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## New Institutionalism in Cross- Border Cooperation: The Case of Edirne-Kırklareli Border Region of Turkey

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# **New Institutionalism in Cross- Border Cooperation: The Case of Edirne- Kırklareli Border Region of Turkey**

Ervin Sezgin<sup>1</sup> and Gülden Erkut<sup>2</sup>

## **1. Introduction**

Institutions take essential roles in the organization of social life. Ranging from institutionalized informal practices to strict laws and regulations and various public and private organizations, institutions have diffused to day- to- day activities. In this way they regulate social interactions and reduce the transaction costs in the social, economic and political relations. The institutional life of a society includes the demarcation of the social field of interaction, provision of mutually recognized formal and informal rules among actors as a framework for their actions, and legitimation of actions through repeated practices and narratives.

It can be argued that the state structure itself is a multi-scalar network of institutions and institutional practices, which includes a myriad of multi-level and multi-actor relations. These relations do not flow unidirectional from the highest level of political organization, i.e. the government, to the lowest; instead in a complex network, institutions are bound with the power relations in the society. One particular aspect of institutions in the political structure is the role they take in transposing the given social/ political dynamics across different political/ administrative scales. From the supra national scale to the nation- state and to the regional and local levels this transposition ensures the reproduction of the social structure at these political/ administrative scales. However, institutions also provide a ground for intervention and change, through which the agency of individual and institutional actors intervenes and modifies the wider institutional structure. Therefore the analysis of institutions in any given social setting, enables the researcher i) to map the dynamics of interaction among actors; ii) to understand the wider social/ political and economic factors that affect this setting; and iii) to locate the points of intervention, which through interpretation and invention of methods of resistance allows institutional actors to transcend the structural constraints and to create a unique institutional mechanism.

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The dialectic relationship between the structure and agency in the context of institutions becomes observable in the field of cross border cooperation (CBC). In broad terms CBC refers to any kind of joint action among local actors across national borders. These actions can be initiated informally or without being part of a broader institutional setting, but they also can be institutionalized under specific plans and programmes as in the case of the European Union (EU) CBC programmes. In this second, the institutionalization of CBC includes the geographical definition of the action area, allocation of necessary financial resources for this purpose and specification of the appropriate types of action, the rules of action, as well as the eligibility criteria to benefit from the funding. Here the institutional setting of CBC is defined by the EU, the respective national governments where CBC takes place and local actors who are responsible for implementing the programme. While the EU and national levels are more influential in defining the legal structure of CBC, the local scale is capable to use and even transform the legal structure through interpretation of the rules in practice.

This study aims to take a closer look at the institutional structure of CBC in the Edirne-Kırklareli border region of Turkey within the context described above. This region is bordering Bulgarian border provinces of Haskovo and Burgas; and the IPA- CBC programme of the EU is operating in the region for more than a decade. CBC is not a “natural” part of the region, but an external institutional setting introduced by the EU in the region as a part of the EU conditionality during the accession process of both countries. Therefore it offers the opportunity to investigate the impacts of EU candidacy on changing institutional dynamics of the administrative/ political structure in that particular region of Turkey.

A field survey was conducted in the summer of 2013 in the Edirne- Kırklareli border region of Turkey for this research. 49 semi-structured interviews were realized, with district governors, mayors, NGO representatives and beneficiaries of CBC projects, questioning the current institutional structure of CBC in the region, as well as the role, European, national and local actors play within this structure.

The methodological approach of the study is institutional ethnography, which aims to “discover the social, rather than theorizing it, beginning with actual people, their doings, and how their doings are coordinated” to formulate an institutional regime (Smith, 2008, p. 433). This method allows the researcher to establish links between interviewed individuals and their interpretations of institutions and the institutional structure in general. This approach enables mapping a given institutional setting with respect to its constituent actors, however the

impacts of the wider social and political factors remains latent in the interpretations of institutional actors and has to be re-interpreted by the researcher. For this purpose the institutional ethnographic approach needs to be tuned to include a “thick description” (Paasi, 1996) that establishes links, this time with the social and political factors that affect the institutional setting and also with the ways of its interpretation by the institutional actors.

