REFORMING BORDERLANDS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Understanding the Czech–Slovak Borderland Dynamics

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Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan kansallisen valtiorajan kokemista ja vaikutuksia rajamaan asukkaisiin sekä kuinka Euroopan unioni vaikuttaa tähän dynamiikkaan. Tutkimuksessa laadullinen aineisto tuo esiin, kuinka ihmiset kokevat Tšekin ja Slovakian välisen rajan ja kuinka se vaikuttaa heidän elämäänsä. Merkittävänä näkökulmana pidetään ihmisen kokemuksellisuutta toiminnan ja jokapäiväisen elämän kautta sekä tuodaan esiin asukkaiden eri rooleja muuttuvassa Euroopassa.

Tutkimusaineistona on kahden eri ikäryhmän, 20–30 ja 30–40 -vuotiaat, henkilökohtaiset haastattelut. Haastatteluja tehtiin 12 kappaletta, ja ne on kerätty Tšekin ja Slovakian väliseltä rajamaalta, asukkaiden luontaisesta toimintaympäristöstä. Tutkimusaineistoa tarkastellaan sisällönanalyysin avulla, jossa hyödynnetään myös teemoittelua ja tyypittelyä analyysin metodeina.

Tutkimusaineistosta nousevat keskiöön kahden eri ikäryhmän tavat kokea rajamaa, kansallisvaltio, Euroopan unioni sekä yksilön ja yhteisön roolit eri aluetasoilla. Lisäksi Euroopan unionin rooli tässä kehityksessä ilmenee eri tavoin eri ryhmien kohdalla. Erilaisten henkilö- sekä ryhmäkohtaisten kokemusten, muistojen, taustojen ja aluetasojen kautta kohdehenkilöt toivat esille sekä omia että yhteisöjensä rooleja eri tarkastelukokonaisuuksissa.

Tutkimus tekee näkyväksi sekä tarkasteltavan rajamaan että Euroopan unionin ajankohtaisiin ja historiallisiin kysymyksiin liittyviä ongelmakohtia ja ratkaisuja, jotka ovat sidoksissa keskenään. Ensimmäiseksi tarkastellaan rajojen välistä ja rajat ylittävää toimintaa Tšekin ja Slovakian välisellä rajalta asukkaiden näkökulmasta, painopisteinä rajamaan historia ja rajojen välisen toiminnan haasteet. Toiseksi keskiöön nousevat kysymykset Euroopan unionin vaikutuksista rajan kokemisen dynamiikkaan. Tällöin keskeistä on ymmärtää, miten muutokset EU:ssa vaikuttavat paikalliseen yhteisöön sekä kuinka territoriaalinen identiteetti vaikuttaa ihmisiin tämän päivän Euroopassa.

Avainsanat: Euroopan unioni, rajamaa, rajat ylittävä, Tšekin ja Slovakian välinen raja, ylikansallisuus

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The research examines the experience and influence of a nation-state border on residents of the borderland, as well as in which ways and how much the European Union (EU) impacts this dynamic. In the study, qualitative data reveal how people perceive the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia and how it influences their lives. A significant perspective is human experience through action and everyday life, as well as the various roles of residents in a transition in Europe.

The empirical research data are personal interviews with two age groups, from 20 to 30 and from 30 to 40 years of age. Twelve interviews were conducted at the borderland between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the interviewees' living environment. The research data are examined through content analysis, which also includes thematic analysis and typification as analytical methods.

The research data show how the two different age groups perceive the borderland, nation-state and European Union. An essential part is also related to individual and community roles at different regional levels. Moreover, the role of the European Union in the development context is reflected in various ways for the different groups. Through personal and group experiences, memories, backgrounds and regional levels, interviewees showed their own and their communities' roles in different contexts.

The study reveals challenges and solutions present in the boundary regions, as well as related to the contemporary and historical issues of the European Union, which are interlinked. The first focus is cross-border and trans-boundary activities at the Czech and Slovak border that will be examined from the perspective of local citizens. In this case, the historical paths of borders and the challenges of cross-boundary action emerge as important factors. Secondly, the question of the impact of the European Union on the dynamic of perceiving borders is reflected upon in multiple ways. In addition, it is essential to understand how the changes and transformation in the EU affect the local community, and how territorial identity affects people in contemporary Europe.

Keywords: Borderland, cross-border, Czech–Slovak border, European Union, transnationalisation

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reforming Borderlands and Understanding the Research Background

In recent years, Europe has been facing new types of phenomena related to border regions and development of national borders. European borders have been in continuous transition, and even in crisis in the 21st century. The solution for the globalising world and the new international context has been the European Union (EU) where borderlands and boundaries between nation-states reform as new ideas and phenomena are spread across Europe. (Siljanovska 2013, pp. 72–73; Andersen, et al. 2012) In general, the significance of some national borders has decreased while it has increased for others. Furthermore, the geographical levels of local and European Union have faced similar tendencies for the people living in the borderlands. This research is a case study from one borderland of Europe, the borderland between the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Europe has been at a crossroads several times during world history. European countries and their people have become closer to each other in the globalising world and after the enlargement of the European Union. From that aspect, the present explains what type of future is waiting for Europe and its boundaries. Borderlands in Europe confront an essential role in developing the future regions at local, regional, national, and other levels. However, it is crucial to understand how the cohesion of two separate nation-states works in a region where various regimes have been changing the environment time after time throughout history.

Several transformations have influenced the borderland between the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The borderland (see Appendix 1) was exposed to impacts from various nation-states as well as a shared history of Czechoslovakia[1] from 1918 to 1992. The shared past has strongly evolved both nations' cultures, languages, and the way people think and act, which are all widely seen in the present-day of both countries. In January 1993, the Czechoslovakian disintegration took place at the end of a crucial era in Europe. Eleven years later, in 2004, both the Czech and Slovak Republics became members of the European Union. The EU as a phenomenon gives us a specific point of view to multi-layered citizenships and cultural identities (Häkli 2008, p. 474; Kramsch & Hooper 2004). From this perspective, both nation-states among the other EU member states merged and fragmented in constant pace throughout the history and provided a rich platform for multi-layered citizenship and cultural identities.

The first focus of the research examines national borders and aims to answer the question: *How do people perceive the Czech–Slovak border and how does it influence their lives?* Borders and boundaries are considered more than lines marking the territorial limits of a nation. It is also essential to examine their significance to regional and national populations, especially in a world where traditional and national borders are breaking down in places and strengthening in others. (Paasi 1999a, pp. 669–680) In chapter 4, the research focuses on this dilemma through the analytical framework and provides a conclusion to the first research focus.

The second focus of the research is to understand how European transformation affects the regions in the borderland of the Czech and Slovak Republics. This will be accomplished by responding to the second research question, which builds on the first question: *In which ways and how much does the European Union impact on this dynamic?* (See also the first focus) Globalisation and transboundary tendencies are influencing different regions in multiple ways. Furthermore, regionalisation and cross-

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[1] The different time-scales in the Czechoslovakian era have formed the path that influences the present, and how different people experience the borderland and the European Union.

border policies in the age of globalisation have created new pressure and opportunities for citizens. Global and regional challenges connote further scales extending beyond relations among nation-states in multiple ways. These characteristics are interlinked. (Aalto, et al. 2012, p. 1; Krishna-Hensel 2000, pp. x–xi) This part of the analysis is discussed in chapter 5, which concentrates on the second research focus.

The borderland on the Czech Republic side of the border has strong Slovakian influences, and the Slovaks are the most significant minority group who have integrated with the rest of the majority population. In addition, Slovak employees are a general phenomenon on the Czech side of the border. Furthermore, cross-border co-operation has been retained since these two countries were in statehood. (Czecho-Slovak Borderland Development Study – Slovako-Czech Borderland Development Study 2009, pp. 56, 70) As of 2018, it has been 25 years since the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia and 14 years since membership into the EU for both the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The integrity that the European Union provides has introduced the development of multi-level or multi-layered citizenship and cultural identities (Häkli 2008, p. 476; Kramsch & Hooper 2004). In the contemporary research, a globalised world means more interdisciplinary traditions. Moreover, spatial concepts such as border, network, place, region, scale, and territory have become common in many social sciences. (Aalto, et al. 2012, p. 2) This study utilises a regional approach to examine phenomena and to understand the variety of levels, from local to global dimensions. The research takes on a multidisciplinary approach that have specific perspectives.

1.2   Research Approach

Both borders and the reformation of borders are included in the framework of this study and the context of the research problem. The research problem concerns phenomena arising from empirical data collected from the Czech–Slovak borderland

in the influence of the on-going Ukrainian crisis and the beginning of the European migrant crisis of 2015.

The features of borders are in a transition process; the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia has become institutionalised after various transitions in the region. The research focuses on how this boundary affects people's everyday lives, both mentally and functionally. For example, in the case of East and West Germany, the disappearance of the border was a different process. In this way, we understand how the border affects individual lives and behaviour on the borderland. It is interesting to note that there is no new unified Czechoslovakia, but both nation-states are in the European Union as two independent nations. Additionally, they belong to so-called *New Europe*, even though some counter opinions would not describe neither the Czech Republic nor Slovakia with the concept of *New Europe*, at least in the very core of the term. The Czech and Slovak border is a new frontier in Europe and one of the European Union's internal borders. Therefore, the research is timely in the sense that in the long term, *New Europe* and new frontiers will institutionalise, becoming the new norm. The new boundary appeared about two decades ago to divide a single society, and its consequences are still influential today. In the present-day, in the former Czechoslovakian region, there are two sovereign nation-states. Therefore, while the Czech people are visiting in Slovakia, means only temporarily staying or residing in a foreign country as strangers than belonging to the nation as it was in the past. All of this is from the cultural perspective as a rapid change that modifies people's mindsets and behaviours.

The research aims to examine the phenomena on the Czech–Slovak border, which is connected to and reconstructed by the timeline of Czechoslovakia as well as the European Union. The first age group interviewed comprises of individuals from 20 to 30 years of age who have not grown up, or have been adults, in socialist Czechoslovakia and are a kind of new generation in their society. The second age group consists of older adults, from 30 to 40 years of age, who lived in Czechoslovakia and remember that time well. Therefore, their lives coexist in different realities that lead to a problematic relational setting between both groups, as one local person stated that generations do not always understand each other. The

older age group may assume that they live in one kind of reality and continuum about past Czechoslovakia, for example, because of the influence of educational elements or through the Russian language, and socialism. On the other grounds, young adults in the Czech Republic may experience Western influences as a path to the future, perhaps the only future that can be a counter-phenomenon for the country's history; it is these assumptions that widen the gap between the two generations.

The Czech side of the boundary region differs uniquely from other regions of the Czech Republic that reflect, for example, the German (Sudetenland) or other country influences from nearby regions. Therefore, each neighbouring borderland has distinct features in its inhabitants and minorities. Ethnic conflicts in different local communities endangered the democratisation process in Czechoslovakia. In addition, after Czechoslovakian time, it was advantageous for both countries to continue as independent nation-states without the other. On the other hand, the national containment is a form of optimisation of space reproduced in the Czech region and determined from a national perspective, with the purpose of limiting the actions of residents (Kangas & Moisio 2012, p. 202; Rose 2008). In that sense, we need to understand actors who are seeking to maximise the benefits and minimise the disadvantages, for example, when the relations between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and the European Union, increase in importance.

The mutual history of the Czech Republic and Slovakia has appeared in many ways in people's mindsets and everyday lives. At the borderland, the mutual history is visible, and the official border between states poses a problem of cross-border interaction, although there is hardly any border control or other activity at the border itself. Therefore, a kind of mental frontier is constructed between the states on the border. The borderline and the border region raise different significances of everyday life that reflect in the language and habits of the local community. The border between the two nation-states has interesting features when considering the typical evolvement of the European Union and the freedom of human activity about national action. One resident stated that these two 'brother countries' would pass jointly to the challenges of the EU and the world.

The research is topical regarding evolvement in the European Union. Regarding the EU integration of the countries of Eastern Europe, must understand the different development paths and the current state of the Member States in various scales and perspectives. The earlier division into Eastern and Western Europe is still in the minds of people; however, the simultaneous first steps of European integration have also influenced people's thinking, unifying the inhabitants and creating contradictions between the nation-states. The Czechs show widespread opposition towards the European Union, even though citizens perceive that they live in Europe's heartland and that the country gains a higher European evaluation than the EU accession countries before 2004 (Eurobarometer 2002). The official position of the government of the Czech Republic is that the country is promoting the idea of a borderless Europe, especially concerning mobility in employment and business, despite this type of change being underpinned by the displacement of inhabitants and the expropriation of past assets (Palosaari 2009, p. 127).

The border region between the Czech and Slovak Republics is chosen in the research because it offers interesting starting points for study within the European Union and its borderlands. The present state of the borderland will face the impacts of historical and future challenges since the Czech Republic and Slovakia unite the history and intentions of their Slavic state, for which Czechoslovakia was previously formed. In the background, there was an idea of a decentralised federation of different states, such as Switzerland. The history has influenced on the threats of Austria, Hungary, and Germany with the Sudetenland[2] territories in Czechoslovakia. German and Hungarian minorities produced challenges for the local people, but the improvement of the Slovakian status also started to disrupt the Czech and Slovakian spaces.

The role of a researcher from outside the Czech Republic and Slovakia provided opportunities for obtaining information that would not be shared with the citizens of the Czech Republic or Slovakia. Therefore, the researcher's objective perspective is a

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[2] Sudetenland refers to former regions in the previous Czechoslovakia and earlier era, which where inhabited by Sudeten Germans who lived in the region. Sudeten Germans were not significant figures in the present-day Czech–Slovak borderland, and therefore only play a minor role in the research.

crucial part of the research. In a globalising world, the role of the nation-state is also becoming more global, whereby institutions such as the European Union will gain new roles. Should the foundations of the nation-state become more global when Czech citizens perceive the changes in the state and EU roles, or should the foundation introduce new perspectives? Therefore, it is essential to understand how the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia ceases to be significant, and the former 'Czechoslovak border' will appear together with the present European Union to people's everyday life.

As a remarkable phenomenon, the research examines cross-border characteristics both from a mental and physical perspective. The region in the Czech Republic offers a unique framework for analysing changes in national boundaries, both due to its location and historical reasons. In the Czech–Slovak borderland people are often heard talking about this border called 'the border', which means the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The border itself raises a wide range of feelings and thoughts in the minds of residents. They perceive that Slovaks are close neighbours who have different backgrounds and the will to construct their own country.

The European Union is one of the contemporary solutions to Europe's ongoing problems and developing crises. The Czech Republic has become accustomed to the constant change of national characteristics, and regional cohesion is essential for the Czechs. In the country, there is the typical way to refer to Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia[3], as well as smaller administrative regions, even more frequently than national context. The significance of the research is to understand and describe what kind of development is in the borderland between the present-day Czech Republic and Slovakia in the middle of the European Union's pressures on change.

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[3] Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia are the three administrative regions in the Czech Republic. However, the research focuses on parts of Moravia near the border.

2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND TERMINOLOGY

In the second chapter, the research framework and essential terminology are defined. Firstly, the research problem section briefly examines the core of the study with research questions and sub-questions related to the topic. Secondly, the theoretical and conceptual framework section focuses on fundamental background theories and concepts used in the abductive reasoning process of the research. Important terminology is related to the main topics of the research and provides an initial setting for the subsequent chapters.

2.1 Research Problem

The research problem consists of two interconnected research questions. The first aim of this research is to examine national borders and raises the question: *How do people perceive the Czech–Slovak border and how does it influence their lives?* This first research question will be discussed further in chapter 4. The second research focus is addressed in chapter 5 within the analytical framework of the study. It is important to understand how European and global transformation trends affect the regions in the borderland of Czech and Slovak Republic. As a result, the second research question builds on the first question by asking: *In which ways and how much does the European Union impact on this dynamic?*

The research setting is essential to understand the current situation in one of the borderlands in the European Union. Based on the primary research questions, the study poses defining and framing sub-questions to reveal the functions of irrational

practices and to understand the possibilities and limits of attempts at social reform (Silverman 2014, p. 443). The sub-questions corresponding to the first research focus are: 1) how does the history of the borderland influence people's lives? and 2) how much do cross-border challenges impact people in the borderland? The sub-questions corresponding to the second research focus are: 1) how do changes in the EU impact the local community? and 2) how does territorial identity influence people in contemporary European borderlands?

From the framework of research problems, this study examines and focuses on the transformation of Central European borderlands in the middle of development in Europe. Solving these research problems in the globalising world and expanding Europe is essential for old member states of the European Union, as well as, borderlands and the people living in the EU. It is crucial to understand and explain the concept of nation-state from this new approach in the globalising and localising environment because the regions in Europe are facing new challenges, in which former policies are not as effective as they were previously. At this point, it is important to introduce the theoretical and conceptual framework on which the study is based.

2.2   Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework refers to research in border studies, European studies, and regional studies across international publications. The research is a qualitative case study from the Czech Republic side of the borderland. Therefore, the theoretical framework has an important role in the study, and the research is defined by the conceptual framework of qualitative research.

Spaces have multiple forms that are subject to continuous change. Space is related to place in an abstract sense, and especially from the political and social perspective, the

place is neutral to actions and objects it contains, and it usually has three dimensions and can be limited and determined, or infinite (Melasuo 2003, pp. 65–66). For example, people have their personal or group spaces and different organisations have spaces where all the functions, relations, and emotions influence other phenomena in complex ways. In contemporary research, different approaches to examining these processes exist. One approach has a functionalist perspective that mostly considers interaction across boundaries. A second approach has a constructionist viewpoint, referring to political communities, national identities, and new political spaces. Another way to understand borders and boundaries is by dealing with concepts of representing both physical and cultural features, cross-border cooperation and governance, and transboundary networks. (Häkli 2008, pp. 472–475, 480–481) Borders are essential factors for representing the otherness and describing the concept of *us and them*. In the present time, some of the borders disappear while others emerge, which gives us insight into the continuous change in the global context and transboundary relations.

Regionalisation is an essential concept of this research. Regionalisation has a connection to international cooperation between national sub-regions across the borders of nation-states. Furthermore, regionalisation is a phenomenon that is related to globalisation and localisation, and therefore with *glocalisation*. (Käkönen 2003, p. 79) The concept has a specific focus on the observed region and the way to define cross-border and transboundary phenomena. The construction of national identities is related to the concept of territory. Hence, territorialisation and deterritorialisation are essential concepts in cultural globalisation where the concept of place has new meanings at multiple levels. When the global level collides with the local in everyday actions, we can think about the present and the following decade when *glocalisation* has influenced people and societies in increasingly diverse ways. The term of *glocal* provides people with a new approach to the concept of sense of place and *placelessness*, which are significantly changing from the past. The Czech–Slovak borderland represents unique features in contemporary Europe, which are actively observed based on the characteristics of the region. Given the conflict between local aspects and global tendencies, several cases have occurred in recent years around the world.

Nation-states have been analysed as a normative construction of social and territorial space. Nation-state approach has a robust state-centred focus, and it is related to different concepts such as territorial self-determination, geopolitical power or state hegemony and sovereignty (Häkli 2008, pp. 471–473). However, nation-states have been considered as *leaking containers*, which have changed from the modern world order. The change has mixed the international level with local, regional, and national levels (Häkli 2008, pp. 476, 478). This institutionalisation of transnational regions has changed the way people produce and reproduce their spaces at various levels at the same time. Nation-states also have non-existent state boundaries or less powerful boundaries, such as in the European Union or the Schengen area boundaries. These transnational boundaries have interacted with political-economic context, which is vital for these regions. Transnational regions have an opportunity for multi-layered citizenship and cultural identities because people can belong to various social and spatial groups. Two essential and characteristic features for transnational regions are deterritorialising and re-bordering processes. (Häkli 2008, pp. 475–476, 482–484) These features are observed more in-depth in section 5.2.

There are two ways to divide the types of cross-border regionalisation. The first has two aspects, which are continuing the erosion of border-related barriers and less central state intervention, for example, internal borders of the European Union. The second aspect has, selectively open borders, for example, special economic zones and control of immigration flows, as in the possible case of United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. A second way to divide the types of cross-border regionalisation has three aspects, which are: first, little or no border control, for example, the Schengen area and so-called *Established Europe*; second, post-Cold War buffer zones as so-called *Emerging Europe*; and third, regimes at the edge of Empire, for example, Australia, the EU, Hong Kong or the USA. (Häkli 2008, pp. 475–476; see also Kaplan & Häkli 2002) Europe has a challenge related to cohesion in the region, which refers to the situation between *Established Europe* and *Emerging Europe*. This dilemma will be discussed in chapter 5.

The context of boundaries has a long legacy of research, from modern nation-states to the present boundary-constructs. One aspect is to see the state divisions as natural

separations of distinct people. Although boundaries are examined as natural dividers related to cultures, economies, and political systems, they still maintain an artificial aspect. However, previous research has focused on the combination of cultural and physical features, and later more on the social construction of boundaries. (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, pp. 1–3) The traditional divide between 'us' and 'them' is part of this research even though the borderland between the Czech and Slovak Republic has been seen more as a social construction where cross-border cooperation plays an important role. The research focuses more in-depth on the territorial approach, which considers both physical and emotional aspects as vital. The study touches slightly on geopolitical issues in Europe, such as sovereignty and hegemony that has the state-centre focus as a crucial role (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 3). However, the focal point is on globalisation and transnational boundaries where the local level merges with global level.

When nation-states transition from state-centred to European-centred, this changes the perception of unity and attitude towards European unity, in which relations between actors, whether they are nation-states, firms, organisations, or authorities, also changes. Encouraging European interaction and growing global interconnectedness work both in favour of and against globalisation (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, pp. 4–5). The so-called *New Europe* where internal boundaries are weakening has strengthened political cooperation, increasing internal openness to border-crossing related to people, goods, and economic capital. After the Cold War era, Europe was still divided in half from many perspectives, and the Czech Republic had a location on the east side of the so-called *Iron Curtain*. The development in Eastern Europe has been considered crucial for all evolvement in the EU where countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia have seen significant, as also in this research (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 5).

