De-Bordering, Re-Bordering and Symbols on the European Boundaries
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Cross-Border Governance in Central European Border Twin Towns.  
Between De-Bordering and Re-Bordering  
Jaroślaw Jańczak

1. Introduction

Borders and border relations were extremely problematic elements of international relations and social interactions between Central European states and nations in the 20th century. However, as Sara Svensson and Gergő Medve-Bálint stress, “after the collapse of communist regimes Central and Eastern Europe has witnessed a remarkably quick proliferation of local cross-border cooperative initiatives”1. Since 1989 border twin towns (described also as divided towns) in particular began to play a symbolic role as European integration laboratories, where the European project is being tested in micro-scale, combining different legal, cultural, economic and social systems in everyday coexistence. Spatial conditions were an interdependent factor in this regard.

The main question that appeared then was that of tools and models of governing twin settlements forming a common space and sharing – under changing border regimes – common needs, opportunities, problems, etc. These were settlements that represented at the same time different political, economic, social and cultural realities.

This paper’s aim is to analyze the challenges related to governing cross-border settlements in Central Europe in the context of European integration, with governance approach being a theoretical prospective of the investigation. The main presumptions will focus on the multi-level character of border twin town governance, where joint management of the public sphere has to involve not only the administrative structure of the divided towns in question, but also non-governmental organizations and the inhabitants as well as state and European levels. Additionally de-bordering and re-bordering tendencies in the region contribute to different patterns of governance.

2. Borders and border twin towns – the case of Central Europe

Borders are traditionally considered as institutions that "separate the 'self' from the 'other'". However, the process of European integration has been increasingly modifying the meaning of borders. By differentiating them into internal (with no direct controls) and external (protecting free-flow within the Schengen area), the separation function has also been modified: softened where de-bordering was experienced and hardened where (re-)bordering was the case. The processes regarding borders seem especially visible in border twin towns – towns located on a border and directly neighboring each other. Spatial proximity leads to a situation where many areas of everyday existence have to be managed together (often water supply systems, public transportation, etc. are necessarily interconnected). Additionally the peripheral location (at the edge of a state's territory) and consequently problems of limited resources, can be overcome only by close collaboration, especially if it is supported by external (European, national) aid and expected by the local populations. Border twin towns are thus often considered laboratories of European integration – symbolic spaces where the European idea is examined in micro scale under relatively controllable conditions. Additionally they are often used for symbolic purposes, as manifestations of successful integration. This element is eagerly employed by politicians on a national level but also by local structures for their own purposes.

Central Europe – here understood as the 2004 EU enlargement area – seems to differ significantly in terms of border relations from the western part of the continent. Borders are much more undefined and fuzzy here – their number and location have changed many times since the beginning of the last century. They were often determined arbitrarily by external actors who frequently did not take local ethnic and historical circumstances into consideration. Consequently, in many cases ethnic borders had to be adjusted to the political ones. Borderlands have thus (not rarely) been zones of perpetually self-accelerating conflicts between religions, nations or civilizations. Additionally Central European borders reflect the asymmetries of their different character, both at their western and eastern edges.

Border twin towns usually appeared on the map of Central Europe much later than their equivalents in Western Europe and started integration later (especially compared to the model-case of Herzogenrath and Kerkrade). Jan Buurinsk differentiates three types of border twin towns: partitioned (a result of the division of

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3. Europeanization, multi-level governance and cross-border governance

According to Roberta Ladrech, Europeanization is a process where "EC political and economic dynamics [become a] part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making". Johan Olsen points out that Europeanization "[...] implies adapting national and subnational systems of governance to a European political center and European-wide norms". Polity, policy and politics are influenced by norms and ideas, institutional and non-institutional actors. Equipping local government with real competences based on Western patterns was a part of this process in Central Europe. It additionally corresponds with an inability of states to be responsible for all public issues. Transfers of competences and the involvement of levels other than national fill this gap. Multi-level governance is then a process of permanent negotiations that involve different territorial levels. This leads to more effective problem solving mechanisms by involving "subnational actors who can act independently on both domestic and international arenas and create transnational links".