The paper will proceed as follows: next section evaluates the theoretical background of the study by focusing on new institutional theory as the most relevant theoretical paradigm for understanding institutionalization of CBC. Section three provides a description of the social and political factors influencing the institutional structure of CBC in the region, in order to allow a thick description. Section four identifies the institutional structure of CBC based on the field study results. Concluding remarks are in section five.

## **2. Understanding Institutional Life**

Institutions as results, means and mediums of organization of social life have found considerable interest in the academic literature. Understanding the role of institutions has been the primary concern of many disciplines including political studies, economics, urban planning and geography. The recent conceptualization of institutions widely uses the tools developed by the scholars of new institutional theory. Although this theoretical approach is fractured to several strands in a way that makes one think that there are several new institutionalisms rather than one concrete theory, in general it is accepted that the strands of new institutionalism differ from the “old” one by commonly accepting that: (1) there is a dialectical relationship between the agency of institutional actors and the structure in which they operate; (2) institutions, depending on the context, can stimulate social change as well as prevent it for the continuity of the existing social structure; and (3) institutions operate through rules, practices and narratives (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013).

Institutions shape human behaviour through three operational modes: rules, practices and narratives. Rules are written legal tools, such as laws or constitutions, which constrain human behaviour (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). Depending on the point of view, rules define the scene of action through actors themselves (Ostrom, 2011), or as constraining factors that, together with defining the scene, also limit the actions and choices of actors. Whatever their role and influence, the rules’ feature is the clear-cut definition of limits of action and the restriction of expectations under particular circumstances. However, rules are not accepted as self-evident entities; they are products of human actions and results of political struggles in

society (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991); in other words, rules are subject to contestation and change. Practices, on the other hand, are informal institutions that transmit limits and expectations in society through day-to-day interactions, traditions, established norms of behaviour and moral values. Although practices do not have the force to impose a particular type of action in the way that rules do, they operate through demonstration within the social structure. People observe common types of actions and seek social legitimacy by reproducing them through their own actions (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p. 57). Finally, narratives create symbolic meaning that justifies both rules and practices within social consciousness. Narratives “provide an account not just of how we do things around here, but also why we do things the way we do” (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p. 64). They are stories articulated by society that establish awareness about the recognized ways of actions, but they are also found in the discourses of political elites, who implant governmental policies in social consciousness through these narratives.

Putnam (1993, p.7) argues that institutions are shaped by history and are also capable to shape it. This double edged position of institutions is reflected in the continuity and change dichotomy. On the one hand institutions are accepted as the results of various social and political dynamics and therefore are identified with the dominant forces in the society. From this perspective, the role of institutions is predetermined by historical dynamics in a path dependent way. Path dependency approach assumes that institutions are bounded by social processes and historical conditions, which determine their form and function. Therefore institutions unavoidably ensure the reproduction of the given social structure by resisting to the pressures for change. On the other hand social change also occurs in the medium of institutions. Institutional change and social change are two processes that go hand in hand. From this perspective although historical dynamics are accepted as influential in the institutional structure, social change as a result of the change in the prevailing power relations in society is also accepted to be mediated by the institutions. However, this change is not accepted as a revolutionary moment but as a gradual transformation. Lowndes and Roberts (2013, p. 127) argue that institutional change occurs through many small steps taken over time, contributing to the “making and braking of path dependency”. In this sense, change is understood as a gradual process that is stimulated by both endogenous and external forces; change is the result of power struggles between and among these forces. According to them institutional change should be understood as having two basic premises. First institutional change should be analysed not in terms of how actors respond to institutional changes, but in

terms of how power struggles between them leads to intended or unintended changes in the institutional process (p. 140). Second, institutional change is not a process separate from institutional stability; rather, these two dynamics should be understood as simultaneous processes that are products of human agency (p. 130).