In this study, the borderland represents both so-called *Emerging Europe* and *Established Europe* where particular tendencies work in duality. Firstly, the historical aspect of post-Cold War nation-state follows the local citizens, and secondly, the Schengen Agreement and the European Union provide the present state where people act and live every day. This dual perspective both burdens and empowers people at

the same time. However, the modern perspective from two decades ago shows that the distinction between the East and the West, especially between Russia and the EU, is not being reproduced (Moisio & Harle 2002, p. 52). This division in the regions of Europe still has strong mental associations from different generations. In particular, younger people see this division as a transition towards the West and the older generation as a conflict between former riparian countries and unions when this context can expand as far as anti-Russian sentiment. In the past, Czech territories had challenges with Germany (Sudeten Germans) and the Soviet Union or later with Russia, with same time national interest's views among the Czechs (Holubec 2015, p. 427). Also, according to asylum statistics the context has led to the European migrant crisis that institutionalised as a phenomenon from 2015 onwards (Eurostat 2017). However, this debate in irrational terms will not lead to the path that Europe and its residents on the boundaries would want to experience. Division between friends and enemies could return in the long-term to inflict bipolarity and otherness in general.

It is relevant to understand borderlands as narrow strips surrounding nation-state boundaries, whereas in some cases, a whole national territory or ethnic homeland could emerge as a hybrid cultural borderland influenced by histories of both political and military conflict. The importance of scale as a factor influencing the development of borderlands between nations is an essential analytical tool. (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, pp. 6–7) In the border studies, scales have undergone change. Before, scales were understood as a hierarchical structure with administrative power and political authority; and social construction of scale relied on nation-states and their role as hegemonic and sustainable institutions. Nowadays, the understanding of scales refers to be an independent factor from each other, as well as scales have faced criticism in international scientific research. However, scales as an independent factor form so-called nested scales, which can be described as hybrid bundles across networks. The scale is a factor in everyday life and between institutional actors. However, transnational scales are produced and reproduced by actors who cooperate internally and compete externally in multiple ways. (Häkli 2008, pp. 476–479) In this research, the scale has a narrower role, but the way in which it influences the context of the borderland should be understood. More specifically, scales are socially produced, historically dependent and politically controversial (Moore 2008). Additionally, the

significance of scale as a factor related to the development of borderlands expands beyond divergences between national and local realms of action (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 7). According to this study, the context of scale is mostly relating to either barrier or physical distance. The research examines the tensions between people's understanding and perceptions of cross-border interaction that eventually arise from realms of social action (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 8). In the present, regarding transition in Europe and Czech–Slovak borderland, it is critical to distinguish between scale as a factor in people's everyday lives and scale as a factor influencing cross-border cooperation between institutional actors (Häkli 2008, p. 479). The conclusion of the research describes the outcomes from both perspectives, but the focus is on the people-centred perspective. In addition, the research focuses on different scales and levels and their changes in relation to each other. Scales do not appear in independent social or political processes or discourses, but are types of practical categorisation outputs (Kangas & Moisio 2012, p. 205). In this case, connections between different levels are essential, and consequently, with the acceleration of globalisation and the emergence of regional significance, interlinkages between levels are emphasised (Aalto, et al. 2012, p. 4).

State-centred governments have been under transition towards governance. Furthermore, the concept of state has been challenged, and erosion of nation-states has begun at the same time as the rise of the region. Nowadays, the division between public and private as well as governmental and non-governmental are blurred. Hence, local and regional development has got more spatial interests. However, political representation has also changed from the past at various levels. Transnational regions are created and reproduced in similar social practices as in governance. However, in cross-border governance, political and economic elites are governing people in many ways. (Häkli 2008, pp. 480–482; Häkli 1998a, pp. 85, 87, 91–92) The aspect is analysed under the research scheme in chapter 4.

When looking through the specific knowledge interests, the theoretical framework exemplifies and examines the region more profoundly than it has been studied before. Furthermore, the chosen perspective deepens the level of the research in contemporary research in Europe. Therefore, to reveal the possible futures turning

points in the borderland, we need to understand the former history of the region with paths in other levels. This path dependence and interconnectedness provides explanations to a different perspective of the research. By framing the research into transboundary context where locality and path dependence expresses their roles, the research seeks to understand the complexity of borderland dynamics in the European Union.

Exemplars from recent and similar research show that the time frame is open and recent development in the borderland and Europe requires further knowledge from the present state. In order to prevent the European Union from becoming an obscure and monolithic entity, the possible recent failure and the incorrect path need to be re-steered to the alternative future. Former research neither exemplifies the perspective from the local borderland nor transboundary focus from the EU level. Therefore, this research method and case study have chosen to reveal this dynamic between various levels and among the residents on the borderland as well as in Europe.

The term *postcolonialism* has been a frequently repeated phrase in the social sciences that considers it a form of social criticism of the emancipatory practice of criticising the unevenly developed state of the world (Ridanpää 2003, p. 104). This argument is related to the post-Cold War or the post-socialist world, in which both terms represent similar criticism techniques and attack mainly the nation's or region's historical path. In this research, the focus is on understanding the transition in a post-socialist nation with a somewhat extensive history. In the past, most studies of democratic transition in post-socialist Europe stated that three critical institutional changes were involved: from totalitarian or authoritarian to democratic governance; from planned to a free-market economy; and from quasi-colonial status to full nation- and statehood (Smith 2003, p. 206). However, this so-called *triple transition* has slightly changed in various perspectives in contemporary research.

Transnational and multileveled structures of *Emerging Europe* provide new backgrounds to understand various levels and their interconnectedness. The process is one essential phenomenon in the boundary regions. Furthermore, an important factor that can be implicit in the borderland itself is its boundedness to surrounding nation-

states, which forms an entity that is undergoing a process of spatial reformation. The European Union pursues macro-regional policies on a European level through local micro-regional instances that this research examines (Cattani 2003, p. 39). The concept of cohesion closely relates to this matter, in which various regions of Europe have a different present state. External factors such as nation-state or the European Union as well as globalisation affect this process. Two concepts, integration and fragmentation, are an alternative to the micro-regionalisation that is considered in the research (Cattani 2003, p. 43). Furthermore, the study has been divided into two opposite but complementing approaches, which are the distinctive external and internal factors of the context of the borderland.

Modern nation-states have been considered a dominative frame of a country. It is essential to understand the reasons that nation-states who share boundaries are also ones who compete with each other as a member of European Union or global network. From this perspective, we can understand the interconnected, globalised world as well as the uniquely interconnected Europe and its borderlands, such as the Czech–Slovak borderland in landlocked Central Europe. This specific borderland also represents a so-called 'bridge builder' between Eastern and Western Europe. Nowadays, the definition of Eastern and Central Europe has strong connections to the Cold War era and is reproduced by the media from two different approaches. They can be either the Cold War or the European approach, which this research also refers to as more profound structures. When thinking about local aspects clashing with global tendencies, we can form multiple cases in the recent years that have occurred in the world. One aspect related to this is borderlands in the European Union.

Next, more of the essential concepts of the theoretical framework are explained briefly. In addition, the theoretical framework includes several other concepts that support the topic. These concepts are based on a framework that covers the national boundaries in a changing Europe. However, borderland in this research connects various terminology. Firstly, the most general term is boundary. Boundary describes all categories of dividers or limits; border stands for a linear and static dividing line, and frontier a dynamic, fluid zone. (Parker 2006, pp. 79–80) It is also essential to understand the multiplicity of terms that refer to borders in different languages, which

refer to the semantic area of the concept of the border, such as boundary and frontier (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013, p. 14).

Regional identity and regionalisation are factors in Europe that are related to homogeneous populations in different states, which have severe political problems between regions (Camiz & Melasuo 2003, p. 14). The research will examine these tensions in the Czech–Slovak borderland. Sovereign nation-states in the European Union are based on the old tradition of nations in Europe whereas European regional policy was first mentioned in the 1957 Treaty of Rome in order to reduce divergence in European regions. However, the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 introduced cohesion as one key factor in the development of Europe. (Camiz & Melasuo 2003, pp. 11–12; Begg & Mayes 1993) This background leads to the complex process of reforming issues between the people and society. Former social structures and connections are changing relatively rapidly if we compare the past, which is related to the time-space compression when our experience of the world as a unified entity has increased, and therefore, the image of the world has changed (Häkli 1999, p. 179). Furthermore, the unified entity and the experience of the world is changing the borderland. Therefore, the research solves the questions and provides answers to how this process is functioning.

Globalisation and regionalisation are two simultaneous processes challenging the institutional order in each nation-state and each macro-region, considered as a political, economic, or otherwise stated aggregation (Cattani 2003, p. 38). With the acceleration of globalisation, the European Union offers Europeans a unique area of living and perform. Therefore, national borders and identities are undergoing change. What is being steered by Europe is a supranational and a transnational challenge that is also reflected in the local level of everyday life and behaviour. Citizens of the internationalised community must undergo a local tradition, national feeling, and a new role of supranational structure, designed upon each regional subdivision (Cattani 2003, p. 38). Living in the age of globalisation has been influenced by, among other things, the need to understand regional problems and opportunities (Aalto et al. 2012, p. 1). Transnational economies and the new role of the state have influenced people's lives in various ways, and therefore, re-scaling of the state is an essential factor.

Glocalisation suggests that the strengthening of metropolitan areas, which intend to engage in global networks of cities, is in multiple ways a state-built process that needs to be reflected in the local conditions on the borderland. (Moisio 2012, pp. 34–37) The international processes and activities remove borders and obstacles between national actors in different nation-states when a transnational or supranational entity connects to another location in another nation-state. Furthermore, cross-border relations are essential in forming transnational identities.

The theoretical and conceptual framework describes the research briefly and connects to the next chapter, which outlines the characteristics of the methodology and analytical processes used in the research.

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS

The chapter explains the core methods and entire analytical framework of the research. First will be the explanation of interviewing methods for collecting the research data. Secondly, the analytical framework of the research and the analytical process is described throughout. The research methods were chosen to exemplify the globalising and changing regions in the world, as well as to go deeper into the research by understanding the whole case study from the analysis of empirical data. This methodological approach to the phenomena in the borderlands is vital to understanding the analytical context. Methods have been chosen to reflect the recent scientific change and transition in the contemporary societies. These societies have formed from specific regions and even smaller, but interconnected, regions in Europe and rest of the world.

3.1 Description of Research Data

The research follows methods of semi-structured interviews. In that way, the research data provides the information needed for the case study and reveals previously unknown information. Therefore, the researcher can focus on the interviewee's viewpoints, unique skills, and look for relevant evidence for the study. In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are commonly used because they allow the world speak to us more openly by collecting naturally occurring data, rather than using the method of fully structured interviews or quantitative methods. (Silverman 2014, p. 170). The method of semi-structured interviews involves pre-set themes, but does not require adhering too strictly to individual questions. In this case, the interviews will

focus on the interviewees' competence, which will give a qualitative interpretation of the subject that is as broad as possible. In the research, the frame of the interview is the same for all interviewees. The theme interview's questionnaire is given an opportunity to get acquainted with throughout before the interview, and the interviews were conducted in English.

The informants were chosen for the research by local contacts and by narrowing down the suitable interviewees among all possible candidates. The validation process was a complicated procedure in terms of finding interviewees who were suitable for the research, could communicate in English, and could be relied on for later contact seeing as the interview could have taken over an hour to conduct. The interviewees were reached through personal networks and by asking people to be interviewed. The procedure was conducted over the span of a few months in the region and all the informants were from the Czech–Slovak borderland. People from the borderland were open to taking part in research that deals with their culture and relations with other European and neighbouring countries. Establishing a dialogue with locals was a gateway to interactive discussion and more in-depth knowledge of the topic. Information was often distributed freely, as long as privacy remained between the researcher and the interviewee if the discussion included, for example, political conflicts. Contacting interviewees was managed by personal meetings, email or SMS messages. Interviews were held outdoors either in a peaceful garden or a public park. Conducting the interviews outdoors provided a relaxed surrounding for the interviewees, and most of them were enthusiastic about the research and provided lengthy interviews with more profound knowledge than expected. A significant advantage was the researcher's role as an outsider, from a country other than the topic of the interview. As a result of the independent researcher and context of *outsiderness*, the research sought to obtain more objective perspectives and to ask questions related to the empirical material. Given that the position of a researcher creates *outsiderness* or *insiderness*, it is essential to understand this function (Scheyvens et al. 2003, pp. 183–186; Fujii 2018; Herod 1999, p. 326). For example, in the Czech and Slovak Republics, Herod (1999, pp. 316–317, 326) explains how the president of each country met him as an essential collaborator related to research of mutual interests and in that way, he was a part of an imagined *inside group*.

The research interviews were voice recorded, and notes were written down for later usage. The research recordings were transcribed in full for the analysis process. The procedure involved a straight transcription of all expressions, with symbols to understand extra-linguistic information such as pauses, emotions, interruptions, stressed words, and changes in the subject. Notes and extra material from the interviews had a pivotal role in the analysis in the later part of the research. Qualitative interviewing is an especially useful tool as a research method for revealing individuals' values and attitudes – those parts that cannot often be observed or accommodated with a strict formal questionnaire or fully structured interviews (Silverman 2014, p. 171). In this way, the priority is to show how interview responses have been produced between the interviewer and respondent as it has been conducted carefully in the study. (Silverman 2014, p. 185) By analysing interviewees' talk, the interviewer is gaining access to a person's cultural universe and rooted moral assumptions (Silverman 2014, p. 198). All in all, the chosen interviewing methods were successful for the research, and therefore, the empirical data contained detailed and precise information from the excellent discussions.

The empirical data of the research was collected locally from the Czech Republic side of the borderland near Slovakia. It is difficult to determine the absolute distance for the interviewees, but the maximum distance is about a 50- to 70-kilometre distance by road to the Slovakian side of the border, and a vital university district in the region is Zlín, located about 50 kilometres from the border. Many students and employees have come to Zlín from several nearby towns, whereas some of them have friends and relatives on both sides of the border. Near the Czech–Slovak border, the ethnic and cultural impacts of Slovakia are represented more than elsewhere in the Czech Republic. Visiting Bratislava (Slovakian capital) is closer, with respect to both time and distance, than Prague (Czech capital). Brno, a major city in the south of the Moravia, is a short 70 kilometres, or one hour, away by road.

Interviewees were divided into two separate age groups. Group A included six people ranging in age from 20 to 30 years. They formed a heterogeneous group that explained their position in the society from their perspective. Often they were students, recent graduates, or employees. Group B also consisted of six respondents of

various ages, from 30 to 40 years. Interviewees were coded as A, M, 23, for example, representing a respondent from group A, who was a male and 23 years of age.

Interviewees' backgrounds provided distinctive factors that facilitated the analysis of later outcomes. Interesting themes found related to *Influence*, which includes *Skills* such as linguistic skills, *Conditions* as personal and surrounding aspects, and *Reasons where to live* as a personal desired state to relocate oneself. Upon closer inspection of conditions such as interviewees' friends who were from Slovakia or other parts of Europe, these factors appeared to influence people's everyday conditions as well as personal status. Furthermore, people's desired state for choosing the location to stay was bounded to price, proximity, and family-related matters.

Secondly, with respect to background themes, the study found that *Location* was related to an individual's hometown or place of home, the latter mentioned by two respondents. Another location-related aspect was *Willingness to move abroad*. That desired state to relocate abroad was divided between Group A and Group B. Younger interviewees' tendency was to relocate to English-speaking countries or regions such as Canada, Scotland, or other regions in the United Kingdom. In addition, Germany was one of the important countries for them. However, older respondents in Group B had a preference to relocate themselves to Southern Europe such as Portugal or Spain. Slovakia for the location was neutral in both age groups, but the provoking division was that the younger age group did not have thoughts on moving to or living in Slovakia. Meanwhile, the older age group strictly mentioned it is good to live in Western Slovakia, but not favourable to live in some of the central or eastern parts of the country.

The research was conducted by abductive reasoning where methodological data and theory were part of a cycle that reflects itself. The correctness of interview data means that we will not need to listen to all the interviewees' responses as true or false on reality, but we can understand such responses as displays of various perspectives and moral forms that draw upon possible cultural resources (Silverman 2014, p. 197). In this way, the abductive approach in the research provided the outcome that reflects the

contemporary state of the Czech–Slovak borderland, from the perspectives of its people.

3.2   Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of the empirical data of the study solves questions and provides answers to the research problem with specific analytical tools. The framework facilitates the analysis of the dataset from different angles such that it is suitable for the case study approach, in which a more profound understanding of findings is crucial. The initial research setting was challenging, and therefore, the researcher used multiple ways to analyse the dataset. In addition, the possibility of limited information or disinformation gathered by the single method is compensated for by combining various methods. In the research, the chosen analytical method is content analysis and forming themes by thematic analysis and types by typification. Furthermore, the reason for these analytical methods is because the qualitative dataset was enormous, and both thematic analysis and typification in the analytical context are formed before the content analysis of the empirical data. To understand more about the dataset, the thematic analysis is chosen to form latent themes that can be examined more profoundly.

Typification provides a tool to structure the self and conceptualise different roles, and furthermore offers an essential feature of institutionalisation and the development of social structure (McKinney 1969). Typification is the most evident concept for characterising the everyday logic of the construction and reconstruction of social reality, which is an essential aspect of this research (Merz-Benz & Wagner 2006, p. 639). In that way, the research can find conjunctive and disjunctive factors. Additionally, in the thematic analysis, categories emerge from the data, which is necessary for the research. The research is conducted this way to avoid the challenges sometimes encountered in qualitative content analysis, namely that the research

results in unclear and trite conclusions (Silverman 2014, p. 118). The reason for this method is to examine relevant words and statements for the research problem and sample these for a complete analysis (Silverman 2014, p. 116). From this angle, the research forms latent themes and types above appropriate context of data for finding essential factors for the study. Moreover, another critical aspect is to use the significant terms and conditions from the interview data to demonstrate critical singular aspects and keynotes on different occasions.

Content analysis is an analysis method and a research technique for generating replicable and valid inferences from transcriptions that apply to this research context (Krippendorff 2004, p. 18). For this technique in the research, the outcome will be reflecting the everyday life at the borderland. As a research technique, content analysis involves procedures that are specialised and expected to be reliable such that the findings are replicable (Krippendorff 2004, p. 18). In order to understand the unique context of the research, the study utilises the method that steers the research to more specific conclusions.

All in all, the interview analysis is structured according to the two primary research questions and corresponding sub-questions. This way both sections remain independent from each other and provide more accurate information for each of the primary research questions. The first part analyses the borderland itself, and the second section includes the European Union context and its influence on the borderland. In the specific field of interests, the analysis process provides an understanding of the somewhat fragmented context of the boundary region. One should keep in mind how the analysis of the borderland is based on a complex society structure and how the critical aspect is revealed. Moreover, interconnected regions and multilevel hierarchies are present in the boundary area. However, the analytical framework works accurately throughout the analysis process with the chosen methods of the research.

4. LIVING IN THE CZECH–SLOVAK BORDERLAND: CROSS-BORDER AND TRANSNATIONAL TENDENCIES FROM THE PEOPLE-CENTRED PERSPECTIVE

The Czech Republic and Slovakia have both come closer and differentiated each other during the history. The border between the two nation-states can be a problem for local people with many features. The research examines how this border affects the everyday life of the inhabitants, and how the border is dismantled and rebuilt both mentally and through actions in everyday life. The first research question has a perspective to the research and to the dilemma from local level as an indigenous approach. The focus of this analysis is to bring everyday life in the borderland to the reflection with the analytical framework. The borderland between the Czech and Slovak Republics forms and reforms boundary surfaces in people's lives that have multiple connections to the region. One aspect is how a person perceives the borderland, and the other is how specific groups perceive it. In this case, the study examines signs and examples to create broader assumptions.

The history of the border region from the early age of the 9th century until the present-day shows that this historical path has led to a mutual linguistic path, which has started to differentiate after the formation of two separate nation-states. Curiosity among linguistic similarities is that both Czech and Slovak languages are closely related to each other and belong to the West Slavic group. In the present, the standard variety and vernacular dialects of these languages exist within the political Czech–Slovak border, approximately 250 kilometres in length. The relationship between the Slovak and Czech languages has influenced the very long history of the political border and its changing status. (Nabelkova 2016, p. 140) For example, Slovakian is a new language that has similar roots with the Czech language. Dialects separated the Czech and Slovak languages but, among other things, the influence of Czechoslovakia harmonised the two languages. The boundary dividing the two different nation-states

and the differentiation of languages divide residents on both sides of the border. This process alienates people from their nation-state and constructs otherness, in this case, separating Slovaks from Czechs.

The Czech flag represents unity as the three regions Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia are presented as a unified nation. The division in the three different regions also explains the characteristics of division in everyday life. The Czechoslovakian time represented the openness of the national boundaries. National borders have emerged to the debate and become politicised at many levels in the 2010s and earlier. The process has happened in Europe, but also in other parts of the world where globalised tendencies are increasing or becoming détente and frontiers are obtaining an exceptional degree of openness.

Although the borderland has powerful ties to the nation-state, the region also has connections to elsewhere. We can call this a *Region with no identity* where common regional stereotypes from everyday life and media will achieve a higher role. Regional prejudices might show in geographical jokes and talk. This means questionable jokes of neighbour countries and races, for example, function as methods through which citizens on the borderland establish their social self-identities. The fact is that otherness is a process in which the word 'we' is separated from 'them'. Furthermore, humour can turn into a powerful political tool of *othering*. (Ridanpää 2014, p. 712) The region with no identity is related to the concept of otherness because the citizens, in this case, are reproducing the otherness in their everyday life through their insecurity and other features of their regional identity. The concept is a contemporary issue in all Visegrád Group[4] nation-states.

The first analysis chapter is divided into the *Cross-border challenges, Independence, Empowerment and influence,* and *European unity* that are examined in more detailed in the next sections.

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[4] Visegrád Group or V4 includes the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. Visegrád Group is an important concept for cultural and political influences in the region.

4.1 Cross-Border Challenges and Constraints in Everyday Life

Regional differences across the boundaries may be cultural, economic, ethnic, ideological, linguistic, mental, physiognomic, religious or social (Seppälä 2001, p. 25). In this chapter, the research focuses on the differences and challenges between the Czech–Slovak border. From the analysis, the first outcome was Cross-border challenges that are related to multiple themes. These findings were *Transparent borders*, *Transportation*, *Cultural diffusion*, and *Threats of borders*.

A theme, *Transparent borders*, includes various sub-themes. One of the sub-themes argues that the borderland is an obstacle or a buffer, which derives from the opinion that it has characteristics of an unnatural evolvement. Boundaries are not often passive or natural dividers between territories or borderlands (Paasi 2002, p. 179). This impacts the way people commute to work or migrate to another place:

> I know many Slovaks living in Czech Republic and working there. But, I like about them that they still keep the language. Even they live 15 years in Prague [the Czech Capital] with their family and kids they still speaks proper Slovakian language (B, F, 35).

