SMART Cross-border Governance - Polycentricity in Practice?

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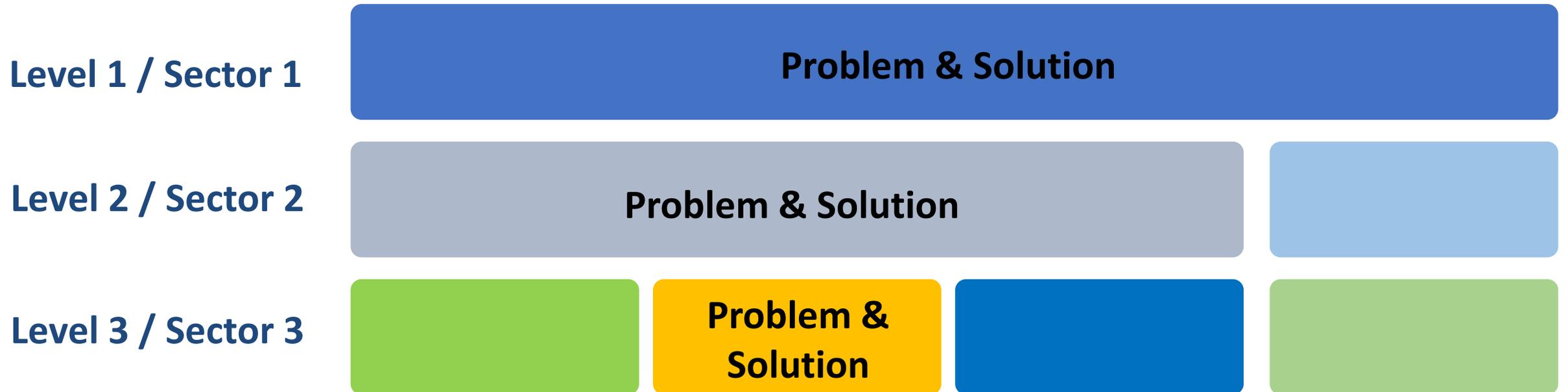Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem

Cross-scaling Problems

Growing uncertainty, complex problems, uneven development, European integration

Key challenge: finding suitable arrangement of governance to coordinate actors from diversified governmental levels and sectors

Hierarchies or networks? Within or beyond multilevel governance?

Level 1 / Sector 1	**Problem & Solution**
Level 2 / Sector 2	**Problem & Solution**
Level 3 / Sector 3	**Problem & Solution**

Source: adapted from Telle (2017) Fuzzy and soft elements in spatial dimension of regional policy (dissertation thesis)

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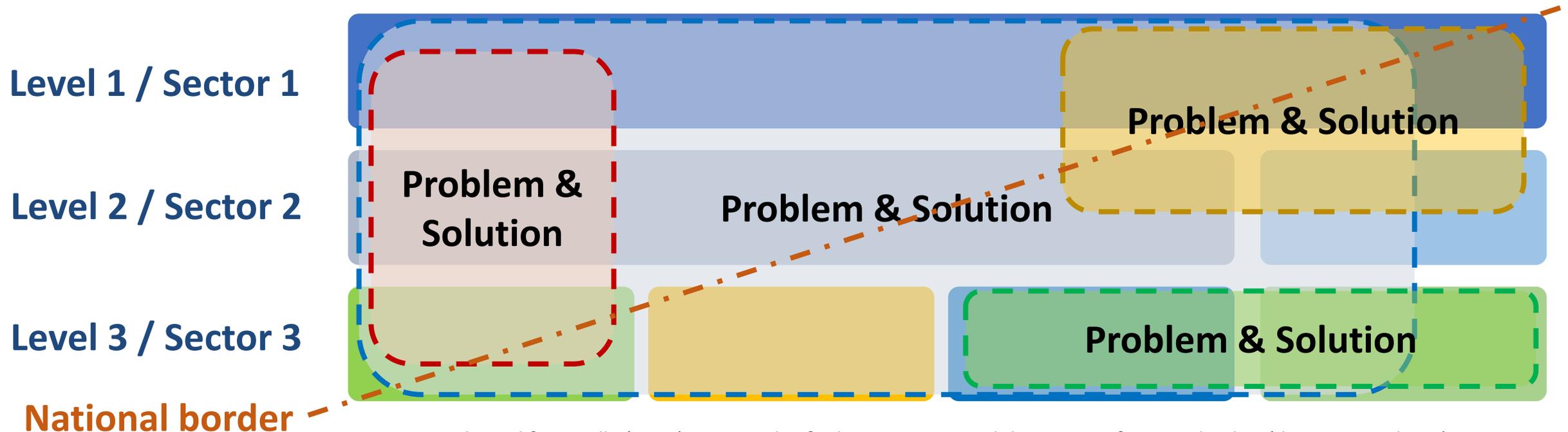Hierarchies or networks? Within or beyond multilevel governance?

