

Research

BORDERS AND BORDER ZONES: DIFFERENCES AND EQUALITIES

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“WELCOME TO THE LARGEST TRANSNATIONAL FAIR OF THE BALKANS”: THE BORDERLI-NESS OF KADA BOAZ FAIR

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Abstract. The location of this study is the border area of the North – West Bulgaria at Bulgarian – Serbian border, near the town of Belogradchik. As a result of several times redrawing of nation state borders between Serbia (Yugoslavia) and Bulgaria during 20th century the borderland population, named Torlatsi had been separated. The Kada Boaz Fair creates a safe space and time for meeting of the separated families and friends, living at the both sides of the border. Very significant point is that the place of the Kada Boaz Fair is widely exploited of all local and governmental authorities from both sides since 2000 as a place to re-construct economic and social relations. The aim of the paper is to discuss which are the factors influencing the real openness and the making borders pervious. The paper explores the border crossing

of Bulgarian and Serbian population, living at both sides of national borders on an everyday level, while trying to explain its notions in different periods of time (Socialist's past, Yugo-embargo, EU accession of Bulgaria). The presentation answers the question how people use the political situations and politicians so that they could benefit from certain circumstances on their everyday level of life.

Keywords: border, border zones, trans-border economy, identity, Torlaks, policies

The study of the ways in which today the borders are being relocated in all aspects – physically, symbolically and conceptually becomes particularly important. In his working paper about transnationalism in European space Ali Rogers¹⁾ mentioned that in Eastern and Central Europe there is a corresponding history of borders moving across people and their communities. The first attempts for discussion of different aspects of the everyday life and the cultural interaction in the border regions appeared in the Bulgarian as well as in the foreign publications – some of them are theoretical and the others are practical^{2,3)} (Hristov, 2009; 2012, Lozanova al., 2006; Valtchinova. 2006; 2013, Agelopoulos, 2004; Вълчева & Неделчева, 2013; Марков & Пилева, 2013; Периклиева, 2013; Пилева & Попова 2013). The ways the borders show differences reflect on the forms they take in material and conceptual terms.⁴⁾

Research profile

This study aims to observe the forms of a particular part of western Bulgarian state border depending on the types of interaction that occur in direct contact with it. The study is located at the Serbian border in the village of Salash, which is about 15 km from the town of Belogradchik in North-West

Bulgaria. It is implemented in the region of Northwest Bulgaria and Northeast Serbia, where the Bulgarian-Serbian border passes, in the region in between the Bulgarian town of Belogradchik and the Serbian town of Knjazevac. A particular event provoking research interest is the renewed annual fair, held at the state border between the Bulgarian village of Salash and the Serbian village of Novo Korito. It has been renewed in 2001, immediately after the collapse of Serbian premier Slobodan Miloshević's government (2000). Trans border fairs are very typical for Bulgarian-Serbian or Bulgarian-Yugoslavian state border. They have been conducted on certain places which for many years have been appointed to be contact points on the border. One of them is Kada Boaz fair. Depending on the political relationships between both countries the fair appears and disappears during the years. It was first established in 1925. In the 30s years of the 20th century it had been implemented with small interruptions. After the Second World War the fair had been renewed for 5 years (1958 – 1962). The trans-border cooperation between Belogradchik and Knjazevac could be observed in the late 70s and during the 80s but the fair was not conducted (Krstić, 2011). So in 2001 it was renewed after almost 40 years of interruption. In this year 2014 it was advertised on Facebook as the biggest one on the Balkans. It comes to opening of the border once a year for three days in which a free zone of several hundred meters is formed so that people from both sides could freely move and share space, goods, emotions.

The main aim of the paper is to discuss the role of Kada Boaz fair in construction of different forms of borderli-ness in the particular regional and trans regional context. The main research instrument of interpretation is the concept of borderli-ness within the meaning of Sarah Green's conceptualization. In her paper, first presented in Nicosia in 2009 she developed the idea about using metaphors *lines*, *traces* and *tidemarks* concerning the borderli-ness.⁴⁾ Lines always evoke a sense of two sides and of course this could be criticized. *Traces* are porous, they leave much room for doubt and speculation,

but on the other hand they evoke a sense of time that the lines do not. Most of all, *tidemark* combines space and historical time, and envisages both space and time as being lively and contingent. Borderli-ness in that sense concerns the space *where* things have got to so far, in the multiple, unpredictable, power inflected, imagined and visceral way that everyday life tends to occur.⁴⁾ In this sense the main question of the paper is how deep and long-lasting the Kada Boaz fair's *lines, traces* and *tidemarks* are.

