

Unlocking Potential of the Metacognitive Management Approach in Border Studies

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Abstract

The research employs the meta-cognitive management approach towards border studies and applies it to the current state of border research. The meta-cognitive management was developed at the Caucasus Laboratory of Geopolitical Modelling at Caucasus International University, and it involves a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis, identifying and understanding the cognitive factors contributing to the complexity of borders, and effectively leveraging previously untapped material and intangible resources. Special emphasis is made on exploring the psychological dimension of borders and the development of cognitive approaches, which form the basis for the metacognitive management process. The significance of psychological aspects in border studies is emphasized, highlighting the importance of factors such as perceptions, identity, memory, fear, and practices of othering in shaping border dynamics.

The article discusses cognitive approaches to the study of boundaries, stressing that borders as constructs (political, social, cultural, etc.) are too complex to be properly analyzed and understood from the perspective of a single discipline. While border studies are recognized as interdisciplinary, the psychological aspects remain insufficiently integrated into these studies. Understanding these psychological aspects provides valuable insights into the motivations behind border-related behaviors, practices, policies, and conflicts.

A significant component of this study is the relationship between borders, conflicts, and peace processes. Territorial disputes, ethnic divisions, and resource competition frequently result in border conflicts, while borders can also serve as focal points for cross-border cooperation and peacebuilding initiatives. The article demonstrates the trend of viewing borders not just as barriers and restrictions, but increasingly as resources and corridors of opportunities for people living in border regions and engaging in cross-border activities and mobility.

Keywords: border studies, meta-cognitive management, conflicts, cognitive distortions, resources for peacebuilding

Розкриття потенціалу метакогнітивного підходу до управління в прикордонних дослідженнях

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Анотація

У дослідженні використовується метакогнітивний підхід управління до вивчення кордонів і застосовується до сучасного стану дослідження кордонів. Метакогнітивне управління було розроблено в Кавказькій лабораторії геополітичного моделювання Кавказького міжнародного університету і включає всебічний міждисциплінарний аналіз, виявлення та розуміння когнітивних факторів, що сприяють складності кордонів, а також ефективне використання раніше невикористаних матеріальних і нематеріальних ресурсів. Особлива увага приділяється вивченню психологічного виміру кордонів та розвитку когнітивних підходів, які складають основу процесу метакогнітивного управління. Наголошується на важливості психологічних аспектів у дослідженнях кордонів, підкреслюється важливість таких факторів, як сприйняття, ідентичність, пам'ять, страх та практики іншування, у формуванні динаміки кордонів.

У статті розглядаються когнітивні підходи до вивчення кордонів, наголошується, що кордони як конструкти (політичні, соціальні, культурні тощо) є надто складними, щоб їх можна було належним чином проаналізувати та зрозуміти з точки зору окремої дисципліни. У той час як прикордонні дослідження визнаються міждисциплінарними, психологічні аспекти залишаються недостатньо інтегрованими в ці дослідження. Розуміння цих психологічних аспектів дає цінну інформацію про мотивацію поведінки, практики, політики та конфліктів, пов'язані з кордонами.

Важливою складовою цього дослідження є взаємозв'язок між кордонами, конфліктами та мирними процесами. Територіальні суперечки, етнічні розбіжності та конкуренція за ресурси часто призводять до прикордонних конфліктів, тоді як кордони також можуть слугувати координаційними центрами для транскордонного співробітництва та ініціатив з розбудови миру. Стаття демонструє тенденцію розглядання кордонів не лише як бар'єрів та обмежень, а дедалі частіше як ресурсів та коридорів можливостей для людей, які проживають у прикордонних регіонах та займаються транскордонною діяльністю та мобільністю.

Ключові слова: прикордонні дослідження, метакогнітивний менеджмент, конфлікти, когнітивні спотворення, ресурси для розбудови миру

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Introduction.

In 2017-2023, the Caucasus Laboratory of Geopolitical Modeling at Caucasus International University conducted the research “A Model of Metacognitive Management of the Political Crisis in Abkhazia”. The research was devoted to the problems of chronically unresolved political conflicts and the analysis of unused opportunities for peaceful transformation. Against the background of the collapse of existing systems of international security, deterrence, and delay in building new ones, on the one hand, there is a rapid development of technologies for waging modern wars and initiating managed crises, and on the other hand, the dominance of outdated peaceful technologies.

