ID 1326 | COMPLEXITY AND ASYMMETRY WITHIN THE BORDER CITIES IN THE BASEL METROPOLITAN AREA. TOWARDS AN ANALYSIS OF RECENT SPATIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the European context, changes derived from the globalization process and those concerning cooperation and integration -intensified at the end of the Cold War- have led to an increasing border permeability in a number of cases.

Under this framework, border urban systems become contact areas, where new opportunities for cooperation and collective development arise, but also new challenges, pressures and risks.

The case of the Basel metropolitan area, where urban systems from France, Switzerland and Germany converge, is a valuable example for analysing these issues. It is a paradigm of cross-border cooperation. Nevertheless, significant asymmetries persist and new unbalanced dependencies and internal conflicts have arose. Some of the most representative projects involving transnational coordination and development, which have led in some cases to losses of complexity at the local scale, serve as an example.

Cooperation, coordination and/or exploitation of cross-border differentials (Wages, prices, costs, land availability…) might be essential for the development of new optimization solutions, but they should not reduce either the complexity or the individual capacity of the urban nuclei located on both sides of the border to face uncertainty. Thus within a context of complexity, not only the potential benefits of collaborative development must be analysed, but also its implications at the local scale.

1.1 BORDERS WITHIN A CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

In a globalized world, discussions concerning the "disappearance of the border" have multiplied in a number of fields, especially since the 1980s. Such a viewpoint contrasts with the intensification of political, social or armed conflicts throughout the planet, as well as with the understanding of borders as administrative divisions.

In the European context, the integration processes deployed from the end of the Second World War, that were intensified particularly after the end of the Cold War and that have continued up to the present, are leading to the enhancement of border permeability. The globalization process and the specific willingness of cooperation of the entities involved have contributed decisively as well (Sohn, 2014). Consequently, borders are acquiring a new significance (Groupe frontière, 2004); (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999) and new roles; but they have not disappeared. In this context, collaborative projects have proliferated (Rojo, 2010). Therefore, border regions are not necessarily peripheral disadvantaged arenas, but spaces with high potential for interaction, especially in the social and economic spheres (Van Geenhuizen and Ratti, 2001). Since the late 1970s, new spatial, organizational and relational forms have emerged, driven by global demands. Transformations in traditional mechanisms and channels of exchange and communication have accelerated. The scale of interaction is global and competitiveness has grown in importance. Border urban systems are becoming contact areas of strategic interest, especially those entities capable of taking profit of physical proximity to different urban nuclei, regarding mainly cooperation and cross-border differentials and resources.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Within this context, borders became resources: new possibilities of interaction open up. Therefore, among the many possible approaches to the study of the border, we focus on its role involving not only separation, but also relation. We work on the basis of two ideas:

- Border as a limit, a division separating two areas. It involves differentiation and, consequently, relation.
- Border as an opportunity: it implies contact between the ensembles located on both sides of it. Thus, the presence of a border involves both relation and difference; conflict and confrontation but also exchange and collaboration. We want to highlight the simultaneity, sometimes contradictory of such realities. Borders can be permeated, they can tend to soften on the functional sphere or, depending on the case-, on the physical realm, but this does not imply disappearance at the social, economic and/or administrative levels (Nel.lo, 1996).

The following sections describe a context of permeability and cooperation, but also of confluence of inequalities and unilateral interests materialized in bilateral responses. Our aim is to analyse this issues at the urban scale by deepening into the case of the Basel metropolitan area.

2 COMPLEXITY AND ASYMMETRY WITHIN THE BORDER CITIES IN THE BASEL METROPOLITAN AREA

In order to understand cross-border interaction and interdependencies, we need to observe the city as a complex system composed of communications among elements (Ruiz, 2001). It is an open system: it exchanges matter, energy and information with its environment (Fariña and Ruiz, 2002; Boccolini, 2016). Therefore, the diversity and the quality of the relations is decisive for its future development. This factor turns out to be essential in a context of border permeability: the increase of perviousness enables direct interactions among urban systems that might have evolved as peripheral spaces in previous decades, being obliged to develop and to optimize themselves in a former environment where communications were limited. New possibilities of contact open up.