This aspect also connects to the longevity of the language and culture, as well as the national identity of the birth country. Both age groups were satisfied with the present transparency of borders. A person depicted his experience of crossing the border to Slovakia as: *"It's in EU, so there is not that visible border. There is just a road, and I feel like I go some another city in same country (A, M, 26)."* The border obstacles have been removed from actual border-crossings and people's reality when they are in transit between places across the border, which represents the past. Furthermore, the visual impulses are essential when crossing international boundaries.

Younger people in the research described the border by the European Union, whereas older people liken the experience of crossing the border as a period of Czechoslovakia. This outcome is one result of generation differences, which was one essential outcome of the study. In the previous research by Moisio and Jutila in 1998,

on the threats against Finland, secondary school children stated that Russia covers most of the threats with 60.5 percent, whereas Sweden and the European Union together circa 9 percent, and around 30 percent belong to general threats that are not connected to any country explicitly. (Moisio & Harle 2002, p. 51) This study about attitudes among the young people living in Finland shows different ways younger people perceive national identity projects from older people.

A significant outcome was that borders and countries should have a compatible nature towards each other, which was important for most of the interviewees. Compatibility comes up when thinking about countries with different development levels, historical paths, or cultures, which explains some negative attitudes towards the EU policies and development in the region. Important themes are related to *Freedom of location, Time,* and *Transit.* Freedom of location means freedom of physical location and movement as well as networks such as the internet. The concept of time implies saving or spending a person's time in ordinary life where transit stands for the convenience when moving from one place to another, for example, without custom inspections or control. The lack of customs for young people can influence on their habits, for example, related to online shopping from the United Kingdom, which is famous among group A. Therefore, United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU can alter travel habits of Europeans within the Union and around Europe, especially concerning time and convenience as critical factors where customs and passport control influence on the travel habits.

Transportation was also a significant theme, which represents the reason for travel by land or living abroad for studying or working purposes. A person mentioned:

> I would be happy if we finish the idea of Tomáš Baťa and make a highway connection to Žilina, which means through Vizovice and still to the east. Very important for anything. For industry, for transport, for people (B, M, 35).

Infrastructure such as new highway to the Slovakian town *Žilina* was found necessary in interconnecting parts of the borderland to Slovakian cities and towns. The same applied to investments in roads on the Czech side of the border, when compared to the

higher standards of infrastructure on the Slovakian side. These ideas are expressed by one respondent as follows:

> I remember last time when I was in Slovakia. We visited place close to border 50 kilometres far, which is known for wine production. We were surprised how everything looks great and modern, up to date. Sometimes the road looks better than Czech Republic, but I think in all Europe roads look better than Czech Republic, ha-ha. But we could see that Slovakia invest a lot to surroundings and infrastructure – very good feeling (B, M, 38).

The life on the borderland and in Europe were demonstrated, also by accessibility: *"It really makes no difference these days. We take a car and drive to Dresden [in Germany], and shopping options are much better there (A, F, 22)."* The statement stands for freedom of choice where accessibility plays an important role in everyday life. The customs for transportation and accessibility were distinctive factors related to crossing the Slovakian border. A female person depicted crossing the border to Slovakia: *"I don't have a car so. But when I lived with my parents, we went three to four times per year by car. It's easy to go there (A, F, 26)."* The aspects of freedom of choice and accessibility come from the idea that nation-states are not only restricting their citizens, but offering them a somewhat open space for everyday life and actions. People also regard this experience as challenging from the context of working and living abroad, as it is an overwhelming inconvenience to travel on specific routes to get to the expected destination.

Time was also an essential factor in the *Transportation* theme. Nowadays, travelling to villages or towns near the other side of the border is more time-consuming because people must go from border crossing points that were set from the past by constructing infrastructure in former customs. Cooperation and communication across the border would mitigate border crossing tendencies, whereas problems with officials would be harmful to regional cooperation on the borderland and bilateral cooperation between the two nations. Furthermore, a significant part is *freedom of choices* where, restricting these choices will bring more frustration to the local community. One outcome in this part was the confrontation between so-called *countryside people* and *city people* and also the yearning between so-called *borderlanders* and Slovaks. Borderlander, as a term, is widely used to refer to people living on the borderland.

Borderlanders are frequently pulled across the border by identical ties related to ethnic and national unity, which also comes up in the research (Wilson & Donnan 1998, p. 13).

Most Slovaks are receptive to work every day in important cities and hubs in the Czech Republic and return home to the Slovakian side, whereas people from the borderland wish these Slovaks could also come to work in regions other than only the most prominent cities. Commuting from Slovakia to the Czech side of the border is getting more common after membership in the European Union. Commuting destinations are mostly to the more significant cities far from the border area as one respondent described: *"Lot of Slovakian works on the Czech side and few Czech works on the Slovakian side who likes travel, who is lazy stay closer to work. For me, it's not interesting to spend time to travelling to work (B, M, 36)."* All in all, the tendency and permit to cross the Slovakian border was important to respondents. Some people found their lives, or part of them, are limited or even prohibited by the border, which is nothing in comparison to the time of independence when some experienced they were stuck on the wrong side of the border or blocked from seeing their relatives and friends in legal manners as they used to be. When thinking about how the national border has influenced people's lives, we can realise that this border is impacting people's daily life in several ways and changing the mutual dynamics with Slovaks. One respondent expressed about Slovakians:

> I think Slovakian work in Czech in big towns or in Prague. There is not much Slovakian here [in the borderland]. Maybe those who create families here. I think it's normal where is border. Czechoslovak border is like each other border in the Europe (B, F, 36).

Another theme of the study is *Cultural diffusion*, which has a couple of approaches in the former research, such as connection with Europeanisation that was not prevented by the Atlantic Ocean or the Ural Mountains in the past when geographical formations had a more dominant role than today (Schmale 2010). In addition, other classic examples of cultural diffusion are the spread of language, music, cuisine, and other culture-related traditions. In the research, cultural diffusion can be divided into three outcomes, which are *Melting borderlands*, *Leaking borders*, and *Otherness.* Research

data indicates that borderlands are melting and attaching to each other and creating networks of borderlands on a larger scale in contemporary Europe. *Leaking borders* or in another way called *leaking containers* can be seen when wanted and unwanted phenomena float from one nation-state to another. The dilemma between an independent nation-state and regional difference on the global scale will keep borders a critical factor in the international discussion where leaking containers or borders have an essential role. National borders are under a threat of drifting into the centre of political tools to maintain and change the world scale politics.

Otherness in this research was seen as either otherness in the nation-state or otherness outside of the nation-state. However, these outcomes are strongly interconnected. Borders, on the one hand, are transparent regions; on the other hand, they connect, spread various phenomena and are nodes to elsewhere. In this study, one interesting otherness-related finding was cultural diffusion from Slovakia to the Czech Republic, and the tendency was more likely one-way than dual force. Particularly on the borderland, cultural diffusion was a widely expressed phenomenon. For example, trans-cultural diffusion can be seen as an inevitable outcome of globalised world order when some nations and cultures merge. Whether people in the borderland are favouring cultural diffusion with Slovakia or they are favouring trans-cultural diffusion with most of the EU countries.

The last theme of *Cross-border challenges* is *Threats of borders*. This theme has a division of *Stolen borderland*, *Forced borders and bounded people*, and *Schengen area*. Firstly, Stolen borderlands have been experienced in a *border county* and the land has taken away from the local people. One example related to this was a former skiing place called *Kasárna* that came up in people's mind in the various situation:

> You know Kasárna. We take it still very serious because it's a problem. It was bad that Slovakians took this part, which was especially for a Zlín, almost every big factory or a company had there some skiing hut […] And after we split belong to Slovakia and only entrance route to this resort was through Slovakian border, but there was no toll, so it was illegal to cross it. So, you can imagine it was quite a bizarre situation. And the only legal way was to go another 50 kilometres around half Slovakia to opposite side (B, M, 38).

Forced borders and bounded people come from the idea that someone else decides how people should live on the borderland, and where the border will appear and how it has been reconstructed in people's lives. In one aspect, the modern state is a territory, which partly remains within its territorial boundaries and its borders are representing sets of transforming discourses and social practices that form a link between inside and outside. (Paasi 1999b) The approach is from the top-down lead rule when local people find that they are forced to be just a piece of the puzzle. One person describes his background in more detail:

> My mother has borned in Kaschau [former German name], Košice. […] My father was born in Poprad, which is the centre of High Tatras. What is little bit funny, my mother is not Slovakian because she was born in Hungarian family, which is quite common in that city (B, M, 38).

This dynamic is mutual in the borderland regions and the research describes the complicated relations people have on the borderland. Some people perceive to belong to the Czech, Slovakian, or Hungarian communities even though they are representing one unity in the border region. People living on the borderland during the independence era may be called *prisoners of space* because the region influenced and controlled their social relations and was deliberated again by the European Union (Paasi 2002, p. 186).

The Schengen Agreement influences local citizens in many ways and especially those who have families on both sides. One dual conclusion was that the Schengen area supports people, whereas national borders create more problems for the borderland. One outcome was that by erasing heavily guarded internal borders in the EU, local challenges would be erased in the border area:

> Now is that the border is open, you can go through without stops. When Czech Republic and Slovakia was not in Schengen area, customs officers sometimes make a little problems. But I think problems came their personality complex (B, M, 39).

The claim is not purely simple given that some citizens on the borderland have difficulty agreeing with the Schengen Agreement, notably when thinking about issues related to concepts from this research such as leaking borders or otherness. A minor

outcome was a fear of popular smuggler areas at the White Carpathians, and illegal immigration from Slovakia through the country, as one respondent explained:

> We use traditional points for crossing, and there were no special controls especially when they see that you got register plate from Zlín. So, you are from like a border county. That's no problem, but, um it happened to me that I was on a trip to white Carpathian. It's a southeast of Zlín, borderline it's a beautiful national park with a nice forests, very rare population there and, um, this place was very popular for smugglers and people who are doing some illegal immigration transactions – if you understand me! (B, M, 38).

Moreover, the way people describe their location has multiple narratives, which are related to their role as a borderlander, transit-nation, and performer. The respondent continued:

> And it happened to my friend that he got almost shot by smugglers there in that forest. It was ten years ago. They robbed him, and yes, he was quite shocked, and little bit hurt but he survived and told us that story. So now we are okay because we are in Schengen. I repeat it again it was big relief to erase the border. You can imagine that even few years ago you could get into a big problems. Also, the guys in uniforms guarding the border could make a mistake, and they can think that you are a smuggler or some. I don't know how are going the mafia people who are going with illegal immigrants (B, M, 38).

As we can see, there are connections between problems that national borders might bring to people's everyday life. In this case, the Schengen Agreement was helpful for the local people in terms of diminishing illegal activity near them and living on the borderland was a challenge to the citizens in comparison to the unified time with Slovakia or with other members of the European Union.

Sovereignty and other forces, such as a migrant crisis or Russian activity towards national borders in Ukraine, come up in specific ways. A respondent explained his thoughts about Russia: *"I don't think it affects my situation here, but in general I'm concerned Russian will to expand territories and that fear influences me (A, M, 23)."* Sovereignty was an outcome that relates to the present situation in Europe, such as United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, as well as a recent referendum movement in Scotland, Catalonia, and Venice. In addition, Northern Ireland remains in the discussion about the future of the EU and is an important aspect for the local people due to their role in the community and society. The sovereignty

among other countries was under positive reactions. However, questions related to the Czech Republic were challenging for the interviewees to answer. Furthermore, one person referred to changing borders: *"Some countries' peoples start driving sovereignty, and biggest problem is share quantity of people especially people from Africa. It might bounce back to people in Europe (A, M, 23)."* These somewhat migratory challenges have risen in the debate in contemporary Europe and already before the actual migrant crisis evolved in 2015. However, racist or otherness-related connotations might lead to the segregation of people and unwanted fragmented tendencies across the borderland, which might influence local movement across Europe.

4.2   Independence and Us

A critical outcome of this research is *Independence*, which was divided into themes of *Common era (Czechoslovakism)*, *Place*, and *Description of the borderland*. Common era examines concepts of unified and divided country and the phenomenon of Czechoslovakism. The aspect includes the present and the past, which especially group B, the older interviewees, considered as golden times of no problems with administration, system, or with people. In relation to this, one respondent described the independence of Slovakia: *"You know Slovakia was never independent nation, and when they are independent nation some people feel more important (B, M, 36)."* Boundaries and borderlands can function as both unifiers and dividers, where the intensity of interaction across borderlands reflects cross-border relations, which are embedded in both historical and contemporary conditions (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 11). On the other hand, time will change, and the future can be different, as a respondent continued about Czechoslovakian time: *"For me its objective reasons. Its advance of our nations in time when Czechoslovakia born and time has gone now (B, M, 36)."* Another person introduced himself as: *"I'm Czech over 20 years, and mother language is Czech (B, M, 35)."* This aspect represents, especially among the

older people, the transition towards the independence in the past and the present state of a nation.

Most people from group B were originally from the borderland. These people are represented by the borderland as an everyday environment and marked by specific physical and social characteristics, and whose views may differ from nationalist views (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 9). Interestingly, this age group felt that former socialism is represented nowadays in very similar ways as before. The only difference was the system in the European Union in comparison to the Czechoslovakian era, as one interviewee mentioned the following about the border: *"Czechoslovakia border was in federation too, but border is like present-days. We go through there's sign Czech and Slovak and buildings. This is same as in communism age (B, F, 36)."* Former customs officers' buildings were left to the old spots. The respondent mentioned that people are lazy to remove those buildings and old symbols and objects from the border, but there would be at least some political signals and a reason to maintain these human-made symbols and therefore, construct discourses. On the one hand, spatial images, contextuality of discourses, and symbols play an important role in political life and in the political geography of knowledge where regions and territories are represented as social constructs (Häkli 1998b, pp. 333, 352–353). For older people, this kind of symbol represents the past time with Slovakia or an unknown future, and for younger people, a transition era towards the future or blurred history in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, the EU-related border symbols produced positive thoughts related to common contemporary time in the European Union and represent a resource in cross-border cooperation and regional development (Paasi & Prokkola 2008, pp. 20–21).

Younger peoples' thoughts about Czechoslovakian time were beyond the veil of time. One person described this period:

> I was born shortly after formation of separated republics, and I can't remember anything particular but Czechoslovakia was about 100 years old and there were bad times, good times. I think the country suffered because the socialism for years and you can see precaution today, both economical and moral (A, M, 23).

Based on participants' accounts, we can examine how past and present are interlinked, together forming a path from both bad and good times to the present in stated liberalised Europe. For group A, this was more likely to be a path to a liberalised national system and coalition, whereas older citizens in group B perceived current evolvement as a bridge across the path of challenges. Group B imagined such a controversial vision nowadays as socialistic Europe where systems are changed, but they still manage to liberalise and restrict or empower and oppress citizens in their characteristic ways.

When comparing travel between the Czech Republic and Slovakia in CSSR or CSFR[5] time to *Independence* and the European Union period, a respondent added:

> It was much easier of course [In comparison to the independence era]. It was same way easy that how it is now. Maybe it was little bit easier because we had one currency and national railroads, and were just one Czechoslovakia. Now we have two currencies, two systems (B, F, 35).

This somewhat system-based thinking was more profoundly rooted in people's mindsets in many ways when thinking about the past and former situations in Europe and Eastern Bloc. Additionally, mentions about currency have a dual aspect where on the one hand, the euro is a more favourable currency for some people, with regard to stable markets and the simplicity of travel and trade. On the other hand, the Czech crown (koruna) has its factors such as devaluation, and people-related matters such as historical or personal perspective.

In a geographical context, the region constitutes a unity that includes characteristics from various parts of everyday life. Group B often reminisced about the old times when discussing the Czechoslovakian border:

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[5] CSSR (Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 1948-1990), and CSFR (Czech and Slovak Federative Republic 1990-1992).

> Czechoslovak border in mountains, Dvorníky, I recommend you visit, and you can go on Czechoslovak border. Sometimes you are in Slovak, sometimes in Czech. But I'm not going to Slovakia, inside the country, I have a reason for it (B, M, 39).

This golden time has connotations such as home and satisfaction. Interestingly, some of the interviewees did not like to go to the other side or mentioned they do not talk about it in closed circles. When asked to compare old Czechoslovakian time to present time, most in group B mentioned the same thing:

> It's absolutely same. This is same. If you go to the northern Moravia, you can see the plates, northern Moravia area. In Czechoslovakia, in communism age was the same. You can see the plate Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. No borders, it is same (B, M, 39).

For group B, these questions incited emotionally charged responses, but they were still eager to talk about these characteristics in more detail, as some believed that no one ever talks about these topics and the questions had not been asked before. In another words, everyone knows these issues exist, but no one talks about them because they are in the past and people prefer to leave them behind. One respondent continues about the border crossing:

> There is a place called Kasárna, and this place was occupied by Slovaks after we split, and we still have lot of facilities there for skiing and. The only, shortest way is going through to our property to Slovakian side, which is now when we are in Schengen, okay but before, it was a bit problem. So, when we are going to skiing our Czech resort on our Czech side, we have to go through this Slovakian strip […] It was funny, we went there as a bunch of friends, and the first car went through and let others know if there is police or not. On the other hand, we would be fined for that (B, M, 38).

One finding from the research is related to the idea that *our resort, their land, our rules* become *our land, our borderland*. This counterforce to the top-down organised rule is instead local political argument or revolutionary movement that comes up powerfully out of the research. Group A, the young generation, instead found this era uncomfortable, lonely and a forgotten past. This kind of corrosive approach can influence the dynamics between people in negative ways. The present time among this age group is also expressed as being alone in the European Union. Both age groups felt the sovereignty of the nation is like it was in their past.

After independence from Czechoslovakia, residents on the borderland felt like being divided more from the Slovaks by the system and language. After joining the EU, people felt reunified again, but less than before. A respondent compared the Czechoslovakian time to the present time by border-crossing memories and thoughts: *"Before it was unified as now. Now it's divided somehow, but people can't really feel that they are crossing the border and going to some foreign country (A, M, 26)."* The contexts of two unified nation-states and separated European Union member states have been carved deeply in people's mind, which represents the lack of ability to bind citizens in the European Union in constructive ways. In this case, the unification facilitated by the European Union decreased the state of divergence. In the present time, citizen versus company confrontation has been stronger and more threatening than before. Prior to and after joining the European Union, some separating forces appeared time after time, resulting in a debate about whether Moravia in the southeast of the Czech Republic should be an independent country:

> There are some political fractions who wants to separate Moravia or who wants to make Czech as a kingdom again. I don't think that we could split again for smaller pieces. Now we are small country, so there are nothing to split. When we split, Slovakian wanted to distich or disconnect, but 65 percent of Czech people didn't want it. There were only few separatists. But now I feel it as a good way how to support national feeling (B, M, 38).

The political environment and people's thoughts explain how time periods and the situation are in transition and how the present will be bound to the past. Thoughts about independence can vary when Slovakian people's desired state for being independent is stronger than that on the other side of the border.

The Great Moravian Empire[6] was an important region with its centre located on the River Morava's region close to the present Czech–Slovak border; it is the first historical territory within the Czech–Slovak linguistic continuum that is traceable (Nabelkova 2016, p. 143). The regional aspects might become more prominent after the European Union era, but citizens on the borderland and in Moravia did not believe

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[6] The Great Moravian Empire (833–907) is still connected to local people's mindsets and often with pride related to the past.

this could happen. All in all, group B were more in favour of Moravian people. In fact, one respondent mentioned that he is Moravian and how disgraceful it is to be Czech when most relatives live in Slovakia: *"I have family in Slovakia. Family from my grandmother. I've never seen them; there are lot of fears how they live (B, M, 36)."* In one perspective, we can see how the national border has influenced and even separated families. The statement is not the same opinion as that of group A – the younger age group. In comparison to group A, group B saw Slovakia as a divided country.

The second theme in this part of the research is *Place*, which is divided into important places that have strong meaning for people. The concept has a connection with *freedom of mobility* when thinking of landscapes and boundary objects, which can alleviate the socio-cultural complexities in borderlands, as far as promoting successful cross-border cooperation (Häkli 2012, p. 164). Group B in particular had significant places related to Czechoslovakian eras, such as a memorial to the history on the Czech and Slovakian border. In addition, the view from the mountainous areas near the border had a strong influence on many respondents. The influence of place was connected, for example, to the *view of home*, which often represents the ideal mental picture from their living spaces, such as the view from the countryside. Also, the mountains of White Carpathians were strongly spoken to be *our mountains*. Memories and national landscapes influenced how people perceived the borderland in different ways by mindsets related to summer, nature, and mountains. One part leading to this was a yearning for national or regional landscapes that were rooted in people's minds.

The fascinating outcome was about the stories and narratives that were carried out through generations. These storylines, for example, about legends and the battle of Moravian fields or formation of places and river's names are still rooted in people's minds as tacit knowledge. An interesting aspect is etymology and origins of the names in the region. For example, *Morava River*, which has a feminine name on the Czech side of the border, but in general, rivers have masculine names on the Slovakian side. Fascinating details also included how the nature of these rivers are calmer on the Czech side but rougher on the Slovakian side. Some of the meaningful places that were discussed were *Francova Lhota* and *Vizovice*, which are villages next to the

border where interviewees' relatives were living, and *Dvorníky*, which is located on the border. All in all, both age groups concluded that although Czechoslovakian time has gone and time continues to pass, the memories stay firm in one's mindset.

The last part of *Independence* is the theme of *Description of the borderland*. The theme includes that many thought borderlands or their borderland is 'boring', and they are living in such a fringe area far from prospects in life and social activities. This kind of outcome was a common phenomenon with the younger age group, who were mostly students or in working life. The existence of one University in Zlín brings hope to local youngsters, apart from the fact that living in small towns caused people stress and frustration from time to time. Part of the empirical data showed how some people think the national border toward Slovakia is useless and borders on all scales are in the process of disappearing:

> [National] Borders disappear. It depends on the nations between borders are compatible. If the nations have a similar life, lifestyle, and region I think without border this is better. But if culture is different, the border is better (B, F, 36).

The statement is partly incomplete since the border is an internal EU border and influencing the everyday life of the local people in multiple ways. One part of describing the borderland was a signification of landscape when describing the region. This landscape is solidly attached to people's mind and memories. All in all, the era of the Czech Republic's independence was more like a dream, and a bad dream for some of the people living on the borderland. The continuity of the Czechoslovakian era until the European Union will comfort these people with the reality that they are not alone near the border. We need to remember that borderland spaces are complex places where the local, regional, national, and international are represented (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 11).