Methodological remark

The research started in late 2009 and it was held in the summer of 2010 too⁵⁾ since then multiple partial field observations have been conducted because of other projects related to this particular region. Life stories, in-depth interviews, participant observations and auto-reflections are the main methods I used in this ethnographic research.

Regional background

A starting research point is the area of Belogradchik border zone – located in the Northwest Bulgaria, which according to Eurostat is the poorest European region.⁶⁾ Belogradchik is a small town with high touristic potential due to its natural specifics, but very low developed due to its remoteness to the center – Sofia and its border location to the state border with Serbia, a country still pending for the EU accession. The town and surroundings are historically destined as border region. At first, the border was established as a border between the Serbian kingdom and the Ottoman Empire in 1833. Later, in 1878, it became the border between Serbia and Bulgaria and continued to be until the end of the Second World War (1944) Belogradchik is a garrison town with well-developed economy, satisfying the needs of the border troops located there during the years. The socialist modernization project (1944-1989) laid on industrialization. A factory for telephones and enterprises of the

light industry were built in Belogradchik, which had attracted the population from surrounded villages. This policy along with the mass and mostly forced, collectivization of the farmland (Гръев, 2009) led to high migration flow to the town. This is a state policy for urbanization and socialization of the border population which aim was to keep it far from the Center and at the same time to secure minimum social and economic conditions in the important border zone. In the views of the communists this was the way to provide the necessary stability near the state borders. The beginning of transition, 1989, ends this artificial economical and social model. The collapse of the enterprises left unemployed the majority of active people and pushed a new migration flow in three main directions – back to the villages (mostly retired people), inside the country to the bigger cities and abroad (people under 45). The region is characterized with high level of unemployment, depopulation and aging population (Вълчева & Неделчева, 2013). The level of poverty is relatively higher on the other side of the border in the region of Knjazevac, Northeast Serbia. Factors affecting the population there are mostly a consequences of the turbulent 1990s, when Yugoslavia fell apart followed by greater economic and comprehensive crisis as a result from the international sanctions and the conflict between Serbia and NATO.

90s have been years of significant transformations for former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. While Yugoslavia was shaken by military actions, Bulgaria turned to its road of accession in EU. The general EU politic for development of good neighborly relations between countries is the main factor influencing the local transnational relations between the border town of Belogradchik from Bulgarian side and Knjazevac from Serbian side to lay on another level. Since 2000 the Serbian region of Knjazevac became attractive and key partner in transnational relations for the Belogradchik's authorities. The place Kada Boaz is located among the two border towns and became a key place for negotiation and demonstration of good neighborhood relations

during the fair which re-emerged at 2001. Every year since 2001 every third week of July a three-day trans-border fair is held.



The fair place

Kada Boaz from the historical prospective

First border line was drawn in 1833 as a border between the Ottoman Empire and Serbian Kingdom and there were placed sentries on both sides of the Kada Boaz. From the historical point of view the place of Kada Boaz as a contact and separation point had a historical role, mostly in tensioned times. It was important during the Belogradchik uprising in 1850 and then in Serbian-Turkish war in 1876 when Russian and Serbian troops with the help of Bulgarian volunteers penetrated the Turkish territory through Kada Boaz. Later, in 1878, it became a part of the newly established state border between Serbia and Bulgaria. In 1885 during the Serbian-Bulgarian war the Serbian troops went through the thoroughfare to Belogradchik. Later in Second Balkan war in 1913 and in 1915 in First World War Bulgarian troops went through it at Timok's valley in Serbia. In 1918 the border became Yugoslavian-Bulgarian and it persists until 1991 and formally until 2006 when it became again Bul-

garian-Serbian (Krstic, 2011). In the time of First World War (1915 – 1918) and Second World War (1941 - 1944) the border at Kada Boaz practically disappeared (Krstic, 2011) and between 1944 and 1948 – it became very porous (Грѣв, 2009, p. 216). But at the entire time due to the establishment of national states and redrawing of borders during the wars in late XIX century and first half of the XX century the border periodically hardened. This process continues during the second half of the XX century because of the different socialistic concepts in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria (Krstic, 2011). In late 90s of the XX century both states still continued to stay far from each other politically – this time because of different politics concerning European Union and NATO.