The absence of independent and authoritative international organizations for monitoring, diagnosis, assessment, mediation, and management (or ineffective actions of the existing ones) has created additional dangers of uncontrolled escalation of crises and their transition to an unmanageable stage. The use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is back on the agenda. A particular problem is the lack of interdisciplinary scientific assessment of conflicts. Conflicts settlement processes lack intellectual and political patronage.

According to the concept of metacognitive monitoring by John Flavell, one of the founders of the theory of cognitive research, the crisis of the political governance system, among other things, is caused by the actual lack of metacognitive monitoring and evaluation. According to Flavell, the absence of a mechanism for scientific monitoring and evaluation of metacognitive management of political processes leads to repetition of mistakes and chronic systemic crisis (Flavell, 1979).

As an alternative to existing reductionist methods of conflict management, the research presented a metacognitive approach to crisis management based on:

- understanding and identifying the cognitive causes of its intractability;
- active involvement of scientists and deep interdisciplinary study of the problem;
- consideration and effective use of material and non-material resources that have not been used so far.

One of the fundamental resources is the knowledge capital generated and accumulated within different scientific disciplines.

The meta-cognitive management approach is based on a deep interdisciplinary study of the problem, understanding, and identifying the cognitive reasons for its intractability, as well as taking into account and effectively utilizing tangible and intangible resources that have not been used so far. This approach also assumes a holistic view of the problem, taking into account interdisciplinary (scientific and non-scientific) approaches to explore the same object. The legitimacy of the meta-cognitive monitoring system is associated with an interdisciplinary approach that takes into account the activities of an extended working group of representatives

from different scientific fields, as well as the participation of experts from non-scientific fields (Rusetsky, 2023).

Taking into account the fact that borders/border regions are, on the one hand, the subject of chronic conflicts and, on the other hand, the most important element of the security system, it seems possible to analyze new resources for an effective border management policy.

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of border studies resources, using an innovative metacognitive problem management framework. The article focuses on the psychological dimension of border studies and the degree of development of cognitive approaches, which are the basis for further metacognitive management process. Through the evaluation, we intend to establish to what extent the development of border studies at the present stage, and consequently the accumulated knowledge capital, is embedded in the system of border management and administration.

Research results.

Border studies as a scientific direction.

In scientific developments, to designate the science of/about borders, the concepts of Border (Boundary) Studies, the most common name, and Limology (from Greek *limes*, border), found in Kolossov and Nail (more applicable in the Russian-speaking space), are actively used. Both titles represent an interdisciplinary field that studies historical aspects of border studies, border territories, border institutions, classification and functions of borders/border territories, mechanisms of border interactions (Kolossov, 2005; Neil, 2016)

In the academic world, the name of border science favors “Border (Boundary) Studies”, and it is not located within the study of any one discipline but is presented as a separate interdisciplinary scientific field.

Academically, limology is a more universal term. However, based on the analysis of scientific work, it is obvious that, as a rule, limology is considered as a section of political geography. Scholars distinguish the following areas – geographical limology, political limology, historical limology, geo-economic limology, and linguistic limology. The lack of a holistic understanding of limology has influenced the fact that the term has not been developed and applied internationally. This has also been contributed to by the fact that the English language has a consonant term “limnology”, which is a branch of hydrology that studies the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of lakes and other freshwater bodies.

To date, border researchers are trying to generalize the accumulated empirical material and disparate theoretical developments (Nemeth, Nemeth, & Kaisto, 2013). The issue of forming a unified theory of border studies is still open, as border researchers have not yet developed a unified position in this regard. Newman says that “it is impossible to construct a unified theory of borders” (Newman, 2006). Paasi wonders whether it should be a theory of borders or a theory of bounding

and the practice of border formation as a specific form of practices, symbols, and institutions” (Paasi, 2011). Brunet-Jailly, on the other hand, offers his vision of “border theory” by identifying four main analytical focuses from the border scholarship literature: 1) market forces and trade flows, 2) the political activity of multi-level governments in adjacent territories, 3) the political influence of border communities, and 4) the specificity of the culture of border communities (Brunet-Jailly, 2005).

Neil’s “Border Theory” provides a theoretical framework for the structure and functioning of borders through the lens of multiple domains of social life. Neil focuses on “critical limology,” defining it as a theory of the actual conditions of production of social boundaries. Neil emphasizes that border theory should be studied through the history of borders. This approach, in his view, provides an opportunity to conceptualize the historical conditions under which different types of borders were formed. He notes that in order to adequately understand modern borders, it is necessary to understand the emergence and coexistence of all types (regimes) of borders and the historical conditions of their emergence (Neil, 2016).