Another constitutive dichotomy of new institutionalism is observed in the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. The structure pole of this dichotomy, similar to the continuity arguments, relies on the path dependency approach. Path dependency is a structuralist point of view, since it argues that the social, political or economic structure, determined by the historical dynamics, is the single source of influence over institutional practices. Therefore there is no possible option for action for institutions outside the already determined structure (March and Olsen, 1984). The opposite pole seeks to establish a theory of action, where rationally behaving actors and their trust and cooperation based relationships are conceptualized as the major determinants of the institutional structure (Ostrom, 2005; North 1990).

The constraining effect of the existing structure is widely recognized by the new institutionalism theory. The classic division of powers in a parliamentary democracy, for example, constitutes an institutional setting that constrains even the most powerful actors of society by limiting or determining their actions. However, it is also recognized that agents possess various means through which they can interrupt the given institutional structure within their respective political systems (Colomy, 1998). The role of powerful economic, social and political elites – referred to as rule makers -- is of particular importance to this process. First, elites take active roles in the reproduction and legitimization of the existing institutional structure. Hence, even if the structure is deterministic; it has to rely on particular agents for operating. Second, the rest of the society, -- the rule takers -- is considered of being both “passive implementers” of rules and also “creative agents who interpret rules, assign cases to rules, and adapt or even resist rules” (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p. 105). In this sense, civil society is perceived as the institutional domain that enables the mobilization of ordinary people through institutions to assert their specific requests and desires in a given institutional setting. Third, powerful political elites (also known as principal agents) act either on behalf of the hegemonic structure they represent or join oppositional forces to form coalitions that may result in institutional change (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991, p. 6). Hence, the diffusion of hegemonic structure in society is understood as a playing field, where rather than the structure itself, the power struggles within actors determines the institutional context.

Through bargaining, coalition formation and power struggles, institutional structure is shaped by actors as much as it shapes the field of political action (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013).

These basic assumptions of new institutional theory are differently prioritized across different strands of new institutionalism. Among many, three major strands dominate this literature. Firstly rational choice institutionalism focuses on actors' behaviours in given institutional settings or in the institutions established by them. Indigenous institutional arrangements originally established for sustainable management of common pool resources such as meadows or fishery areas have been among the inspirations of this approach (Ostrom, 2005). Mostly researching trust based problems and solutions between actors and borrowing concepts from game theory, generally it is argued, that actors' behaviours are rational and rational behaviour optimizes the use of resources. The major role of institutions from this perspective is reducing transaction costs between actors. For North (1990) the role of institutions is to reduce transaction costs in social and economic interactions by avoiding uncertainty and reducing risks in social relations, especially those arising from trust problems. Hence institutions are the "rules of the game" that "reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life" (North, 1990, p. 4). Rational choice institutionalism does not directly oppose to the constraining effect of the structure, however researchers of this strand have not put it into equation and have focused mostly on the agency side.

The second strand, historical institutionalism resides at the opposite side of the spectrum. Historical institutionalism is related to the long-term evolution of institutions in a wider context. Instead of focusing on individuals or organizations as rational choice and sociological institutionalisms do, the historical institutionalist approach investigates the wider institutional structure (i.e. the nation state or the world system) and its long term, historical dynamics (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). The term "path dependence" takes a key role in explaining the historical institutionalist approach. Path dependence argument presumes that when policymakers choose a particular path; the aggregate impact of actions taken in the aftermath produces a snowball effect, which is difficult to roll back or alter in terms of direction. Consequently, a "powerful cycle of self-reinforcing activity" is created that strongly influences the decisions of actors within institutions (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013, p. 39). However, the intentional change or transformation of institutions and institutional structure is not accepted as totally impossible. Institutional change can and does occur throughout revolutionary moments of history, in which the "periods of continuity [are] punctuated by 'critical junctures', i.e., moments when substantial institutional change takes place thereby

creating a ‘branching point’ from which historical development moves onto a new path” (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p.942).

Finally, sociological institutionalism presumes that behaviours of actors are context-driven; in other words, social structures (e.g. cultural conventions, norms and cognitive frames of reference) determine not only the options and choices of actors, but also actors’ ways of thinking and perceiving the world. Hence individuals’ actions are not shaped by their own decisions taken independently to reach their desired ends, but are dependent on the prevailing social context (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). The context in which institutional actions take place will not be the same across space and time. Therefore, opposing to historical institutionalism, sociological institutionalism argues that an actor’s choices related to the same subject will vary greatly under different circumstances, which depend on the social structure in play (Immergut, 1998).