Level 1 / Sector 1

Level 2 / Sector 2

Level 3 / Sector 3

National border

Problem & Solution

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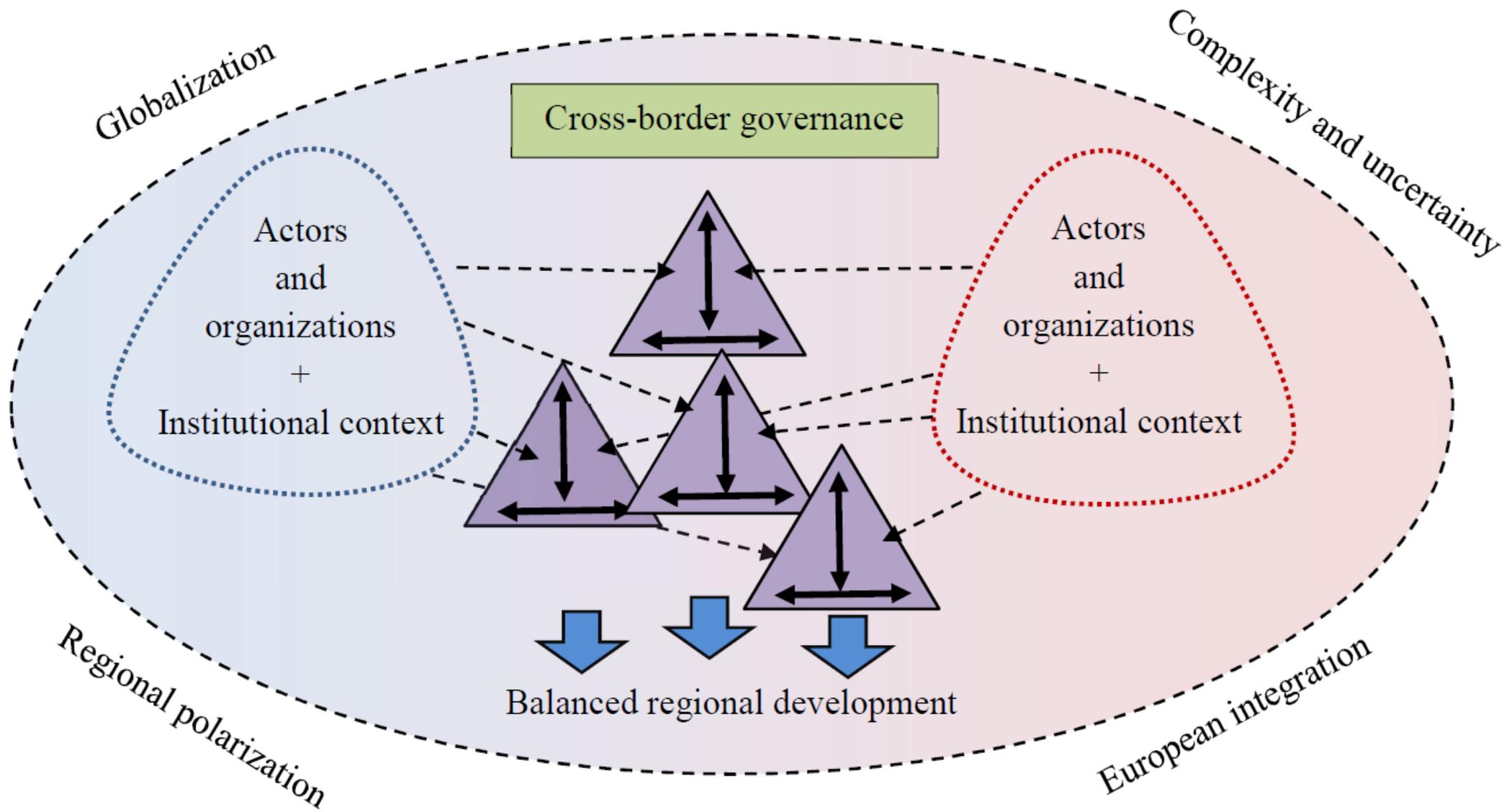
How is Cross-Border Governance Organized?