The key English-language terms in academic papers are boundary, frontier, and border. The difficulty lies in the fact that they are usually translated into other languages as one word “border”. However, in the English-language interpretation, each of them has its own connotation. Let us consider what is the difference between these concepts, which are very often perceived as synonyms.

Newman and Paasi note that initially “boundary” and “border” were considered simply as a line separating territory (Newman, & Paasi, 1998). Analyzing scientific publications, the following distinctive characteristics can be distinguished. Boundary denotes a sign restrictor, a physical separation in space, a boundary between two or more objects, which can be both material and abstract. According to Panarina, “boundary” can take any form, not necessarily physical (Panarina, 2015).

“Border” represents an international boundary, in some works denotes “state border”, and is presented as an area that includes the boundary line itself and the space adjacent to it (which is often called borderland). Border researchers have noted a certain transformation and shift in the focus of research from the border (in its linear sense) to border practices. The following problematic aspects of considering the border as a line are noted. First of all, the representation of borders as “undeniable entities”, a stable and fixed reality, does not allow us to see the sum vector resulting from social, cultural and political processes that lead to the emergence of borders. We can observe borders everywhere, not just in a particular geographical space.

Border researchers agree on the following fundamental issues:

- Borders are complex dynamic processes with multiple dimensions, changing structure, shaped by and involving different actors (Scott, 2020).

- Borders cannot be considered in the abstract, isolated from a specific context that connects both their symbolic and identity-forming meaning, as well as their institutional and legal significance.

- A reductionist approach to the study of borders is not productive. Borders require research that connects multiple elements that explain their meaning and processes (Scott, 2020).

The psychological component of border studies.

The study of psychological aspects of border processes has great potential for future research. Psychologists study the impact of the border on the psychological state and mental health of individuals and groups, intergroup relations, psychological motivations for border activities (trade, smuggling), mobility, and border policy making (Olapegba, & Idemudia, 2012; Dhungana, et al., 2019). Of particular interest is the issue of perception of boundaries by members of communities that are delimited by these boundaries.

Bertram Brown, as early as 1983 noted the importance of a psychological view of boundaries, as he believes it can provide a new perspective on understanding the relationship between social policy and mental health. The concepts of global minima can help us to better understand our world personally, domestically, and internationally (Brown, 1983).

Marsico and Varzi in “Psychological and social boundaries: Regulating relationships” point out that “psychology in general can be seen as the science of human boundary constructs, studying the dynamic relationships that exist between people and what surrounds them” (Marsico, & Varzi, 2016). Marsico also applied the concept of threshold spaces - boundaries to the study of education, which represents “the outer boundary of human development, but it is the only boundary that is never crossed once and for all... At each step we move toward a new, higher level of education, the horizon shifts as well. The process of moving forward in life, with its constant crossing of boundaries, defines the arena within which all human development takes place.” (Marsico, 2015).

Volkan, in his book on immigrants and refugees, discusses themes such as trauma, perennial mourning, prejudice, and border psychology, points out the importance of maintaining effective psychological boundaries because they contain shared prejudices and help protect the identity of the larger group. He explains that large group psychological boundaries are likely to be overwhelmed by emotional attitudes when physical boundaries are no longer effective (Volkan, 2017).

Journalist Jessica Wapner draws attention to the negative psychological impact of people living near walls made of concrete, barbed wire, and other types of fences along borders and lines of separation. In her book “Wall disease”, she refers to the German psychologist Dietfried Müller-Hegemann, who in the early 1970s documented this problem of the psychological danger of living by

a wall and argued that this condition required his own diagnosis as a mental illness, which became known as Mauerkrankheit (wall disease) (Wapner, 2020). Naturally, the restriction of freedom of movement and action is a constant stressor. People living in areas of separation constantly experience this factor, especially if they are "fresh walls", behind which there are objects vital to them. These may be: relatives (the problem of families divided by war); cemeteries; sacred ritual sites; houses they have recently lived in; land that was cultivated before the conflict began. All of these objects thus constitute an occasion for feelings of deprivation, i.e. access to vital objects. In this way, feelings of nostalgia are formed, which under certain conditions can be transformed into an attitude of revenge that aims to destroy the "wall".