If multi-level governance is related to the transfer of competences to the four other levels: international organizations, civil society, local government and business, a specific situation can be observed at state borders. Norval Veggeland notes that cross-border regional spaces have to be built by different institutions of territorial partnership. De-bordering (but also re-bordering) and increasing (or decreasing a previously single town by a shifting border), duplicated (a town existing on one side of a border was copied on the other) and connected (two separate towns are linked by infrastructure). The majority of the pairs in Central Europe belong (contrary to Western Europe) to the first category, however the division time varies.

A relevant change in relations between twin towns was initiated by the collapse of communism and then by the European integration process, especially with regard to de-bordering and re-bordering, as well as the process of Europeanization. Both led to new ways of governing twin towns in the form of cross-border governance.

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ing) mutual interdependencies create a necessity for cross-border governance of the territorial public sphere where all the actors can be involved (Graph 1). Cross-border governance is consequently gaining relevance in Europe.

As Tarmo Pikkner defines it, “cross-border governance capacity may be understood as a social infrastructure across the state borders which create channels for the transfer or flow of material and non-material resources”. Markus Perkmann stresses the horizontal networked structure of cross-border governance. Joachim Blatter differentiates territorial and functional governance. The former is characterized by vertical interaction lines and information flow within national units, where the border is crossed at the top of the hierarchy. The later is characterized by direct contacts between different level actors across a border. This model may be also implemented to the relations within border twin towns where the hierarchy is reduced to the set of local players.

Graph 1. Cross-border governance

Supranational level

Town in state A | BORDER | Town in state B

Supranational level

Traditional governance

NGOs

NGOs

Bussines

Bussines

Local government

Local government

Source: Author’s concept.

Enrico Gualini defines the three dimensions of cross-border government: political-economic, institutional and symbolic-cognitive. The first one is related to the process of strategic selectivity of aims. The second involves the institutional aspects of collaboration. The third deals with the creation of trans-border communities and the invention of a cross-border identity. All those three dimensions have to be analyzed from the point of view of the actors involved in its creation.

In addition to municipal authorities, the residents also need to be considered as involved in cross-border governance. Interactions between individuals contribute to the overall situation in border towns, especially with regard to the selection of aims and the issue of identity. It was assumed in the research – when identifying actors – that governance (in its territorial meaning) in a border twin town results from interactions between individual citizens and administrations, mutually influencing each other. They formulate specific postulates with regard to a town across the border. Additionally, civic institutions are a third actor in-between them, accumulating and articulating ideas, interests and social energy. However, in every border twin town pair structures are duplicated. This fact creates natural level-partners for interactions on both sides of the border (Graph 2) which reflects the functional character of the governance. In the further investigations business was deliberately excluded from considerations as it represents a non-political reality.

Consequently, cross-border governance has two dimensions. Vertically it contains three levels: administration, NGOs and individuals that interact in the process of formulating policies addressed to the partner town. Horizontally, on the other hand, the corresponding actors interact at each level. Cross-border governance in a border twin town may be top-down (by administration) or bottom-up (by individ-

Graph 2. Cross-border interaction forms in border twin towns

Administration

NGOs

Individuals

Town A

Town B

Administration

NGOs

Individuals

Town AB

Source: Author’s concept.

als) inspired, but it always requires collaboration of at least two actors from both sides of the border, representing the same level of governance.

To evaluate the opportunities and difficulties in governing a border twin town an empirical investigation is needed, where the three levels described are tested.