Although these three strands differ in their approaches to the main aspects of new institutionalism theory, they commonly accept that institutions operate through rules, practices and narratives. They also commonly problematize structure- agency and continuity-change dichotomies and seek to establish a dialectical understanding of these problematics (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). The new institutional theory and especially its three main strands provide a wide array of perspectives for analysing and understanding above-mentioned institutional dynamics. Although these three strands rely on theoretical backgrounds that often contradict with each other; their combined use grasps the diversity and complexity of institutional structures more accurately than using a single approach and excluding the remaining perspectives.

### **3. The context of the study**

The social and political context of CBC in the Edirne- Kırklareli border region is influenced by two major global dynamics and their reflections on national scale. The first dynamic is the Europeanization process, or speaking in broader terms, the EU community- Turkey interaction. The history of Europeanization of Turkey is as long as the history of the Turkish republic itself. The ‘project’ of westernization was seeded with the establishment of the republic by making a strategic choice in favour of the alignment with the western countries, but not the socialist bloc (Dulupçu, 2005). This alignment has resulted with close ties with European countries, institutionalized with the Ankara Agreement in 1963 that has made Turkey a member of the European Economic Community. Since then, bilateral relations



between the European Community (later the EU) have intensified, reaching their zenith with Turkey's accession to the customs union in 1996 and gaining official candidacy status in 2005 (Keleş, 1995).

The EU candidacy status has brought forward several obligations on Turkish side as a part of the EU conditionality. Ranging from agriculture and fisheries policies to free circulation of goods, labour and services, under 18 chapters these obligations have triggered a considerable change in the state structure of Turkey. Two effects of the EU conditionality have considerable impacts in the institutionalization of CBC in Turkey. The first one is observed in the attempts for transformation of the administrative structure of Turkey. Most remarkably observed in the 2004 dated Draft Law on the Fundamental Principles of Public Administration, but also in the Municipal Law, Law on Metropolitan Municipalities and latest amendments to this last law, the administrative transformation was justified with a rhetoric of efficiency in providing services, and devolution of government to the closest level to citizens in accordance to the principle of subsidiarity, which is promoted in the European Charter of Local Self Government.

Regional policies are a second field for observation of the EU conditionality. Although regions in Turkey are not accepted as an administrative tier in government, in the past decade they have been institutionalized for the purpose of regional development. The establishment of the EU originated NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) division of regions and assignment of a Regional Development Agency for each NUTS II level region have institutionalized the NUTS II level regions as the units for regional development. This process was backed by the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National 5 Years Development Plans that had set their priority as making necessary structural transformation for EU accession.

Accompanied with the large EU funding made available under the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA) the main impact of this transformation on regional scale in Turkey was observed in the intensified use of tailor made programmes for regional development. Cross border cooperation has been integrated to this process as a part of the IPA. The regional development agencies in Turkey have adopted a similar approach to the EU instruments, which basically operates with the following procedures: development of priorities, establishment of programmes for implementation of these priorities, announcement of grant schemes for the programmes, call for projects and funding selected ones. Having been introduced both by the EU and the RDA's to the regions, these procedures have mobilized the

local societies for the use of the funding newly made available for them by writing and managing projects.

This approach also corresponds to the second aspect of political transformation in Turkey. Starting from 2000s with the 8<sup>th</sup> 5 Years National Development Plan, state subsidized and controlled regional development approach has been renounced in favour of a new regionalist approach. This latter mainly relies on the mobilization of endogenous resources in one region, and competition with other regions across the country and world for regional development. With the arguments of efficiency and subsidiarity, this new regionalist approach is interwoven with the EU accession process and its conditionality.

This context made CBC possible in border regions by providing a rationale for its realization and establishing its legal structure as defined in the EU and national law and regulations. The rationale can briefly be summarized with the endogenous development approach that necessitated the use of any possible resource (including CBC) in the regions and the increasing tendency toward using partial programmes and projects for this purpose. The legal framework, on the other hand has its roots in the wide ranging implications of the EU conditionality on Turkey, including the transformation of the administrative structure and especially the transformation of regional policies.