Conformation and reaffirmation of the border

The Belogradchik border zone is the oldest part of the national border between Bulgaria and Serbia. Unlike the rest points of this border which were redrawn several times due to different political situations this one did not. It functions not just as political but also as an ethnical line in the region. (Грѣв, 2009, p. 213). Regarding this there is a historical fact which is little known in Belogradchik and surroundings and there is no material evident to remind it, except few photographs and a visiting card with almost sentimental value for a family. At the end of XIX century a young geologist from London came to Belogradchik to investigate the mines and its potential in the region. His name was Joseph Kenarlekdji. He bought a mine near the town, got married for a local woman and became a father of two daughters.⁷⁾ Before the signing of the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919 a delegation headed by the young English poet Henry Baerlein visited Belogradchik to check and redraw the national border. His translator was Joseph Kenarlekdji who being informed about this visit prepared himself by learning the customs and habits of local population. When Baerlein came Kenarlekdji explained to him that there are big differences be-

tween local Bulgarians and neighboring Serbs. Girls on the other side of the border – he said - wear their hair up high, while local girls wear braids down. Baerlein’s delegation was met by girls with braids down. Due to this setting the local border line was not changed and it was just reaffirmed. No word about common *turlak*⁸⁾ identity near the both sides of the border line was even mentioned. As we will see below the situation did not change during the rest of the XX century. The idea about common *turlak* identity of population in both border zones – Bulgarian and Serbian, appears during Kada Boaz fair recovery as one of the main tools for building of common transnational space for communication and relations.



Henry Baerlein (1875-1960) in Belogradchik, 1918 (photo: Joseph Kenarlekdi)

Straight line during the socialism

My first memories of this area are from the time when I was in elementary school. Once teachers took us on a trip - the aim of the trip was to visit the quarters of the border troops situated near what is nowadays the Kada Boaz Border Fair place. This happened in the early 1980s. The border guards demonstrated their well-trained dogs for the purpose of capturing the tremendous diversionist (*diversant*). Perhaps this is the time when I first heard this word “diversionist”, but years later I still did not understand its meaning. Interestingly, those responsible for capturing of the diversionists and keeping of borders, were 18 to 19 year old boys, brought from remote parts of Bulgaria (such was the practice then – regular military service was not allowed to be close to home) for the regular three years special military service. Almost in every village located near the border, there were such border troops. Today one can still see the remains of barracks where they had stayed.

The region of Belogradchik was divided into two zones, called border zone 1 and 2.⁹⁾ The border zone 2 was further from the border and free movement was allowed in it. Into the border zone 1 were the territories adjacent to the border. My grandparents' village was in the border zone 1. My parents who lived in the town of Belogradchik after they had migrated from their places of origin needed a special permission to visit my father's parents. They were given a stamp in their passports, certifying that they could go in the border zone 1 – without this stamp, they could not visit it. People outside the two separate areas, who wanted to visit one of the two border zones, needed a document, called “open list” (*otkrit list*), which described the purpose of the visit, the timing and the address of the host. Once there, people entered at a special border entry control, where soldiers guarded around, border inspections were made with special breed of dogs (called *granicharsko kuche* – *Border dog*), trained not only to capture but to smell anyone who even dared to think of getting close to the border line, where electric current passed through

the wire fences separating the two countries.

These are experiences and stories that we grew up with. Many local people from older generations still remember the time when many Bulgarian villages were divided by wires with electric fence. Constant tilled borderline, very strict prohibition regime of access, even for locals, in both border areas at the Bulgarian side had become part of the landscape in the border zone for the whole period of socialism (or at least since Marshal Tito's break with the Comintern) (Груев, 2009, p. 227).

