

Section Spatial Planning and Development



Geographic Quest for Elaboration of Cross-border Functional Areas in Lithuanian-Polish Borderlands

Assoc. prof. dr. Eduardas Spiriajevas

Center for Social Geography and Regional Studies
of Klaipeda University/ and University of Latvia

Riga, 31-01-2020

Section Spatial Planning and Development

What a is cross-border functional zone/area?

What are the precondition for creation of cross-border functional zone/area?

What is a key role of cross-border functional zone/area?

Why the spaces between Lazdijai and Suwalki are so important for creation of cross-border functional areas for promotion of international tourism as for socio-economic development and for sharing of social and technical infrastructure?

Section Spatial Planning and Development

A functional region or zone/area is a territorial unit resulting from the organization of social and economic relations in that its boundaries do not reflect geographical particularities or historical events. It is thus a functional sub-division of territories.

Functional areas/zones are often organized around a central point which is also called a node.

The concept of functional region provides a way to examine the linkages and flows that create interdependence among people.

According to Fouberg, Murphy, and de Blij's introductory textbook on Human geography (11th edition), "a functional region is defined by a particular set of activities or interactions that occur within it."

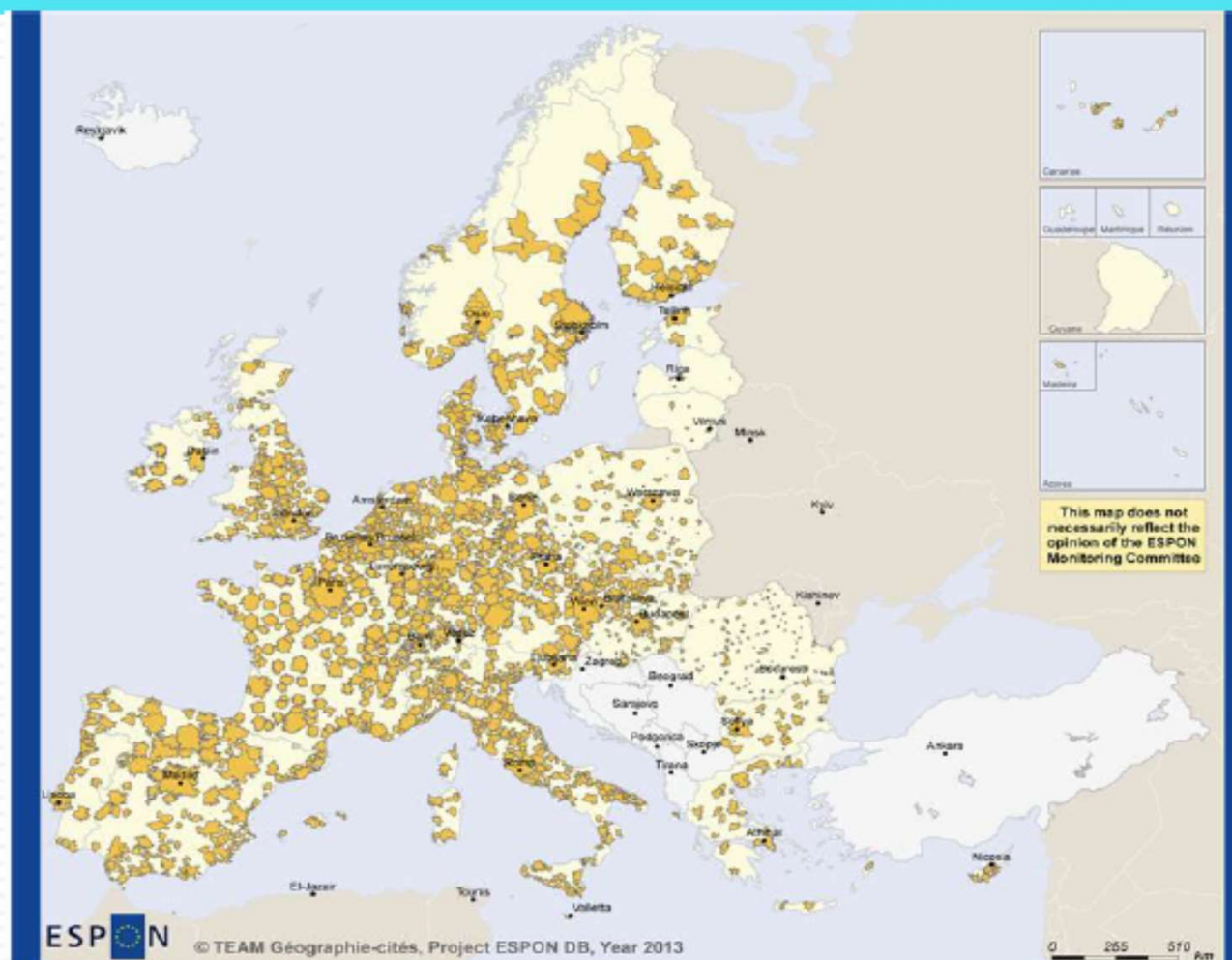
Section Spatial Planning and Development