4.3 Empowerment and Influence: Cooperation and Emergent Processes across the Boundaries

Another result in typification of the research is *Empowerment and Influence*, which also was divided into themes such as *Lifestyle, Proximity, Power,* and *Neighbours.* Before examining the context in detail, we must remember various boundaries and their meaning. Parker (2006, p. 82) reveals different types of boundaries: Cultural Boundaries, Demographic Boundaries, Economic Boundaries, Geographic Boundaries, and Political Boundaries. These boundaries and their interconnectedness were explained in *Borderland matrix* where each of the boundary sets is within borderlands. They are intertwined strings that represent themselves with subcategories inside. The dynamics of the interaction of the boundary sets are envisioned as being propelled by time as one factor, and interaction between each boundary sets is described as strings. The interwoven strings represent the interaction that takes place between these boundary sets through time. (Parker 2006, p. 90; Scholz 2016, p. 137) The described boundaries played an essential role in the research, even though the study employs a multi-type approach where these elements are combined in various angle.

The first theme, *Lifestyle*, is an integral part of the globalised world in the 2010s. Various channels of media influence citizens at the multilevel way, which can be distinguished, for example, from television, where singing competition programs give viewers an opportunity to listen to these Slovakian soft and different voices and build a bridge to the inside of Slovakian cultures. Moreover, understanding of other languages goes another way as a person described: *"Slovaks understand Czech because they watch even Czech programs in Slovakia. So, they speak and understand better (A, M, 27)."* Mostly, understanding the language is a one-way flow from the Czech Republic to Slovakia, but the borderland is a small exception. A tendency is to have a primary linguistic flow from Czech to Slovakia and only a secondary flow backwards. On the one hand, media moulds people's attitudes towards immigration and life in other regions in Europe. Traditions and lifestyles bring longevity to the

lives of people and institutions. These traditions can be described as food or beer cultures or even traditions that have formed into customs in public sector or business traditions. Lifestyle also represents people's actions and activities across the border as one person discussed crossing the border without border checks: *"It's convenient. There is not that visible border so people can go more, communicate easily, transport many things. I think it's really good (A, M, 26)."* Personal physical activity, communication, and transportation present an active lifestyle of the younger generation as this respondent summed up. This conclusion is rough, and it is a signal and generalised outcome that powerfully connects to personal influencing probabilities in personal life or the society. In this research, there is no significant difference between people's socio-economic status, and mostly generation and age is one factor that reflects people's attitudes toward the research outcomes.

Proximity to the typification of *Empowerment and influence* has multiple meanings. These can be found from a personal angle and divided into action-based or feeling-based concepts. As an action, the concept of proximity means the distance from the border to facilities of work, study or leisure related entities. That aspect can mean, for example, food toll from Slovakia as in the independence era when people from the borderland had to choose whether to bring food from far western Bohemia or near western Slovakia. As a feeling-based context, we can find concepts of friendship, our people, and memories. These can especially be found when examining the close history with Slovakia, but also in the present-day borderland. The concepts can combine with the concept of *mental border*, which is rooted in people's everyday lives and is strengthened at the same time as formal cooperation processes remove obstacles by opening up the border (Paasi & Prokkola 2008, p. 27). These concepts enhance the control of people and therefore have a role in empowerment processes and context. Furthermore, without the simpleness of cross the internal border in the European Union, national boundaries have characteristics of cultural or imaginary dividers between cultures (Häkli 2002, p. 89). These can be related to both action- and feeling-based concepts, as well as reproducing mental borders between the nation-states.

The meaning of power has a complicated interpretation. The theme of *Power* refers to law and obedience as well as violence and safety. Although the concept of fascism and people's rights were found necessary from the empirical data, still the governmental power has formed an invincible wall not to be challenged. No matter whether the concept is related to legal or illegal activity, it can be justified by the past and by the other purposes. These can be found even nowadays on the borderland where illegally trafficking people and substances is still in progress even though joining the European Union has dramatically changed the trafficking routes and purposes. In addition, we need to understand the influence of the leadership at the national as well as EU level that flows through the borders to the local people. The understanding of the dynamics is crucial when partially people find they are the lost or forgotten people who are facing the decisions of the elite. The view from the horizon has often altered with polarised political rhetoric and future probabilities. Nevertheless, it has political interests or economic interests where the outcome or surplus will be divided among all counterparts, but the local people might gain the least. More traditional power in the region represents *KDU-ČSL (Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party),* which is a somewhat pro-European party and has most members and voters near the Slovakian border (Magone 2011, pp. 120, 364). The example of the party is one indicator of the distribution of power in the region. One aspect related to power is social exclusion, which can mean social homogenisation, political disempowerment, or cultural fragmentation (Holt-Jensen 2001, p. 5). In the Czech–Slovak borderland this was described as neighbourhoods for unemployed, working class that do not believe in politics, and especially the gap between generations. The generation gap between group A and B was the most evident finding related to social exclusion.

The concept of *neighbours* was a complicated outcome in the research. The concept represents the meaning of *our side* specifically to group B where older people stated about *our borderland* and memories from various timespans. Independence can have a broader outcome for the empowering process, which means the independence takes away the meaning of who the person is in general. The idea of living on the borderland had favourable outcomes and thoughts about *our land and rules* whereas cooperation with neighbouring people and nations to *their land* was explained as a fair

and receptive event. Social mobilisation of and participation by people living in the region is essential (Holt-Jensen 2001, p. 6). In this borderland, social mobilisation and participation across the border were seen as part of standard functions in everyday life. In reference to neighbours, some interviewees mentioned defending the country's national borders, and about Czech Silesia and relations with Slovakia, Germany, Poland, and Austria. All in all, empowerment and influence are essential concepts for people to secure their lives and bring hope for the future, even though some parts of these concepts will increase instability and threats from the other side of the border.

4.4   European Unity in the Context of the Continuum of Boundaries

The last significant typification of chapter 4 is *European unity*, which also includes themes such as *Common border relations*, *Description of borders*, *and Description of Slovakia*. Common border relations included sub-themes such as no international or visible borders when people experience the borders through national tendencies, or transparency when the border area feels like a home and not like being abroad. As one respondent described:

> We feel like we are in old good Czechoslovakia, no problems at all. People living on both sides of the border are very friendly to each other because mixed families and others respect and friendship are so strong. There is no problem (B, M, 38).

An identical attitude was prevalent among group B where former time with Slovakia was comparable to the present in many ways. Another person mentioned crossing the border to Slovakia: *"You don't even notice these days, you just go pass, it looks more or less same (A, F, 23)."* The border-crossing procedure is one important part of the European Union and its internal border policies as well as the development of its internal border regions. When thinking about crossing the border, group A had a strong connection to the European Union time:

I Think we have used to across all borders in Europe without being stopped. Few years back we had to show passports when going to Germany; now we just drive by. My family lives very close to Dresden, and you can get there in maybe one hour (A, F, 22).

Another person compared crossing the border to another European Union country: *"They also don't have that much border and officials that much but the landscape is little bit different than Czech and languages, so I feel like I'm in some foreign country. More than in Slovakia (A, F, 26)."* Even though English and other European languages skills are higher among the younger generation, for some people there is a more significant gap at a mental level to cross and communicate across the borders. From this perspective, we can find the context of 'home and away' where features of foreign nations will represent being away and features of closer nations at being at home – such as Slovakia for some.

International boundaries will create minorities as much as they create nations (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 12). Therefore, people must understand the outcome of bordering people and the impact of the whole process in the EU. Furthermore, the research points out how evolvement in the European Union is crucial for the borderlanders in the Czech–Slovak border. Therefore, decreasing the experiencing of otherness and marginalisation of people is a consistent outcome, and part of the demarginalisation process as a whole. Understanding regionalisation within the European Union system is a complex process for reasons such as the integration and fragmentation policies of EU; the dual approach towards an extended former regionalism or a present re-defined one; and the rapid changes in the society (Cattani 2003, p. 58). Division and unification of Nation-states derive from various reasons and outcomes. The longevity of traditions and lifestyles play an essential role in the borderland by affecting the unity of European Union: *"It's a question if all that conception of European unity will stay same as it is. There's the question, not in borders (B, F, 35)."* In the future, people are expecting more borders in Europe, but these borders' role is more political than traditional nation-state borders. Controversially, some tendencies among the younger generation provided alternative visions about future borders in the EU: *"They don't do passport control so people can't feel borders. Its official thing and something disappearing (A, M, 26)."* There are some thoughts towards the institutionalised

federal union of Europe, but more likely singular evidence for that than the conventional view among local citizens.

Proximity and connection play a considerable role in understanding mutual border relation. These concepts include no toll or border checks on the region. Section 5.3 further discusses the Schengen Agreement and its influence on the borderland and the transparency of the border. What draws attention is that most of the people did not have any personal perspective or opinion about cross-border cooperation or developing borderland with Slovakia. Therefore, the lack of opinion can be related to the *Emerging Europe* tendency where most people do not understand the opportunities for cooperation. In many ways, citizens of the borderland perceive living in a transit area where promoting *Established Europe* belongs elsewhere, whereas they see the European Union as a tool for better luck in their lives. According to firms in the region, it is slightly different when some companies are gaining more benefits from the EU and others less. In addition, unfairness will not change the thinking towards *Established Europe*.

Common border relations with international aspect also have other approaches. One respondent described common borderlands with neighbour countries:

> We call ourselves like a 13th colony of Germany. So, losing borders or opening borders to Germany is something, which is natural but the history of industrial cooperation between Czech and Germany is a hundred years long. Poland on the north has been influenced Silesian region around Ostrava. So, I have friends in Opava [a Czech town on the Czech–Poland Borderland]. It's quite normal that they speak Polish language or listen Polish music. It's very mixed culture, but it's only this part on the north and Austria on the south (B, M, 38).

Language and culture inspire an outcome related to leaking container and culture. Cultural diffusion has characteristics that can either bring nations together or divide them. A wildcard scenario would be what would happen if national borders weaken their meanings and provide more ground for the unified regions in Europe. Nation-states in decentralised Europe or regions of Europe are strengthening the local autonomy in multiple ways – administrative, cultural, economic, and political (Camiz & Melasuo 2003 p. 7). These ways are observed in this research and formed connections between the concepts. In the recent research, for example, the growth of

regional government could in some cases provoke the decline of the nation-state that nowadays seems to have been widely overstated, notwithstanding the reinvigoration of secessionist nationalism in regions such as Catalonia, Scotland and elsewhere in Europe. Nevertheless, regions and regional thinking have in some cases proved to become resilient. (Deas & Hincks 2017, p. 4) Nation-states tend not to be replaced by regional governments as Deas and Hincks (2017) suggest, and this is also the case in the Czech–Slovak borderland where prominent institutions such as nation-state have been seen as an incredible force to overcome.

Related to borderlands, we need to understand the nature of them. Borders and frontiers are merely the opposite extremal points of the continuum of boundaries. Borders can be distinguished as linear, hard, and static, while frontiers are fluid, soft, and zonal. It is crucial to understand that boundaries cannot only classify as borders or frontiers. Thereby, every single boundary can be specified on the continuum between each border and frontier. (Scholz et al. 2016, p. 138) When thinking about melting borderlands and the influence of cross-border flows with neighbouring countries, a respondent described his thoughts as:

> I think this is a very good chain for Czech and Moravian friendship with the north Austrian. Old historical name of that part is called Moravian field, people there 50 percent Austrian people there have Czech surname. I think we are melted little bit around borders (B, M, 38).

The research shows how one European nation has many kinds of neighbouring countries, which all have their roles to develop the borderland between nations. Every Czech borderland has its unique features and characteristic people, with particular flow from the other side of the border. All the other borderlands except with Slovakia have similarities even though the paths are different. The past was staying with Slovakia whereas other nations had a stronger border between nation-states. Still, the evolvement of these borderlands has such massive importance for local regions, which shows how the borders are leaking or flowing through, and the vital role the Schengen Agreement and nations cooperation has for internal European borders and their citizens.

In the research data, *Description of borders* is critical to understanding other phenomena. This includes real or sensory factors such as passport control, queues, and customs officers, whereas items like passport, stickers, and stamps stand for physical hassle or edges. Breaking these control mechanisms will provide people feelings of freedom and simplicity. The idea of one big European Union without internal borders was interpreted as easy and straightforward, but also the EU influenced one factor. This influence can be understood in the context of political borders. Some people from both age groups regarded multilateral borders as building more walls and obstacles, especially if their intentions were staying in small towns near the border. On the other hand, funding related to the EU was a divided issue where most people had positive responses, but also questioned the present allocation of funds and funding resources. One fundamental reason for this was Slovakia's more open policies to use these projects funded by the European Union than what respondents felt has been done on the Czech side of the border.

A transnational region such as the Czech–Slovak borderland is on fertile grounds for understanding the home country and foreign nations; it is a place where chains of the foregone world are present, and where Czechoslovakian influence meets the present European Union era. Being a satellite state for the Soviet Union or buffer zone to the EU will not make a big difference for the ordinary citizens on borderlands, especially when golden memories are colouring the mutual path. Especially among group A, the opening of the borders to Europe influenced people's abilities to visit neighbouring countries more often. An interviewee depicted visiting Germany: *"It's beautiful, it's so much better than in our side of borders […] Sometimes you want to buy something, sometimes you want to go to look around (A, F, 22)."* Places and, for example, shopping options were most of the crucial motivations to visit neighbouring countries. Places can be divided into nature and city surroundings where both traditions and ad-hoc activities play an essential part. The outcome was common among both age groups, but the division was related to the visiting region; group A supported Europe in general whereas group B was in favour of Slovakia or countries in the Eastern or Central Europe.

The last theme related to the typification of *European unity* is *Description of Slovakia*. The theme is a broad theme providing multiple perspectives to the neighbouring country and its people as well. From a cultural perspective, interaction in borderlands may reflect or breed cross-border identities (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 12). A respondent described the exact borderline between these two nations:

> I have my favourite uncle living on a border exactly. He has a horse farm on a borderline in Francova Lhota. He got his horses both sides; he doesn't care too much. […] There was a beautiful watchtower [Čubův kopec observation tower] built as a monument of friendship between Czechs and Slovaks. I didn't even know there was such a watchtower and you could see all two countries. It was built on foundation of Czechoslovakian friendship, and the people did it by themselves. You could feel the strength of friendship on the border (B, M, 38).

These thoughts and aspects had compelling characteristics, especially among older interviewees who have stronger roots in the borderland. Stories about legends are familiar, and these stories often have powerful messages and detailed narratives such as seeing the home and the concept of otherness as a conventional home or nation. The border itself also constructs the feeling of national landscapes that connect the two nations. This cycle strengthens the cross-border identities of the local people.

One common approach in this research is related to perspectives on neighbouring people, such as Western Slovakians are brothers and Eastern strangers as one interviewee mentioned: *"Western Slovakians are really our brothers. When you come Eastern Slovakia, you can see more differences (B, M, 36)."* Another person concluded about living in Slovakia: *"It's tricky. Because this country has two sides. The western side and surroundings of Bratislava is rich and good for job opportunities. Opposed in east, it's a hard to find work (B, M, 35)."* This person would live in the High Tatras, mountains where his roots originated. These opinions could come up in the context of finding a table in a restaurant with Western Slovakians as someone who comes from Moravia, near the national border:

> It is a wood hotel and pub on Czechoslovak border, the hotel is on a Czech side, but owner is Slovakian. In there, somebody is Czech somebody Slovakian, and all are the same. When you come there, you don't feel like stranger on Czechoslovak border near Western Slovakia. When you go eastern from Czechoslovakia border, Slovakian are like yes, he is a Czech. And he can make to you little problems (B, M, 39).

Same roots and feelings cross the borders also mean to be stronger together. These are the key points that bind people together by being stronger together and supporting each other because of shared roots. Language as a binding method is one point that makes people closer even though this mutual path has faced crossroads and the European Union can separate some part, but also connect these nations more with each other. In other words, European Union countries were seen as more distant than brother nations even though the viewpoint of interviewees was often that 'our side' means the side of the Czech Republic only. This context with the linguistic roots breaks the stress or ties from communities such as Czech, Slovakian, and Hungarian. A respondent referred to this common past:

> Some Slovakians are proud to be in EU and euro, and some Slovakians remember the gold ages of Slovakian crown and Czechoslovak and feel they are not controlling democratic process what is happening in their country (B, M, 36).

From another perspective, the more a person goes to Western or Central Europe, the better it will become. This statement is vague and controversial, but often Czech citizens' mentality is to be in Central Europe, whereas Eastern Europe is representing places or countries behind Slovakia or Hungary from the Czech perspective. The critical difference was among group A where younger people did not experience the same need towards talking about Slovakians: *"We usually don't talk about it [Slovaks or Slovakia] much because there is no particular reason (A, F, 23)."* Mutual time in Czechoslovakian era may influence on people's thoughts in this related matter. Additionally, a constant contextualisation and assessment with the former era, the West and possibilities in the future facilitate much of the modern landscape discourse and become an integral part of people's everyday life (Czepczyński 2008, p. 181).

Positive descriptions of Slovakia were also related to the nature and beauty of the country where tourism took a necessary role, as one person described:

> It's very nice country and still in hearts of most of Czechs, especially the old. It's Slovakian country the place where you can feel free, and you can enjoy sport and nature, and also the people. Because especially older people don't speak any language except Slovakian they can speak together and understand each other (B, M, 38).

Out of the two age groups in this research, group B had deep down rooted feelings towards being in Slovakia for several reasons, while group A was more into the European Union. These views were a question of generations, in which language and past time played a significant role. One person described travelling to Slovakia:

> It's a country where you can speak your native language, and nobody is surprised. I had a situation when we were offended by some Slovakian guys. And I said we are not Czechs we are Moravians. Czechs are more like Prague and Moravians are like neighbours (B, M, 35).

Other aspects are more different such as Slovaks have a somewhat Balkan mentality, and the Czech–Slovakia relation is perceived both as a one-way flow but also as a dual relation, as one respondent mentioned when asked how his family and friends talk about Slovakia or Slovaks:

> It depends about who. Slovakians are more Balkan mentality; more straight when say opinion to you. More straight than Czechs. They are more emotive. And both sides people maybe smile to us and we to them (B, M, 39).

Moreover, the description could be that Slovakia represents as a proud little brother who wants to be independent in many ways as a person depicted Slovakia in the European Union:

> They are proud of themselves, more like lions, they will fight. They are like our younger son who is much more angry, and wants to do more but still younger and smaller brother and we are like older and little bit wiser. They have temperament; nation has temperament (B, M, 38).

These differences between the nations are reflecting the past role on the national scale but also on the borderland. What requires attention is answering: is the old unified past with the brother nation over, and is the EU an actor that breaks the mutual bond and unifies these nations at other levels at the same time? The differences between the two nation-states will be the internal reasons; on the other hand, external influence from the EU can separate the path of these two nations as well as draw a thicker line between the residents on the borderland.

The neighbouring country desires to build national characteristics such as own language, in which words of purity and new grounds are re-constructed without its roots to the Czech language or without any foundation to any languages:

> Words like blueberry is borůvka, and they have čučoriedka. It has no foundation of any language; it's so nice, I like it. Especially here in Moravia we like to say jokes in Slovakian language because it sounds more funny (B, M, 38).

Furthermore, linguistic usage of Slovakian showed importance for many interviewees as well as softer tones and more like Slavic language in some cases:

> I found that how they try invent their own words hundred years ago, when they started to build their own nationality, and they wanted to be little bit different, they wanted to build their national meaning of themselves (B, M, 38).

The invention of own new words is a part of building a nation and national meaning, which is important for the young independent country and its national hegemony; however, many Czechs lack that feeling. Humour also has a connection to understanding how people's spatial identities, the cultural institutions, and society are interconnected. (Ridanpää 2014, p. 722) An interviewee describes Slovak:

> Many hip-hop and rap, and modern style music has roots in Bratislava. There is a big massive population of singers singing Slovakian, and we like it. Its softer and we feel it very pleasant to hear it (B, M, 38).

Language across the borderland on each side was an essential factor for evolving the whole nation-states of Czech and Slovak Republic. Linguistic boundaries as one type of boundaries are a sub-type of cultural boundaries (Parker 2006, p. 82). Among group A, Slovakian language is still a significant factor even though it is less necessary than for group B. Linguistic boundaries between people are strengthening even though the European Union might support the reunion of these neighbouring nations. One person described Slovakian language as: *"It's really similar, I'm glad that I can understand most of it. It's kind of more softer than Czech (A, F, 22)."* All the interviewees depict the Slovakian language in similar ways, but younger people do not mention the importance of knowing the language better as the older people did. The linguistic viewpoint is an integral part of connecting the borderland to Slovakia.

One perspective is related to how tensions are crossing borders naturally, which in this case refers to three-tier flow from Prague to Moravia and ending in Slovakia, where each step changes the relation to other people or region. One respondent explained this more from the perspective of a person from Moravia with roots from both countries:

> It [tensions] exists but not much. I think it's same tensions people from Moravia where we live and people who live in Prague, tensions are same. Maybe lower with Slovakians to people who live in Prague […] People who live in Prague are proud to live in big city and you are from countryside and Slovakian; now we are independent, we have euro (B, M, 36).

In addition, global companies with a significant amount of foreign direct investments and capital reserves have contested local and regional companies with the same three-tier flow. This competition is not always fair in multiple ways. (Czepczyński 2008, pp. 112–113) In the Czech–Slovak borderland case, this kind of phenomenon is shown as well as problems between local SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) and global enterprises.