- No single formal authority or jurisdiction over the cross-border regions with decision making power covering the whole territory (Faludi, 2012; Knippschild, 2011)

- Interactions between two or more different multilevel arrangements => Multilevel governance Type I or Type II? (Hooghe and Marks, 2003; and Blatter, 2004)

- Polycentric governance:

| Self-organization | Autonomous units | Adaptive capacities | Overlapping jurisdictions | Multiple decision-making centres |

(Ostrom & Ostrom, 1999; Ostrom, 2010; Finka & Kluvánková, 2015; Jordan, et al., 2018; Tarko, 2015)

- The necessity to take into account existing informal institutions to be successful in an integration of formal rules for economic development
  - In practice EU Cohesion policy under multilevel governance results in different outcomes due to differentiated national institutional arrangements (Dabrowski, Bachtler, Bafoil, 2014)

Source: Špaček, 2018

Polycentric small-scale systems perform better (SES framework developed by E. Ostrom), but how it can work in EU cross-border governance?

Model Regions and Methodology

Three model regions:

1) Czech Republic - Free State of Saxony

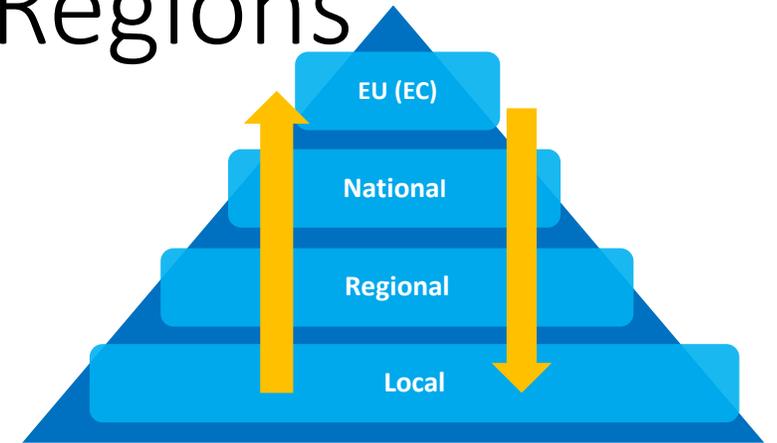2) Czech Republic - Slovak Republic

3) Slovak Republic - Austria

47 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders:
Regional/national public authorities,
mayors, NGOs, Chambers of commerce,
Euroregions, universities

Coordination Problems in Model Regions

- Main Challenges in CBC:
  - Language, Legislation, Multilevel mismatch, No common strategy, Sustainability, Different interests
- Multilevel mismatch = different administrative and political competencies at similar governmental levels
- Strong presence of central government in implementation of EU regional policies in the Czech Republic and the Slovakia
- Limited capacities at regional and local level in the Czech Republic and Slovakia
- Inability to deal with cross-scaling issues (labour market, education, social systems)
- Lack of strategic approach

Pyramid diagram: EU (EC) → National → Regional → Local

Federal Republic of Austria	Slovak Republic	Czech Republic	Federal Republic of Germany
9 provinces/states (Bundesländer)	8 regions (kraj)	14 regions (kraj)	Free State of Saxony
95 Districts	79 districts (okres)	205 municipalities with transferred powers	10 rural districts (Landkreis) + 3 urban districts (Kreisfreie Stadt)
2357 municipalities (Gemeinden)	2928 municipalities	6253 municipalities	432 municipalities

Source: Own elaboration

Towards polycentricity?

Bottom-up and polycentric governance in projects implementation

vs.

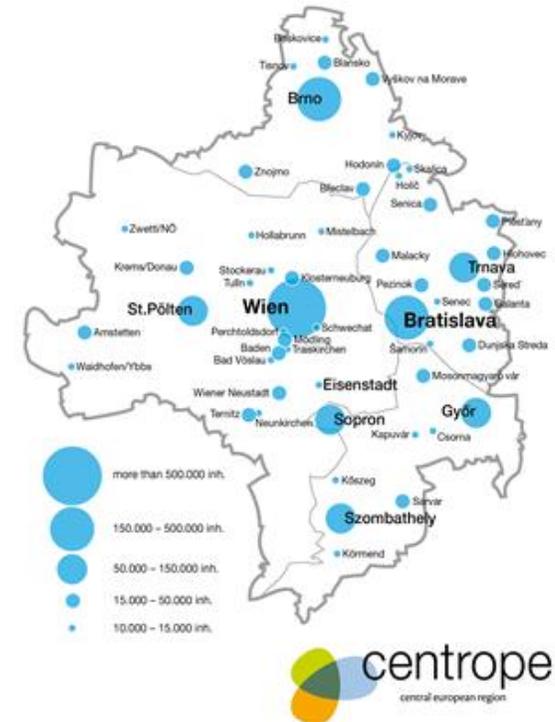**Hierarchical implementation of INTERREG programme**