Moreover, urban systems are subjected to constant change. Interactions among elements of the system itself and with those of the environment lead to processes which in turn generate new ones[1]. Consequently, not only internal differences, but also those among border regions or other systems play a crucial role in their organization and functioning. Within a framework of relatively open borders, resources of urban systems on one side of the border can be observed by those on the other side as an opportunity to satisfy its own demands. Variations in the status of the border induce new probabilities of change to the urban systems located on both sides of it.

The Basel metropolitan area, integrated by French, Swiss and German cities and municipalities, is a valuable example to analyse this issues. It is a paradigm in terms of cross-border cooperation, but also an ensemble subjected to pressures and contradiction. During the last decades, a number of specific local and supra-local demands and circumstances have led to an increase of transnational collaboration. The cooperation structures have been regularized, (Reitel, 2007) and the connectivity among the urban nuclei has been improved. Shared dynamics have intensified as well, especially those aimed at boosting collective development. In turn, the volume of cross-border travellers and workers has remained significantly high, (Driscoll and Vigier, 2011), affecting housing trends and public transport demand, among others.

Nevertheless, the main border urban systems in the three countries keep having significant asymmetries in economic, social and political conditions. Basel has traditionally been the major node considering its wealth (higher than that of its neighbouring regions) and its ability to invest it beyond its boundaries (Walther and Reitel, 2013). Consequently, both the adaptation to variations in the status of the border and the ability of each of the cities to evolve and to develop strategies within a changing context have been unequal. Permeability does not mean fully integration. On the one hand, although cross-border collaboration is not a new phenomenon, the persistence of asymmetries regarding spatial planning

[1] We consider the phenomena of change as continuous spatiotemporal processes, and not as isolated events.

instruments, boundaries and limits for decision-making and distribution of power in each case is a fact. Their ability to face uncertainty and their autonomy is highly unequal. On the other hand, projects involving cross-border coordination and being regulated by those instruments might lead to contradictions between scales, or even to loss of urban complexity if global objectives are followed to the detriment of the local. We will analyse this two issues in the following sections.

2.1 NEW INSTRUMENTS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FACED WITH COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INSTRUMENTS OF REGULATION

The area of our study has been a pioneer in the field of cross-border cooperation in Europe. Cross-border cooperation structures have expanded since the 1960s. In 1963, the Regio Basiliensis project arose, bringing together the Swiss authorities in order to pursue joint economic, political and cultural development in the Upper Rhine[1]. Two years later, the French authorities of the region of Mulhouse joined into the Regio du Haut Rhin[2]. As a result of the former, in 1971 the Conférence Tripartite Rhénane was created (Hildebrand, 1996), aimed at encouraging exchanges among the state of Baden Württemberg (Germany), the region of Alsace (France) and the Swiss cantons of Basel-Landschaft and and Basel-Stadt. It was an important first approach to this field, substituted by the Commission intergouvernementale franco-germano-suisse in 1976. Nine years later, the Freiburger Regio-Gesellschaft was founded. It would pursue the same objectives as its French and Swiss homologous developed in the sixties. Thus, even though the three countries kept having distinct planning instruments and their own economic development, the foundations of tri-national development had been built. It was not until 1990s when the main efforts in search for coordinated development took off. On the one hand, thanks to the implementation of the Interreg programs. On the other hand, with the commitment made in 1995 to reinforce cross-border cooperation in the area, which would lead a few years later to the creation of the Trinational Basel Agglomeration (ATB) and to the development of a common development strategy for the member cities and municipalities. Its main objectives were to define priority projects and the creation of the association Agglomération Trinationale de Bâle (ATB partnership) (Duvinage et al., 2009). It enabled to give a regulatory framework to the practices that had been taking place during the previous years. In 2007, the ATB would become the ETB[3] and the cooperation perimeter expanded. The guidelines of a common development strategy were set out as well. In contrast, the systems of regulation within each country maintain strong differences, which have traditionally conferred unequal power to the communes/gemeinden[4], concerning their duties and functions. Despite the fact that cooperation at the local level has existed in the area from a long time ago, flexibility and ability to adapt to a changing environment vary on each case as well.