Wapner also points out that, relatively recently, psychologists have begun to study "the connections between the brain, our emotions, and the many other dynamics at work in our experience with boundary walls" (Wapner, 2020). The discovery of a spatial map of the brain by Nobel Laureates, neuroscientists May-Britt Moser and Edward Moser, suggests that "The brain of a person living near a boundary wall contains cells that are activated every time the wall comes into view. If a person grew up in the shadow of the wall-structure, it has always been part of their cognitive map. If the structure was added to the environment later, the person's map has adapted to include it. If the border wall is in your midst, then it is also on your cognitive map" (Wapner, 2020).

Cognitive approaches to the study of borders.

Researchers from different fields of social sciences and humanities engaged in the issue of border studies point out that the field has nowadays become interdisciplinary (van Houtum, 1998; 2005). Geographers, historians, economists, ethnologists, lawyers, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists (and the list goes on) develop approaches, methodologies, classifications based on the sphere of interest of a particular discipline (Brunet-Jailly, 2005).

Within these disciplines, subdisciplines and sub-directions that try to analyze the cognitive dimension have come to occupy a special place. Let us give some examples. In geography, in the last three decades, a special place has been occupied by "Behavioral and Cognitive Geography", which aims to study the psychology of space, place and environment and tries to "describe and explain human activity and interaction in space and place" (Montello, 2018). James Scott, applying the methods of behavioral and cognitive geography draws attention to the psychological nature of borders, which are the product of complex social cognition and social communication of ideas about distinctive places (Scott, 2020).

Dunér and Ahlberger, define cognitive history as a symbiosis of methods and tools of historical research and theories of cognitive science to explain and understand human behavior, communication, and thinking in history

(Dunér, & Ahlberger, 2019). Cognitive sociology, a science, studies the relationship between cultural processes, individual consciousness, and social actions (Kaidesoja, Hyyryläinen, & Puustinen, 2022). Another example of the application of the cognitive dimension is cognitive linguistics. This field, which has been developing over the past few decades, addresses "the linguistic structuring of basic conceptual categories such as space and time, scenes and events, entities and processes, motion and location, force and causality" (Talmy, 2006).

This list can be developed further, as such directions as cognitive anthropology, cognitive economics, political cognitive science are intensively developing. There are numerous works investigating imaginary borders or spaces, perception of borders, emotional experiences (Aphijanyatham, 2009; Varro, 2014; Smith, 2020; Adotey, 2020, Kim, 2020).

Consequently, the study of borders should also emphasize the cognitive dimension. As noted by many researchers, the interdisciplinarity of border studies brings its own difficulties, misunderstandings, and contradictions, as each discipline develops approaches, methodologies, and classifications based on the sphere of interest of that discipline (Brunet-Jailly, 2005).

Moreover, sometimes approaches developed within one of the scientific fields are difficult to understand within another field of social sciences (van Houtum, 1998), additionally border studies have gained popularity in the humanities and the arts. For example, as Newman writes, "traditional geographers - understand borders as lines separating states in the international system and, in some cases, as administrative lines separating municipalities and regions (Newman, 2006). Sociologists and anthropologists understand borders as abstract lines of separation between "Us" and "Them", "Here" and "There", representing the essence of difference. Political scientists see borders as an important element of state-building. Although some progress is already being made in bridging "the differences between the separate disciplinary approaches within border studies" (Scott, 2020).

The introduction of another research dimension in border studies can be associated with certain difficulties and obstacles. As Laine rightly notes in "Identities and Methodologies of Border Studies: Recent Empirical and Conceptual Approaches", the openness of border studies to a wide variety of fields and perspectives "appears to be both an advantage and a limiting factor for its future development" (Laine, 2021). He notes that interdisciplinarity expands "the analytic perspective to also include the various processes and phenomena that transcend boundaries or are transformed, diverted, or even prevented by them." (Laine, 2021). Scott highlights the importance of uncovering the connections between different levels of border making, ranging from the political to the cognitive (Scott, 2020).

Cognitive distortions.

The concept of cognitive distortions (or illusions) was first introduced by psychologists Tversky and Kahneman in the early 1970s (Kahneman, & Tversky, 1972). Cognitive distortions refer to unrealistic, inflexible, or extreme interpretations of information caused by systematic errors in human logic (Beck, 1976). Given that human activity is a constant process of information processing, decision making, and responding, including emotional responses in a wide variety of domains, we can conclude that we encounter cognitive distortions/illusions everywhere. Cognitive distortions are characterized by systematicity and universality.