In the terms of straight line maintaining of a Border everything on the other side seemed different and somehow – magic (Дичев, 2009, p. 35). A 70-years old informant remembers that in the school time teachers bring pupils near the border line to have a look at the Serbian side where the cultivated fields stretched. At the opposite side a former Serbian teacher from the nearest village remembers how he once took the children to see the cultivated fields of corn on Bulgarian side. Crossing the border line even by a simple glimpse looked like an act of touch to a completely different reality. And it always gives a sense that on the other side the life is much, much better (neighbours meadow is greener).

Ivaylo Dichev compares the stages of crossing the borders at the checkpoints with the process of marriage or initiation with its stages: separation-liminality-reintegration (Дичев, 2009, p. 36-37). I could add that not only crossing the checkpoint, but just staying near the border line is like staying on the no men's land where everything could happen. My generation still recognizes this feeling. The evidences of this are the words of the writer Georgy Gospodinov:

[T]he Border is not just a line or a wire net, dividing two countries. This is a strip of empty land, nobody's land, No Man's Land, although it belongs to a State. This is a land, cleared of people, expropriated,

unused. A place of a special loneliness, where you could not see another human for months (Господинов, 2013)

All this strict regime of control of accession turns crossing the border lines in a “special privilege” during the Cold War times (Дичев, 2009, p. 34). In this respect there is one specific privilege the population in the border zone of Belogradchik had in those times. Despite all measures of control, this was not possible to stop the information flows, coming from Serbian media. There were Bulgarian state erected silencers located throughout the border zone but they could not catch the signal of broadcasting technologies from Yugoslavia. Almost everything my generation designated as Western was coming through Yugoslavian radio and television channels. For example, every New Year Eve there was a three-day movie marathon, when you were not even thinking to go to sleeping, you did not get up from watching movies which were mostly American. Those times in communist Bulgaria, it was almost impossible to catch a glimpse of a Western movie on National television. In the public cinemas, they appeared briefly from time to time but hardly visible within the stream of Russian and Indian movies.

Serbian is my first foreign language. I did not really notice when I learned it during my childhood. Russian was far more difficult for me, despite the fact that we were studying it from early stages at school. Scarce commodities – from candy and chocolates to dreamed records, blue jeans and gadgets, were coming to us also from Yugoslavia through different and unknown channels. The evidences show that the Kada Boaz fair was re-opened for 4-years period from 1958 until 1962 (Krstic, 2011). The generation born in 40s of the XX century still remembers that buying something from the Kada Boaz fair was a special kind of privilege:

“To buy you a jacket from the Fair – this was a big deal!” – My father says, remembering that this was the time of his early childhood. Then the

strong political domination of USSR had banned any kind of local cooperation with Yugoslavia – the pronounced betrayer of “socialist idea”.

That was how it worked in the time of socialism. How striking the tidemarks remaining this time could be? I will give you one example from my own experience. In 2010 we made a trip with a team of students to trace the path of Bulgarian petrol smugglers during the Yugo-embargoes. We did this trip at the end of Kada Boaz fair where we have been working for three days at the open space of the fair, moving from Bulgarian to Serbian side and back without even noticing it. We started our trip from Belogradchik, through the checkpoint of Vrashka chuka (without having any problems with the checking procedure), stopping in Serbian town Zajchar and through the village of Novo Korito we headed to the Serbian side of Kada Boaz. In the base of Serbian border troops adjacent to the place of the Fair we were drinking coffee with the border guards. They took us to the border pyramid on the border line, where the day before we were walking freely under the welcoming transparent written in both languages. I was so impressed that I am just 15 km away from my home that I asked one of the border guards is not it possible just to pass through and get on the other side. The answer shocked me: “It is state felony. If we do not shoot you, Bulgarian gays have to do it!” A day before Kada Boaz place was a free space. The border line was stretched some 100 meters. It was invisible to us, who were focused on the hundred years old border line which seemed erased. A day later the line was back.