Thus, while centralization and hierarchy have traditionally characterized the French planning system, the Swiss one is highly devolved. The Confederation has a limited legislative responsibility. It collaborates with the cantons and coordinates them. The latter decide the competences that they will delegate to the communes. In any case, the higher authorities must allow the lower ones[5] room for manoeuvre. On the other hand, in the German system significant powers are granted to the Länder (Federated States), but unlike the French case, no privileges are conceded to any city over the rest. On their part, the gemeinden have a high level of autonomy as well, keeping general competence for issues at a local scale.

The above-mentioned asymmetries have affected the relations among the border cities, especially concerning the action strategies enabled by border permeability[6]: -Firstly because the ability to anticipate and to think strategically is crucial under the described framework[7]. Hence, those nuclei with greater decision-making capacity at the local level, such as Basel-Stadt, have an advantage regarding both the

[1] Source: Regio Basiliensis.
[2] Source: Conférence du Rhin Supérieur.
[3] As described in the Statutes of the Trinational Eurodistrict, the so-called ETB is a cross-border cooperation platform of the Trinational Agglomeration of Basel. It was created in 2007 as an association of local law, registered in the Register of Associations of the Court of Instance of Huningue.
[4] The gemeinde is the smallest subnational entity in Germany, comparable to the commune in France (both terms are used in Switzerland). It is commonly translated into English as “municipality” or “township”.
[5] Art. 2 para. of the Loi fédérale sur l'aménagement du territoire du 22 juin 1978.
[6] Even if the possibility existed that the whole area was unified from an administrative viewpoint, the border would not disappear, it would just be displaced.
[7] Both to anticipate changes in the environment and to act in advance, as well as to propose collective projects aimed at achieving collective goals while satisfying individual needs.

development of collaborative projects and the adaptability to changing environments. -Secondly because the development of projects based on bi-national cooperation enables costs-sharing, but it entails longer development processes and less unilateral control. The distribution of power and the availability of resources on each case, turn out to be essential. Therefore, cross-border projects should not be analysed without considering its local effects, and the latter must be studied simultaneously on each of the urban systems that are directly affected. With all of the above in mind, we will analyse major projects in two key fields regarding the recent development of border urban systems in the Basel metropolitan area: communications and life sciences, from a viewpoint of urban complexity. Our research focuses on the 1985-2010 period[1].

2.2 BEYOND THE BORDER: COMMUNICATIONS AND LIFE SCIENCES

2.2.1 THE BASEL METROPOLITAN AREA AS A COMMUNICATIONS NODE

The Basel metropolitan area is located in a privileged environment in the space where the northern front of Switzerland converges with the boundaries of south Alsace and the Land of Baden Württemberg (fig. 1). It brings together the area where the Rhine begins to be navigable[2] and a key location along the Rhine-Alpine corridor, one of Europe's busiest freight transport routes. The convergence of these two factors, added to its function as a gateway between Europe and Switzerland, turns this area into an important communicative hub.