Some of the Eastern Slovakian towns were debated vigorously by borderlanders about their problems with marginal groups and with phenomena such as unemployment, immigration, and other social issues. These marginal groups can create dependency or social exclusion in the local community (Muilu et al. 2001, pp. 75–76). Provoking part was excluded groups of people, which occurred from either side of the border but especially were strongly mentioned to come more from the Slovakian side. For example, near *Košice* that neighbourhood is called *Luník IX*. These groups can be Romani people, immigrants such as Islamic groups, and other excluded groups. The fundamental mental divide for the interviewees was between European Islamic societies and the Middle East Islamic societies. Some interviewees called these ghetto-like regions as neighbourhoods from Middle Eastern countries: *"It's something, which is not very common in Europe, in European unity, maybe in Romania (B, M, 35)."*

Although the majority pointed out poverty or dependency as a factor, still in most cases, the respondents had relatives near Košice or other regions in eastern Slovakia

that had problems with unemployment or immigration that also explained the poverty factor. Mariusz Czepczyński (2008, pp. 175–178) articulates this as a *landscape of the excluded* when the old, the ill, the less entrepreneurial and the passive have been forgotten related to benefits from the economic freedom. Czepczyński presents this dilemma with two examples from the Czech Republic: the industrial cities of *Usti nad Labem* and *Pilzen*. Both cities tried to separate *the good* and *the bad* by building walls between these grouped people for blocking the unwanted phenomena to spread to the other regions and creating a ghetto-like neighbourhood, which creates even more social polarisation (Czepczyński 2008, p. 177). These regions are combined with some of the pseudo-public spaces to exclude the specific groups of people. These spaces can be such as upper-class neighbourhoods, malls, and CCTV-controlled areas. These areas often become *no-go areas* to the excluded groups. (Czepczyński 2008, p. 175) In the study, one outcome was a division between the local majority groups with some of the excluded minority groups. Although, the study focuses more on local people's perspective and these excluded groups have not been included in the research, their presence has still been noticed for explaining interviewees' mindsets.

Strange borders were found out from the study. From time to time, national borders are formed unnaturally, rather than as a result of natural development in the region. The research shows that most regions between the Czech–Slovak border are unnatural dividers of people and are against local citizens' everyday movement and life in general. On the other hand, the River Morava is a sample from the history when it borders the present-day Czech–Slovak borderland from parts of the Czech Republic and Slovakia from the Austrian present national border. This Austro–Slovakian border is one of the oldest national boundaries in Europe and an archetype of the natural border. The river is essential for the local people in many ways and in connecting them mentally to Slovakian neighbours. An example could be national borders which are drawn by states without so-called natural border formation. Examples would be such borders in the African continent, bordering China or India, and some borders in the Western Balkans and Europe as well as the division of the Korean peninsula. These strange borders can divide a city, an island, or even time. The question of how national borders form and how they should represent the local people, should be more in focus. The aspect offers one solution that even though borders are often unnatural,

people can learn from natural border formation when developing the border regions. From a historical angle, this part examines both the unnatural versus natural border formations that are found in the region. Divided borderland with strange borders divides the two nation-states with violent manners. The following questions can be asked: has globalisation formatted the borderland either more closed and unusual or more open and natural? If so, closed or open to which level and for whom?

Countries and nations in the European Union have immigrated people often to the lower working class or social status. In the Czech Republic, this is not yet happening that powerfully as in Western Europe during the last hundred years. The aspect might change in the future with the introduction of new kinds of challenges to society and the continuation of the migrant crisis in Europe from 2015. This immigration wave might be just one among many, and after shocking the foundations of the European Union, more challenges will be faced across Europe like in the Czech and Slovak borderland as well.

The European Union as an institution can strengthen its member states and act as a safety net for the *European dream*. One approach is the idea that institutional nation-states are facing challenges, and when uniting with others, the perspective must be changed towards the common united perspective, notably when challenges become mutual. This somewhat institutional change in thinking can progress the idea of a united Europe when understanding the crucial role of various borderlands in accomplishing common goals. More about this approach will be examined in the next section, which focuses on impacts of the European Union on the dynamic between people and borderland. However, so-called *Europeanisation* was an unknown term to most of the interviewees, but it can be a phenomenon that is not publicly spoken about. The term is in close connection with *decommunisation* process that is related to the cultural background of society, its history, structure, wealth and hopes and aspirations (Czepczyński 2008, p. 182).

A more substantial phenomenon is related to the era of socialism in the history of Czechoslovakia. The connection between the time cycles rose in the topic especially among group B when people mentioned surprisingly unilaterally that they found

Czechoslovakia and the European Union very alike. The discussion related to the socialistic era and its influence on people living in the region is socially banned, and it is a kind of taboo on the borderland. Group B, respondents from 30 to 40 years of age, was especially eager to talk about the past and its duality to the present. Even the Czechoslovakian regional hegemonic characteristics and tendencies were actively under discussion among group B. Some interviewees' opinion was that they were happy and lucky to discuss this forgotten topic and mentioned that no one ever asked about these questions, which are in their minds from the past. On the other hand, group A did not mention the Czechoslovakian era without being asked. Most of the younger people did not remember or did not live in that era and clarified merely that they would be indifferent about that topic.

One aspect about deconstructing national borders we can think of is reconstructing new ones. The setting up process might mean building up European frontiers to the edge of the EU or near. This aspect came up from the respondents when they explained how opening national borders might change their thinking and actions related to the EU and other nations in further context. The development might change people's thinking from the national level to the higher one such as the European Union level. The whole process concludes the idea of multilevel citizenship and steers the path towards the question of citizenship. Therefore, the meaning of transnational citizenship becomes more necessary. The question of whether the concept of citizenship should be separated from its geographical-political connotations is under debate. Therefore, the definition of a citizen could turn into a non-localised, drifting subject who is a member of the present-day global community without any spatial referents, and who relates to other parties through the discourse of humanity (Kallio & Mitchell 2016, p. 4). Relevant in this context is to ask people themselves, what they are as a nation or what they are as the European Union or what they could achieve by joining other levels of the region.

On the one hand, some of the interviewees showed a reasonable fear towards Islamic or intra-European movements, whereas European cultural diffusion was to be more receptive. Some specific exceptions also occurred from the interviews such as common (gun) laws, structural funding, and direction of the union as a single

institution. Most citizens on the borderland were welcoming new ideas or changes related to cultural diffusion, and the reason partly rises from the history near the national border and from all the consequences and challenges that are brought to people's life. The contradiction means people who are living on the Czech–Slovak borderland perceive the border as an institution that impacts people in negative ways without offering more positive aspects. Therefore, the evolvement of hardening borders again will bring challenges to people's lives. One approach is that the dynamics influence people's lives in multiple ways from the older people's reference age group came up that the European Union provides the same deliberations to border-related matters as the mutual Czechoslovakian time. The outcome means, for example, taking back the border control that will rechallenge their lives without proper reasons in this specific borderland.

In the reference age group, a significant finding was how Slovakian language is differentiating and how Slovaks construction of an independent nation-state is in progress. The evolvement of Slovakian language was one even melancholic outcome from most of the interviewees from group B. Among group A, respondents did not consider language a considerable obstacle, but were still aware of a weakening in their language skills: *"I understand the language. It's harder for me than my dad. But I can understand most of it and they can understand us (A, F, 22)."*

Being in a sovereign nation-state and part of the European Union, this borderland has the features to build a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe as well as guarantees the longevity and continuous transit position inside Europe and dynamic cohesion in the region. Therefore, between the Czech Republic and Slovakia can distinguish a renaissance of neutral land from each other. Independence as an outcome of this research will conclude that this aspect of building a bridge in the future is a mutual challenge where borderland maintains a key factor. On the one hand, the past appeared more strongly in group B related to, for example, the history of the Soviet Union and issues related to the Iron Curtain. Moreover, younger people's age group is more likely to face this phenomenon as weakening borders on a larger scale where most mentioned opening towards other European countries, not just to neighbouring Slovakia. The aspect constructed a question of freedom related to *transportation*,

migration, and *employment* when understanding that from the other side of the border, the outcome could be very different. These findings are discussed more in the next section.

The cultural diffusion can be distinguished in other ways as melting borderlands or on the other hand leaking borders. Melting borderlands were constructed from the idea that the boundary region is merging with its surroundings or with transnational regions. Leaking borders means in this case smugglers who deal with people or illegal items, but also, it represents more characteristics of everyday life. Many from both age groups, A and B, mentioned other kinds of leaks. These were monetary, human capital, cultural, linguistic or other ways related. All in all, this was a case of leakages as something wrong or not preferred was occurring in the region. The transitions in borderland can change this dynamic in many ways, and the EU has an influential role in the transition.

A key finding was also related to empowerment of the citizens on the borderland. Empowerment can be understood as a personal or community-related matter. In the end, this empowerment process is a meaningful way to contribute the issue of fragmented regions. In this study, age as a factor provides one element related to empowering people. Age has a connection to rootlessness and is therefore connected to the question of integrity in the boundary surfaces. For example, younger people lacked ties to the so-called motherland, which had a connection with the process of rootlessness. Therefore, lack of commitment brings questions related to cohesion in the European Union scale, also as cohesion between the Czech–Slovak border can be discussed more profoundly in that sense. Cohesion was dealt with more in the section related to the independence and topics related to so-called *Czechoslovakism.* On the other hand, the *Transportation* element provided tools for the local integration and empowerment when interviewees explained their wishes, for example, new highways or railway connections to the Slovakian side, and somewhat better infrastructure to provide a stable environment to connect their lives across the border.

Moreover, from this point of the analysis, we can see a connection to the second section of the research, which focuses on the impact of the European Union on the

border-related dynamics in the region. This is discussed in-depth in chapter 5 from multiple perspectives.

4.5   The Czech–Slovak Borderland: Nodes as a Regional Glue

The Czech–Slovak borderland has various challenges from the past and in the present. One challenge was the dilemma of two independent nations. Since the era of independence, people experience more emancipation in their personal spaces. Two separate timeframes, Czechoslovakian and European Union, have multiple similarities. The bridge-building process across these times was an important factor for local citizens in the borderland that is one of the internal borders in the European Union. The borderland provides cooperation possibilities and transnational linkages as well as it is located near the external eastern border of the EU that has a crucial geopolitical factor. The Czech–Slovak borderland has a historical path from the Cold War and from a longer timescale. Furthermore, *Euroregion Bílé–Biele Karpaty*[7], in the White Carpathian mountain range in the West Carpathians, is in the region. This Euroregion is a constant region in the focus of development between the two countries, even though the concept of Euroregion is commonly detached from people's ordinary life. However, this brings out the question of the dilemma between the core and periphery Europe. In addition, various projects' implementation processes often lack local points of view in the region, particularly when the personal identification process to the cross-border or trans-boundary aspect often relies on a person's background and, for example, cultural and social ties. These questions are essential factors that are debated in the research.

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[7] *Euroregion Bílé–Biele Karpaty* is for cross-border cooperation on the Moravian–Slovak border (same as the Czech–Slovak border) that originates from cultural, natural and traditional values and relationships that have developed during the Czechoslovakia. The cooperation intensified after the single country was split into two independent entities. (Euroregion Bílé–Biele Karpaty 2014, p. 4)

It is interesting to notice that the past, present, and future outcome will repeat itself in a cycle. The European Union era will remind us and represent people's past from the Czechoslovakian time, as one respondent mentioned: *"All is the same, things won't change (B, M, 39)."* The question and the result should focus on the idea of deliberation and trust because, in that way, citizens in the local borderland could find that their decision-making processes and actions will matter in the end. Both age groups of respondents gave similar opinions in that sense.

Borderlanders and belonging to a place can show how the local community is an essential factor to reproduce their lifestyle, especially among the older age group. Some of the interviewees are from a small village, and they might have a stigma of countryside people even though they lived in Zlín or other major regional nodes or traditional regions. These are the ways others might see them in their point of view, for example in Prague. Forces inside of the nation dictate people's lives when the concepts of freedom and safety are contested by public debate and by media. The internal border talk mostly represents only a few concepts for the explanatory processes of boundary challenges. The historical path towards the *West* and the democracy as described in the *West* is still ongoing, and the public trust for the systems inside the country and the EU has still much to be developed.

A struggle regarding boundary related matters and questions of citizenship has existed between the two nation-states and neighbouring countries. In some cases, people had the option of choosing Czech or Slovak citizenship if, for example, they had Czechoslovakian citizenship and were born abroad. In many cases, it was parents' most recent residency that determined whether children became Czech or Slovak citizens, even if parents were born on the opposite of the border. From the perspective of border-crossing, the Czech–Slovak border is nonexistent in the sense that it separates two nation-states and still is one divider in people's mindsets (Häkli 2002, p. 83). The regional nodes influence the local environment in many ways with respect to the economic, social, cultural, and political context. These nodes have a significant role in reconnecting and therefore alleviating the differentiating process between the borderland. However, one obstacle is the one-way flow of human capital from the Slovakian side, and another obstacle is related to dysfunction of the nodes across the

border, even though they play a significant role in regional development in each country and region.

One essential outcome when thinking of regional bonds and transnational connection by nodes in the region is the meaning of language. Neighbouring countries of the Czech Republic are Austria, Poland, Germany, and Slovakia, of which the German language is perceived as an essential factor amongst the inhabitants. The importance is because it offers sort of a channel to Western Europe and the possibility or dream of better living standards by adding value to people's quality of life. Citizens of their nation-state still represent their people for the Czechs, but the regional differences are considerable, and the importance of local identity is manifested in many ways, for example, as support for sports teams or in the beer culture of the region, which can also be understood as cultural habits. In vernacular language, there is the talk of Bohemians and Moravians instead of Czechs, and for example, dialects are present to divide people into different places – regional nodes and various meanings in people's mindsets. Slovaks appear to be a kind of close brother nation for most Czechs, but there are many differences between the somewhat stereotypical characteristics of Czechs and Slovaks, of which the Slovak language is one of the most significant for the people on the other side of the border. However, it is crucial to understand that initially the Slovak language was part of the common dialects, but was deliberately evolved into a new language. As a historical phenomenon, the position of Russian is evident, as during the Czechoslovakian era the Russian language had to be taught to people in the same way as English is taught in the present-day. For this reason, targeting research to young adults is also an essential factor. They live partly in a different linguistically produced world than older generations.

5. THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A BRIDGE BUILDER: A TRANSBOUNDARY REGION IN EMERGING NEW EUROPE

European tradition is weakening national borders instead of strengthening, which the research will examine. The second research question focuses on how much the European Union impacts this (Czech–Slovak borderland) dynamic. This approach comes from outside of the borderland, and it tends to examine this borderland from a more objective perspective than above. Additionally, the development processes of nation-states cannot compare to each other thoroughly. The unique path and rooted history will create a specific base for the evolvement that we need to keep in mind.

The connection between national identity and boundaries is complex because most European nation-states have several boundaries and borderlands, which may have contradistinctive histories and divergence related to national identity narratives (Paasi 2002, p. 179). In the Czech–Slovak borderland this connection is different, based on the shared history and national identity narratives, and therefore, this borderland is unique among the other borderlands in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. The only precise separative period began when Czechoslovakia was divided into two independent nation-states, which are called an *independence time* in the research. Various national identity narratives are essential for understanding when local boundary conditions are elaborated from the research.

In this research, the outcome related to the influence of the European Union includes three primary typifications; *Characteristics of the EU*, *Identity and place*, and *Globalisation*. These outcomes are examined in the following sections.

5.1   The Faces of Europe: A Journey from Eastern Europe to the West

Firstly, to understand the characteristics of the European Union, the study focuses on the *benefits and disbenefits of joining the EU*, and after that, examines *European Union membership* from a universal perspective and then the *role of the EU in the future*. The benefits of joining the EU includes various perspectives on the borderland. All in all, the EU has benefitted people: *"It forces the businessmen and bonuses to be honest about. I like policy of customs, and free movement of people in Schengen area (A, M, 23)."* The research shows sub-themes, and the first is *Work, studying, and business*. The European Union and its importance for job opportunities, salary for a reason to emigrate oneself, competitive employment by immigration, studying abroad, trade, and communication were significant for the people. A respondent described the obvious benefits of joining the EU: *"It brings many benefits especially related to employment. We can get cheap employment from other countries, and also we can get higher salary from other countries (A, M, 27)."*

The second sub-theme, *Movement*, includes how the European Union has influenced opportunities to travel or live abroad more by free movement and more open borders. Other necessary aspects are how distance has been experienced to be shorter, and how fear of going abroad has declined by opening the internal borders in the European Union. The third sub-theme of *Ideology* brings import factors for the whole nation by binding nation to the West. The original ideas of the EU have been stabilised to people's minds when people think that it is a destiny to belong to the European Union. The next sub-theme is *Policy*, which includes policies from borders to administrative characters. Customs policy, less control, and simplicity of export and import, for example, related to taxation policies were crucial changes related to borders. From an international perspective, good relations with neighbouring countries and work against corruption in the Czech Republic or towards Russia, for example, were as crucial as the evolvement in the Union and the single currency system in the EU. One person expressed these policy-related benefits: *"I really like the original idea of EU to*

remove obstacles for trade, no customs, no bureaucratic obstacles to trade, people move freely where they choose (A, M, 23)."

The *Physical world* is the last sub-theme in the *benefits of joining the EU*. Most essential sections were comparing places in the Union and evolvement of the infrastructure. An important role was also research and development projects and funding for the member states. The infrastructure was linked with the policy aspect when thinking about the corruption:

> Roads and railroads are our biggest minus, and we are transfer country, we are node that's why we should be supported on the other hand we should be much more controlled because the corruption of that specific area of industry, building infrastructure is horrible in Czech Republic and I'm very ashamed of it. That's our biggest minus – corruption (B, M, 35).

This argument is controversial with the policies of INTERREG, an initiative for financing social and regional development, and agricultural funding in the Union (Scott 2003, p. 132). Interestingly, people perceive that some countries such as Slovakia or Poland gain more from cross-border cooperation and different projects than their side of the border.

The disbenefits of joining the European Union for the people who live on the borderland will show the divide between the practical and ideological point of views. Firstly, the focus is on the *Policy* sub-theme that is related to the local and EU level perspective. Benefits for interviewees' hometown or dwelling place and national legislation have been seen as a dilemma when regulations and laws over national legislation have faced challenges. A respondent described legislations at different levels:

> In business, we have the common law about trade and common technical norms, but in general the country should stick with their own legislation […] we are not that much unified in Europe. So, every country has different situation, and it should be reflected to the laws (A, M, 23).

Transnational laws or processes impact the border county in many ways. Interviewees were mostly against the *strange influence from far distance*, but some programs also

provided opportunities for residents of the border area to join the competence building processes on a larger scale. Another person concluded the issue of the EU as a transnational actor:

> There's program called Rosvoj[8], it's something like growth, and it means if you have a company that wants to buy new machines you will be given 50 percent for the machines but only in specific regions. So, if you have a company in Zlín, you cannot reach that foundation funds. But if you have a company 20 kilometres from Zlín, you get machines 50 percent cheaper and what it can do on the market – big mess (B, M, 38).

For many citizens of the border area, favouring some and disfavouring others was found to be a problem.

In the Czech Republic, problems within its minorities already exist, and the influence of the Union has been troublesome in many ways. National hegemony and the unilateral steering power of a nation-state have faced a lack of trust by people; whereas multilingual and cultural challenges and the lack of unification in the EU will bring issues of trust. According to interviewees, the gap between people and social classes in the Union weakens the EU's foundation. The European Union has been facing a dilemma where the pressure to expand and to maintain the present EU diminishes the trustworthiness of the Union. These issues can be found from the research from enlargement to Turkey or other boundaries in the east, agricultural challenges, and democracy in the member states and the borderlands. One important theme is *bureaucracy* where political processes and administration are implemented top-down, directives and norms based regulation, and problems with transparency are the most crucial challenges. A respondent described the EU and its impact:

> I think the project has been last decade something else. It has become too bureaucratic than good. There are too much taxpayer's money going around, too many regulations that's what I don't like […] The administration is too heavy and if money goes around its pointed to useless things (A, M, 23).

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[8] Rosvoj (Development in English) is a regional development instrument in the Czech Republic that has sort of a controversial role especially among people who live in the regions that will not benefit from the program or who live in the Czech–Slovak borderland.

The Union's problems with productivity and disturbed markets also weaken the trust of people who live and work on the national edge in the EU.

Secondly, *disbenefits* for the citizens in this research are related to *Cost and monetary* sub-theme. The single currency and monetary union have been an expensive solution for many countries in the Union and the euro as a currency has been a threat on a national scale. For the *Movement,* disbenefits mean external immigration from outside of the Union that brings social problems and instability on a national scale. However, the Union's internal emigration and immigration bring negative thoughts and fears for the people. Ideologically, local people perceive that the EU is not for the average people when control is centralised, and people's role is passive. Centralised control and passive role of people are familiar dilemmas especially in regions such as borderlands, which can resemble fringe areas in multiple ways. In general, the EU tends to favour big companies and for few strong nation-states. A sub-theme, *Ideology*, also shows how the future of the European Union and future evolvement are foreseen as an eventual failure. Research on European integration has traditionally emphasised the capability of the *EU machine* that catches nation-states into the integration process (Moisio 2003, p. 8). This integration process is still ongoing, but it has faced multiple challenges. In the borderland, these somewhat negative attitudes towards the Union's future tear down the positive spirit of constructing the future EU. Stagnation of the Union's present state reflects the local people's attitudes in this research. Furthermore, the question about zone one, two, or three in the EU where the nation-state could belong related to its current state and probabilities in the future. These zones mean that the whole Union creates core and fringe areas or constructs otherness among the nations, but on the one hand nation-states do similar functions already.

The next theme in *European Union characteristics* is *EU-membership in universally*, which refers to everyone in the Union. The development of the European Union has also meant new spaces for regions, which represents constructionist perspective; therefore, new political spaces are emphasised by the changes concerning the concepts of nation-state and territorial state (Melasuo 2003, p. 72). This section shows how thoughts about the EU have changed thoughts on the borderland towards

71

expectations about higher standards of life, related to *income*, *education*, and *lifestyle*. The expectations about the change from independence era to the European Union era have been changed, and the bitterness of people has been growing towards the Union. A person explained how joining the EU changed the way people thought:

> Definitely yes. It depends on the generation. We joined '97 to NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and EU […] um, 2002, 2001? It's more than ten years. [2004 correct] It comes with economical situation. This year [2004] was quite good, we were scared what it brings, and nothing happened actually. We couldn't see any increasing bloom of quality of life. People were happy that they don't need a passport to go to Germany for shopping and they need just the ID-card (B, M, 35).

Generation gap and history play a huge role in people's perception of a unified Europe. Quality of life was the expectation that behind the boundaries life could get better in multiple ways. The present state of the nation, and somewhat a window from the borderland to the Slovakian side have shown how well everyday life could be. In addition, how citizens in nation-state should react when people experience the Union has transformed Slovakia more than the Czech Republic. A respondent depicted his changed thoughts towards the EU:

> EU changed a lot; it's not for ordinary people. It's not for union of nations of first category, second category, third category. Germany is the first leader, number one. European Union helped Slovakia more than Czechs. But it's about politics and present-day of country. And something else, we will see (B, M, 36).

A nation that observed the direction of Germany in the past is looking at the similar way in the present time when the European Union influences people's lives related to the neighbouring countries and regions. This bitterness towards Slovakia's evolvement is one indicator that moulds people's thoughts in the region where they can observe what happens in their area and behind the Slovakian border.