Scientific endeavors are no exception. Manuela Pinto, calls “to recognize that science is subject to the same cognitive distortions that affect human behavior. The same cognitive system that allows us to understand and explain the world around us also places limits on our cognitive capabilities” (Pinto, 2023).

The topic of cognitive distortions is also an interesting one in relation to border studies. Borders do not arise on their own - they are a product of human activity. It can be assumed that the processes of border reproduction are also subject to cognitive distortions.

Mishra, A. and Mishra, H. analyzing the process of mapping natural disasters introduced the concept of “border bias”. In the course of their study, they concluded that the state border, from a cognitive point of view, can be perceived as a real physical barrier, creating the illusion of safety in natural disasters. The study conducted an experiment that showed that even the thickness of the line that marks a disaster boundary on a map affects the perception of the proximity of a natural disaster, and as a consequence leads to irrational risk assessment (Mishra, A., & Mishra, H., 2010). It can be hypothesized that the process of building walls on borders, which has become ubiquitous in the past few years, also has a component of cognitive distortion. Although it has been shown by numerous studies that building walls does not provide real security as they can be easily destroyed, one of the factors why this solution is becoming so popular is the illusion of security.

The problem of cognitive distortion begins when we cannot define exactly what kind of borders we are talking about. With the process of formation of the scientific direction of border studies, the formation of the corresponding language (terminology) began. Since the process of border science is not yet complete, there is no unified and, most importantly, unambiguously accepted glossary/vocabulary of border/boundary terms. Rankin and Schofield point out that right or wrong terms produced by scholars and policy makers have been subject to distortion through phraseology, inadequate translations, spelling errors (Rankin, & Schofield, 2004). Terminology has also been distorted based on political interests, questionable analogies, and metaphors (Newman, & Paasi, 1998). As a result, the same term in different works

and contexts, had different semantic content. Conversely, different terms were used to refer to essentially the same process. Viewing borders through the lens of different disciplines adds to the confusion.

In addition to cognitive distortions, so-called subjective realities occupy a significant place in border studies. Andersen suggests analyzing borders as an attempt to create “certain types of subjects and subjectivity” (Anderson, 2006), so we can talk about such a concept as subjective borders. The concept of imaginary (or subjective boundaries) has been widely developed in border studies. Collective imagination finds expression in the drawing of concrete real boundaries. This process depends on how “human communities imagine relationships,” including “the goals of various ethnic and national projects involving members of the same collective or people outside it” (Yuval-Davis, & Støtzel, 2002). Moreover, the geographies of these “imagined” or subjective projects, largely based on perception and interpretation, can overlap, creating fields of tension. With the development of technology is not only the improvement of the process of controlling movement across borders, but also the emergence of a new type of border - virtual, electronic, or digital borders in cyberspace (Jiménez, Orenes, & Puente, 2010). Virtual borders create virtual realities that are somehow projected in the real world. With the intensive development of Internet technologies and the integration of artificial intelligence into everyday life, virtual maps are becoming more and more widespread, designed to convey a maximum set of useful data about a particular place, allowing a real person to plan his or her routes of travel. But it turns out that the way we see the map of a certain territory (especially disputed territories or conflict zones) on our devices depends on the location of a particular user.

Borders and conflict.

In the context of this paper, it is important to understand the relationship between conflict and borders. Just like boundaries, conflict is a natural and inevitable part of our lives. According to one of the classics of conflict resolution theory, psychologist Morton Deutsch, “Conflict exists whenever incompatible actions occur. An action incompatible with another action prevents, hinders, obstructs, interferes with, harms, or in some way makes the latter less likely or less effective” (Deutsch, 1973), hence conflict itself is inextricably linked to the notion of boundary, limit, intersection, collision. Hoseason, examining the relationship between territoriality, identity, and conflict, argues that borders are “a necessary condition of conflict, due to some separation of self and other”, the very fact that conflict occurs is evidence that borders were involved in its occurrence (Hoseason, 2010).

While both conflict and border studies have increasingly focused on exploring the links between borders and violence, there is a definite lack of theoretical and empirical research on the territorial dimension of

conflict and violence. Brambilla and Jones argue for the need for “work that specifically analyzes the significant position of the border in studying the presence of violence and conflict in space” (Brambilla & Jones, 2019). They introduce a concept such as the paradoxical property of the spatiality of the border”, emphasizing on the one hand the deterritorializing nature of borders, but on the other hand as determining borders as a site of development (Brambilla, & Jones, 2019). Thus, while addressing the issue of deprivation caused by the “wall,” we must also consider the positive effect of its existence, as it provides security against potential threats. Proceeding from this, it is possible to fix one more problem of the psychological conflict derived from this state of affairs inside an individual, which is determined by the difference of assessment of the phenomenon of “wall”.