Privatization of the border – extension of the line

The Security Council of the United Nations adopted a series of resolutions, which imposed economic sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro in 1991. Resolution 713, adopted on 25.09.1991, imposed total embargo on any type of arms trade on the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia. Resolution 757 (30/05/1992) indicated a wide range of measures that restricted critical eco-

conomic ties to Serbia and Montenegro. It also prohibited any import of goods and materials produced in Serbia and Montenegro. There was also the prohibition of the exports of all products and materials for Serbia and Montenegro, with the exception of food and medicine, specifically defined by the list adopted by the Sanctions Committee. Serbia and Montenegro had been denied access to various global funds. Finally, it was forbidden any scientific and technical cooperation, as well as flights to and from the country. By resolution 787 (11.16.1992) the transport in Serbia and Montenegro without specific permission from the Sanctions Committee of the United Nations was banned. The second embargo was imposed in response to the war in Kosovo and was officially terminated by the contract from Kumanovo on 10.06.1999. It mainly concerned the import and export of fuel. Bulgaria was the first to impose a total ban on trade in fuels and on production of all the chemical industry. This act directly opened the channel for the illegal fuel trade.

So, the *Yugoembargo* brought news about the captured tanks with fuel and once again we were shown that these territories were crossed by criminals.³⁾ Years later, it became clear that actually most of the local town businesses were launched by the money earned during the *Yugoembargo* time.³⁾ The *Yugoembargo* leads to a “privatization” of the Border in the words of Ivaylo Dichev, while from a very periphery it became the most attractive territory (Дичев, 2009, p. 49 - 54). Local people well acquainted with the border territory transformed it into a contact exchange zones during the *Yugoembargo*s. Local people from Belogradchik still remember and recall the story about “Dr. Shell”¹⁰⁾ – a local doctor who was caught in the woods near Kada Boaz with full tank of petrol. So while the controlled flows were crossing through the border checkpoints other parallel flows were running through the entire border.

Not only local people benefited from this privatization. Kalin Yanakiev goes further in an interview from 2008 saying that *Yugoembargo* gave

birth to Bulgarian organized crime.¹¹⁾ At this period the border transformed from buffer zone to zone of the flow control at all stages. And this process had drawn a new map of the border territory where everybody involved into the traffic of exchanges has tried to secure own safety and control.

The place where people are hiding 3-4 liters of gasoline to be able to go back; the place where a car from Belogradchik burned full of petrol, the place where people should leave the plastic bottles with gasoline for the customs officers, the lawn in Former Yugoslavia – a temporary parking where trading took place, are some of the key points in this new mapping. The market had been located 500 meters from the checkpoint of Vrashka tchuka and had been extended to the nearby Serbian town of Zajchar. This new mapping shows the zone of total control – of both the officials and local people from both sides – Bulgarian and Serbian. How solid this trajectory was traced indicates the fact that even after the Embargoes ends, the exchanges continued on the same order of the mapped points. Just the wanted goods changed – from petrol to cigarettes, yellow and white cheese, olive oil and cosmetics. The line had bent in depth on Serbian side, reaching the Serbian towns Zajchar and Knjazevac and transforming this curving territory into a space of exchange.

The Kada Boaz border fair – split of the line

The Kada Boaz fair is now held for 13 years. Every year it transforms the border line by splitting it and opens a free space between stretched line for three days. This space is limited by two makeshift checkpoints on both sides – Bulgarian and Serbian where people, coming to the fair are permitted to enter the fair only after verification of identity cards by the border guards.

Our observation is that the first and most visible feature of the fair is its commercial nature. The second characteristic of this space is that this is a stage for local and national politicians and activists appearing. On a third place is coming the entertainment characteristic as this is a stage for many

local folk groups and popular singers of Bulgarian *chalga* music and Serbian *turbo* folk performance. And last, and most probably – least - this is a space for meetings and communication of people from both sides of the border. The fair itself seems like a new form of three-day privatization of border when all the visitors try to benefit, but the profits are directed mainly to traders and politicians.

Traders are flocking here from all over Bulgaria to offer their goods. The petty-trade merchants do know the fairs calendar and they include this in their annual agenda. Grills and beer stands are always present on the Bulgarian side but stalls with different kind of goods – from pants to basins, predominate. Plenty of stands that offer pigs on a spit and Serbian specialties on the grill with a beer from the region could be seen on the Serbian side.

