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INTEGRATION WITHOUT JOINING?

NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS AT THE FINNISH-RUSSIAN BORDER

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Abstract

The Finnish-Russian border is one of the oldest dividing lines on the European continent, but also the most stable and peaceful new border the EU has been sharing with Russia since 1995. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, it became both a site and an instrument of increased cross-border interaction and institutional innovation, as illustrated by the establishment of Euregio Karelia in 2000. The paper recalls the historical background of good-neighbourhood in the Finnish-Russian / Soviet borderlands and calls on constructivist IR theory to elaborate a model for analysing the factors, actors and mechanisms that contributed to the partial integration of this frontier. With Russian regions adjacent to the EU / Finnish border participating in the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation contributed to the growing regionalisation of the EU-Russia "strategic partnership". The paper addresses the challenging conceptual and political issues posed by this trend towards an "integration without joining" at the EU's external border.

1. Introduction

> "Under the contradictory impact of globalisation, regionalism and nationalism, the importance of borders is both declining and increasing – but above all it is changing." (Møller, 2000:1)

Changes in the functions performed by borders have occurred on all five continents over the past fifty years. Above all, it is in Europe that the transformative effect of borders on the "borderlands milieu"[1] and the quality of inter-relations between adjacent polities (be they states, regions or trans-regional settings) has aroused the most interesting debates among scholars. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, new borders have been drawn in Europe as a consequence of the Soviet Union's collapse. Simultaneously, the EU's internal borders are gradually being erased, while external ones are being displaced eastwards and reinforced as a consequence of Schengen enlargement. Paradoxically, these processes lead to Europeanisation gaining ground beyond the formal borders of EU member states, but also to a "*re*-quest for certainty, identity and security in a territorial sense" (Berg & van Houtum, 2003: 1), a claim usually met by erecting stronger (though not necessarily physically-embedded) borders.

Finland's accession to the EU on January 1st, 1995 radically changed the functional and symbolic meanings of its 1300 km-long border with Russia. It triggered a "leap forward" in cross-border cooperation (CBC) and contacts with non-state actors of the Russian border regions. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the conditions of peaceful transition at the first of the EU's land borders with Russia[2] and to state whether EU policies are and will be able to foster what I call "integration without joining". In other words, my objective is to state whether or not CBC can favour the partial integration of North-West Russian borderlands into EU-led dynamics of integration, without the Russian Federation (RF) joining the EU in a foreseeable future and in ways that would benefit all the actors involved.

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[1] The concept of "borderlands milieu" was developed by Oscar Martinez (1996: 8) in reference to the systemic characteristics of a territory cut across by an international border. In this paper, I refer to "borderlands" in this zonal / biospheric (ecological) sense.

[2] In May 2004, Russia and the EU acquired four more land borders – with Estonia (290 km), Latvia (217 km), Lithuania (227 km) and Poland (206 km) – these last two EU member states border Russia at the sole level of the Kaliningrad enclave/exclave.

The uniqueness of this first EU-Russia border also derives from that it is one where a subject of the RF enjoying republican status, Karelia, is involved in CBC with a non-CIS country. Together with three border Unions of Communities of Eastern Finland, the Republic of Karelia established a Euro-region in February 2000. "Euregio Karelia" is the institutional realisation of "the EU-way" of covering a decade-long experience of cross-border interaction that is rooted in the philosophy and praxis of good-neighbourliness so characteristic of Finnish-Soviet relations. Apart from this 733 km segment of the Russian-Finnish border that runs along the republic of Karelia, the Russian borderlands comprise the Northeastern part of the Leningrad oblast', neighbouring Southern Finland on a territory that was once in history an integrated "natural economic space" - in Ohmae's sense (Ohmae, 1995) - the Karelian isthmus.

