ROMANIAN BORDERS. CONFIGURATION OF LINES AND FIELDS OF FORCES

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Abstract. In order to create a better connection between the national territory and its neighbouring countries, members of the European Union, it is undoubtedly necessary to connect Romania to their infrastructures in a more efficient way. Nowadays, the trans-border crossing from Romania to its neighbouring states seems rather abrupt, while the perception of borders appears quite expressive. Therefore, the infrastructures that facilitate connections with Hungary, including the sense of organizing and use of the territory, reflect the features that are specific to the economically developed countries in Western Europe. At the same time, in the case of Romania’s relationships with other border states, the situation is more favourable. In the Southern part, the relationships with Bulgaria are blocked due to the lack of other two or three bridges over the Danube that would create an opening towards the Balkan Peninsula. Trans-border relationships with Serbia are rather weak, the crossing locations being more like no man’s lands. Despite the fact that, from a linguistic point of view, the Northern and the Eastern borders concentrate populations that speak the same language (Romanian and Ukrainian) on both sides of the frontier, trans-border relations are anaemic and rare. Establishing some lines of forces able to attain a good connection to the adjacent trans-border lines is still postponed by the domination of a Cold War mentality. Overcoming this ideological threshold could represent the first and the most significant step towards trans-border cooperation with no obstacles and barriers.

Rezumat. Frontierele româneşti: configuraţia liniilor şi câmpurilor de forţă. Pentru a crea o legătură mai bună între teritoriul naţional şi cel al ţărilor vecine, membre ale Uniunii Europene este necesar ca România să fie conectată într-un mod mai eficient la infrastructura acestora. În perioada actuală, trecerea frontierelor dinspre România înspre ţările vecine pare abrubtă iar percepţia frontierelor este evidentă. Astfel, infrastructurile care facilitează legăturile cu Ungaria, inclusiv organizarea şi utilizarea teritoriului reflectă caracteristicile specifice ţărilor dezvoltate din Europa de vest. În acelaşi timp, situaţia legăturilor României cu celelalte ţări vecine este mult mai bună. În partea de sud, relaţia cu Bulgaria este blocată datorită lipsei podurilor peste Dunăre. Relaţiile transfrontaliere cu Serbia sunt slabie, punctele de trecere fiind mai mult de tipul „no man’s land”. În ciuda faptului că, din punct de vedere lingvistic, în regiunile granitelor de nord trăiesc populaţii care vorbesc aceeaşi limbă (română şi ucraineană) de ambele părţi ale frontierii, relaţiile transfrontaliere sunt anemice şi rare. Stabilirea anumitor linii de forţă capabile de a stabiliri relaţii bune cu liniiile transfrontaliere adiacente este încă împiedicată de mentalitatea războiului rece. Trecerea acestui impediment poate reprezenta primul şi cel mai important pas pentru stabilirea unor cooperări transfrontaliere fără obstacole şi bariere.

Key words: territorial development, trans-border relations, lines of forces, fields of forces

Cuvinte cheie: dezvoltarea teritorialului, legături transfrontaliere, linii de forţă, câmpuri de forţă
Romania has an area of 239,380 km² and a population of 21.5 million inhabitants. The length of its borders is 3149.9 km, of which 649.4 km with Ukraine, 681.3 km with The Republic of Moldova, 546.4 km with Serbia and 448 km with Hungary. Romania has a 245 km long opening to the Black Sea.

From the total of 3149.9 km of borders, 1816.9 km are natural borders (57.68 %), found mainly on rivers (Danube, Prut, Tisa, others).

Today, Romania has 29 official points of border crossing, of which 9 with Hungary, 5 with Serbia, 6 with Bulgaria, 4 with The Republic of Moldova, and 3 with Ukraine. Thus there is an internal demographic "pressure" / border crossing of approximately 740,000 people (for comparison, this internal "pressure" at Hungary's border with Austria is 3 times less).

From the 29 points of border crossing, the most active are those with Hungary. In this case, some of them stand out: Nădlac-Curtici – Arad County and Bors-Episcopia Bihorului – Bihor County. With Ukraine, the most active border point is the one on the river Siret, with The Republic of Moldova: Sculeni and Ungheni, with Bulgaria – Giurgiu and with Serbia: Stamora-Moravița and Porțile de Fier I (Iron Gates I).