4. Empirical test – different cases of Central European border twin towns

Border twin towns in Central Europe represent various features that may influence the form of cross-border governance. Two variables were introduced when selecting the sample. First was the location. It was assumed that governance at the three levels mentioned will be reflected differently on internal and external EU borders. Administrations will have more instruments for close collaboration on internal borders (where de-bordering is followed by financial and institutional support enhancing collaboration), whereas external borders exhibit less room for maneuver (in accordance with the logic of re-bordering). It was also expected that the situation where partner towns are inhabited by ethnically different populations (with consequences for levels of language knowledge, cultural differences, forms of mutual contacts, etc.) will facilitate other governance possibilities than in the case of pairs that are homogeneous (the same nationality dominates on both sides) or where the populations are mixed (a large minority of one nationality lives on the other side of the border).

After searching for examples, four were selected, representing the four different combinations of the above-mentioned variables (Graph 3).

Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice on the German-Polish border is a pair representing an internal EU border with ethnically separated populations, Gorizia–Nova Gorica on the border of Italy and Slovenia has the same legal status, but has a long tradition of ethnic mixture. Terespol – Brest (Poland and Belarus) is located on an external EU border with ethnically separate populations, Narva-Ivangorod (Estonia and Russia) have ethnically homogeneous status. The first two pairs are additionally located on the western edges of Central Europe, the last two on the eastern edges. Both represent two types of asymmetric relations.

4.1. Frankfurt (Oder) – Slubice

Frankfurt (Oder) and Slubice represent a typical example of a partitioned town that appeared on the map as the result of the decision taken at the Yalta conference and the border shifts in 1945. Frankfurt (Oder) had previously been a German town located far from the political or ethnic Polish-German border. After the Oder River became the border, the eastern suburb – previously called Dammvorstadt – was renamed Slubice. This name (coming from slup – boundary-post) was to symbolically stress the early middle age Polish character of the settlement. The German population was evacuated, fled or was expelled, the province and the town itself was filled with Poles, mainly from the Polish eastern provinces (now in Ukraine and Belarus). Consequently, after 1945 the border was a new but real (in cultural, ethnic and linguistic terms) phenomenon.

The border was closed by the beginning of the 1970s (when the Yalta border was officially recognized by the Western Germany), then open for about a decade, closed again in the 1980s as a result of opposition activities in Poland, and finally re-opened at the beginning of the 1990s. Both towns were used symbolically in the 1990s by Poland and Germany to manifest the mutual reconciliation process and then progress in the European integration of Poland. Presidents, prime ministers and ministers of both states have met in the towns many times since 1989. Consequently, the border controls were also involved in the process of softening by 2007, when the border became an internal EU border and direct inspections were abolished.

Frankfurt (Oder) is inhabited by about 60,000 people, Slubice by about 18,000. The groups are ethnically separate, the number of Poles permanently living on the German side is limited, with only students (usually originating from other Polish regions and temporarily staying in the town) representing a visibly mixed group. This situation results from both historical developments and current limitations – e.g. the German transition period in labor market access for Polish citizens which was finally eliminated only in May 2011. Also economic asymmetries, characteristic for the Polish-German neighborhood, are visible there.

The level of social integration in Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice may be considered relatively low. Decades of isolation, a lack of borderland tradition and cultural and

Graph 3. Cross-border governance patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Towns ethnically separated</th>
<th>EU internal border</th>
<th>EU external border</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice</td>
<td>Terespol-Brest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorizia–Nova Gorica</td>
<td>Narva-Ivangorod</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s concept.

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language differences prevent individuals from making non-commercial contacts. As the research reveals, knowledge of the neighbor’s language is limited in Slubice and very limited in Frankfurt (Oder). Many Poles know German only on a communicative level (in practice necessary for commercial contexts of interaction), the amount of declarations of fluent language knowledge is similar to other non-border towns in Poland. Personal knowledge of Poles was declared at a level of 65% among respondents in Frankfurt (Oder) and in Germans in Slubice at 51%. Mixed families are not common either, however their number is constantly growing. Additionally, the inhabitants are sometimes against the towns’ integration initiatives initiated by the local authorities. Frankfurt’s negative referendum on a cross-border tram line seems to be one of the best examples.