In this paper I analyse the level of integration reached at the Finnish/Russian border in a "zonal", that is to say a non-linear and meso-level perspective. This methodological posture was formalised by the so-called "new geography school", in line with the research agenda set by Jean Gottmann (Gottmann, 1952: 121) and French critical/post-structuralist geographers. The interest of considering state borders in terms of "thick spaces" of interaction (borderlands, frontiers) rather than dividing "boundaries" (borderlines in the strict sense) is that it takes away the supposedly imprescriptible sacred aura relating sovereignty and territorial boundedness (Guichonnet & Raffestin, 1974). It allows to consider them for what they are – zones of separation and contact, i.e. "zones of transition" (Prescott, 1978) and therefore archetypes of "interface territories" in a Rokkanian sense (Rokkan, 1980). In the post-Westphalian international system, also argued to be "post-territorial" by some (Ruggie, 1993) and "post-international" by others (Rosenau, 1997), a zonal approach seems pertinent for capturing the driving forces behind trends such as "de-territorialisation" (Castells, 1996) and "debordering" (Joenniemi, 1998). These neologisms were coined to assess that, if borders are institutions whose meaning change in time and space depending on the use made of them by agents[3], then statist borders seem to have a faculty to be "moved" or "re-translated" in space due to the multiplication of transnational flows and the knitting of CBC networks. This approach allows me to include *border cities* into the analysis[4], including a constitutional unit of the RF standing within the realm of the Finnish-Russian borderland: a major harbour, scientific and industrial centre of Northern Europe, located less than 400 km from Helsinki - the city of St. Petersburg, ex-imperial capital (1712-1918), now Russia's second "city of federal importance" and the administrative centre of the North-West Federal District.[5] St. Petersburg is a "border container" in its own right because it hosts an international airport, a stock exchange, foreign consulates, the headquarters of international organisations, etc. Taking urban centres into account is useful for analysing processes of de- and re-territorialisation because global flows that cut across borders *need* urban nodes.

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[3] The hypothesis that borders are socially-constructed institutions-in-the-making, shaped by (usually conflicting) discourses of power and identity, is the cornerstone of a post-structuralist and constructivist lens in the contemporary study of borders, one best incarnated by Anssi Paasi (1998: 72) and adopted by the post-modernist school within IR theory (Albert, 1998: 57).

> "Inevitably located in national territories, border cities are the organizational and institutional locations for some of the major dynamics of denationalization. While such processes […] are institutional and not geographic, the geographic location of many of the strategic institutions – for instance, financial markets and financial services firms – means that these processes are embedded geographically" (Sassen, 2000:373).

Growth in trade and people-to-people exchanges, and the laying out of new communication networks around the Baltic Sea rim are elements that led to important structural changes in the Finnish-Russian border's daily functioning during the "transition" (post-Soviet) phase of the border's "life cycle" - to use a formula coined by Baud & Schendel (1997). Questions arise as to whether this interdependence is a positive-sum game for all players. Whither good-neighbourhood between states when their external borderlands are increasingly integrated into outer spheres of influence (North-West Russia border regions in relation to the enlarged EU) and when new security obstacles to border-crossing or mutual confidence are being erected - due to Russia's neighbours joining the Schengen space (as did Finland) or NATO (as did the Baltic States and Poland in 2004)?

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[4] Literature on the border-city nexus (Reitel & al., 2002) distinguishes a) cities that are cut in two by a borderline or river ("pairs of split border communities", cf. Schultz, 2002); b) cities leaning against a border in a < 50 km perimeter, e.g. Lappeenranta (Finland), Vyborg (Leningrad oblast'), Sortavala (Republic of Karelia), Apatity (Murmansk oblast'); c) bigger cities located further away in the hinterland (Joensuu, Rovaniemi, Petrozavodsk).

[5] The RF comprises 89 federated units ("subjects"). In the spring of 2000, President Putin introduced an intermediary, prefectoral-type level of governance between the "centre" (the federal level) and the subjects of the RF – seven Federal Districts. The North-West Federal District (NWFD) includes the republics of Karelia and Komi, St. Petersburg city, the oblasti of Kaliningrad, Murmansk, Leningrad, Pskov, Novgorod, Vologda and Arkhangel'sk (the latter containing an eleventh subject of the NWFD, the Nenets autonomous okrug).

Oscar Martinez (1996) proposed to categorise borders in four ideal-types of "borderlands interaction". It is a useful nomenclature for cross-country comparison and a paradigm for characterising the different life stages of a border's history and suggesting prospects for its future evolution.