It is this feature that plays a key role in “understanding the multiple ‘tensions’ that converge at the border but are linked to multiple places and practices that occur away from the border itself, helping to emphasize the quality of conflict and violence as cultural practices that cannot be considered exceptional and should be seen as part of the normal functioning of social order as well as everyday struggles” (Brambilla, & Jones, 2019). Such a complex and integrated understanding of the border can provide insights into conflict. A number of authors, come to the view that “territory alone is neither a necessary nor sufficient cause of conflict, nor does it automatically create more opportunities for conflict” (Starr, & Thomas, 2005).

It is the fact that the spatial borders that define territory have the added value of representing the limit where the identities of two contiguous states meet that allows many contemporary conflicts to be reconceptualized in ways that do not necessarily involve impartially located and granted territory (Hoseason, 2010).

Each state is an integral part of the world community system. Developments in the international arena - struggle for geostrategic natural resources, transportation communications, high level of competition for influence in the world, increasing number of international conflicts – influence the processes of interstate delimitation. One of the most important external political aspects influencing the process of border formation and development of border territories is the place and role of a particular state in the general system of international relations.

In this context, it is necessary to highlight the relations in the immediate geopolitical environment and especially with neighboring states. It is these relations that largely determine the external border policy of the state. In the border spaces there is contact and interaction of neighboring states, which may have certain (often contradictory) interests in the development of new (or previously lost) spheres of their habitat and life (e.g. territories, markets, resource sources, etc.).

Another significant foreign policy aspect is the degree of completion of the international legal formation

of the border. The incompleteness of the process of territorial delimitation with neighboring states forms a potential threat to state integrity. Existing and potential hotbeds of local wars and armed conflicts in close proximity to the borders of a particular state can be problematic. As Kolossov notes, it is statistically proven that if a country borders a belligerent neighbor, it is three times more likely to be drawn into a conflict than other countries” (Kolossov, & O’Loughlin, 1999). The concept is confirmed by the OECD special report “Borders and Conflicts in North and West Africa” which shows that border regions are characterized by higher intensity and clustering of violence, as this is where state and non-state actors seek to realize their political goals (OECD/SWAC, 2022).

Participation or aspiration to participate in various international political unions/organizations, associations/blocs, especially of military-political nature, belonging (or aspiration to belong) of neighboring states to such international political associations with competing political interests is a source of border tensions. At the present stage of historical development, the very principle of inviolability of post-war borders is being questioned. The role of non-state actors - small border businesses, local authorities, educational institutions, transnational corporations, international non-governmental organizations, as well as cross-border organized crime, terrorist groups, etc. – has significantly increased in the system of international relations.

The concepts of borders are closely related to the notion of national security, hence at the state level it is important to adequately define national interests and identify potential external and internal threats that counteract their achievement and further planning of border policy (Kolossov, 2005). The understanding of border security, according to traditional approaches, was seen as the need to prevent military threats, control any cross-border flows, and the exclusivity of the state's right to provide security. According to postmodern approaches, however, border security is viewed in the light of the changing understanding of threats to national and regional security.

Gibler, in his work “The Territorial World: Borders, State Development, and International Conflict”, suggests that territorial issues “evoke a host of biological and psychological responses in people in threatened states... In various ways, people are likely to believe that their own survival is closely tied to the defense of territory, which leads them to use (and endorse the use of) violence to counter territorial threats” (Gibler, 2012).

Today's understanding of border security is based on the following:

- Military force cannot provide protection against illegal migration, international terrorism, the risk of epidemics, environmental disasters, and so on;
- Tightening of barrier functions of borders is ineffective and negatively affects the economy and

society and under these conditions it is important to develop cross-border cooperation with the participation of regional and local authorities of neighboring territories;

- System-wide approaches to border protection are being developed and implemented.

As we can see from the above, borders are usually considered and perceived as some kind of barriers and restrictions (Newman, 2006), however, there is an increasing number of works presenting the border as a resource, as a kind of corridor of opportunities for the inhabitants of border areas.