#### **4. The institutionalization of CBC in Edirne- Kırklareli border region**

Based on a field research conducted in the summer of 2013 at the north-western border region (Edirne- Kırklareli provinces) of Turkey, this study performs a new institutional analysis for evaluating the major institutional dynamics of cross- border cooperation in the region. For this purpose, various components of the institutional structure of cross- border cooperation are analysed with respect to the three major strands of new institutional theory. The analysis uses the differing theoretical backgrounds of the three strands of new institutionalism to develop a comprehensive understanding of the institutional structure of cross- border cooperation in the region and place it within the wider social/ political structure as well as within the local context. For this purpose the results of the analyses are brought together and discussed in relation to the structure and agency dichotomy. This theoretical conceptualization allows the researcher to find a common ground among the three new institutionalist strands and to use the analysis for establishing a coherent picture of the institutional structure of cross- border cooperation in Edirne- Kırklareli border region.

The context briefly defined in the previous chapter, from a historical institutionalist lens, illustrates the structural dynamics that have resulted with the emergence of CBC in the region. Two particular implications of this structure are of particular importance for CBC.

The first one is welfare state substitution. In the course of globalization the Keynesian welfare state is argued to be replaced by a Schumpeterian workfare state. In terms of state policies this implies that the central state controlled wealth redistribution (reallocation of wealth through taxation and social policies) were abandoned in favour of individual competition with minimum state intervention (Harvey, 1989 and 2005). The implications of this transformation on regions was conceptualised under the new regionalism theory (MacLeod, 2009; Dulupçu, 2005; Keating, 2003, Rodriguez- Pose, 2013), where rather than a balanced development approach, interregional competition and reliance to endogenous resources for development was favoured. The new regionalist transformation of the regional policies in Turkey have resulted with the similar paradigm shift (Dulupçu, 2004; Bayırbağ, 2013). Accompanied with the reduced central state investments, the new paradigm has forced regional authorities to search for substitutes of these investments.

During the research it was observed that although some of the political elites, as well as civil society representatives remain reluctant to CBC, interpreting it as an intervention to the nation state's sovereignty, most of them feel the necessity to use it as a substitution of the decreasing central state investments. As an illustrative example, a mayor, who was preparing to write his new project on using solar energy for street lightening was predicting that in few years the central government will not allocate budgeted for municipalities for this purpose and something has to be done from now.

Quite contrastingly to the new regionalist paradigm, the strong tutelage state tradition relying on devolution of government instead of decentralization has prevailed (Aksu Çam, 2013; Eraydın, 2000) as the main framework for public administration. In relation to CBC, this latter assigns a gate keeping role to the central state, which is the second implication of structural dynamics on CBC.

The gate keeping role can briefly be defined as implying a selection process before and during project application process. This selective porosity is mainly done through regulations and narratives. Concerning the legal field, the major tool for selection is the regulations that forbid organizations owing social insurance and tax debts to the state to apply for CBC funding. This regulation automatically excludes several institutions, mainly small scale NGO's and

municipalities, which due limited budgets hardly reach an equilibrium between their incomes and payments. A similar barrier is also erected by the EU regulations, which allow payments only after the completion of tendering. Practically speaking, this means that an organization has to pay beforehand for a project related cost, and then wait for reimbursement for several months. Again, for organizations operating with very low budgets it becomes impossible to implement CBC projects. The language of the projects (English) and the project writing process itself, which requires specialized knowledge, are among other institutional barriers that are hard to overcome in the given local context, where human capital capable of writing and managing such projects is very limited. The central state is also influential on its local organizations, such as public schools and several local unions for service provision. The project proposals of these organizations have to be approved by the local authorities before application.

The gate keeping role is also performed through narratives, which allow potential project applicants to know their limits. Although it is not officially stated, it is well known in the region that candidates who choose Burgas Municipality of Bulgaria as the project partner will be rejected. The reason is the decision of the municipal council of Burgas to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide, an issue that has been rejected strongly by Turkey in the international arena.