> *alienation*: in alienated borderlands "day-to-day, routine cross-boundary interchange is practically non-existent owing to extremely unfavourable conditions [caused by] warfare, political disputes, intense nationalism, ideological animosity, religious enmity, cultural dissimilarity and ethnic rivalry" (Martinez, 1996: 2). In the Finnish – Russian case, such alienation dominated during the inter-War period (Jutikkala, 1978).
>
> *co-existence*: when nation-states manage to reduce conflicts at their border, i.e. once major problems have been solved (eg. territorial claims retracted, warfare removed from the border zone) or when exogenous factors make minimal stability prevail (bipolar order), borderlands in Martinez's taxonomy are said to be "co-existent". This border interaction feature is typical of Finland's "bounded sovereignty" position during the Cold War (1947-1991), pejoratively called a period of "Finlandization".
>
> *interdependence*: this model characterises borderlands' situation "when a border region in one nation is symbiotically linked with the border region of an adjoining country" (Martinez, 1996: 4). Such interdependence is conditioned by the prevalence of a relatively stable international context, confidence-building measures and a potential to stimulate economic growth through cross-border flows. These trends have been at work since 1991.
>
> *integration*: the notion of "integrated borderlands" refers to a stage and "depth" of interaction when "neighbouring nations eliminate all major political differences between them and existing barriers to trade and human movement across their mutual boundary" (Martinez, 1996: 5). The basic rationale and precondition for this open-border scenario is that political and economic structures in the two neighbouring national systems (or at least their border regions) have come to a synergetic level of steady convergence. They "absorb" the border barrier in their cooperation and "dissolve" it by laying down bridges that permit a merging in of specific sectors of social activity and political life. Such borderlands' integration typically accompanies the establishment of confederal arrangements between

> neighbour states and one finds it as well in the "deepening" of the EU's integration and the concomitant blurring of borders between its member states. If integrated, borderlands have the opportunity to become new growth centres and, eventually, action units (e.g.: Euroregions).

The Finnish-Russian borderlands cannot reasonably apply for this fourth, "integrative" ideal-type of interaction, since Russia is not in a position, nor willing, to join the EU. As I argue in this article, "integration without joining" of the Russian border regions in the common European "space of flows" is a *functional* feature of borderlands' interaction that is limited to problem-solving in low-policy sectors (environment, culture, business, public health, etc.). As the symbol of a not-always-positive and certainly asymmetrical interdependence between EU Finland and Russia, the border is an interesting object of research on how good-neighbourhood diplomacy "desecuritises" borderlines (Henrikson, 2000 – see also Waever, 1995) and whether cross-border interaction can in turn re-territorialise the border. This problematic will be addressed in answering three sets of questions:

1. what level of integration characterises cross-border interactions within the Finnish-Russian "borderlands milieu"? Compared to another asymmetrically interdependent border much studied by IR scholars, the United States – Mexico border (Martinez, 1994; Vila, 2000; Van der Velde & Van Houtum, 2003), I argue that the Finnish-Russian border enjoys integrative patterns that are else to be found only within the EU (Blatter, 2004), not in North America. To analyse them I use the theoretical instruments of three approaches of border interactions (cf. Van Houtum, 2000): the flow approach (transnationalism), the CBC approach (neo-institutionalism) and the people approach (constructivism).

2. which actors have influenced these new border arrangements and what was the role played by the EU in making interdependence a "postive-sum game" for all players of a "Europe free of new dividing lines"? – which was the original aim of the EU's external policies in the *Northern Dimension* (Council, 2000).

3. where does the transformative power of this particular borderland lie, keeping in mind that "functional integration [the interpenetration of territorial policy spaces] does not automatically lead to political or social integration" (Keating, 1998: 182-183)? I suggest that the "integration without joining" feature of neighbourhood has an impact on foreign policy-making processes and the overall philosophy EU-Russia regional cooperation.

This paper is organised in three sections. Firstly, I examine the characteristics of the border's *location* a) *in time*, recalling the historical background of conflictuality and good-neighbourliness at the border; b) *in place*, as a space where flows and geopolitical projections intersect; c) *in International Relations (IR) theory*, a discipline that has bred various new approaches to border issues since the fall of the Iron Curtain. The theoretical frame retained in this paper for assessing the extent of the EU's influence on the evolving *nature* and *function* of the Finnish-Russian border calls for the usage of analytical tools of both the *post-modern* and *constructivist* conceptual families in IR theory. It attempts to reconcile them as to the contentious issue of whether globalisation and regionalisation lead to a *de-* or a *re-territorialisation* of borders, and how these overlapping trends affect state sovereignty and the very essence of diplomacy in post-Cold war Europe.