Borders create a stage for social activities of individuals and different groups, which in turn should make efforts to establish heterogeneous communications in order to get certain dividends from the delimitation (Feyissa, & Hoehne, 2000).

A number of researchers who adhere to the concept of the border as a resource give a special role to the spaces of interaction in the so-called “in-between” border zones, because it is here that there is an opportunity for interaction and exchange. In border studies, a number of concepts of such spaces are presented.

Borderland concept considers the spaces adjacent to the border in physical and symbolic dimensions. Borders are usually conceptualized as barriers separating dual systems. However, when extending the understanding of borders to include the spaces they share, multidimensionality emerges, a certain “third space”, “contact zones” – that is, such spaces where differences are constantly created and blurred, new models of communication are formed, and intercultural interaction takes place (Dorokhina, 2020).

These constructions of border spaces as meeting places and polylogue of different ideas, cultures and traditions are extremely important in the context of this paper. Since if we say that in any conflict there is a border, then another assertion is also true in the peacebuilding movement that there is a need for space for interaction and contact. One can agree with Brambilla & Jones that “the complex relationship between borders and violence can be reconceptualized as a space of political creativity where it is also possible to cultivate a ‘politics of hope’” (Brambilla, & Jones, 2019).

Border Management System.

We have reviewed the main trends in the development of border studies, their intersection and relationship with conflict. Conceptualizing the management of the diverse palette of borders in today's world requires consideration of several key questions: What system of border management has emerged to date? How and by whom is the concept of borders embodied in real life? To what extent does the process ensure the participation of scientists?

Taking into account the fact that borders/border regions are one of the most important elements of the security system of both individual states and the international community as a whole, it is extremely

important to form institutional structures that ensure the effective functioning of its individual elements. Based on the analysis of international experience, it is possible to classify the institutional structures involved in the process of formation, border security and development of border areas at the national and international levels (Dorokhina, 2016).

With regard to borders at the level of individual countries, national governments have full sovereignty in determining policies within their territories. Thus, the border management system reflects different national needs and interests (Aniszewski, 2009). The choice of a border policy option is largely determined by the specific features of particular borders: their length, the landscape of the borderland, the intensity of cross-border flows, the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the neighboring territories, the severity of security challenges (Golunov, 2009).

The national government develops a policy doctrine for how borders should be managed. General border management policies include the following areas: immigration policy for the transit of people across the border, customs policy for the transit of goods, border security policy to define the protection mission of the border force, and intelligence policy that defines the level of information that can be shared with border security personnel (Duggan, 2008). The border is a place where national legislation in a number of areas of government regulation (security, customs regulations, phytosanitary regulations, migration, etc.) must be harmonized.

In a number of countries, the political responsibility for shaping border security strategy and infrastructure falls within the competence of ministries of the interior. Another traditional form is the division of functions between three ministries - foreign affairs (visas), home affairs (immigration) and treasury (customs). In some countries, single structures uniting the three above-mentioned spheres are formed. In addition to these agencies, there are a number of other government agencies that play an important role or influence on border management issues: government agencies responsible for agriculture, economy, energy, environment, investment and infrastructure, transportation, justice, etc. (PwC, 2015).

Within such a political and economic association as the European Union, the main principles of border policy (in general) are determined by the relevant norms (among which the Schengen Agreements occupy a special place). Taking into account that in the EU it is rather difficult to control the work of border, customs and other authorities of individual member states, the main emphasis in this association is made on standardization of border policy, establishment of information and experience exchange. The implementation of the EU policy on external borders is carried out by the following structures: coordination of efforts of the EU member states on operational issues is realized by the European Agency for the Management

of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (“FRONTEX”), and the exchange of information – by the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR).

According to researchers, the concept of border management in the XXI century has undergone significant changes (Aniszewski, 2009). At the level of a single state, it is difficult and problematic to solve security issues, and there is an objective need to intensify international cooperation in this direction. A practical solution in relation to borders is found in the organization of an integrated border management system, which has been widely used in recent years. The main objective of this system is to simplify trade and passenger clearance procedures while ensuring border security.

The Integrated Border Management system is being implemented within the EU. The European Union also supports the development of similar systems in other countries. For example, the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) has been operating since 2005.