As the research conducted by the author proves, despite differences in civic development in Poland and Germany (characterized respectively by low and high individual engagement), NGOs from both towns do collaborate (almost 50%, the majority of them on a regular basis). They declare that neither cultural differences nor prejudices are the main problems in mutual contacts, rather they experience difficulties mainly in obtaining and distributing information about each other. NGOs then, seem to represent the more open part of the inhabitants, aiming at collaboration and contact for better local problem solving. Some of them – collaborating as the Shutlzburg association – symbolically stress the togetherness of the towns by their names and legal forms of activity.

The most advanced collaboration can be detected between the towns’ administrations. This top-down organized governance is fuelled by the pragmatic approach of the formal structures. Together with EU financial instruments for cross-border collaboration and the positive climate between Berlin and Warsaw, local authorities have been operating closely at institutional (joint commissions, sessions, etc.), symbolic (public image of a successful, model example of Polish-German collaboration), and operational (dozens of common projects in different fields, among others education, sport, spatial planning, etc.) levels. Public space symbolism is represented by the authority-inspired European integration monuments in both towns.

Additionally the latest research shows that top-down integration is slowly contributing to individuals’ involvement in cross-border, non-commercial activities.

4.2. Gorizia-Nova Gorica

The town of Gorizia is located in a traditionally borderland area, where the influence of several states, civilizations and cultures has overlapped in the last few centuries. It was a part of the Italian-Yugoslavian/Slovenian-Austro-Hungarian/Austrian borderland with Alpine and Mediterranean influences, as well as the presence of Italian, Friulian, German, Slovene and Croatian languages and cultures. The appearance of the twin town – Nova Gorica – resulted from territorial shifts in Europe at the end of the Second World War and represents an example of both a partitioned and duplicated town. The 1947 Paris Peace Treaty divided the region, leaving the town of Gorizia on the Italian side of the border, while the eastern suburbs (with the town’s railway station) became part of Yugoslavia. The population was not forced to leave their homes, however numerous Italians decided to leave the territories now forming a part of Yugoslavia, and many settled in Gorizia. Due to the lack of an urban center on that side, a decision was made to construct a new town – Nova Gorica – that was to serve as a new center for the Yugoslavian part of the region. Consequently the urban area on both sides of the border was bisected by the state border and governed in the form of two administratively established towns.

Together with the eastern enlargement of the European Union, and then Schengen zone enlargement, the border regime separating both towns softened and finally became a part of the Schengen regulations, eliminating direct inspections and the physical existence of the now internal EU border. It is, however, important to mark that the border was also relatively open during the Cold War. To avoid the Berlin scenario the authorities in Italy and Yugoslavia made the towns the main crossing point for mutual transport and exchange of goods, also open to individuals in several agreements. After 2007 the border became a highly permeable internal EU border with the possibility of unlimited crossings in many places along the edges of both towns.

Gorizia–Nova Gorica represent border twin towns that are ethnically mixed. Almost 20% of Gorizia’s 38,000 inhabitants declare themselves Slovians, the rest are...
mainly Italians. In the interwar period (before the division) the level was about 30%. In Nova Gorica only 1% belong to the Italian minority. The number of Slovenians in Gorizia has been growing in recent years.

Contacts between the inhabitants of both towns have been very intensive and social integration levels very high, especially compared to similar settlements in Europe. According to Milan Bučno it results from two factors: First of all, the fact that the border separating the towns (and splitting the region) is a relatively new element in the history of this territory, while the population structure and distribution has not changed significantly. Second, the population is mixed and there is everyday contact in different contexts. About 80% of the towns’ inhabitants state they have family on the other side of the border, many have friends. Among the reasons for border crossings, not only commercial but also social reasons are frequently declared. Both languages are spoken in the two towns by the majority of inhabitants.

Progress in social integration is reflected in the extent of collaboration between civic organizations from both towns.