The second section focuses on three *influential sets of actors* that have "shaped" the Finnish-Russian border in the 1990s and transformed it into an "interstitial space" – to use the terminology of Irish border-specialists Hastings Donnan & Thomas Wilson (2003) - of positive interdependence and potential integration: a) states and their multilateral organisations (regional bodies), b) sub-state units (regional and local authorities in territories adjacent to the border) and their common institutions of governance (Euro-regions) and c) the European Union and its "dimensionalist" policies on Russia.

In the third section, I consider the implications of multi-level cross-border interaction for public policy-making. I analyse how Finnish-Russian CBC influenced regional and foreign policy decision-making structures and, eventually, policies. This feedback did not lead towards more cooperativeness, though, which is why my assessment of the EU's influence on the Finnish-Russian border's intrinsic conflictecness is not that positive. I discuss the hypothesis of the Finnish-Russian borderland being a model and locomotive to improve the EU's own good-neighbourhood attitude in the "four common spaces" of Wider Europe. My assessment of Russia's perception of EU cross-border policies is that the statist reification of Russia's North-Western border, observable in recent policy statements, is illustrative of the unbalance and misunderstandings that characterise EU-Russia relationships in their common "near abroads". The last subsection examines the obstacles, coming from both these "reluctant regionalizers" (Haukkala, 2001), that hamper the furthering of CBC at the Finnish-Russian border and suggests some policy recommendations to avoid future conflicts. I argue that the EU-(unilaterally) defined "rules of the good-neighbourhood game" need to be adapted in order to meet the challenge of "integration without joining". This requires taking into account Russia's specific needs, interests, and legitimate right to bring in its own identity-related values in the project of border-making and border-breaking in Europe. Finally, the findings of this case study are viewed more broadly in addressing how multi-level CBC affects the geography of power relations in contemporary IR.

2. Situational, functional and theoretical characteristics of the Finnish-Russian border

Borders are spatial and temporal records of relationships between local communities and between states. This made the Swiss geographer Claude Raffestin refer to them metaphorically as "palimpsests" on which to read the evolution of IR. The borderland where the Finnish-Russian border is drawn today has experienced all four phases of interaction identified by Martinez (1996), until the post-Cold War period when the borderland is one of *interdependence*. This is not an unprecedented situation in its history, since this border was one of *alienation* only during the inter-War period (Paasi, 1998: 74). Prior to that it had already experienced *integration*.

In his seminal work on the Finnish-Russian border, Anssi Paasi (1996) made an "archaeological" inquiry into the border(land)'s cultural history and showed that, at times, this boundary appeared more fluid and less immutable than it is today. In the current post-Soviet phase of its history the border transformed from a military buffer zone (alienation pacified by co-existence) into an interstitial space of flows and interactions of *bon voisinage*. Paradoxically, increased interdependence sets good-neighbourhood in peril because it fosters an integration unforeseen and uncontrolled by central governments, calling them to reinforce borders to counter the negative "border-effects" of some transnational flows (immigration, smuggling, terrorism, etc.).

A) LOCATING THE BORDER IN TIME – FROM ALIENATION TO CO-EXISTENCE

Borders are both *institutions* that delimit state sovereignty and citizenship, and *processes* whose instrumental function is physical (as elements of state control over trade and immigration) as well as moral. As cultural fences, borders are "markers of identity and elements of discourse in narratives of nationalism" (Anderson, 1996: 3). They are "con-textual" in the sense that they are the support of diverging and often conflicting "stories" that contribute to the writing of history textbooks and to the sketching of images of the Other. This subsection recalls the previous stages in the border's life cycle that assess its temporal and spatial "contingency" (Albert, 1998: 57). It sheds light on early phases in Finnish-Russian relations when the borderland was "integrated".

Russia's North-Western external border is one of the oldest cultural dividing line on the Eurasian continent. Its first legal "marking" draws back to 1323 (Pähkinäsaari Peace Treaty), when the (Lutheran) Kingdom of Sweden and the (Orthodox) Novgorod Principality agreed to delimitate the scope of their respective religious influence on their contact zone, the Karelian isthmus. At the time, this frontier area was inhabited by nomadic tribes of Fenno-Ugric origins, but mostly Eastern Christian faith (Jutikkala, 1978: 39). The Karelian borderland was the main battlefield of the Northern War (1699-1721), during which czar Peter the Great seized from Sweden the strategic Neva estuary, on which he established Russia's new capital city, St. Petersburg. From 1703 to 1809 the territory of today's Finland belonged to Sweden but, at least on its Southern front, it was shared between two distinct spheres of influence: that of Stockholm on the Western (maritime) border (key city and local capital: Turku), and, on the Eastern (land) frontier, that of the new Russian metropolis. The imperial capital's cultural and economic *rayonnement* went far beyond the border and served as a magnet for a large portion of the population living in the Karelian borderlands, many of them commuting to St. Petersburg for work (Engman, 1993).