Starting with the decentralization of the aerial transports, several international airports have opened, amongst which Cluj-Napoca and Timișoara.

From 1989 the number of border crossing points has increased, together with increased efforts for fluidization of traffic towards the west, after Romania's integration in the EU.

As a result of the political factor, the border "strips", on either sides have been and still are areas poorly populated and with decreased economic activity, facts that has a negative impact on the general welfare of the population.

One must not omit, though, the enrichment result from illegal trans-border traffic, especially with goods, which in some periods reached a maximum (the oil embargo on Serbia and the rapid enrichment of the people living in the Danube Gorge).

The force lines of the territory are defined by axes that are concentrated along communication ways of various types (railways, roads, naval ways) and other major infrastructure components (pipes for oil and natural gas, water pipes, electrical lines etc). Along these force lines there are settlements as nodal points of energetic and territory "command" and control concentrations. In other words, the territory force lines are true communication vessels through which substance, energy and information are distributed, at various levels, hierarchical and historical, inside the territorial organism.

In the majority of cases, the plan-spatial configuration of the force lines is of tree type, with a certain hierarchy within them, in terms of volume, intensity, diversity, quality and the specifics of the their components. In certain situations, the force lines are sustained and accompanied by rivers. The impact of relief on the configuration of force lines and fields is often essential. Force fields are defined by areas upon which force lines converge or from which force lines load themselves with substance, energy and information. Every territory, no matter it's size, has force lines from the beginning or as a result of the layering of human activities with force lines.

Along and at the intersection of force lines, there are settlements of various sizes and functional configurations. The areas resulted from the intersection of force lines are generally poorly populated, with a predominant of the natural component.
Upon this "condensed" step, prefigured 30 years ago by G. Gusti (1974), it has been argued and sustained the presence and functionality of the force lines and fields in the national geographic space, in our example, over the rank 0 settlement (country capital) and the rank 1 urban centers (province metropolis).

The country capital – city of Bucharest – with almost 2.5 million inhabitants has generated convergent force lines to it from all over the country. This "general stream" has led to and sustained a development of the prime city in the detriment of the "province" (the capital's hypertrophy). The province metropolises (Cluj-Napoca, Iaşi, Timişoara, Craiova and Constanţa) are placed at more than 7 ranks behind the capital city, in total disagreement with the rank – size rule, which generates and sustains a continuing lack of territorial balance from a development point of view.

The capital city enjoys an exceptional historical inheritance, which is common all over the world, but, in the passive, the following aspects come into view:
- impressive territorial eccentricity;
- excessive climate (freezing winters with blizzards and very hot summers, with frequent droughts);
- lack of a river with a bigger flow and lack of local drinking water;
- seismically active area, which endangers the constructing effort of the last 25 years;
- and not least, the proliferation and maintaining of a parasitical demographic segment, permanently opposing the law and good behaviour.

The rank 1 cities, especially those situated near borders (Timişoara, Craiova, Iaşi) send out force lines through the border points in their proximity, their force fields being obturated and limited almost entirely by the border strips. The same situation is present in the case of smaller cities from border regions (Giurgiu-Ruse, Calafat-Vidin, , Drobeta Turnu-Severin – Cladovo, Jimbolia-Zrenjanin, Oradea-Debrecen, Arad-Szeged, Sighetul Marmăţiei-Solotvino).

The present configuration of the force lines at national level, with their excessive centering on the capital, does not permit a normal opening of the national geographic space towards the exterior, the political factor acting in all situations as a decisive force. The projecting and joining the east-west and north-south connections of the national territory represents one of the most important solutions which could lead to the much desired "territorial harmony". At the same time, there also has to be sustained a rapid development of the rank 1 cities, as opposed to the capital. There has to be a national and regional political will of balancing and reconfiguring of force lines and fields in territory, with good effects on both the national geographic space and the contiguous space from the neighbouring countries. Creating trans border complementarity functions would considerably reduce the burden of multifunctional development, especially of the big cities near the borders, both in Romania and the neighbouring countries (Timişoara - Novi Sad – Szeged – Arad – Mako; Oradea – Debrecen – Satu Mare; Iaşi – Chişinău; Suceava – Cernăuţi; Giurgiu – Ruse; Calafat – Vidin and others).

BIBLIOGRAPHY