In the confined space of the Fair the movement is free, but there are border troops all over and the cars are often stopped for inspections - mostly for illegal transfer of goods. For example, a few years ago, the driver of the former mayor of a Bulgarian city, was caught transferring a master box of cigarettes to the Serbian side. The local people from Belogradchik are kidding that the demand is differing every year. A few years ago, Serbs bought bags of sugar; next year it was the boom in sales of bicycles. Local Bulgarians say: “Serbs buy everything wholesale, even boxes with light bulbs. The prices are higher there few times and nevertheless for Serbs here is cheaper”. It can explain the boom in petty-trade from Bulgarian side and the lack of merchants (but cooks) in Serbian part. This is why the Kada Boaz Border fair is seen from Bulgarians primarily as an opportunity for profit in all ways. The trade of goods is active in the Bulgarian part, while the Serbs are offering mainly beer, grilled meats and sweets. This activity of trade relations on the Bulgarian part of the Border once again shows how the paradigm has been changed – if before 1989 the former Yugoslavia was West for Bulgarians, after the accession of Bulgaria to EU, Serbs start to look to Bulgaria – as West – in other

words as a place where they can receive cheap but good quality products.

The unfinished story of the local check point establishment

Since the year of 2001 each and every year a promise to open a border check point has been declared during the Kada Boaz Fair from the officials from both sides of the border. This check point is still not established. The question here is whether, if it would open, it will meet the expectations of locals, or whether it would just create a kind of bubble – as the checkpoint Iinden at Bulgarian-Greek border on the road to Drama, established in 2005¹²⁾ has done. In 2014 Kada Boaz fair was again marked by the checkpoint establishment. Turning the first sod for the new road to the planned checkpoint was done on Bulgarian side by big delegations from both states. Bulgarian one consisted of several ministers, deputies and local activists, led from Bulgarian side by Michail Mikov and the major of Belogradchik Boris Nikolov. Bulgarian socialist Michail Mikov is a former interior minister and already a former chairman of the Bulgarian parliament during the last government of Plamen Oresharski (2012-2013), who resigned after more than a year of street protests and a lot of scandalous political decisions. Mikov is seems to be the most popular political figure in this part of the Northwest Bulgaria from last years. He is a regular guest to almost all important ceremonies in the region or at least somebody reads during such events greetings signed by him. This event was not an exception. The delegation was guarded by too visible state security officers. A discreditable photo later this day appeared first on internet and after a report was shown on a TV channel. It had showed scantily dressed young woman, dancing on the table of the officials, on the sight of the apparently happy chairman of the Parliament. This apparent act of political infantilism later was commented by Mikov himself that this was just a way to show the people how close to them he is, or that nothing human is alien to him: “In such situations you have two choices – to behave like a lady form the Victori-

an times, or to be among people. I choose the latter. Let be known that politicians are also humans.” – said Mikov.¹³⁾ The ceremony of turning the first sod was planned actually as an act of demonstration that the (already former) Government devoted much attention to the development of the region.¹⁴⁾ This act was met with a sense of humour by locals, because the older generations still remembers that at the time of warming relations with Marshal Tito such turning of the first sod had been done and negotiations for opening a border checkpoint had been established at that time. An almost 70-years old man said to a young woman with a 5-year old child:

[T]his is nice that your kid saw turning the first sod ceremony in 2014. This is unforgettable moment as I still remember the first “first” turning the first sod from my childhood.

The comments under the articles on the on-line newspapers with the photograph of Mikov in the company of the young woman dancer show that his behaviour, although controversial, is more acceptable for locals. The view of long tables with local and official politicians around it on the Serbian side of the fair is something already traditional. Thus the fair constructs a space for negotiations and trans-border policy making.

Borderli-ness of Kada Boaz as traces – glimpse in the past: jump in the future

These, along with new processes of trans-local “turlak”¹⁵⁾ identity construction, are favourite topics of the local authorities from both sides and are usually used as a convenient opportunity for exchanging visits. These two negotiations periodically re-open during local elections and are included into the speeches of all candidates, regardless of which party they represent. Actually, the “turlak” identity is only a constructed political instrument.³⁾ Gradual-

ly was developed the idea that the Fair has to create a three-day space for turlak families meetings, who were divided by the state border. The family meetings should become a common practice. Every year cousins from both sides of the state border should hug each other and drink together. Actually one could hardly see few tables filled with relatives sharing what had happened to them during the year. Almost all the partners' contacts between authorities and individuals from Bulgaria and Serbia in this border territory are said that are based on the local patriotic tradition of turlak population. "We are turlaci, we are heroes" is the slogan of the local population from both sides of the border.