The XVIII century saw the birth of Russia both as an empire and a modern State, emphasising the *frontier* (absorbing) dimension of borders. Expansion onto the Baltic Sea shore became a driving force of the Kremlin's diplomacy. Finns became the subjects of the Russian crown after the Tilsit Peace Treaty of 1807, signed by Napoleon and Alexander I, whereby the Eastern provinces of the defeated Swedish kingdom were incorporated into the Russian empire. From 1809 to 1917, the Grand-Duchy of Finland enjoyed limited sovereignty within Russia, with governmental institutions and a fiscal regime of its own and the right to retain Swedish as the official language of its administration. This relative autonomy derived from, but also contributed to consolidate, the cultural differences between Finns and Slavs during this "Russian period" of Finnish history (Jakobson, 1998: 11). Even if this civilisational border with Russia is considered by cultural anthropologists and historians to have played an important role in the process of Finnish identity-building (Paasi, 1996), its relative blurring and integration in the XIX century transpire in facts that are not anecdotic only, since they remained in both nations' collective memories as "common goods". First of all, literature reflects this mutual influence, with Finnish shamans becoming archetypal figures in Russian novels and tales, whereas most elements of the Russian *byliny* (traditional troubadour songs) found their way into the Finnish folklore of the time. Etymologically, the Finnish word "border" (*raja*) derives from the Russian *krai* (which means both "limit" and "territory", much like in the sense of the American *frontier*). This illustrates that the Finnish-Russian border qualifies for a definition in terms of contact zone rather than linearity/boundedness. Architecture is another field where cultural interaction across the Finnish-Russian border remains the most visible – suffice it to visit Helsinki to witness the influence of Russian (Petersburgan) style, and Tampere to contemplate the biggest Russian orthodox church ever built outside Russia. Last but not least, there have been important flows of ideas crossing the border during the last decades of Russian dominion on Finland, with *Fennomania* echoing the Russian populist movements of the 1870s (*narodnichestvo)* and Lenin finding in Finland an exile place from where to prepare the October Revolution. However, despite the fact that many Communist Finns joined the Reds during the Civil War, the newly-born Finnish state became an advanced post for White counter-revolution. This explains why, after the Bolshevik Revolution, the Finnish-Soviet border became one of strategic exclusion, with high military and ideological obstacles alienating borderlanders from each other.

The Finnish-Soviet border remained impermeable for one generation. It was moved again by force when Stalin invoked the argument that Leningrad was exposed to direct threat by the Wehrmacht and unilaterally moved the border further from the city (Jakobson, 1998: 31), thus absorbing part of the Finnish eastern borderland. In March 1940, Finland signed an armistice ending this Blitz- "Winter War" against the Red Army, but soon after, the Finnish military leadership attempted to move the "Mannerheim line" (a defensive construction against tanks) to the East again with the help of Nazi occupants – this episode being known as the "Continuation War" (1941-1944). However, Finland failed to re-conquer Eastern Karelia, and by September 1944 it had no alternative than signing a separate peace treaty with USSR to retain its independence as a sovereign state, although truncated of 10% of its territory (12% of its pre-War population) (Jakobson, 1998: 54). On 23 February 1948, which ironically is also the day the Prague Coup was carried out, President Paasikivi signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with Stalin, an act of acquiescence that turned Finland into a model of "pacific coexistence" with USSR for forty years. The evolution from alienation to co-existence in diplomatic relations had only a slight effect on the border itself. The Finnish-Soviet border did not open much more, rather, it became one of the most militarised in bipolar Europe. Nonetheless, there were elements of cross-border (though centrally-led) cooperation in trade, industrial innovation[6], city and university twinning, as well as a gentlemen's agreement on spies' East-West migration across the border (Austin, 1996).