At the intergovernmental level, among the institutional structures related to borders are the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The WCO unites customs services of almost all countries of the world. Its activities are focused on the development of international instruments, conventions on such issues as classification of goods, assessment of customs value, organization of customs duties, simplification of international trade procedures and so on. One of the documents developed by the World Customs Organization is a recommendation to states on models of “integrated border management” (Aniszewski, 2009). Within the OSCE, work on borders focuses on security issues. The framework for cooperation among OSCE participating States is set out in the “Border Security and Management Concept” from December 5, 2005 (OSCE, 2005).

In addition, the OSCE pays great attention to the professional development of border management staff in OSCE countries. This activity is realized through the OSCE Border Management Staff College. Another important structure at the international level is the UN International Court of Justice, whose functions include, among other issues, the adjudication of territorial disputes between states.

The policy in relation to the border regions is largely determined in the context of the general border policy, but it also involves state structures regulating the policy of regional development, regional and local authorities. Among the international structures dealing with the problems of regions (including border regions) it is necessary to emphasize the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. This structure, special emphasis is placed on the cooperation of cross-border regions, stating that “cross-border cooperation between local and regional authorities is an important part of the Council of Europe's work to promote

democratic stability and good-neighborliness between states and regions, and through it such CoE values as democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, including minority rights, as well as the preservation of cultural diversity” (CoE).

Cooperation of border regions within the European Union is a key element of cooperation policy both between EU member states and neighboring countries. Such a form of cross-border cooperation as Euroregions has become widespread. In addition, such a form of cross-border cooperation as the European Group for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) has successfully established itself within the EU (Dorokhina, 2019).

Undoubted successes have been achieved in the process of formal institutionalization of border studies: specialized (state, university and public) research centers have been established in many countries of the world. One of the first in Europe was the International Boundaries Research Unit at the University of Durham in the UK, which aims to link academic research with the solution of practical problems of international law (IBRU). This center supports various states in the process of border delimitation and demarcation. Universities focusing on or located in border regions, where interdisciplinary research is conducted, play a significant role, and their number is growing.

Notable examples include the Nijmegen Centre for Border Research at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands, the Centre of International Borders Research (CIBR) at Queen's University Belfast, the Viadrina Center B/Orders in Motion, the International Border Studies Center (IBSC) at the University of Gdańsk, and others.

The University of the Greater Region (UniGR) is a unique and innovative alliance of seven partner universities from the border regions of four states within the “Greater Region” (Germany – Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland; Belgium – Wallonia, French and German communities of Belgium; France – Grand-Est Region (Lorraine); and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg). The primary goal of this university association is “to become a benchmark in Europe and throughout the world, actively working to develop a common field of higher education and research within the political space known as the University of the Greater Region (UniGR)”. UniGR promotes the development of a “cross-border culture” in partner universities by enhancing the effectiveness of regional development through region-oriented research. Comprehensive research on borders is conducted through the UniGR-Center for Border Studies (UniGR-CBS), while the training of professionals who understand the specifics of working in border regions is achieved through the Master's program in Border Studies (UniGR).

The establishment of a number of professional associations and research networks – “Asian Borderlands Research Network”, “The African Borderlands Research Network” (ABORNE), “Culture and the Canada-US Border” (CCUSB), etc. – is also indicative of the emergence

of border studies as a separate academic discipline. The largest and most influential of which is the Association of Borderland Studies, which provides communication of specialists in the field at the international level and promotes the further development of border studies and border regions (<https://absborderlands.org/>).

Conclusions.

At the present stage border studies researchers are working on the generalization of the accumulated empirical material and disparate theoretical developments, on the basis of which border studies has become a separate academic field of interdisciplinary nature. Psychological aspects become increasingly important as globalization and migration increase, especially as the trend of wall-building and securitization is increasing.

Although conflict and border scholars have increasingly focused on the links between borders and violence, there remains a lack of theoretical and empirical research on the territorial dimension of conflict and violence. Understanding the complexities of borders and

the importance of incorporating psychological dimensions helps explain how borders influence conflict dynamics. Borders, traditionally perceived as obstacles, are now being recognized as valuable assets and pathways for social engagement, communication, and cross-cultural exchanges. This perspective highlights the potential of border spaces as zones of political creativity and hope, crucial for peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Effective management of borders and border problems is impossible without scientific support, which implies, first of all, expertise of the current management system, as well as research of meta-cognitive resources as additional reserves for solving chronic or sudden problems arising in the process of border management. The metacognitive management approach to border studies has great potential for improving our knowledge and management of borders. Scholars and practitioners can obtain a greater understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of borders by employing metacognitive approaches.

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