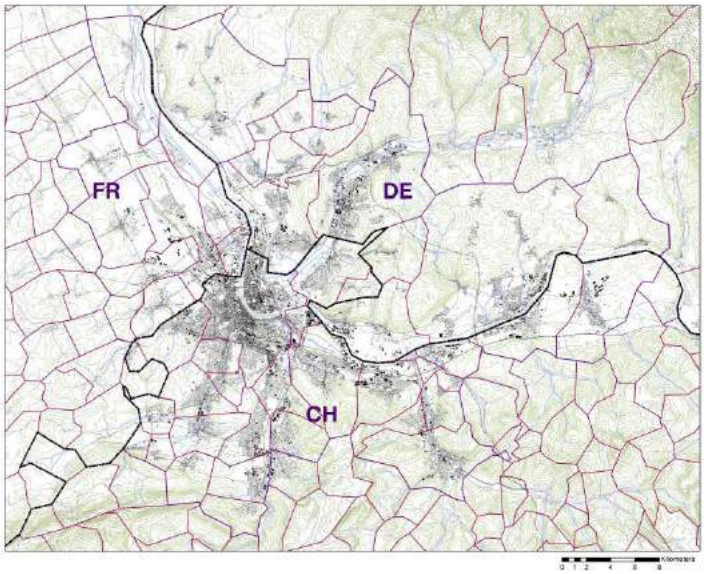

Figure 1 - Geographical and administrative framework of the studied area.
Municipal boundaries are shown in red; state boundaries in black. Source: Own elaboration.

The major city, Basel-Stadt, is settled in an area with an extension of only 37km2. It is subjected to growing pressures, increased by the boost given to "life sciences" industry in the city during the last decades. Firstly, because a multiplicity of leading companies in this field are located in Basel, creating a “pull” effect. Secondly, because this circumstance leads to additional demands (e.g. concerning land availability). On its part, the relationship with the canton of Basel-Landschaft, independent since the s. XIX (after numerous confrontations regarding distribution of power), adds an “internal border” to the already mentioned ones, at both the administrative and the physical level, and more difficulties concerning management purposes.

[1] Covering the period form the years prior to the establishment of the Schengen Agreement -with France and Germany as initial signatories- up to a recent stage, as a preamble to the new period that will start with the IBA Basel 2020.
[2] The river is navigable on a stretch of 883 km that links Basel and its delta in the North Sea.

2.2.1.1 THE CASE OF CROSS-BORDER HIGHWAYS: COMMON OBJECTIVES, UNEQUAL URBAN RESPONSES

Given this background, nodal areas regarding transport and logistics demand an increasing capacity for improvement (e.g. optimization of communication infrastructures, organization, transportation and storage capacity….). This ensemble of factors has introduced cumulative pressure over an area forced to deal simultaneously with issues concerning both global and local scales in order to solve external problems while keeping internal organization. From this angle, heterogeneous solutions have been adopted, ranging from expensive technical designs to cross-border coordination and search for opportunities beyond the border. The impact of those processes at the urban scale has been different in each case.

We will first focus on the main projects aimed at enhancing cross-border road connectivity in this area during the above-mentioned period[12]. Even though they share common objectives, the final developments are the result of individual planning approaches coordinated with those of the surrounding areas, and not of a single unified project. Thus, despite the fact that they succeed in solving common needs, we will analyse whether in any of the cases it was done at the sacrifice of urban complexity in what follows.

As stated, the Basel metropolitan area has an important location with regards to the North-South axis of the European communication network. In addition to the rail network that was built centuries ago (Linking the network in Basel with the German and the French ones), cross-border highways have been gradually developed, strengthening this axis. During the last decades, a number of approaches aimed at linking the main highways in this area have arose. The key project is the so-called Nordtangente, in Basel-City. It connects the French highway A35 with the A3 in Switzerland, and in turn with the A5 in Germany, within a spatial configuration that locates the junctions and the main linking section in an urban area on the northern front of Basel (figure 2), as we will discuss later.