Administrative collaboration between Gorizia and Nova Gorica dates back to the 1960s, and then to the initiatives implemented after Slovenia gained independence in 1991. Joint municipal services (e.g. in the fields of water supplies, border traffic, etc.) were introduced. Already, around the eastern enlargement the level of administration-led initiatives was very high and included public services, culture, sport, transportation, etc. The project of Gorizia Nova introduced a new perspective on multi-sector integration with strong financial incentives from the EU. European subsidies have pushed both towns’ authorities to prepare a common project, however this is not the decisive factor. The governance is bottom-up organized and results first of all from a strong social base.

4.3. Terespol-Brest

The pairing of Terespol-Brest is an example that is not always classified a border twin town due to the fact that the settlements do not touch each other. Both towns were formed in the 19th century from a settlement on the Bug River in the Polish part of the Russian Empire, with Polish and Jewish inhabitants dominating. Due to the construction of a new fortress, Brest with its inhabitants was moved two kilometers eastwards, Terespol one kilometer westwards. After the Bug River became the border between Poland and the Soviet Union in 1945 the towns were politelly separated from each other. They represent, then, an example of a partitioned town.

The border regime, which was relatively liberal after the collapse of communism in Poland and dissolution of the Soviet Union, was re-hardened after the Polish accession to the Schengen zone, together with the necessity of introducing a visa regime. Visa fees together with time-consuming formalities (necessity of traveling to apply for documents in the case of Terespol citizens) additionally limited the possibilities of mutual contacts. Even before this, they were not encouraged due to poor infrastructure: lack of a crossing point for pedestrians, an hour-long train connection and the permanent traffic jam at the road terminal.

The majority of Polish inhabitants of Brest left the town in 1945 and then again in 1956. At the same time the town experienced a rapid growth of population as it became a regional center with over 300,000 inhabitants with a clearly Belarusian ethnic profile. The Poles who stayed there, merged quickly into the Belarusian/Russian/Soviet environment (although there is a lack of complex research on the identification of Poles in the region). Terespol, on the other hand, remained a small town with about 6,000 inhabitants. In the 2002 census, none of its inhabitants declared Belarusian nationality, which seems to correspond with a wider tendency of assimilation of the Belarusian population into the Polish environment.

Despite the fact that both languages are proximal and mutually understandable, contacts between Poles and Belarusians in the divided towns are limited both by time and context. Crossing the border is time consuming and expensive, and consequently does not form part of the everyday practices of the local population. The context of contacts is usually related to commercial behavior and is related to buying...
ing/selling goods and services, in which the smaller Terespol, in particular, is trying to attract consumers from Brest. Research conducted by Krzysztof Kolanowski revealed that a "majority of the inhabitants have either never, or not for many years visited the other side". Apart from the ethnic separation and impermeable border, cultural differences related to the current situation on both sides (autocracy in Belarus and Polish involvement in its democratization) have additionally resulted in mutual mistrust, also at a personal level.

Among the 11 NGOs operating in Terespol only 1 collaborates with a partner organization in Brest. Some of those from Brest have contacts with partners in other, larger Polish towns in the region.

Administrative cooperation is difficult due to the asymmetry in the size of both partners as well as the political tensions between Poland and Belarus. In 2002 a cooperation agreement was signed, but official meetings are sporadic. Cultural cooperation is visible in, for example, the participation of individuals from Terespol in Brest Days or a joint marathon race, however results are almost invisible in sector collaboration organizing the governance of everyday life. No European subsidies for cross-border cooperation are reported by either side for joint projects. Interestingly, the only visible initiative is related to the heritage of Brest fortress, which is to be used for the development of tourism.