The generation's differences are substantial, and the quality of life has remained lower than expected, and a mental bridge from the past Czechoslovakian era to the European Union era remains durable especially for the age group of older people. People describe the change as a difference from the past, but most of the characteristics remain the same. The borderland between the Czech and Slovak Republics continues to be a connecting link as transfer region for the union and for the transfer nations

where people, money, and goods keep flowing to another nation-state. Therefore, this cycle brings the thoughts of someone paying for others and lack of trust to the politics in the region, country, or in the Union. Mostly, the thoughts have changed towards the EU as well as the German focus where the past remains, and the hope for an alternative future has gone.

The last theme is *Role of the EU in the future.* The themes show the importance of geographical location when the Union expands to Eastern Europe or the Balkan region. Moreover, the role of the EU worried people related to the enlargements: *"EU is economic suicide for most countries […] Turkey in Europe advance for big companies because they will get big market, not for us (B, M, 36)."* The aspect that the Union works for larger multinational companies is rooted deeply in people's mindsets. The importance of belonging to the Union will remain in the future. The importance comes mostly from the ideal location in Central Europe and status of being a transit country and region, as a respondent mentioned about the future of national collaboration with the EU:

> Important, our geographical position says we have to be a part of EU, we are not a Switzerland. We are almost same geographical islands inside of Europe surrounded by other states, but we don't have that gold so we are transfer country, transit country and we have to be a part of EU (B, M, 35).

A nation's role is deeply rooted in people's minds and therefore to their actions and mental images. Location is one key asset when thinking about country's or people's ability to contribute to all the levels. Therefore, transnational and global levels are a new normal in the future's transition. Safety in Europe and borderland will bring the Union's influential role in a debate because some nations are more nationalist than others or in a transit role in their borderlands. All in all, the local people considered themselves the black sheep of the Union since they often described how they were indifferent to what will happen but they should keep the EU close for multiple reasons. These characteristics become political factors, and the present-day boundary shows other nuances.

5.2   Identity, Place, and the New Narrative

The second section focuses on the typification of *Identity and place*. The chapter has divided into themes of *Disappearing borders*, *Borderland*, *Nature*, *Moravian regionalist and territorial identity*, *Regions of Europe*, *Not our EU*, and *Otherness.* The concept of relational space is necessary when we try to understand geographies of exclusion, territoriality, and otherness (Holt-Jensen 2001, p. 5). In this section, the research further examines identities and the meaning of place.

The thematic analysis of *disappearing borders* has a connection mostly to national borders and agenda of safety issues. During the history, national borders have been in a role of a tool for increased security and control. It has been relatively straightforward to keep this status or even strengthen the capability of regulating people. After joining the EU, national borders are often seen as unimportant for the local people. However, distance and convenience are key factors, as a respondent demonstrated: *"I feel like neighbouring countries are even closer and easy to go somewhere far for example Netherlands. Before I thought it's pretty far but now I feel it's more closer even its same distance (A, F, 26)."* Convenience in that matter means borders that are without a toll and the connection through these borders to home, for example, should be convenient. A person depicted how the EU has influenced her thoughts: *"I have visited Germany many times, but I don't have that strong connection to the country, but I see that maybe more optimistic than I used to (A, F, 22)."* These positive thoughts towards European nations were typical especially among the young. One difference is for group A, which showed that belonging to any specific place was uncommon when thinking about disappearing borders in the European Union.

On the one hand, safety issues by buffer zones like Turkey or by Balkan countries were a complicated question after joining the Union. Protecting our borders is one aspect where interviewees' attitudes towards the influence of either Russia or Middle Eastern countries were appearing. One aspect when thinking about disappearing

borders is the path from the communism age through the independence era until the present. As a respondent explained:

> The truth follow the money. For example, Czech milk exported with low price to Germany to make a new product and imported to Czech Republic but just new product made from lowest quality milk. High-quality milk stays in Germany and price of both product is the same, maybe in Czech a bit higher (B, M, 35).

The changes related to agriculture and industry have been one of the key questions in the region. Influence of the local people has become more in the debate, for example, if the discussion is about milk or cars that had somewhat politicised status in the region. Citizens in the boundary area might act slightly passively, but they think actively. Before, the occupiers might come from the north or the east, but nowadays, the so-called *colonisation* is based on industry, and the proud of the past has faded: *"Now everything has destroyed, and what has survived from communism age by rich investor from foreign investors […] They [local people] work like three-time lower income than Western countries (B, M, 36)."* The lack of actions and frustration to the present state were typical among the older age group, whereas younger people found themselves more interconnected to everyone else in the EU.

After the Cold War, Europe has still been divided in half, which is the heritage from the time when, for example, some people in former Eastern Europe and Czechoslovakia reproduce the former division by their everyday life. When asked how the EU has influenced the way a person thinks about the national border, a respondent concluded: *"National borders are not important. More important is national identity like country, its democracy (B, F, 36)."* The conclusion about internal borders of the Union explains that although national identity and people who reproduce the identity are in a significant role, still borders between nations might be less meaningful for local people living on the borderland. On the other hand, weak national identity does not explain the weak role of borders, which have tendencies with other nation-states as well. It is a universal belief that individuals should belong to a nation-state, with national identity, and citizenship, which has reproduced in border practices, and in the demand of having a passport (Paasi & Prokkola 2008, p. 14). The dynamics are related to both multilevel and multilateral aspects.

The borderland between the Czech and Slovak Republics after joining the EU will reflect a good future and cooperative initiatives in people's minds. That aspect rises from the small-town identity that people often have. A respondent described the relationship across the Slovakian border: *"Getting better and better, definitely we need each other. It's a cliché, but we are like brothers. I think there's nobody who doesn't say the same (B, M, 38)."* Citizens on the border from both sides are interconnected in multiple ways, and the most alienating factor to break this connection is either the border or separated nation-states systems. One counter force on the borderland is *stolen identity*, which can be found related to national identity, which has a strong connection to the history in the region. Therefore, joining the European Union will not change interviewees' identity related to the place he or she lives in and reproduces one's everyday life. It has stronger tendencies to maintain this identity as a person states: *"Even many countries belong to EU still they have own languages, appearance, identity. So, joining EU doesn't mean we change our characters (A, F, 26)."* This outcome came up interestingly from both age groups. People experience they are not glued to the place on the borderland and joining the Union would influence people who are experiencing rootlessness. Stolen identities can be related to lack of territorial identities – a part of deterritorialisation. On the other hand, transnational identities are not soon emerging to replace traditional territorial identities, because of the connectedness between political participation in the region and national territory, which will persist the transition (Häkli 2008, p. 484). Especially younger people tended to be rootless to the region, whereas the older age group reproduced the traditional regional identities by political activities, trade unions, and everyday life. Therefore, the transnational identity context is close to reformists and younger generations – the direction of the possible future. All in all, deterritorialisation is a somewhat ongoing process in the borderland, where transnational and global tendencies have to gain more grounds in the process of identity construction and deconstruction.

Relational space often relies on aesthetic, social, individual, and functional factors (Holt-Jensen 2001, pp. 6–7). Still, nature has strong connections to people's territorial identity and sense of place. Most national parks and mountains like the White Carpathians are on people's minds when considering the connection between people

and their land. Old historical ruins can be found from the borderland. A respondent expressed his relation to the history of the region: *"I'm Moravian regionalist […] You go, and you see 1000-year-old chapel, and you know that you live in a country with history (B, M, 38)."* The history of the region influences people's lives and thinking in several ways. One aspect is the common past in the same surroundings, in territories, where nature or constructed sites connect people across the border. Historical sites bind people's mindset into the past: *"I was there I found some small national park there was 700 years old oaks in middle of nothing. There were some ruins and there live some species they don't live anywhere else in Europe, endemics (B, M, 38)."* The White Carpathians and disappearing borderland reflects dichotomous approach with disappearing borders and where territorial identity is reproduced on both sides. We need to remember that when the population identity is being decreased to a homogeneous regional one, it may increase regional racism against other regions (Camiz & Melasuo 2003, p. 18). An interviewee described the place he comes from: *"Yes, I'm very proud of the place. I'm from Moravia, which I think its nice place to live […] People here, especially on this side, east and south, are used to work very hard, and we are more agricultured than other part of Czech Republic (B, M, 38)."*

In 2018, the European Union has experienced tendencies that divides and even separate union apart, nationalistic movements and pressures for independence have occurred in various countries. Moreover, in Moravia strong hegemonic regional forces are shown, a person described identities of the place: *"We have many small towns, so it's important to have our own identity in every town but still our own history (A, M, 26)."* This sense of place comes up from *Tomáš Baťa*[9] and it is somewhat *Bata-spirit* where a person gives and gets. In more detail, this phenomenon means a local self-employed and hardworking person who conquers the whole world. This proud culture

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[9] Tomáš Baťa (1876–1932) was an important employer and innovator in the region who still influences people's lives. This brings an interesting context of self-reliance to the examining of regional hegemony. Self-reliance in this context means a collective self-reliance, which promotes regional solidarity among culture, economic, social, and political context.

is related to the history of the region where work culture binds people together against power from above. A person described this local spirit:

> 100 years ago, when *Tomáš Baťa* found its imperium about shoes, he gave something to this city. Now when I'm older, I'm getting into it, his ideas. Sometimes I read a book or short sentence what he said. It's still so creative, and he was a hard worker, and he left something in the city, genius lossy, some spirit which is in everybody who were born there. Almost everybody had some relative who worked for Bata. Working for Bata meant correct, not to steal anything, work hard, but also enjoy the life after the work. You give, and you get. That's something what is not common in every city (B, M, 38).

The local spirit was created in the region, and it was reproduced as local hegemony during the 'golden times' of Czechoslovakia. The embodiment of *Tomáš Baťa* and selfhood of the individual are related to work culture that binds people together. These independent people formed regional hegemony to the isolated region that had and also still has agrarian backgrounds. Moravian regional spirit comes from smaller regions and towns, and in the context of the EU, this would be a developing identity with equally strong connections to both the nation-state and to the EU. On the other hand, people believe this phenomenon is not active and only a few are favouring it as a person expressed: *"There are some people who liked to separate Moravia from Czech Republic but they are only a few, and many people think they are nuts or crazy (A, F, 23)."* The public attitude is that it will be unlikely to achieve Moravian independence. One key factor in Moravian regional identity to some parts of Slovakia is time-related connection and memory of the language. In contrast to regions in other parts of Europe, the Czech Republic has faced a unique past, and this respondent described how the history of the region is crucial for people:

> Not as much as you can find in some other countries because we haven't done all by choosing […] People are moved a lot, so they are not that interested of areas inside. So, I think that separate people from the land and its shattered life. It made people much more introvert in their lives because public life was controlled (A, M, 23).

This context has a connection to the so-called *black sheep of the EU* mindset when citizens on the borderland and elsewhere in the Czech Republic follow other nation-states and regions besides adopting an active role. A respondent simplified his thoughts about the EU and the European Parliament: *"Voting European Parliament, Czech and Slovaks – black sheeps. We don't care, let's have a beer for 20 crowns,*

and we don't care, sorry but we are like that (B, M, 38)." The role of territorial and regional identity has become one form of identity. The stories and the storytelling about the borderland brings multiple varieties into the narratives from the region. The great story or narrative of the people, nation, and borderlanders in the region join with their territorial identities.

Forced migration, social displacement and separation between land and people will create rootlessness and mistrust among the people in this case. The time after Czechoslovakian disintegration took place, independence changed the local mindsets; after joining the European Union, Moravian agriculture and trade with Slovakia increased. The independence changed people's everyday life on the borderland by influencing work-related matters and building local spirit, which can also be a counterforce to the idea of being only a transit nation. One respondent clarified the importance of the history and the nation:

> People in Czech Republic are no nationalists. They aren't proud to be Czech, maybe the most in European nations. People wants to live a normal life without problems. With high income. Nationality and history was stolen for profit by somebody else (B, M, 39).

These thoughts are mutual in the border region, and the perception of the nation is often more practical than ideological for the interviewees. The respondent continued: *"I'm proud that I must explore myself for the place, I'm not glued to the place (B, M, 39)."* The research shows how residents on the borderland are influenced by the past, present, and future. The past follows them, but the present state has influenced people's opportunities in life and their minds to construct their lives from different perspectives.

The *Regions of Europe* theme has a connection to the concept of human nature, which means some people as individuals or as part of a region have a different type of mindset to cope with the transition at the local, national, or the EU level. Some characteristics of nation-states are passive as an interviewee described to be in the Czech Republic. Despite the similarities between these two nations, the characteristics of people have been seen altered by joining the EU. That statement comes up only

when the society and the people have faced new challenges and gained opportunities. Passive behaviour without a change could be a vicious cycle to be managed through as people experience life on the Czech side of the border after joining the European Union. The passivism can be seen from the involvement in various ways such as lack of voting or participation in activities in local, national, and transnational levels.

Regions of Europe include a connection to national identity and kind of generation gap between groups A and B. Citizens on the borderland feel their experience and history in the region influence the way European regions are influencing their lives. Czechoslovakia or the European Union affects people's adaptation to the present era where older respondents experience regional development in the EU more related to the national development. Younger people have adapted to the current situation and are more flexible to think, for example, that regions could reconstruct Europe. One interesting point from both age groups in this research was rejection of the Euroregions[10]. These Euroregions have been mentioned to be set up with no sense, and they are against natural evolvement of the regions. The principal objective of Euroregion cooperation aims at concerted action by the constituent regions among the European Union bodies, as well as securing the support and acceptance for large-scale projects in the region, which has sometimes brought suspicion (Häkli 2002, p. 78). No matter the purpose of the Euroregions, citizens on the Czech–Slovak borderland have no acceptance for them based on the lack of knowledge and fear of the future, which relates the past time in Czechoslovakia and reproduce the suspicious role of the EU.

Both age groups shared the belief that regions of Europe will face challenges: *"If EU try to control into regions, it's too much. Maybe we lose our national identity, I'm against that (A, M, 27)."* The statement also shows the tendencies how people perceive the EU as a tool for controlling people and national development. Another respondent discussed Euroregions:

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[10] Euroregions construct local cross-border cooperation, however the term and context is not familiar to people on the borderland and they offer these people more questions and suspiciousness than solving challenges of cross-border cooperation.

> I don't think people will get familiar with that way to break old regions. We have in Zlín are Wallachians, Slovácko, and Haná[11]. We have three regions we don't need new European regions; it makes no sense (B, M, 35).

The attitudes towards natural and unnatural development in Europe are one of the essential factors in the borderland. The concept of Euroregions in comparison to the independence by separation has robust mental counterparts. Especially among older people, Euroregions are somewhat a counter force for the traditional regions. When thinking about European regional cooperation, Euroregions represents rather cross-border than transnational functions that develop the boundary regions in many ways.

One necessary part of the influence of the European Union on the borderland is the lack of European identity when people find it is *not our EU*. The interesting side is that these people also mention it is *not our Czech Republic* as a person describes belonging to the place she comes from: *"Not that much, I have never felt belonging to any place (A, F, 23)."* Nations' social cohesion and sense of place are fragmented around the Czech Republic after socialistic control. Citizens on the local borderland find their nation-state is following other EU members as a secondary category nation with stigmas of Eastern Bloc and the history of occupation by other nations. A respondent revealed this point of view:

> People think EU is a good project and after financial crisis, they found EU is a project for somebody not for all […] Czech people, Slovakian people and all East Bloc maybe without Polish feel like being second category of EU, not members (B, M, 36).

Additionally, the attitude towards the EU is following and adapting: *"If something happened we just sit and drink beer and companied each other, even how bad the situation is we do nothing (B, M, 38)."*

The changes on the Union scale have resulted in people feeling abandoned or never counted into the core context of EU decision-making. On the one hand, most people categorise themselves as Central Europeans, but some bring in the discussion that they

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[11] Ethnographic regions of Valašsko (Moravian Wallachia), Slovácko (Moravian Slovakia), and Haná (Haná or Hanakia).

represent Eastern Europe or even Eastern Bloc. *Not our EU* means people face a future challenge to develop their society and the Union. After joining the European Union, some people's thoughts towards Germany also changed mostly related to both economic and political reasons, as a respondent depicted the change: *"I would say in a good way. We work for them – they give us money (B, M, 35)."* Economic distribution of wealth is one perspective that citizens on the borderland express when thinking about suitable countries for the EU. Inequality among the member states is one important factor when facing the present situation in the European Union. Some countries should pay for others' development for strengthening the unity in the Union. This dilemma and division of East and West is the toughest challenge. When comparing the outcomes to be more part of the West a person described the role of joining the EU and NATO:

> I think for us it was more important to join NATO, it was something we were scared of Russians after everything, and we needed to protect our borders and ourselves, and economical structures of European community was something behind (B, M, 35).

This aspect of comparing the ways or reasons to be a part of the so-called 'West' has many outcomes where the European Union is just one administrative and political construction among the others. On the other hand, most interviewees in this research avoided talks related to joining the West, and more likely they described how they maintained their position in the core Europe in the centre. This aspect also partly explains the importance of the national border, which contextualises in people's minds, especially in close distance from the neighbour states.

The final part of *Identity and Place* is the *Otherness* theme that reflects attitudes toward the development of the EU and inside the Czech–Slovak borderland. National identity was seen both for and against the development, but common national laws and equality were seen as significant factors among the interviewees. After joining the Union, borderlanders again faced one kind of cultural clash when they saw in the media and in person how member states were changing after joining the EU. Although these people were stigmatised as occupiers and hostile nations in the past, Christian–Islamic division plays a considerable role. Most of the citizens in the region were more or less permissive in their mindset, but visitors and immigrants should

understand the attitude of *local people were here first.* A respondent offered a statement on that when asked about the Union's role in the future for Czech people:

> I don't mind people from anywhere and if someone wants to work here let them come and do their best. But I don't like someone to live only from social system […] You can come here but remember we were here first (A, M, 23).

Social exclusion, a socio-spatial phenomenon, features the exclusion of economic, political, or cultural factors. That context often means social homogenisation when people are allocated to the neighbourhood by their resources. This means political disempowerment when, working-class people and their power have evaporated, and cultural fragmentation or diversity when, cultural identity is built on age or ethnic-related factors. (Holt-Jensen 2001, p. 5) In this research, social exclusion has tendencies from all the mentioned characters. Exclusion of economic and social homogenisation can be found even though the region is mostly sparsely populated area. In that sense, people from economically privileged families or better employment status have more options to choose their region or housing type while others are instead allocated to the margins of the region. The problem can be understood as neighbourhoods with a range of socio-economic challenges. Exclusion of political and political disempowerment is related to the promise of the future in the European Union. This aspect can be distinguished when a working-class person has trouble evolving oneself or influencing one's society, and the promise of a *golden future* in the EU has been torn down and switched to the *golden past* in the era of independence or Czechoslovakia. Exclusion of cultural means for the local people a generation gap whereas ethnic-related factors are not the priority.

5.3   Globalisation and Dynamics of Transnational Citizenship

The last chapter of this section discusses globalisation and the influence of the European Union on local citizens on the Czech–Slovak borderland. This chapter is

divided into the themes of *Future development*, *Movement*, *Significance of borders and distances*, *Schengen area*, *Division*, *Euro*, *NATO*, *Network of nations*, and *Federalism*.

The theme of *Future development* shows how residents on the Czech–Slovak borderland are living a dream from the Czechoslovakian era to the present, but the dream is becoming a challenge. This dilemma comes from the threat that the Union is a failure and should change in front of income and federalisation challenges. A respondent expressed his expectations about the future: *"It takes my country more higher standard. Like higher salary, education, everything higher. The role of EU is making life better, better lifestyle not only money (A, M, 27)."* Uncertain future and realisation of opportunities in the Czech Republic would steer the future. People experience the separative forces such as United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU or Catalonian and Venetian independence movement, are somewhat camouflage for the centre control in the EU to hide the future path of the Union. Only threats from countries, such as the fear of Russia, will affect the border region between the Czech and Slovak Republics. The lack of contiguous visions and future development will bring new aspects to the discussion. The success of the Union in the long-term may require a learning process, and furthermore unlearning the mistakes of the past. Few success stories from around the globe are comparable to that of the EU. Many European cases have conducted federalisation on a smaller scale, which has allowed the Union to maintain the longevity of the region in a sustainable manner.

Globalisation and the theme of *Movement* can be divided into *Freedom of choice* or *Freedom from the past*. The division means historical path dependence on a national scale that shows opportunities in the past and present. In that context, people need to understand the factor of a historical chance, which includes for example industry, raw materials, and human capital that influence in multiple ways with economic determinism and other mechanisms for creating urban systems (Arthur 1988, pp. 95–96). Former opportunities with proper time frame have provided the path that the Czech Republic and its citizens have experienced; however, the present shows the opportunities that they can choose for the future path. Furthermore, a necessary part is movement by travel, study, or employment-related purposes. A respondent

demonstrated the change: *"Before I was a little bit afraid to go abroad and it felt like everything is far away from me, but now I feel I can just go (A, F, 26)."*

Movement or migratory characters are close to each other, such as reasons related to workforce, people, and distance. *Forced migration* and separation between land and people are distinctive factors on the borderland. On regional scale, the European Union will decrease these tendencies between people. Distance as the closest place will be altered, and the whole group of countries will become nations that transcend borders. We also need to remember the contemporary world order and the EU with its borders as geopolitical factors close to other borderlands in the world. These factors are linkages between the boundary region and transnational or European counterparts.

The *Significance of borders and distances* are essential for transit countries where people and actions move to another nation-state. After joining the European Union, there was a practical change related to the distance, in which Slovakia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Hungary, and Italy became closer than before. The borders lost their importance in internal actions between the member states and citizens on the borderland perceived to be one with others like a respondent mentioned about national boundaries: *"They certainly has lost of their significance. They are still there but there are more matter of legislation and organisation, and they have lost importance for personal life (A, F, 23)."* The influence of the *Schengen area* is related to this matter when thinking about otherness, 'our' space, and foreigners. Citizens on the borderland see the Schengen Agreement and area more as an opportunity than a threat, but in some instances, they perceive to be between Western and Eastern Europe, which is an interesting point of view when reflecting on the enlargement of the Union[12] in 2004. A respondent depicted the Schengen Agreement: *"Free movement of people and workforce around Europe is something I really like. That is part of original idea of EU (A, F, 22)."* The role of a so-called transit nation ensures the longevity of interconnected Europe that is a critical purpose of the Union.

