through the People's Eyes" [12]. Leading sociologists from the participating countries were involved in the collaboration, and for the first time a large-scale empirical sociological study was carried out in their border regions [13].

Under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism Program in 2016-2017, the project *"Information Support and Implementation of Innovative Approaches in Cross-Border Cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine"* was successfully implemented, with the participation of Slovak, Norwegian and Ukrainian partners (ITC, as

well as an institutional expert – the Department of International Studies and Public Communications of the Uzhhorod State University"). The author of this article worked as a project manager from the Ukrainian side. There were carried out a comparative sociological analysis of the development of CBC in the Carpathian and Barents regions [14], as well as an empirical sociological survey of trends in the CBC development [15], and substantive practical recommendations for optimizing the management of cross-border cooperation [16].

In 2017, the Department of International Studies and Public Communications won the grant project *"The Contemporary History in the Carpathian Region"* with the support of the State Fund for Fundamental Research, in which the author also performed the duties of a project manager. On the first stage of its implementation, 34 experts from 5 countries of the Carpathian region made a theoretical analysis of the contemporary history of CBC; on the second stage (2018) they studied the problems of the empirical sociological research methodology [17]. On the second stage *"Theoretical and Methodological Support of an Empirical Sociological Study of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Carpathian Region"*, the theoretical foundations for the sociological analysis of CBC were developed, as well as social testing of the received knowledge through its implementation in the pilot empirical sociological study of transborder cooperation of the population of the Transcarpathian region and the neighbouring Kosice and Presov regions of Slovakia [18, 19].

Summing up the analysis carried out, the following conclusions can be made.

1. Borders and transborder processes are very important components of the modern society development.
2. Due to their complexity, the analysis of modern state-spatial delineations should be interdisciplinary and be done on the principles of systemic methodology.
3. Sociological analysis shows that the transformed nature of the newest transborder processes under the influence of modern communication systems has led to an increase

in the tendency for "blurring" or even a complete levelling of the borders' barrier function. This resulted in the emergence of new social threats and challenges, such as "hybrid wars", waging of information wars, running cyberattacks, etc.

4. Under these conditions, a systematic understanding of borders and transborder processes requires deepening and modification. For this, the author considers it necessary to introduce into the scientific circulation the general notion of "interstate spatial phenomena".
5. It is necessary to initiate a scientific dialogue with representatives of related disciplines, in particular political geographers, political scientists, lawyers, in order to develop a common understanding of the latest transboundary phenomena and prepare appropriate practical recommendations for government authorities.
6. With regard to sociological developments in transborder phenomena of border and transborder processes, they need to branch out as a separate area of sociological knowledge "sociology of borders and transborder processes" (as, for example, the "sociology of wars" in the field of sociological science).
7. Along with theoretical and methodological research, it is extremely important to carry out empirical sociological studies of borders and transborder processes (especially monitoring).

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