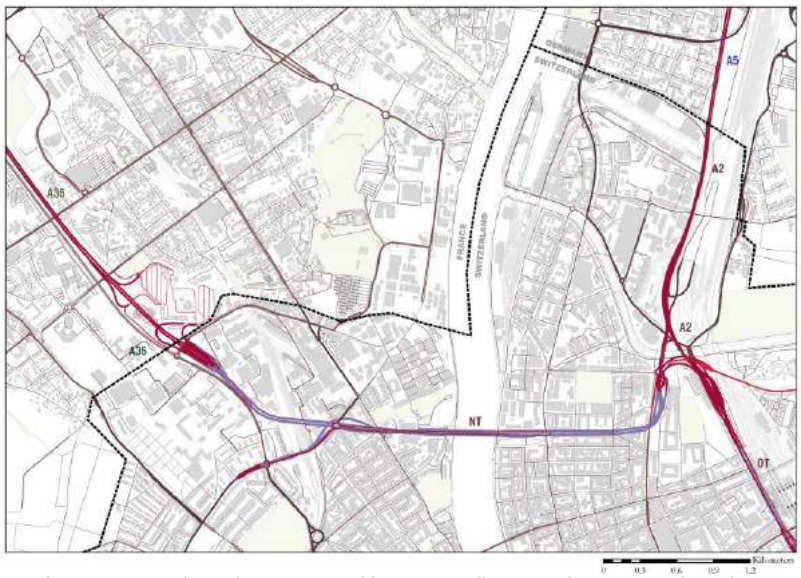

Figure 2 – Basel Nordtangente and its surroundings. Underpass road sections are shown in blue, State boundaries in black. Source: Own elaboration.

The section of the French highway, A35, linking Saint Louis (airport) and the Swiss border was opened in the late 1980s, when the German highway, A5, had already been in service for many years. It involved the duplication of the route that linked the Swiss exit of the airport with the city of Basel, but in this case as part of the French network[3]. The project was not only an axis of linear north-south connectivity. It also favoured the subsequent development of strategies targeted to increase the attractiveness of surrounding pieces of land. They were based on the general improvement of accessibility, the economic dynamics and the "pull"

[1] All of the analysed cases started before the development of the ATB/ETB, although some have been concluded a few years ago.
[2] It must be noted that dissimilarities regarding the projects presented do not necessarily emphasize the presence of the border, since the starting points, specificities of design, conditions and periods diverge, but they are valuable examples to analyse local effects of supra-local and collaborative projects.
[3] Connectivity solutions are distinct regarding network topology. The Swiss road links directly with Basel, and controls are carried out at the airport. Although it is located in France no intermediate customs points exist. The French highway, on its part, has multiple junctions. Additional customs control is required.

effect created by the leading industrial groups located in the environs. As a consequence, the degree of (inter)dependence with Basel-city was increased, as we will discuss later.

From a spatio-relational viewpoint, the ability to harmonize scales in this context was limited. The construction of the route did not create a large internal break in the local scale, since it was adapted to the structure that had been developed years ago (when the customs route linking the Euro-airport and Basel was built), but it established new rules that affected the subsequent development of surrounding space. The presence of large parking spaces related with the customs areas in the French A35 and in the German A5 respectively, serve as an example: both are located outside the Basel area, and constitute large "closed spaces" with almost no interaction with its surroundings. This latter is an important fact regarding the relation with Basel from the viewpoint of urban development. In spite of the customs giving service to both sides of the border, Saint Louis suffers the highest disruption regarding the future possibilities of improving urban continuity and activity[1]. It must be added that the spatial configuration of local networks in the border has suffered almost no variations in the analysed period. The maintenance of control-oriented structures at the local scale, where only a number of major roads go across the border while the rest are disadvantaged, generates weak and vulnerable networks. Thus, the communication with the neighbouring urban nuclei are limited, and so is the potential for new relations to emerge.

On its part, the Nordtangente project was approved in 1987, more than 50 years after the first ideas for its development came up, and after the rejection of an alternative option (Baumann, 1996). It became operational in 2008. The aim of the project, besides improving connectivity, was to separate through traffic from residential areas by building tunnels[2] and above-ground sections, and by including two levels in the Dreirosenbrücke (Dreirosen Bridge). Even though the highway would accommodate part of the local traffic as well, from a topological viewpoint unequal linking solutions were created. They involved a theoretical reduction of travel times in major roads while regaining street space for pedestrians, bicycles and public transport, but also the enhancement of the attractiveness of many surrounding areas (with an important economic component)[3]. Regardless of the specificities of design, which have been controversial[4], the solution adopted allowed to make functions compatible in a more complex way than the one presupposed for infrastructure projects of this kind. It was not only due to the separation of traffic flows, but also because it enabled to preserve the coherence of the urban fabric by keeping a high degree of connectivity at the local scale and by permitting the emergence and or maintenance of activity in the area.