Functional regions are defined by their organizational structure. They are also called nodal regions because they usually revolve around a focal center, such as the downtown core of an urban region or the local service area (Dunford, 2009).

The idea of the functional region captures the idea of a territory characterized by spatially related human activities (Tomaney, 2009).

Section Spatial Planning and Development

WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL REGION?



Section Spatial Planning and Development

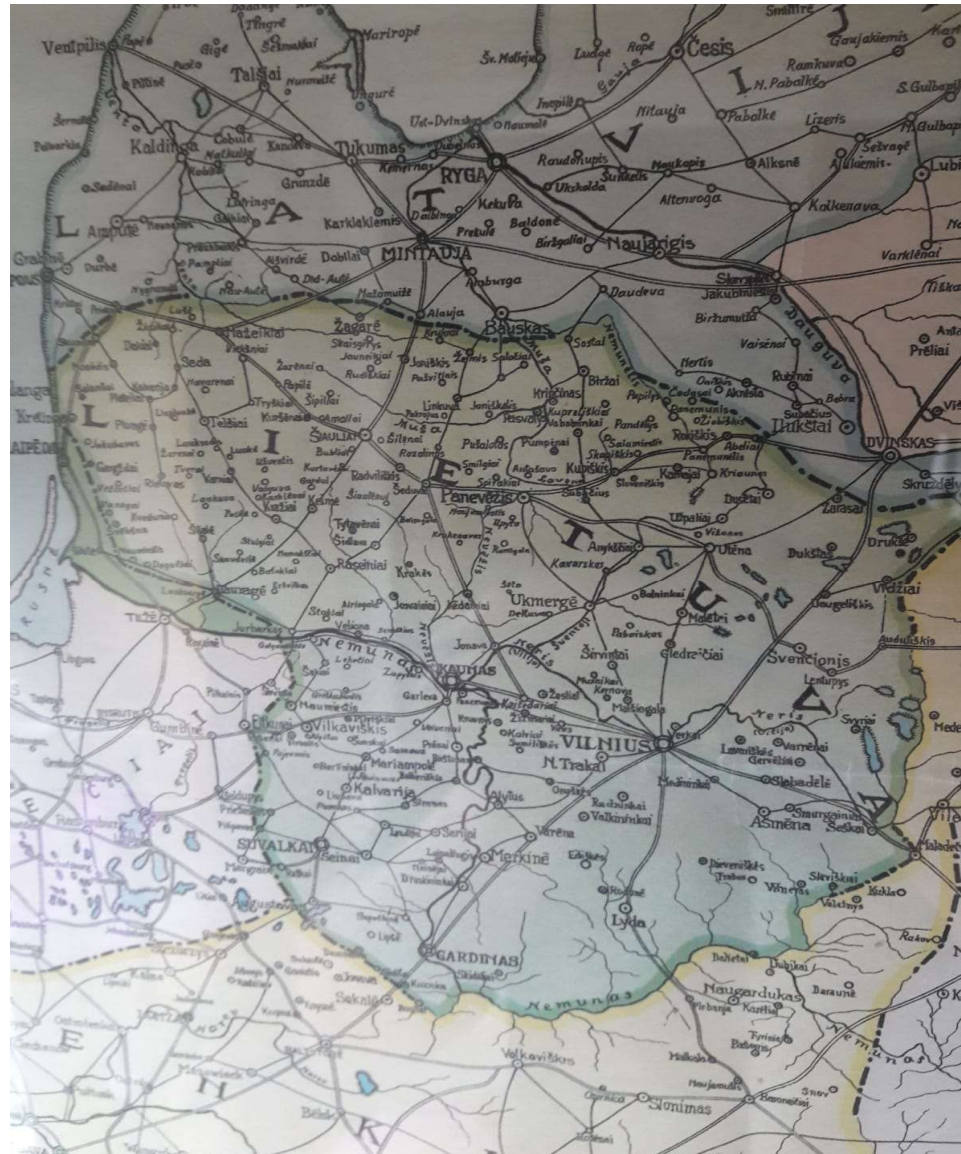
In Lithuania a definition of *Cross-border functional area* is a new narrative in national regional policy.