There is no big religious centre in this part of Bulgaria or in Serbia. The 3th Bulgarian Kingdom (1878-1946) used to be entirely secular in nature, which was heavily supplemented by the aggressive propaganda of the communists after 1945. The analysis shows that the fact that Bulgarians and Serbs are Orthodox Christians is not important for border population and, instead, it is the local ethnographic groups that emerge to be the most important unifier to be used for development of different policies. They not only have the same customs, cuisine and music, but local border population also speaks almost the same dialects of their language: "We do not need a translator"- as one local representative had said.

Both sides political mobilization of turlak identity on Kada Boaz exceeds the boundaries of the fair and reflects on the entire region. Many local initiatives under the turlak slogans had started in places that revitalized their turlak identities – the town of Chiprovci and the village of Chuprene for example organized their own annual fairs having the same slogan. This year even a "Dictionary of turlak words" was published by an author with roots from a village of Gorni Lom, situated into so-called turlak area.¹⁵⁾ This is how by splitting the line Kada Boaz becomes a common space where the "turlak" identity happens. In this sense it creates a space for an imagined community of the turlaks (Anderson, 1991).

Conclusion

The borderli-ness, discussed through Kada Boaz fair, shifts from the questions “who” and “how” to the question “where” the stories have happen and regarding who’s are the current interests to drive some processes.

Political, social, cultural, economic and global pressures on the Border change its forms. The tidemarks which these transformations leave can be with varying intensity and duration. This could be a tidemark of the ethnic boundary straightening, closed between the pages of the Joseph Kenarlekdi’s family album. Or this could be an unforgettable childhood strong sense of special “privilege” of owning something, bought on occasionally held Kada Boaz fair in the times when it was appearing. The tidemark could occur as unexpected stupor when a border guard shows the invisible border-line where you do not expect (or at least forgot that this could) to appear in the 21st century. Some tidemarks could even change the map of a particular area by curving the border in depth like during the Embargoes. The other tidemarks could leave a bad feeling that somebody still continue to “eat (or pay a tip to a dancer on the table) at our expense”. The analysis had shown that no matter what kind of shape the Border takes, it is always a subject of “privatisation”. The profits are mainly for local leaders, national politicians and traders and less for the average local people. All the actors will continue to benefit from Border until its “privatization” would be possible.

NOTES

1. <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/rogers.pdf>
2. <http://www.cas.bg/en/cas-finalized-programmes/p-from-local-to-regional-identity-the-possible-construction-of-cross-border-regional-identity-case-study-of-a-border-region-smolyan-131.html>
3. <http://prehodbg.com/sites/default/files/Embrago%20-%20Uniting%20people.%20a%20presentation%20by%20Margarita%20Karamihova%20&%20Svetlana%20Antonova.pdf>

4. http://www.eastbordnet.org/working_papers/open/documents/Green_Lines_Traces_and_Tidemarks_090414.pdf

5. I have been involved as an external expert into the Project “Transition – Voices, Faces, Memory” – Module “Memory and Borders”, a Common Project of the Historical Department of Sofia University and Anamnesis Foundation, financed by NSF, led by Dr. Mihail Gruev.

6. http://dariknews.bg/view_article.php?article_id=1058566

7. Roza-Tatyana Kenarlekdi-Tomova is his younger daughter and she told me the story of their family. She is retired teacher from local gymnasium.

8. Tourlak/torlaci – the name of the regional ethnographic group living in the surrounding villages of Belogradchik

9. [Antova_Sv_Terenni_zapiski_Gorni_Lom_2012.doc](#)

10. Named on popular fuel station chain “Shell”.

11. http://novinar.bg/news/profesor-kalin-ianakieviugoembargoto-rodibalgarskata-organizirana-prestapnost_MjU4NDszOTc=.html

12. <http://prehodbg.com/?q=book/export/html/1161>

13. http://clubz.bg/6319-mihail_mikov_otreche_da_e_dama_s_viktorsiansko_vyzpitanie

14. By words of the (already former) Minister of regional development Desislava Terzieva.

15. The ethnographic group, called turlaci, populates the entire Border region.

15. <http://bnr.bnr.bg/vidin/post/100414524>

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