SMART cross-border governance based on self-organized
cooperation initiatives to overcome hierarchy:

- Euroregions (CZ-DE, CZ-SK)

- National parks (Czech-Saxon Switzerland)

- Flood protection (Danube, Morava, Elbe)

- Alps-Carpathian bio-corridor (SK-AT)

- Metropolitan Areas (Vienna, Bratislava, Dresden)

- Initiative CENTROPE (CZ-AT-SK-HU)

- Public transport (AT-SK)

- Cross-data – spatial planning (CZ-DE)

Problem oriented, natural => Flexibility and functionality =>
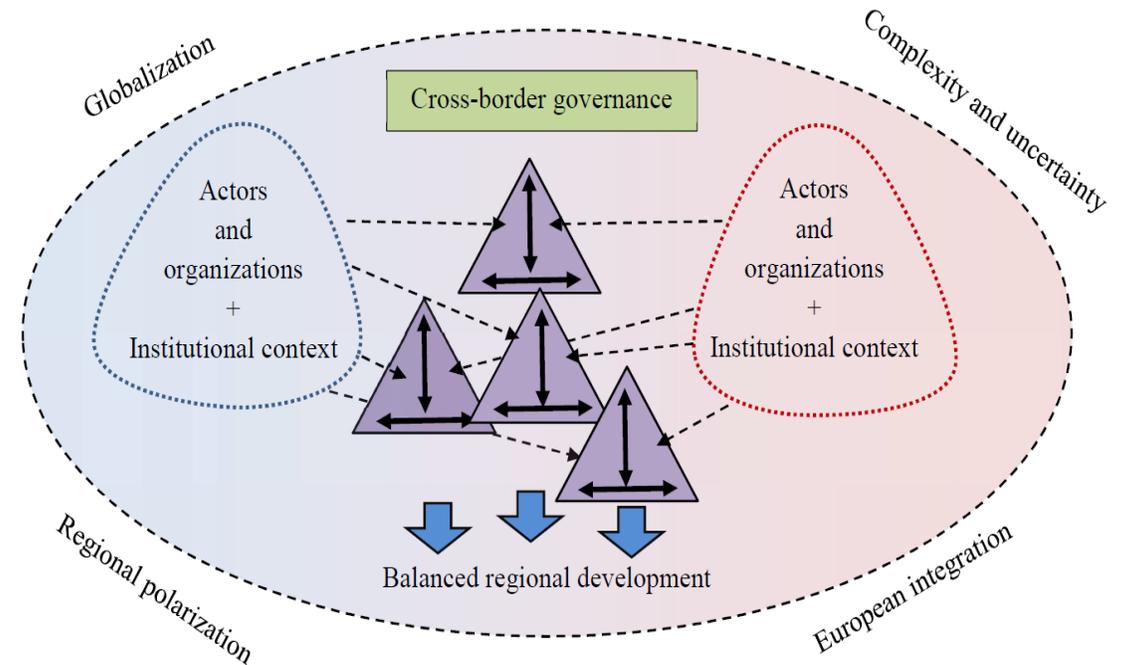   polycentricity?

SMART Cross-Border Regions: Polycentric Multilevel Governance

1) Clearly linked in some problem in the cross-border territory

2) Based on the long-term cooperation among involved actors

3) Created directly by actors from the territory and place specific (co-evolution)

4) Importance of sufficient capacities of actors involved into the partnerships (capability to learn and adapt)

Source: Own design

Polycentric networks are facing hierarchical multilevel governance: **Question of legitimacy, accountability and sustainability**

(Kluvánková, Baker, 2017)

Conclusions

- Polycentric governance is suitable concept for analysis of cross-border cooperation

- In cross-border regions geographical conditions play a minor role whereas the main challenges are represented by diversified institutional obstacles.

- There are challenges such as limited personal and financial capacities at regional and local level, coordination problems, lack of strategic thinking and legislation

- Top-down implementation of policies vs. Bottom-up, flexible and problem oriented initiatives

- Creation of suitable conditions for institutional co-evolution is needed to overcome complex cross-border issues

- It seems essential to support/implement SMART institutional approaches within cross-border governance based on institutional co-evolution in relation to improving cooperation between different levels of government and among different actors towards more balanced economic development – Polycentric governance

Thank you for your attention

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