However, the characteristics of the immediate environment were being transformed, and new rules regarding their development and the probability of variation were introduced. Not only the area under direct transformation was affected, but also those of the urban systems in its surroundings, which became directly connected through this specific channel.

The example illustrates the contradiction between potential and fragility in cross-border cooperation relations within a framework of asymmetrical spatial planning systems and economic, social and political conditions. In the Nordtangente project, a number of factors concerning specific economic interests and availability of resources, among others, enabled optimization at a supra-local scale without the local simplification that the introduction of channels of this kind commonly entails.

Nevertheless, projects of this kind bring on new risks for the urban system, especially within a context of poor land availability. These processes involve new developments and/or renovation of disused areas, but also the transformation of the economic conditions of the area where they are established. They may lead to potential displacement or expulsion of population and local uses and activity in the long term. It must be added that the creation of increasingly complex artificial artefacts as these ones, based to a greater or lesser extent on cooperation or bilateral or trilateral agreements implies not only growing dependence on the natural environment that they degrade, but also reciprocal dependence relations (and not necessarily balanced) among the urban nuclei involved. Since the proposed model depends on non-unilateral actions, so does its survival.

[1] Although this greater connectivity has benefited St. Louis in other ways.
[2] Grossbasel Tunnel (1432m) and Kleinbasel Tunel (1092m).
[3] In 2003, the Grand Council of Basel approved a development plan that included building and residential developments associated with the Nordtangente project.
[4] Some design issues have been publicly criticized, especially concerning street widths, considered oversized in a number of cases, and the design of public space.

These phenomena have also occurred in other fields that have been essential in the recent development of the city, such as the life sciences. Projects based on co-ordination, cooperation and/or exploitation of differentials have arose during the analysed period. In the following section we will deepen into some particular cases and their implications at the local scale.

2.2.2 BASEL AS A LIFE SCIENCES HUB

Basel-Stadt is not only a node regarding communication networks, but also life sciences, mainly due to the major role played by companies in the pharmaceutical and chemical fields since a long time. In the 1980s Basel remained an industrial city that showed signs of crisis, but that progressively began to redirect a significant part of its activity towards management and R&D. The boost given to this field from then on, derived from the confluence and the evolution of leading chemical, pharmaceutical and bio-tech companies, would turn the city and its surroundings into a hub at a supra-regional level.

The repercussions of changes concerning production, management and research activities were not only material, but also -and mainly- economic (Diener et al., 2006), social and organizational. Not only Basel, but also other nuclei in the metropolitan area such as Huningue, Saint Louis and Weil am Rhein, experienced new trends (housing, projects aimed at taking advantage of the tri-national condition, etc.). It must be added that, mainly during the 1970s and 1980s, a number of SMEs and companies were established in the nuclei surrounding Basel, attracted by the pull effect created by this latter.

However, the effects of proximity regarding the industrial establishments and the labour market have been contradictory. On the one hand, although it has served to attract new businesses to the smaller nuclei of the metropolitan area, asymmetrical dependencies have emerged, as Basel-Stadt is clearly the leading node (companies like Roche, Syngenta or Novartis have contributed decisively to its wealth). On the other hand, a number of small and medium enterprises located in those urban nuclei have experienced difficulties in competing with the conditions offered in Basel[1].

Given this framework, we will deepen into in the urban transformations carried out by large corporations like Novartis in response to the needs derived from their context. They have directly affected nuclei on both sides of the border by taking profit of cross-border coordination and differentials while locating their headquarters in Basel.

2.2.2.1 COMPLEXITY AND ASYMMETRY IN THE CASE OF THE NOVARTIS HEADQUARTERS CAMPUS

The case of the Novartis Campus Headquarters is a valuable example to analyse whether new local conflicts and dependencies arise under these circumstances, and their effects regarding the surrounding urban areas.