4.4. Narva-Ivangorod

The pairing of Narva-Ivangorod represents a border town with a very long tradition. Both towns were a crossing point between Denmark, Sweden and Russia, which is represented in the architectural landscape of both towns by the two castles facing each other, and by the border bridge on both sides of the Narva River. The towns were a single urban and administrative entity in the interwar period. Together with the Soviet incorporation of Estonia border was shifted westwards, Estonia became a part of the Soviet Union, but the eastern parts of this republic were transferred to the Russian Socialist Federal Republic. The border separated the eastern suburb – Ivangorod, a new town in the RSFSR – from the town of Narva. Despite its administrative character the border was an internal Soviet one and was invisible in everyday existence. After the regaining of independence by Estonia in 1991 the border really separated the two towns, also including border controls. Estonia tried to regain control over the pre-war eastern outskirts of her territory (including

Iivangorod), however those attempts were unsuccessful. At the same time, the Russian population of Narva was looking for autonomy. Consequently, the pairing represents the example of a partitioned town.

The introduction of border controls in 1991 initiated the phase of towns’ re-bordering. Together with the eastern enlargement of the European Union, and the Schengen zone three years later, the border in the middle of the town became an external border of the EU. Its permeability decreased due to the visa regulations, which accelerated the already visible process of the towns’ separation.

Both towns are inhabited by a Russian speaking population. Among the 70,000 inhabitants of Narva they constitute 96%, and almost all of the 10,000 residents of Ivangorod. The originally dominant Estonian population in the pre-war period was replaced by Russians as a result of the population evacuation in 1944 and industrialization processes in the late 1940s and 1950s. Nowadays, both towns are ethnically Russian.

As Thomas Lundén marks, "the inhabitants of Narva can be divided into three categories of about equal size according to citizenship. One third has acquired Estonian citizenship, another third are Russian subjects, while the last third consists of those who are considered aliens. The latter are required to have a special permit which, until recently, also functioned as a valid entry permit at the boundary". According to his research, many belonging to the second and third category are not interested in having an Estonian passport due to several privileges they can obtain in Ivangorod as Russian citizens. Additionally, the identity factor plays a role. On the other hand, the third category has to obtain permits to conduct many everyday life activities, e.g. to work, establish a business, invite relatives from Russia, etc.

Russian is taught in Narva in all schools as the first language, the provision of Estonian classes is limited due to a shortage of teachers. Russian is almost exclusively spoken in both towns, Russian language media from both Russia and Estonia dominate the local market, and local media also broadcast in this language.

All those cultural and language elements create a situation of relatively close ties between individuals on both sides of the border. Family and friendship ties are close. Due to the visa regulations they are not as easy as before Estonia’s accession to the EU, and on the other hand they are strengthened by the different legal status of Narva dwellers. Several thousand regular based border crossings are noted everyday.

49 Strategia współpracy miasta Terespol z organizacjami pozarządowymi na lata 2011-2016, Terespol 2011, p. 28.
50 „Listy informacyjny miasta Terespol”, no 3, 2008.

55 Ibidem.
56 Ibidem.
the same time it is reported by some scholars that a Narvaian identity has appeared, “... which is not Russian anymore, but has not yet become Estonian either”\textsuperscript{58}. This divides a previously homogeneous community.

Civic structures are very weak in both towns, which results from the dominating patterns of political culture in post-Soviet areas.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and economic depression strongly affected both towns. This, together with the interstate relations, led to the dissolution of the previously existing functional and infrastructural ties between towns. In the early 1990s separate systems of transportation, telecommunication, electricity and heating, water supplies, sewage purification, urban planning, etc. were introduced. As Thomas Lundén points out, “even if Narva and Ivangorod form a historical unit and are forced to cooperate on some technical issues (water, cross-border traffic), their coexistence is marked by an absence of official co-operation”\textsuperscript{60}. Additionally, national politics seems to play an important role. One of the symbolic examples could be the re-erection of the Swedish Lion monument in Narva, commemorating a Russian defeat in 1700. On the other hand the European Union and OSCE are actively encouraging re-establishing collaborative links between the towns\textsuperscript{62}. In particular, the development possibilities are stressed here, pointing at the fortresses as a common heritage that can attract the attention of both inhabitants and visitors.