From a sociological institutionalist lens, such factors or the gate keeping role of the central state in general represents a major institutional barrier in front of institutionalization of CBC. It is a structural factor that limits the distribution of CBC funds to a small circle, comprising of financially powerful and politically “correct” organizations. This, results with a vicious circle where a limited number of organizations continuously produce CBC projects and others are systematically excluded from the process (Sezgin and Erkut, 2014). Hence the social structure, dominated by a strong central state at the local level, defines the characteristics of actors and projects by implying a selective porosity process.

Although several structural factors are influential in defining the context of CBC in the region, day to day practices, informal networks and power relations within society, i.e. the institutional practices of CBC are as much influential in the institutionalization process of CBC. The institutionalized practices of CBC are the “arena” where the institutional framework of CBC is constructed with the agency and power relations of local society, including political and economic elites as well as ordinary people.

The most important function of the practical aspect of CBC in the region is observed in the several ways actors have found to by-pass the structural constraints imposed by the central state and the EU, briefly stated above. Through by-passing practices, public organizations (schools, local branches of ministries, service provision unions etc.), municipalities and NGO's are jointly constructing the institutional structure of CBC in the region. Providing some examples of these practices will be illustrative for understanding the institutionalization process.

Public high schools and the provincial branches of Turkish Ministry of Education are among the most active project applicants. The major reason for this is their use of English teachers for project writing and management. English teachers in the region have become one of the most significant human capital resources, not only because of their knowledge of the project language, but also because of their longstanding experience with EU programmes in the field of student exchange. In the lack of skilled labour for CBC in the region, teachers have emerged as the most practical solution.

As mentioned previously, public institutions and municipalities owing debt to the state or not having temporary budget to be allocated for CBC were legally discriminated from CBC. Despite these legal constraints municipalities and public organizations are among the leading project beneficiaries in the region, thanks to an informal strategy used for bypassing these hurdles: intermediary organizations. These organizations are used either to transfer the necessary budget for tendering to public organizations or to replace the municipalities that are in debt to the state and apply for projects in their name. Unions for Delivering Services to Villages, Foundations for Social Solidarity, Provincial Special Administrations, Schools' Families Unions, and Municipal Unions are among these types of intermediaries. They appear as the beneficiary name of the project, but in fact the project is developed by a shadow institution, one that is technically not allowed to participate.

These law-bypassing practices come with their consequences. In the case of municipalities, municipal unions can apply in the name of two municipalities at most, since this is the limit of projects that a single organization can be granted. Municipal unions usually stay in the control of the municipality that is having the presidency of the union for a particular period; hence preferences tend to favour those municipalities. In the case of public organizations, there are no constraints limiting participation, but a temporary budget for project funding has to be found within a supportive organization. Although informal solutions make it possible for

public institutions such as schools to participate in CBC, they also bind them to the personal decisions and connections of the governors as the top authorities who issue these permissions. Again, personal connections with governors are in practice, which can be used as a source of power over these institutions. Concerning the public organizations, this is the part where selective porosity of the state is practically implied.

CBC practices in public organizations become a part of the bureaucracy instead of voluntary actions. Usually, top managers of public institutions order their staff to prepare CBC projects. These managers are also ordered by their managers and so forth, onto the highest level. The main reason for such pressure stems from competition between Edirne and Kırklareli in terms of having the largest number of project contracts. Consequently the number of the projects, not their social value, is more important, resulting in low attention paid by the employees to the projects themselves. However, it also identifies the strong commitment of central state institutions to CBC. The attention paid by the highest officials of provinces, the governors, makes CBC a part of central state policies.

Finally, although political elites are among the most influential actors in CBC because of the political power and the resources they hold, they are not the only actors that affect the institutionalization of CBC. A considerable number of civil servants, municipality officials and NGO workers are highly influential within CBC practices at the regional level. They are the individuals whose names come immediately to the minds of local people when they seek help or advice for CBC due to their experience, position and willingness to help. They have contributed to the preparation of several projects and the promotion of CBC within the region. Although they are not as necessary as the political elites for its proliferation, without their efforts CBC would not achieve its current level of recognition in the region. Indeed, either by inventing practices of bypassing or by supporting those NGO's who want to participate to CBC but do not have the capacity; they play crucial roles for the institutionalization of CBC. The literature refers to them as "institutional entrepreneurs".