In 1999 a competition was proposed to transform an old industrial complex next to the Rhine into a “campus” oriented mainly to R&D and management activities. Two years later Novartis made the official commission. The object of the redesign was to transform the area of St. Johann in Basel (figure 3). The master plan included the development of buildings designed by renowned architects, the modification of Hüningerstrasse between the Huninge Customs and Kraftstrasse, (incorporating it into the Campus private area) and the relocation of one of the local customs points. With aspects of the adjacent industrial zones located in Huningue, a new linking road was designed. This latter was not only aimed at improving connectivity between areas on both sides of the border, but also at serving spaces that would later be reconverted. Besides this, a new underpass would link the parking area of Novartis in Huningue with the Campus area in Basel. As a result, the whole area turned into a continuous closed space located in two different countries.

[1] As highlighted in the 2011 PLU of Saint Louis, the areas located close to the border attracted a great number of enterprises especially during the 1970s and 1980s. Progressively, strong alternatives in the rest of Haut-Rhin and Alsace appeared, and the land prices in communes close to Basel-Stadt started to rise. Besides this, the conditions provided by Basel concerning wages (among others) induced additional difficulties. As a consequence, the amount of settlements of new enterprises in those areas has diminished considerably.

From a complexity viewpoint, the project is based on reducing the uncertainty of the environment in order to increase internal control. Although the design of Novartis Campus and the kind of activity it performs is adequate for integration at the local scale, the willingness of control prevails. The area becomes a “blind spot” that acts as a barrier to its immediate environment. As a consequence, its ability to evolve is restricted and the possibilities of interacting with the rest of the city are limited: the specific “rules” established for a definite area determine the future probability of transformation of its surroundings as well.

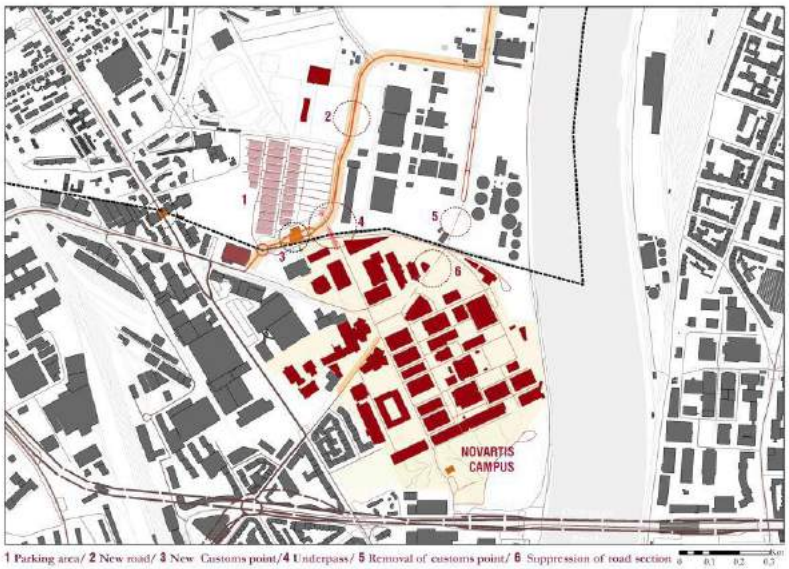

Figure 3 – Novartis Campus Headqurters and its surroundings in 2010. Source: Own elaboration.

Moreover, the persistence of borders on the physical and administrative levels has continued to affect design strategies. As stated, the ensemble has internal continuity on both sides of the border from a connectivity viewpoint, but the linkages between the two urban border nuclei are not significantly improved. It solves the needs of the campus area while generating an “external border”.

Despite all of the above, the final design in this case is not a consequence of a lack of resources. It results from a deliberate action aimed at reducing complexity to increase control. The example illustrates how projects and actions based on cooperation or exploitation of cross-border differentials do not necessarily lead to mitigate the “border effect”.