The issues related to cross-border functions, their distinctions and either territorial or functional disparities are not well theoretically or practically examined, but political and public awareness are accepted by many public and private regional development agents, which imply and stimulate the cooperation between neighboring regions.

Since the accession to the Schengen zone, this borderland has not any proper economic, cultural or tourism image due to low intensity of common functions, a lack of on commonly agreed values and joint initiatives on the both sides of borderland.

Since the accession to the Schengen zone until recent time, this borderland has a mental barrier for many travellers as formerly strictly controlled border area with less knowledge on natural, cultural and historical values and common heritage in this area.

Section Spatial Planning and Development



Section Spatial Planning and Development



Section Spatial Planning and Development



Section Spatial Planning and Development



Section Spatial Planning and Development



Section Spatial Planning and Development



Section Spatial Planning and Development



Border regions are commonly perceived as disadvantaged areas marked by peripheral location. Most of them are indeed suffering from the distance to political decision centers and economic core regions.

The purpose is to utilize touristic value and to revitalize socio-economic situation.

Section Spatial Planning and Development

The concept of functional region or area must have a role of facilitation of circulations between the two nodes, e.g. between Lazdijai and Sejny. The territorial determination of the nodes and enabling of the functions for intermutual coopeation, these are the key preconditions for establishment of cross-border functional area.

A narrowed model of *functional region* can be enabled on Lithuanian-Polish borderland in a form of cross-border tourism functional area, which is regarded a new concept of territorial cooperation in order to promote the functioning of tourism systems on the both side of cross-border area as an outcome of spatial interaction and strategical development

The concept ***tourism limology*** is a key determinant for creation of cross-border tourism functional area for better regional cohesion of Lithuanian-Polish borderlands.

Section Spatial Planning and Development

Excerpt...

The issues related to the development and challenges of the Polish-Lithuanian border area result both from its specific neighbourhood with countries outside the European Union (Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia in the West and Belarus in the East) and from historical, spatial and social conditions. The high level of use of co-operation incentives/support instruments available for the Polish-Lithuanian border area in the years 2014-2020 (e.g. the INTERREG 2020 Lithuania-Poland Programme), as well as bottom-up activities initiated by Polish and Lithuanian local governments indicate a great potential for further development of cross-border cooperation. The tendency to deepen Polish-Lithuanian integration is particularly visible in the cooperating municipalities:

- on the Polish side: Puńsk, Krasnopol, Szypliszki, Sejny city, Sejny, Wizajny, Giby and Rutka-Tartak
- on the Lithuanian side: Vilkaviškis, Kalvarija and Lazdijai.

Section Spatial Planning and Development

The bottom-up initiative establishing Sejny-Lazdijai and neighbouring Polish and Lithuanian municipalities as a potential cross-border functional area is a good example of strengthening cross-border cooperation, especially from the point of view of tourism development and the functions related to this sector. The proposed model of cooperation may have a very positive impact on solving common problems on both sides of the border (including employment, entrepreneurship and, indirectly, external security, i.e. the Suwałki corridor) and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of this area. It also fits very well into the next perspective of the Interreg 2027 Lithuania-Poland Programme, which considers introducing different conditions of support for beneficiaries than at present.

Section Spatial Planning and Development



Thanks for your attention!

Eduardas Spiriajevas

Center for Social Geography and Regional Studies
Klaipeda University/ and University of Latvia

borderlithuania@gmail.com