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[12] Former enlargement of the European Union in 2004 when ten new nations joined the Union. Both the Czech and Slovak Republics joined the EU with mostly Eastern European nations. The enlargement has been called as Eastern enlargement. (Eur-Lex 2007)

Globalisation and *Division* are firmly connected to the location and place where political attitude owns the critical role. For example, the Moravian separative forces are weak in comparison to similar forces in other parts of the EU. Moreover, division among the Czechs and Slovaks occurred peacefully: *"From communism age, there was a split of Czechoslovakia. This was a political revolution not like in Yugoslavia with war. And we are connected with EU, that is very funny (B, M, 39)."* Various kinds of changes have happened throughout the history of Europe, and these two separated nations still walk on the same path together and with the rest of the Union. The outcome will be seen later, but for now, we can find similarities with longevity and solidarity among some nation-states in Europe where the EU has shown various kinds of revolutionary tendencies and features. However, tendencies of division can reflect short- or long-term deglobalisation, for example, protectionism in contemporary foreign policies, which might show the first evidence in deglobalisation process.

When thinking about global tendencies, the euro as a currency, and European monetary integration, the research shows how the European Union is divided. Citizens in the region think the single monetary system brings instability and could lead to a financial crisis, which shows how the system is not for all member states: *"I think these times it is quite unstable, and there is no certain advantage [to join euro] [...] But it definitely would remove minor obstacles (A, F, 23)."* A single currency system would increase people's ability to act on a larger scale among the member states. For some nation-states, this system is not a working tool to promote the economy and people's ordinary life and needs to be reconsidered. This development could lead towards zones of euro one and two[13] as a system with one currency, and bring new kinds of borders into people's lives.

Many people prefer the Czech crown as a respondent stated: *"Crown has tool for advanced economy of Czech Republic to Eurozone. Advance that don't have in southern nations in Europe (B, M, 36)."* Devaluing currencies against free movement

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[13] Euro one and two refers to the divided dual currency system in Europe that has been under debate.

inspires stronger opinions from these citizens on the borderland. Although the single monetary system brings fewer obstacles and more mobility to some people, the downsides represent the issues of the whole Union. The costs of the euro are worrying many: *"I'm afraid everything is getting expensive because I can see what happened in Slovakia and sceptical about it. I hope we can use koruna as long as possible (A, M, 26)."* On the other hand, the euro as a currency has another side as a respondent described: *"Euro is a weird money. If you believe euro for business and small companies, it's good because national currency is bordered. Euro is a trade without a border (B, M, 36)."* The role of the euro is complicated, and we should understand the probability to steer the role to the next or another level. The role might mean the new euro-one and euro-two zones or in other terms one currency – two systems, at least, for some citizens on the borderland.

The Czech Republic has joined NATO and has a national army, although general conscription is only a memory of the times of socialism. The general atmosphere in the country is free and local people are not particularly nationalistic, although in the past the Czech national borders have changed frequently and the nation-state has faced several different occupiers. The free atmosphere could be described by comparing the velvet revolution with the non-violent atmosphere that still seems to be a characteristic feature of the inhabitants. NATO has been understood as an organisation such as the EU, which both have two sides and faces. Nowadays, NATO has shown to the local people to be more of a global attack organisation than a defence organisation. On the Czech–Slovak borderland, interviewees' visions are shown to be more in favour of European common defence policies and strategies, which also protect from the fear of Russia and are a better solution than recalling the past in people's mindsets:

> In Czech, we are in danger of being in Russian fear of influence; especially economically they attempt to push corruption money to here […] This money have been used to influence to Czech politics and money goes back to Russian politicians. Its good thing that NATO binds us to the West. It makes us more part of West than the East (A, M, 23).

From one perspective, the shared European vision should lead the member states to favour the idea of united nation-states: *"We should have own army and cooperate*

with defence without USA because Europe and USA are different areas with different visions (B, M, 36)." For a single nation-state and citizens on the edge of a nation, the role of member states of the EU will be an essential factor when different threat scenarios influence people's daily lives. The present state of NATO will bring steering dilemma to the EU when the USA plays a significant role together with other counterparts without a singular vision of the European Union. However, the concept of anti-Russian sentiment can be found as a unifier in Europe where, for example, so-called *fake news* and the influence of disinformation by alternative as well as traditional media has risen to the focus. Many European countries have faced a dilemma with handling fake news, and the Czech Republic is among them. In addition, the Czech Republic held general elections in late 2017 and had been subjected to an information war organised from Moscow (Keen 2018). Fake news and disinformation related to the EU tend to appear in the contemporary discussion in the borderland. This kind of a discussion is also reflecting the former *golden ages* of Czechoslovakia, especially among older people from different backgrounds.

Globalisation and *Network of nations* bring questions of the role of a single nation-state after joining the EU. Citizens in the Czech–Slovak borderland perceive how the Union has amplified differences between working and paying nations. The second-class countries will have to work for the core union. This kind of discriminative context does not judge the evolvement in the EU, even though the borderlanders in this research have accepted working nature on their part. A network of nations desires stable nations into interlinkage as a person described the period of Europeanising[14] in simple conclusion: *"I think Europe has become more unified in better and for worse (A, F, 23)."* This point of view is common among younger respondents who do not remember the time in the Czechoslovakian era. The present development in the Union might lead to the setting of a good–bad–country and break the EU into even smaller fragments on a larger scale than nation-state level. Similarities and compatibilities

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[14] The period of Europeanising represents the time when democratisation of the Eastern Europe countries came from behind the iron curtain and started the significant process of Europeanisation, a new East–West rhythm (Schmale 2010). The East–West division still has been as a continuum even since that era.

within nations are important for future development, whereas present development is worrying most citizens in the local border region as a respondent expressed: *"Before joining they should have stable finance. Joining EU can make them higher standard so everything should be stable (A, M, 27)."*

The last theme related to the Globalisation is *Federalism* that reminds people of the socialist era in the past when the European Union represented the resemblance with Czechoslovakia in the past. A person described the transition:

> When communism was here Czech Republic was a member to countries union called RVHP, but for me, EU is quite similar. It's a socialistic project but it's not a bad idea to connect European countries, it is a great idea (B, M, 39).

The difference of generations shows how older people in this research compare past and present eras as the person continues:

> I think it's a little bit same. Something in EU is worse something in RVHP is worse, but it's same […] EU don't have five-year plans but other things. EU is not for ordinary people in EU. It's for organisations for support big corporations and big nations (B, M, 39).

Continuity from past socialistic time continues in the present and flows towards the future in people's minds in similar ways as the centre-controlled system has taken part in their lives. A person continues about divided Europe and regional movements for independence: *"I think target of EU is small federalisation because there is one centre with one control. It depends what you believe for […] This is just camouflage (B, M, 39)."* Federalism has various types in Europe from the past to the present, which must be understood by historical path. These regions are, for example, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, and former Czechoslovakia.

The longevity of federalist ideas means that federalist ideology is not only the result of Europe's experience of integration, but convictions evolved before and after 1945. Therefore, it is in response to the horrible moral and political crisis provoked by Nazi Germany, which has been maintained for the significant part intact during the political developments of the last half century. This longevity is more striking when one considers that the EU remains far from being a federal state. (Gilbert 2005, p. 29) The

core tendency related to this is about citizens in the Czech Republic side of the borderland, because of the continuity from the socialistic era to the European Union era. It has a massive influence on citizens when people perceive they are still in the old past especially among the older interviewees who still remember the time of Czechoslovakia. The outcome will be seen when understanding how the federalist past in the region is reflected the present European Union; then, we can understand how complex question federalism is for the local people. For example, issues with minorities, such as Romani people, are common in the Czech Republic, as a respondent depicted similarities and problems between past and present:

> We have a program to assimilate minority to majority. This doesn't work; communist wanted the same […] gipsies are smoke camouflage for criminal big boys. Socialism and European Union are making tension between classes of population. If you have a problem with your neighbours, you don't have time to think politics (B, M, 39).

Polarisation in the Czech Republic is strengthened when the economic divergence is combined with the ethnic one in the region where the conflict with Romani minorities is the most obvious among the Post-Socialist nations (Czepczyński 2008, p. 176). This type of challenges among the nation-state is a tool to create time frames for lobbying the specific objectives, and by political rhetoric that affects the ordinary people, these political groups can achieve other goals. In the borderland, this kind of influence on politics has been regarded as an ugly way to ensure the decision for the oligarchy.

People felt euphoria during the transition to the capitalism in independence era and to the European Union time. One respondent explained:

> When communism age ended people lived in euphoria and believed future will be better […] When big change happened, people were crazy. I lived that time, and I think it was best time of my life and I'm very happy for living this time, and I'm very happy to live this time now because this time was really freedom because nobody knows what happens tomorrow (B, M, 39).

This transition from communism via independence to the present state was somewhat dual era related to the concept of freedom when people reflect the past to present and future and this ecstatic state can still be seen from people's activities in everyday life. This cycle was a time of searching for themselves – searching for the identity of the

society. On the other hand, we can distinguish a fragmented reality of the state of a nation when people have been divided half and more into smaller fragments and groups. These fragments cannot find a singular voice among the nation-state nor the EU, which is one way to understand why people act passively in the old Czechoslovakian region.

The euphoria and its continuity is a force driving people to live and work better than in the past. An important factor, in this case, is that most people focused on their euphoria, which led to fascinating life-cycles, but on the larger scale, the euphoria in Slovakia was used most of all in the evolvement of the nation. Nowadays, especially older people in this study found they live in the old socialistic environment. For residents on the Czech–Slovak borderland unified Europe and the EU showed different faces: *"EU is a great idea, no united Europe is a great idea, but EU is worst realisation (B, M, 39)."* These problems occur from the deeply rooted floes that have been made during the decades. For example, a vast number of people think euro, NATO, and The EU is the same deception as they faced before in the era of communism. When interviewees think the question of when they forget the Czechoslovakian time, most of answers that it will take two to three generations or more: *"When last people who lived in Czechoslovakia is alive. The new generation of Czech don't understand the Slovakian language; Slovakians understand Czech because TV series and movies (B, M, 39)."* Again, the separation between two nation-states was seen from a linguistic and personal perspective when a person has experienced the past. The linguistic memory is an essential factor when reproducing the territorial identity as well as social, cultural, and even political and economic contexts.

One critical aspect is the time scale, especially when comparing how quickly the transition can be run through when thinking about the transition in the past to the present: *"Some people adapted really quickly I think from privatisation. But mentality from past socialism is passed down, so I think two or three generations to settle in a democratic system. It is still here even it is not (A, F, 23)."* All in all, the transition and people's adaptation to the present were run through quickly, and future transitions could be managed without huge problems, even though federalism does not represent

a driving force: *"There are some divided regions already, some countries stick together more. It's either by location or political attitude. But I think after years' countries still hold their importance (A, F, 23)."* In this case, federalism shows to be an unexpected event in the future for the citizens on the Czech–Slovak borderland, but dividing the EU or nation-states into smaller regions is one aspect that has stronger beliefs. The region in the border area is used to coping with changes. Therefore, the people of the borderland has euphoria to grab and manage the challenges that future will bring, which surprisingly shows the interconnection between the citizens in the region.

One outcome was emancipation or liberation from place related functions when a person has a freedom of movement or communication abilities that can represent either monetary, physical, or personal ability and functions. However, this process is connected to a person's mental context. Transnationalisation increases emancipation or liberation because different social relations overcome physical space and therefore national, regional, and local boundaries (Ortega & Schröttner 2012, p. 9). In a resolution and agreement of European nation-states, these place-related factors have become more important boundaries that the Union should follow.

Different kinds of borderland concepts can understand the generation gap between people in various ways. This *borderland of ages* will divide people, for example, when focusing rural and urban division. Young people's mental worlds are constructed in different ways than older people's; therefore, the research found that the gap between the generations exemplifies the major challenge in the borderland. (Skelton 2016, p. 19; Wood 2016, p. 491) However, from the grounds of decision-making and cohesion-related problems, popularity or trends in the media and each society might weaken the solidarity and coherency of the EU. When people perceive themselves as a second-class or third-class citizen instead of primary class in the European Union, new awakening forces may resurrect from negative perceptions and experiences among borderlands in Europe or from the Czech Republic. That outcome might not be the first but the second wave of changing the European Union, and was also part of the findings that how borderland influenced people's lives. It is not

necessary to create uniformity in fragmented Europe, but these questions need to be discussed further.

Reflecting the socialistic era to the present time cycle, mainly group A saw the current evolvement as a problematic issue:

> Everybody has to do things by themselves. And also, there are good things coming from EU, like no customs, simplified trade, same technical norms. Bad things like bureaucracy, inefficiently divided money, which has spent to senseless projects (A, M, 23).

This argument leads to the idea of being alone in the European Union in similar ways as during the independent era. A respondent continued reflecting on the past: *"Remove objects for trade, let people move freely, let them work where ever they choose. But I don't like […] robbing separate countries from sovereignty (A, M, 23)."* Sovereign nation-states have been considered as a norm during the last few hundred years. The norm has been challenged by the will to construct the future Europe where nation-states develop themselves together in multiple institutions. The dilemma between sovereign states and unified Europe will be the challenge of the present and onwards.

One part of people's worries is related to their safety on the borderland where, for example, the European Union will restrict carrying a handgun or related weapons for self-protection. This kind of safety related contradiction between Northern or Western Europe and the newly joined nations is vital to understand and solve for common grounds. The European Union influences this kind of present state in the region where people perceive some distant institution and power have influenced them. This outcome is reflecting everyone's rights and personal sovereignty. No matter what the solutions for this kind of decision-making face, there may form rising counter forces to maintain the present state, whereas people among other European regions might not understand the local environment. The problem follows as a kind of debate among security and violence that is challenged and influenced by the EU and by comparing to the previous time cycles that would be a troublesome issue even for the younger generations. That context shows the difference between perspectives related to the

concept of freedom that a respondent described: *"It worries me because usually harmonisation of law works that the most restrictive one what can be found comes to the all the rest (A, M, 23)."* Law and order, such as with the security field student, explain a lot in Europe where the local environment is different and people must obey regulations from top to down.

The *Use of power* on borderland is a factor when younger generations experience freedom in the European Union and do not have to obey the former controlling mechanisms. From the other perspective, hierarchies and oligarchy in the European Union have been interpreted as a waste among citizens on the local borderland: *"European Parliament moves from Strasbourg to Brussels and costs dozens of millions of euros only because they couldn't agree the place and every single taxpayer are included (A, F, 23)."* Centralised power and using that for the whole European Union bothers people as it did in the past. However, concepts of freedom and people's rights oppress respondents in the borderland where people perceive living in the edge or fringe area. The European Union may reflect the former Soviet rule for many people although the system and features are different.

From one angle, borders can be seen like a fence in a prison, for violence by bordering people and actions as well as protection by bordering other people and their actions. Bordering people on a small or local scale represent the same as bordering people on a nation or more extensive scale. Borders can be understood as a boundary surface or interface to the place where an entirely different world that is unknown, foreign, and strange has been made easier to access if people have obtained freedom for cross-border tendencies. In addition, people's identity in the postmodern world in the era of globalisation can be varied in complex ways where one can remain more traditional form, but more are constructing identities from different levels, as well as in multi-level and transnational identities. Globalisation can be either a key for the progress of humanity or a key to destruction if misused, as the case of the Czech–Slovak borderland shows that the boundary region itself has been underestimated even though the borderland represents one type of a node, a transit node, in the context of the European Union.

The question how *Established Europe* or *Emerging Europe* functions in the Czech–Slovak borderland is an aspect of the study. One perspective is how a person perceives their position in the European Union and how other people construct this mental image. All in all, local people conclude how they are part of the deeply rooted institution of European Union, and therefore, part of *Established Europe*. Although some tendencies show how the forces of *Emerging Europe* will function in the borderland and is related to the Post-Cold War buffer zones in European level, still people in regional context and nation-state will consider the stability and towards the already *Established Europe*. The definition of Eastern and Central Europe in the post-Cold War context play an essential role in the borderland where the younger and older age groups have a clear division in their mindsets. The Cold War era has been represented not only by the media but also by actions in people's everyday life, which can be either orientated by the Cold War and was present in the older age group, or European context among the younger age group.

Global changes and people's rootlessness create insecurity where the future is an unknown and unstable factor. A nation-state can continue its existence only if it represents a state that reinforces and reproduces its identity and ensures exact territorial limits since the principle idea of 'nation' is based on a feeling. Therefore, the state needs to be rooted in a territory. (Bordoni 2014) However, multiple nuances of the people and other actors construct the borderland as multi-scalar and transnational network in the global context. This kind of paradigm can be understood as a contemporary European tradition in the end when the Czech–Slovak borderland is merging with other European borderlands and becoming an interregional connection at other levels on various scales. In this case, borderlands do not often have a stabilised status as cities or nation-states do. However, residents on the Czech–Slovak borderland reproduced and reformed the borderland in cycles. This context will interconnect the local region with the European and global levels, which also means that people can skip some levels and choose what scale they will be a part of in the process. The process of breaking the scalar chain or skipping levels has become more optional in the contemporary development. Building bridges in the region in the transnational context means often building transit actions and bilateral linkages to Europe. Living on an edge or next to high barrier can influence nations and citizens in

the countries. These isolated people can be seen as lonely, melancholic, and survivalists. Living in a transit country next to a transit border can be, at the same time, living on an edge and living by a channel of information and human resources where possibilities flows through the region.

Migration has been a complex issue in the past when some people involved with criminal activities related to immigration to the region as well as other border-related grey economies. Nowadays these activities are partly diminished by the Schengen Agreement and challenges to maintain incomes with the grey economy. Diasporas in the Czech–Slovak borderland are not very visible even though there are some diasporas to be distinguished. In addition to Slovaks, there are some immigrant groups or communities in the region such as Vietnamese, Romanian and Hungarian. These communities represent their roots from the trans-national counterparts. Most of these diasporas have appeared friendly or moderately harmless and not mainly affecting the local lives of the interviewees. Even though nations are imagined communities, the image is sharp to create strong diaspora from abroad. We can ask that is the interconnected world reproduced either with imagined narratives or socially constructed reality. From the interviewees' perspective, *positive networks* can be found related to Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, and some other European countries, and the *negative networks* represent more likely complex relations with Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria. However, we need to keep in mind that the characteristics of the networks are highly connected to personal perspective, background, and contemporary role in the society.

Bringing the European Union into the Czech–Slovak borderland question gives this another level to examine together with the lower local level. In this research, one outcome was that migration and ethnic-based questions must be interpreted in regional or borderland context as a fragmented construction in transnational or multilevel scale. From a historical aspect, this brings us to question continuous change in the boundaries of Europe and the local borderland. Only the serving of authoritarian groups and system is changed, while most interviewees from group B mentioned this very clearly and strictly that one authoritarian system has changed to another. However, in group A, none of the respondents mentally constructed a bridge

from the past to the present time. The differences between these age groups reflect the main issue, which has an essential connection with the personal mindset, socio-cultural backgrounds, and path of the individual.

5.4 European Union and its Significance to the Czech–Slovak Borderland

Some European countries, especially in *Emerging Europe*, have struggled to convert to a new political and economic order (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 9). The Czech Republic and the borderland with Slovakia had faced a period of so-called *Europeanising* when the past was unlearned, and new rules were adopted both in the political and economic sphere. Although this process was not entirely adapted, the lives of the many were still changing. The Schengen area[15] represents opportunities and challenges to people in the European borderlands. A time when different questions have emerged but the solutions are pending; the Schengen area still provides freedom of movement or location to the majority of people living in border regions. These migratory or movement related challenges come up in the discussions of the Czech–Slovak borderland. Europe has faced ideological division where the fragmentation of nation-states challenges the European integration. The Schengen Agreement is one of the contexts, which have strong connections to the political spheres. Political transformations have forced a redefinition of borderlands in Europe as well as in the Czech–Slovak borderland (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 8).

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[15] Schengen Agreement and area have provided people with the freedom to move their location without greater challenges or obstacles. The Schengen area is crucial especially for regions such as Czech–Slovak borderland – a transit region in the middle of Europe.

On the other hand, Czech citizens on the borderland faced Schengen area as an enlargement of their ability of movement. A respondent described and compared present time with Schengen Agreement to the Czechoslovakian time:

> It was big relief. Maybe for people living close to border, it was much important than rest of the nation who had less problems to travel Germany for example. People living around borders, Czechoslovakian borders it was a big progress to be again together (B, F, 35).

Description of being together again was one outcome of this research. Especially group B place former Czechoslovakian and present European Union time into a single and continuing time phase. The elimination of border control between European countries increases the ability to travel across boundaries and exerts a tremendous psychological pull, just like the single currency system serves economic integration, when external boundaries surrounding the EU have increased in significance (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, pp. 9, 11). The critical aspect is that group A did not mention this as an essential factor, even though their thoughts are similar. A respondent clarified what if border checks are brought back in border policies: *"I would be very unhappy. I'm quite satisfied with present state of things. It's comfortable, easy, simplify many things (A, F, 22)."* The difference between the age groups was related to the generation by memories and personal path. Group A was more familiar with the independence era and faced the European Union era more like a very new opportunity for the future, whereas group B saw the present with multiple connections to the past. One interviewee described past to the present by travelling out of the country: *"I remember when I was very little. It was a hassle to cross the border. It was annoying to go Germany or Croatia (A, F, 22)."* Time and simplicity was a significant factor related to the physical movement.

Another respondent described Schengen area: *"It is a good idea with similar countries but bad idea with non-compatible countries (B, M, 36)."* The statement concludes the thoughts towards the other nation-states inside the Union when thinking about Schengen Agreement and free movement. An example was the Union's enlargement to Romania and Bulgaria that influenced people in many ways as an

interviewee revealed his thoughts about the future enlargements, for example to Turkey:

> I understand why we need countries like that [Romania and Bulgaria] in our space because they have big market and there is a cheap labour […] I cannot be imagining that European community have borders with countries like Iran and Iraq – never (B, M, 35).

This aspect shows the attitude towards enlargements and adequate buffer zones between *us and them*. The EU and Schengen area construct the context of 'us' to be reproduced whereas reproducing the concept of 'them' is produced at the same time. This cycle will also create buffer zones to connect the concepts of *us and them*.

Dual or multiple citizenships as a factor to empower people and strengthen their abilities in everyday life has been replaced partly because of the European integration process. In the past, crossing the borders was particularly challenging, which also came up in the discussion of the research. There are various *push* and *pull factors* for citizens on the borderland. The former include labour markets, income, rootlessness, and European identity while the latter include language, culture, family and friends. These were common among both age groups, but push factors stood out especially among the younger people.