Variations of the conditions and or of the elements on the border urban system lead to unpredictable transformations and asymmetric relations with those on its surroundings, in spatial terms, as analyzed, but also economic or social. Recent changes experienced by urban nuclei like Saint Louis, account for this as well. They are no longer –or, at least, not only- based on small operations associated with its own scale and needs, but linked to the needs and demands in major urban systems of its environment:

A number of projects developed during the last decades have been based on cooperation and/or reciprocal exploitation of resources on the other side. Although these practices might lead to a positive-sum game, the relation is not symmetric: Saint Louis relies part of its development strategy on the possibilities opened by the enhancement of connectivity and the potential of physical proximity to a key node like Basel. This latter takes profit of the resources on the other side as well, but the distribution of power and the ability to anticipate and to develop strategies is different in each case, and the sharing of burdens and benefits can hardly be equitable. Both unilateral and collective solutions should not only be geared to adapt20 to changes in the environment, but to anticipate them.

3 CONCLUSIONS AND DEBATE

The settlement of a border involves differentiation, and also, consequently, relation. Thus, within a framework of accelerated globalization and increasing European integration, border urban systems have become contact arenas where relative permeability has brought new horizons for planning in a scenario of contradiction. Nevertheless, that does not mean lack of conflict and/or risk. These areas are subjected to a

high degree of uncertainty and they must often be able to deal simultaneously with local and cross-border solutions in order to evolve within a changing environment.

In the case of the urban system of Basel, subjected to significant limitations, the possibility of taking advantage of cross-border differentials and cooperation has been essential for it to face new challenges. Nevertheless, although tri-national cooperation has been present since a long time and its importance has increased in recent decades, the relations among the border urban nuclei within its metropolitan area are not symmetrical.

Collective development should not be detrimental to local development. The analysed projects illustrate that, despite the fact of sharing objectives and cooperating, new internal conflicts have arose at the local scale. The solutions adopted have led in some cases to the simplification of the urban space. They lead us to wonder to which extent those concessions made by each of the nuclei following common objectives may jeopardize their future ability to cope with uncertainty. The answer is not easy, since we can only analyse trends. In any case, it is essential to ensure a relative local degree of autonomy. Each of the urban systems must find its own “place” in the cross-border complex.

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ID 1335 | SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES TO FOSTER TERRITORIAL COHESION IN THE DANUBE REGION

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ABSTRACT: The Danube river connects many countries, different landscapes and a number of regions with various cultural identities. A transnational EU project known as the Danube Urban Brand (DANUrB) aims to create a continuous promenade alongside the Danube, one of Europe's main waterways. This aim entails a whole series of challenges for the involved stakeholders and experts. The main essential tasks from the planning point of view pertain to the development of a cross-border strategy, which requires spatial analysis of well-developed regions. The main findings are being further developed within interdisciplinary teams for interregional and international usage. To tackle these complex planning tasks, a process was developed that ensures the sustainability of the resulting strategy and its outcomes, as well as its transferability to other Danube regions. A stable timeframe and a good team of planners are vital prerequisites for successful regional planning. Clarity and attractive presentation help generate the necessary understanding and support, and create an awareness of planning issues among all the stakeholders.

KEYWORDS: complex planning problems, planning process, strategy, transferability, sustainability

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION

The population decline in rural regions is a Europe-wide phenomenon that gives rise to major challenges for sustainable usage of rural environments, especially village settlements. In many places, tourism and agriculture are the most important economic drivers that contribute to preserving the cultural landscapes and enable the population decline in rural settlements to be delayed, or ideally stopped. The course of the Danube river, rising in Germany and ending in the Black Sea, represents a collection of various landscapes and cultural identities.

The historical and political environments in the eastern and western parts resulted in the evolution of different kinds of development in the settled regions alongside the river. An EU-funded project known as the Danube Urban Brand (DANUrB) aims to try to connect these regions via a holistic strategy which similarly preserves individual cultural identities within the regions. The project focuses on the design of a continuous promenade, which requires cross-border knowledge transfer, communication and cooperation concerning spatial development strategies. Tackling this ambitious goal involves the spatial analysis of well-developed regions. On the one hand, this requires the transfer of theoretical planning methods proven in practice and the definition of essential fundamental information for their practical application. On the other hand, it calls for the design of guidelines for the digital transfer of spatially pinpointed information to