Institutional entrepreneurs are those individuals or groups that take on leadership roles in the process of institutional transformation (Colomy, 1998; Perkmann, 2002). Although their expectations from and interests in institutional transformation are of particular importance to their mobilization, they do not necessarily have to gain a direct profit from their entrepreneurial activity. Lowndes and Roberts (2013, p. 174) argue that in a highly contested and unreliable environment, the design or redesign of institutions emerges as an intentional

activity of institutional entrepreneurs who foresee ongoing transformation and prepare/propose reforms through building coalitions and managing conflicts between opposing actors. Although they never manage to fully satisfy interested parties, they facilitate a transformation of the existing institutional structure by focusing on the common interests of conflicting parties. For Colomy (1998), institutional entrepreneurs represent the form of human agency that is the most capable of transforming institutional structures.

As a result, the most significant denominator of institutionalized practices of CBC emerges as the impact of particular individuals in the society. These can be either political elites or the “institutional entrepreneurs” mentioned above.

## **5. Conclusion**

The institutionalization process of CBC in Edirne- Kırklareli border region is influenced by several factors. Among them, welfare state substitution, the gate keeping role of the state, strong dependence on individuals and the practices of bypassing structural constraints are of significant importance.

Welfare state substitution and the gate keeping role of the state are among the structural factors that have been influencing the institutionalization of CBC. The historical institutionalist approach would interpret welfare state substitution as the historical condition that has caused CBC. Together with the two major historical dynamics taking place in Turkey, the process of EU candidacy; and the shift from Keynesian welfare redistributive regional policies to new regionalist policies, this historical condition unavoidably ends with a project based development approach, where actors prepare projects and compete for funding and each of these projects partially contributes to regional development. Also in the course of globalization, with the increasing porosity of national borders and the integrative capacity of the EU between nations, cross border interactions are also made available for the implementation of these projects. From this point of view, CBC is not a special case, nor an exception, but a part of a global transformation process.

Depending on historical and social contexts, CBC takes different shapes and its impacts vary across countries. Although the gate keeping role of the state is also supported by the EU in order to prevent corruption, how the central state intervenes to CBC is still strongly dependent on the context of the particular country. Hence, state intervention to CBC emerges as one of the most important structural dynamics in the institutionalization of CBC; and to understand

state intervention and the gate keeping role of the state, a sociological institutionalist lens becomes more explanatory. In the Turkish case, the strong tutelage state tradition, and the organization of state structure to dominate the local scale are the structural factors that are influential in shaping the institutional structure of CBC by introducing several constrains. Any practical aspect of CBC is then organized with relation to these constrains.

Gate keeping role of the state and welfare state substitution are related to the legal aspect of the institutionalization process of CBC. However it is the field of day to day practices, where these laws and legislations are interpreted and modified. Therefore, the institutionalization of CBC is constructed at this practical field through the agency of local actors. In the case of CBC in Edirne- Kırklareli border region of Turkey these practices are by large shaped by a number of persons, who either have the duty of promoting CBC or are voluntarily involved in as they see CBC as a unique opportunity for improving quality of life in the region. Their major role is to overcome the human capital difficulties by providing help for project preparation. Practices of bypassing structural constrains are the second major aspect of institutionalization of CBC in the region. Through these practices not only the existing networks and power relations are transferred (or transposed) to CBC, but also the way to adapt to the changing structural context (the EU accession and new regionalism) is paved.

The institutionalized practices in this context play a crucial role in circling out the structure and agency dialectic and understand the institutionalization of CBC in the region. The agency of political elites and institutional entrepreneurs while on the one hand enables CBC to spread across the region despite various constrains introduced by the central government and the EU; it also serves for the imposition of the given social structure and historical dynamics in this emerging policy field. This dual role of agency contributes to the dialectical transformation of the society in the border region with continuous interaction between structural factors and the innovative methods in their implementation.

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