Migration in the region was not a significant issue or possibility. Among the younger age group, some were thinking about work and life in Germany or another Western European country whereas older people did not see that as an opportunity. At the beginning of the European migrant crisis, 2015 and onwards, the borderland did not have much influence from immigrants. For migration movements in general, former communism times meant that the Czech Republic and Slovakia quickly began deviating from the former communist model that was characterised by complete isolation. These countries including Hungary slowly became transit and migration destination countries, and the Czech Republic and Hungary, especially, turned into net immigration countries. (Drbohlav 2012, p. 185) The former isolated role in immigration was present, and some diasporas were stronger than others. We need to understand that a steep increase in immigration from 2001 onwards separates the

Czech Republic from Slovakia and Hungary because of the favourable economic situation and growing demand in labour markets. The change was in the past supplied by immigrants from post-Soviet or other socialist countries such as Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, or Vietnam, and therefore the immigrant-level reached 394,000 in 2007. (Drbohlav 2012, pp. 185–187)

Life on the borderland is different from that in major cities, but media and family- or friends-related talks influence people's ordinary life in migration-related topics. Most common attitudes towards immigrants are similar as before, and the increasing migrant-crisis in 2015 did not influence people's perceptions in extreme ways. Most other types of demographic challenges such as ageing or socio-economic challenges are in people's daily life whereas immigration has included a new, but small, level of changes in the demography. However, the typical reason for immigration to the CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) countries is for work, business or other economic activities, as well as the related family reunification (Drbohlav 2012, p. 188). This kind of problems occurred in the past and families lived across the border. Family reunifications have increased after joining the Schengen Agreement also between Czechs and Slovaks as it happened during the Czechoslovakian era. This question was essential for many on the Czech–Slovak borderland. Additionally, immigration for work or family reunification from the Slovakian side of the border was a significant factor. Issues related to immigration come up very rarely in political or public discourse in the CEE countries and Czech–Slovak borderland, which is a definite symptom of a somewhat immature transition phase within the migration cycle (Drbohlav 2012, p. 196). All in all, the Schengen area provides an essential platform for transition in the region but also the local migration policies will be reflecting the past with multiple functions and characteristics.

Consequences after the United Kingdom's withdrawal process from 2016 to predicted 2019 from the EU would change the context of the Union somewhat significantly. Furthermore, the migrant crisis in the 2015 and onwards has moulded the present state in Europe. The research will show some characteristics of the foundations for both, United Kingdom's withdrawal, and migrant crisis from borderland perspective from one boundary context in the European Union. Furthermore, the only stable thing in the

past and present Europe has been the instability that also focuses on the European borders and borderlands. Border-related policies can change the development of the boundary regions in Europe. These internal border policies can help Europe to be more unified in the future or change the direction to somewhere else. Whatever the practice will be, the outcome is related to the future policies and evolvement of the whole borderland contexts in the European Union. The conclusion and discussion of the future will be discussed in the further chapters.

6. CONCLUSION

European borders and borderlands are in continuous transition, and only the permanence is considered as an abnormal phenomenon. The borderlands are principal boundary surfaces to develop the future of the European Union. These crucial parts of the puzzle form the current construction from the past as well as an outline for the future. Still, the European Union is a powerful mechanism of political and economic regulation (Häkli 2008, p. 471). However, when thinking about the Czech–Slovak borderland and how it influences people's lives, we can understand how history might repeat itself, but in a different and unique way each time. The Czech–Slovak borderland case showed how firm this belief is, but some people still believe they can affect the future by learning from the past. People also perceive the borderland in many ways based on factors that vary from physical and mental factors to characteristics that are related with cross-border and transnational tendencies. When we see today's borderlands in the world, we see many changes and cycles, which are also present in everyday life. Therefore, the transition is firmly connected with the history of the borderland, which reconstructs the past to the future by the present time cycle.

There is no single answer to the question how the history of the borderland influences people's everyday lives. Castells (2010, p. 333) explains how complex and interconnected the process is when each region, the social alliances and their political expression are specific, comparable to the existing regional power relationships, economic structure, and the history of the territory. However, the research distinguished several outcomes from this cycle where the path of the borderland is having an impact on the citizens. One essential outcome is to distinguish the continuum of historical cycles when history repeats itself in the contemporary construction of society. The outcome brings an essential perspective where for example generations experience the history from their mindsets and memories. For

example, older people distinguish secure connection between the times in Czechoslovakia and the European Union whereas younger people experienced the same context as the transition from old era until the new time, or as a Europeanising process that has only a one-way option. All in all, the change from the independence to the European Union era in the Czech–Slovak borderland is offering a question of paradigm change related to the contemporary scientific debate about the European internal borders and the impact to the citizens, especially when considering the context of unified European Union.

Cross-border interactions are a more common phenomenon when the *other side* is conveniently accessible, in comparison to when people lived a long distance from the borderland (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 7). Cooperation between national borders is a way to change the state-centric approach to the social interaction approach that is an opportunity for local people in transnational context. In the Czech–Slovak borderland, this kind of functionalist perspective of cross-border interactions are easily accessible because the location and functional space have an optimal environment for transit traffic and business. This construction brings a crucial bridge-building factor to the regional context. People in the European Union can imagine the future and ask themselves what kind of construction of the EU is ideal for everyone.

People and actors who are institutionally involved in cross-border cooperation often view the borderland in different ways from people who are committed to nationalist objectives (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 9). In this case study, we can find that people have different views if they are involved in trade or business with the neighbouring countries. An impressive result is how national context can become an essential factor for people whose family and friends live on both sides of the border, and who perceive they have been somehow prevented from meeting each other. That outcome can be related to physical challenges such as distance, or barriers such as problems with officials. Cross-border cooperation typically takes place on different scales from the individual level to local authorities, regional networks, national governments, and as far as international organisations (Kaplan & Häkli 2002, p. 11). Therefore, many actors in this research have their contexts related to cross-border activities and cooperation, and the impact of cross-border-related matters varies from each actor.

While examining how much the cross-border challenges impact local people in the borderland, the research found multiple factors that play an essential role. One factor is related to the person's background, and for example, the role in the borderland is an essential factor that explains the polarisation in the region. If a person was born in the village near the border, the challenges are deeply rooted in personal experience and reflect the daily aspect of life. On the other hand, if a person has re-located oneself to study in the region, the person accepts more often the cross-border challenges as characteristics of the region and therefore has no intention to reduce the challenges. Cross-border and transnational tendencies can also reflect as free movement around the Schengen area. For example, people feel anxiety when entering a territory that is different from their own. Häkli (2015, p. 91) describes this phenomenon as a transgression of multiple categorical binaries, such as citizen/alien, domestic/foreign, home/abroad, personal/public, and bodily integrity/territorial integrity. These binaries are firmly connected to the research and the concepts of otherness, empowerment, independence, and European unity that were discussed earlier in chapter 4.

Some borders are building up while others are breaking down. Some borders are reforming in multiple ways. The process of border-development could mean borders that are located in between nation-states or inside of them. Furthermore, reforming borderlands means that especially internal borders of the EU have changed their ability to flow through. On the one hand, deinstitutionalisation of borders and boundaries brings multiple advantages and disadvantages for the local communities. For example, stateless states in the transnational context in the internet and other connections will provide alternative realities in the borderlands and the EU, which makes us ask further questions about the role of the traditional borders and borderlands. However, while keeping regional boundary conditions valid, the research can reveal the outcome that nation-states boundaries construct challenges in everyday lives even though they are soft borders such as between Schengen countries and this research.

Returning to the research problem of which ways and how much the European Union impacts the dynamic, we can conclude that the Union has had both positive and negative effects. Some ways are very similar to the communism age, and some are

reproducing the negative spirit towards the European Union among the people in the borderland. The path of the European Union is the path of the Czech–Slovak borderland as well. Both nation-states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, have chosen this mutual hand-in-hand process and what happens in the European Union will reform this borderland as well, when thinking about how changes in the EU impact to the local citizens. One important outcome was the polarisation in the country after the transition from Czechoslovakia to the independent era, and finally to the European Union era. The polarisation meant a sharp division between generations in which younger people felt freedom and older generations felt anxiety for the transition. Moreover, the question is who wins and who loses in the social contexts? On the one hand, the future is full of opportunities and alternative paths for development in the EU that creates the role of a passenger, not an active member state. However, on the other hand, the ongoing change can be irreversible, which can mean more members could withdraw either from the Union or become a passive member, and impact to the boundary regions as well by multiple scenarios.

Another aspect is how the rules and mechanisms of transboundary cooperation are formed in the region. This aspect is related to all types of cooperation processes from Euroregions or local perspective to bi- and multilateral aspects. Frantically it is a complicated process for example related to data sharing regarding transboundary cooperation projects. In the bi-lateral cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the result is usually one-way flows, and more advantageous for the Czech Republic based on the current demographic situation (Halás 2014, p. 429). This process came out clearly from the research to prove the importance of Schengen Agreement. The present open shared border, between the countries as a part of the Schengen area, aims to maintain bilateral relations with the two countries (Halás 2014, p. 429).

From the perspective of this research, we can form broader outcomes related to the development of European borders. The first outcome is to secure open border relations that have been influenced in a recent European context. The second conclusion is that synergies in the borderland come from three perspectives. One represents the people on the borderland, in territorial context. Another means higher

level impact, such as region, nation-state, or the EU level. The third aspect has a tendency of spaces where people have faced new types of spaces. New spaces exist in different forms, in which linguistic and cultural expressions have been the most important, whereas boundary regions need spaces for intellectual reflections and tolerance among Europeans (Melasuo 2003, pp. 75–76). From this research, for example, we can distinguish new spaces of transnational among the EU and citizenship-related with Slovakia. These new spaces have developed in the contemporary context together with linguistic and cultural importance to unify people and society even more in-depth on the borderland. Other kind of constructionist perspective the research found related to spatial identities and less to related to political communities.

The research distinguishes interrelationships between various elements, which are related the contemporary development in both the Czech–Slovak borderland and in the European Union. In nature of multi-factorial explanation, the case study can form connections between the elements and examine more in-depth into the social organisation (Silverman 2014, p. 435). First, it is necessary to understand that borders are complex structures with social processes and contextual features, which means nationalism, national identity, and territoriality are crucial contexts to reflect each boundary case as in this research (Paasi & Prokkola 2008, p. 26). The second point to consider is how to achieve the knowledge from the borderland, and reflect on the first part. In this case study the knowledge was distributed relatively freely, which offered several ways to analyse the research data.

People on the borderland have various identities including a somewhat clear regional identity that influences people in many ways and has connections with the boundary region. In contemporary Europe, if the nation-state does not represent a substantial identity, or provide space for a coalition of social interests that empower people under a re-constructed identity, a political or social force defined by ethnic, territorial, or religious identity may take over the national identity (Castells 2010, p. 339). In the Czech–Slovak borderland, and in constructionist viewpoint, ethnic and religious identity has a weak role, whereas territorial identity proves to take over the other forms of identities, including national identity. The transition or period of

Europeanisation proves how the development has changed towards both territorial and regional identity, especially when focusing on the generations that have not experienced Czechoslovakia as a nation-state, and have somewhat eroded their national identity. Europe within its borderlands must rethink its policies after possible transitions in the future, such as United Kingdom's withdrawal or future changes and reforms. Borderlands are crucial to this regional integration process if, for example, Scotland is determined to join the Union, which brings the more focused question of soft and hard borders in the region.

However, the Czech–Slovak borderland has characteristics that are not simple for benchmarking in everywhere in Europe. When examining similar borderlands in the EU we can distinguish the concept that has related with either neighbouring countries or some of the Eastern European countries. When thinking about Central or Eastern European countries such as Visegrád Group, we can understand the root of the inner division of the Union. One nation in this context is an anomaly, the second is a rarity, but more players can form an alliance and reform the dynamics of the European Union and the contemporary role of its boundary regions.

DISCUSSION

The research was successful in reaching a higher level of understanding and in explaining the phenomena that influences both the Czech–Slovak borderland and the European Union. Furthermore, the study reveals connections to different levels from the local to the global scale. The first part, the Czech–Slovak borderland and its influence on local people, distinguished various challenges that were related to factors that impact citizens. Successful outcome has a firm connection with the whole transition that has not been concluded in contemporary research. Further examination of the concept would be related to paths that lead to the future and the fundamental conditions that were found from the research to achieve the mutual resolution for the challenges in the Czech–Slovak borderland.

The second section, the impact of the European Union for the development in the borderland, found the core characteristics for the challenges in the present-day evolvement in the EU, especially when examining the Eastern European nation-states or for example the development and transition in the Visegrád Group countries. When thinking about the various internal borderlands in the European Union, we can realise how colossal dilemma is to understand and form simplified models for each of the boundary regions. Therefore, this research was only one pinpoint in the vast map of European borderlands to be continued forward in the future.

For the future research, it would be essential to study more how the Czech–Slovak borderland influences smaller regional concepts, such as villages or municipalities, and organisations in the boundary region. Furthermore, the critical aspect is to examine other borderlands in the Czech Republic and adjacent regions, for example, in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. In the contemporary, globalised world new actors are gaining more power and focus. Therefore, further research should also focus more on these new actors, such as all types of organisations and

companies from perspective similar to this case study. The conventional research and orthodox tradition have been focusing on only singular actors rather than narrowing down the research to contemporary issues in holistic ways. In present Europe, for example, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and other former nation-states from Eastern Europe, will be gaining more focus in the discussion related to Europe's future. Therefore, research on solving these nation-states arguments will be crucial for the one unified European Union. The major issue relies on multicultural union where multiculturalism itself has become for some countries a priority question against the former solidarity in the union. The multiculturalism is essential, for example, when thinking about the immigration policies in the nation-states and how to understand former Eastern European nations of the EU. From that point, we can broaden the importance to understand also new economic spaces in the EU related to various new models, levels, and governance with the different impacts and aspects to societies.

For the future of the EU, the research related to all the internal and external boundaries in the region has significant features when thinking of the stable, prosperous, and beautiful future of the Union. In that part, would be essential to study how smaller regions of Europe would work together with nation-states if the transition fragments Europe into smaller regions than contemporary nation-states. The concept is essential when recalling the times when the nation-state is struggling with independence driven citizens. Another importance is related to possible withdrawals of nation-states and how to deal with the unsecured bond and lack of obligation of countries. It is also necessary for future research to understand the meaning of borderlands in the possible enlargements of the union, both in terms of the perspective of each new boundary region in the Union and the impact to larger scales.

All in all, the future is the path the borderland and other regions have chosen before. The difference and importance of the direction are in the bifurcation point that the boundaries in contemporary Europe have achieved. When remembering the present state and its interconnectedness to the past and the future, people are on the correct path. The implementations for the future European Union will be based on the characteristics of different regions in the Union whereas borderlands have a role in

reforming the traditional development in the nation-state. The role of the borderland may vary, although the primary role often stays the same when understanding its role from the European Union scale. Therefore, in the future, the Czech–Slovak borderland will reflect the same characteristics as before – by the people who understand and reproduce the everyday life of themselves and their surroundings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Figure 1. Delimitation of the area of interest. Czecho-Slovak Borderland
Development Study – Slovako-Czech Borderland Development Study (2009)
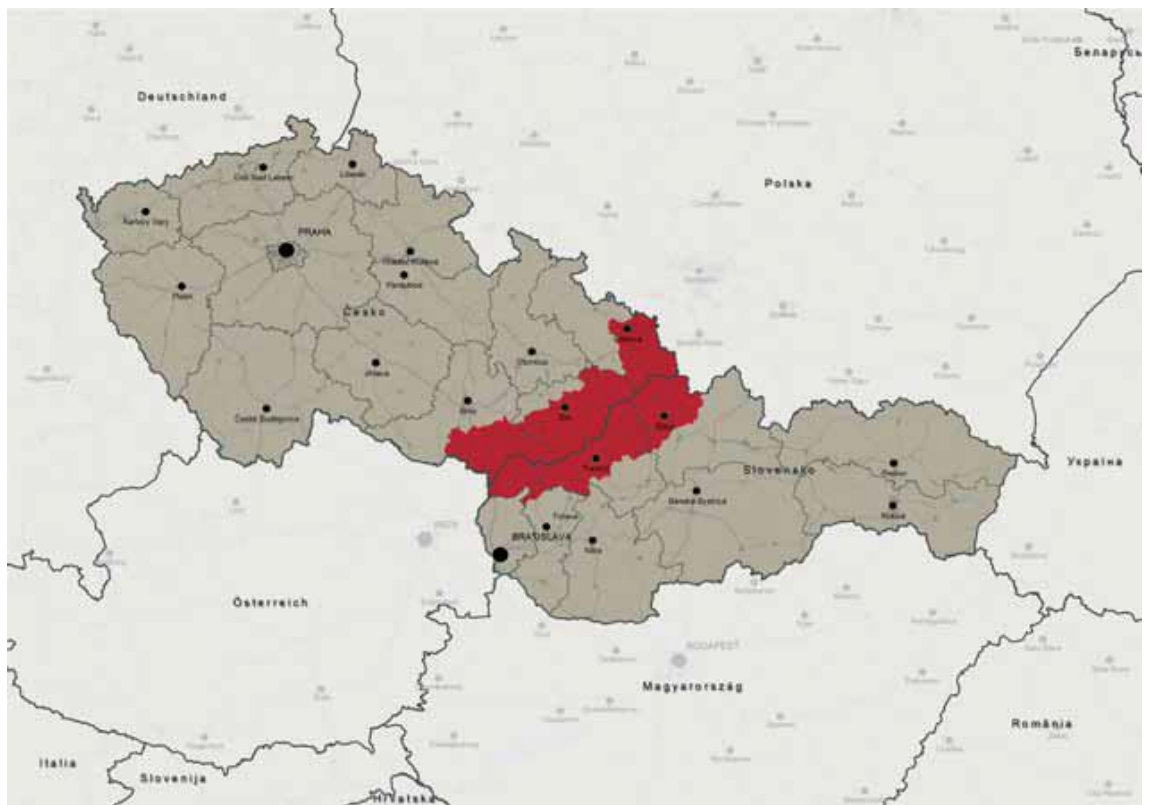
APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire:

1. Backgrounds

1. First name

2. Age

3. Nationality and mother tongue

4. What foreign languages can you speak?

5. The informant is at the moment:

   a. Employed

   b. Unemployed

   c. Student

   d. Other (Specify)

6. Place of residence (Staying at the moment?)

   - Previous places of residence?

   - Hometown or village?

7. What are the reasons for choosing your place of living?

8. Where would you like to live in the future?

9. How do you feel and think about living in Slovakia?

- To another EU country?

10. Do you have any;

- Slovakian friends or relatives?

- Friends or relatives from a neighbouring country?

- Friends or relatives from another EU country or elsewhere?

2. Czech Republic–Slovak Republic border

1. Have you visited Slovakia and if so, how many times in the past year (3-5 years)?

    - When the last time and what was the reason?

2. How frequently do you cross the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia (per week, month year etc.)?

3. What are your reasons to visit Slovakia?

4. Tell me about crossing the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia. What do you experience during that trip?

    - Do you feel that it is similar/different on the other side?

    - How strongly you feel that you are crossing an international boundary?

5. What do you think about cross-border co-operation?

6. What is your opinion about crossing the border to Slovakia without being stopped by border officials?

    - To another EU country?

    - What do you think if you would be stopped by border officials in the future?

    - Can you compare the Czechoslovakian time and the present time – is it very different to cross the border to Slovakia? What about travelling out from the CSSR?

    - How do you find the differences between crossing the Slovakian border and another one from some other neighbour country?

- Do you think border crossing to Slovakia will be somehow different in the future?

7. What about border crossing to another EU country?

8. Do you think there will be some new borders in the Czech Republic, in Europe, or on a global scale, or will some old borders maybe disappear?

9. How would you describe living in borderlands?

- (You can also think the point of views like e.g. functional/economic/cultural/political)

10. Do you know anyone who works on the other side of the border?

11. Do you know anyone who speaks Slovak (on the Czech side) or Czech (on the Slovakian side) of the border?

12. Do you know anyone who has moved to the other side of the border?

13. How do your friends and relatives talk about Slovakia and Slovaks?

14. What do you think about a cross-border trade with Slovakia?

- Cross-border trade in the EU?

15. What would you like to change in the borderland of the Czech Republic and Slovakia?

16. What do you think about the Czechoslovakian times?

17. Have you often visited other EU countries?

- What are your reasons to travel to different countries?

- Can you compare travelling to Slovakia and some another EU country?

18. How do you feel about the Slovakian language? What makes it different from the Czech language?

3. The Europeanisation of Borderland

After Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR) era was over, both the Czech and Slovak Republic opened towards Europe and other countries. Also, privatisation process began at that time.

1. How do you see the Czech Republic in the EU now and in the future?

    • What about Slovakia?

2. The Czech Republic has been a member of the European Union for ten years. What do you think about the European Union?

    • What do you think about the Schengen area?

    • What do you think about NATO?

3. What are the 3 best things that the EU membership has given for your life?

    • Best 3 things for the Czech Republic (or hometown)?

    • What is the worst thing caused by the EU membership?

4. Is the history of the region (e.g. Great Moravia, CSSR etc.) still important in people's lives?

5. Are you proud of the place where you come from?

    • Do you feel belonging to that place?

6. If you need to go to a big city near where you live in, which cities will you visit and why?

7. Has the meaning of locality or nation changed after joining the EU?

8. Have you noticed any change in the way people think since joining the EU?

9. What is the role of the EU in the Future for Czech people?

10. The border area between the Czech and Slovak Republic has divided into 3 Euroregions. What do you think about this White Carpathians Euroregion *(Euroregion Bílé–Biele Karpaty)* where you live?

11. What do you think if the EU will be divided more into regions than national countries in the future?

12. How long do you think it takes for people (or generations) to forget times in the CSSR?

13. How has the EU influenced your thoughts about national borders?

4. Describe your thoughts on these mixed questions:

1. After joining the EU have your thoughts changed toward **a.** European Union **b.** Germany **c.** Slovakia **d.** Something else?

2. There are five countries recognised as candidates for the EU-membership: Iceland, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Do you think these countries should join the EU?

3. What do you think about using euro as a currency instead of koruna (crown)?

   - How would euro as a currency change your mobility in the EU?

4. In the 90s, there was a transition period, which has been described as Europeanising. How do you see that change - do you think there has been such a period of Europeanising?

   THANK YOU!

The interview will be conducted confidentially.