5. Conclusions – towards a cross-border governance model

The analysis here allows the following statement to be made: The governing of border twin towns in Central Europe depends on the EU related character of the border and the ethnic/cultural situation there. Graph 4. presents four models of cross-border governance. The geometric figures’ divisions correspond with Graph 3. Here, the wider a given level is, the more intensive, frequent and effective the collaboration is as well as its role in governance. The more narrow – the less relevant it is.

In the case of internal EU borders, institutional, symbolic and financial incentives (coming from both European and national level) enhance collaboration. This is usually used by administrative actors on both sides of the border. In the case of EU external borders, the instruments are incomparably weaker, some of the factors (especially state related) are additionally a de-motivating character. Political de-bordering (observable on those borders that gained internal EU status) is, then, a collaboration attracting-factor whereas re-bordering (visible on those borders that


\textsuperscript{60} T. Lundén, \textit{Vaige-Valka, Narva...}

\textsuperscript{61} S. Burch, D.J. Smith, \textit{Empty Spaces...}, p. 915.

\textsuperscript{62} P. Jaenniemi, A. Sergunin, \textit{When two aspire...}, pp. 17-19.

became external EU borders), whether caused by border introduction or border hardening, is a repelling-factor.

However – taking into consideration the three element character of cross-border governance – the role of individuals is also crucial. Cultural and ethnic proximity of populations creates a social pressure for integration. In ethnically separated towns this is on a relatively low level and contacts between individuals are limited to commercial contexts. In a situation of the ethnic homogeneity of both sides, or the visible presence of a minority of one of them in the partner border twin town (usually rooted in a longer tradition of coexistence), cross-border governance is based on this element as well.

Civic structures may serve as a bridge, combining individual involvement with structured activities for the common good.

Concluding, the most favorable situation for effective cross-border governance in border twin towns is one in which top-down led initiatives of administration are accompanied by the bottom-up expressed will of the inhabitants. This happens on internal EU borders with ethnically mixed/homogeneous inhabitants.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
 & EU internal border & EU external border \\
\hline
Towns ethnically separated & \includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{image1} & \includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{image2} \\
\hline
Towns ethnically mixed/homogeneous & \includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{image3} & \includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{image4} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textit{Source: Author’s concept.}

In the case of an internal border location combined with ethnic alienation of populations, governance may be still efficient as the tools the administration is equipped with (especially by the European Union) make it possible to initiate collaboration and to implement it with external financial support. This situation additionally creates contexts where individuals naturally become involved in interaction and elements of social integration appear, especially in over longer periods.

The external character of a border means that governance presents a difficulty (especially in the Central European interstate political context), however ethnic
proximity creates space for individual contacts and potential for future developments. On the other hand, political isolation has consequences for identity perception and may cause more difficulties in the future at the individual level.

The most difficult situation is represented by border twin towns on external EU borders with ethnic separation. Authorities face a challenging task with limited instruments and minimal pressure from the population.

Special attention to additional elements may be also relevant. The analyzed cases show that EU external border twin towns in Central Europe represent civilizational boundaries, in their political meaning, too. This – with regard to Central European states’ necessity of confirming their European belonging – creates their role as border defenders. Cross-border collaboration is then even more difficult. Symbolically this is illustrated by monuments confirming differences. Internal EU border twin towns are located in the same (western) civilization (also in its political meaning). Here, belonging is shown by openness (symbolically also by European monuments). Re-bordering in the east means (in its extreme form) collaboration, de-bordering in the west of the region – exemplary integration. Ethnic mixture/homogeneity influences this situation, by creating social pressure on administrations. Symbolically, whereas on the internal borders there are joint tram lines and schools that represent cross-border governance (stressing togetherness), on the external ones there are plans related to fortresses (that are still protecting and separating in their basic meanings).

As all of the pairs represent de facto different forms of divided towns, internal border pairs additionally symbolize re-integration by de-bordering whereas external borders display disintegration through re-bordering. In the first case the asymmetry should be reduced, in the second this is not necessarily so.