B) LOCATING THE BORDER IN THE WIDER EUROPEAN SPACE: A SITE OF EU-RUSSIA INTERDEPENDENCE

The Finnish-Russian border can be said to be both "post-Soviet" and "European" in the sense that it is experiencing a structural transition that derives directly from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and from the EU's last enlargements (1995, 2004). This radical transformation in the border's international environment precipitated profound changes in the borderlanders' life. Previously a dead-end of the European continent, marginalized at the periphery, their territory became a major transport corridor between East and West. It is now handling more than 70% of the goods (mainly raw material exported from Russia) that transit on land between the Russian and European markets. In this context, the opening of the border fostered flows and cooperation in all fields where differences could be "bridged" and needs met by cross-border interaction. The previous state of mere co-existence transformed into a well-assumed feeling of mutual interdependence, however asymmetrical.[7] For Russia's border regions of the North-West Federal District (NWFD), the density of international (mainly cross-border) interactions is higher compared with the level of interactions among themselves and with other regions of CIS countries.

Martinez (1996: 8-11) identified five types of pressures that set apart borderlands from interior processes and link them to their counterpart of a neighbour country: *transnationalism* (a process whereby borderlanders are influenced by material and immaterial flows coming from the other side of the border); *international* and *ethnic conflict* (and conflict accommodation), due in large part to the cultural heterogeneity of borderlands or their vulnerability to irredentist claims from neighbour countries; *otherness* (borderlanders present cultural features that differentiate them from people of the core country) and *separateness* (when a border community develops a "proto-diplomatic" (Duchacek, 1988) strategy of voluntary alienation from the heartland). The various combinations of these factors determine which driving forces produce interdependence and the quality of it. Hereafter I examine to what extent each factor contributed to shape the characteristic features of interdependence observable in the Finnish-Russian borderlands today.

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[6] One example of CBC in the economic field is the village-factory of Kuhmo-Kostamuksha located on the borderland. The Finnish-Soviet joint-venture that handled the production and export of timber from Soviet Kostamuksha to Finland was one of the first ever operating on Soviet land (Tikkanen & Käköenen, 1997) and it proved a good starting point for CBC in the transition years (Shlyamin, 2002)

[7] At the XXIst Cosac conference in October 1999, Vice-Chairman of the Parliament Kimmo Kiljunen pointed out that "the Russian-Finnish border represents the deepest income gap in the world, a gulf much deeper than between Mexico and the US or between Hong Kong and China". Nowadays the difference in the standards of living of Eastern Finland and Russian Karelia is at a level of 6: 1 (Vardomsky & Golounov, 2002: 166). The gap between the Finnish and Soviet population was esteemed to be of 20: 1 in the early 1990s.

Growing transnational flows across the border

Following the disintegration of the command economy in USSR, Finnish-Soviet/Russian trade dropped drastically. It triggered a deep economic crisis in Finland, whose economy was structurally dependent on barter trade with its Eastern neighbour (the Soviet market represented up to one third of Finland's foreign trade in the mid-1980s). In 1991-1993, Russia's share in Finland's trade (which had gone down from 25% to 10% during *perestroika)* plummeted to less than 5%. Soon after flows of goods across the Finnish-Russian border started to grow again, reaching a peak in 1994 with a € 3 billion turnover. Russian exports plummeted in 1999, and since then Finland's trade balance with Russia turned negative – a direct consequence of the rise of both world oil prices and Russian exports. Currently, Russia represents approximately 10% of Finland's foreign trade. Finland having a population of 5 million (comparable to the St. Petersburg agglomeration), it obviously does not weigh that much in Russia's total foreign exchanges. However, Finland is among the three main trade partners of the Russian border regions (trade with Finland amounts to 25% of Karelia's foreign trade and about 10-15% of that of the Lenoblast' or St. Petersburg.

The fall of the Berlin Wall reversed the nature and function of borderlands' interaction in spheres underneath macroeconomics: within a few days, the fence between Russian border regions and the outer capitalist world, of which Finland was a shop window, went down, and with it the remaining obstacles to the free movement of goods and people. In Yeltsin's "new" Russia, any individual was granted the right to create a business, including one of currency exchange, and to leave the country with nearly whatever item (s)he might want to sell abroad – at least in a country granting short-term access without visa, as did China, Turkey and Finland at the time. This "open-border" policy facilitated cross-border shuttle trade by "*chelnoki*" (literally - suitcase-carriers) i.e. "trader tourists" in Donnan & Wilson's terminology (Donnan & Wilson, 1999: 123). They were mostly Russian individuals travelling by bus or car to sell highly-taxed goods in Finland (vodka, cigarettes, petrol, metals, wires) and taking back home consumer goods and quality equipment unavailable in Russian shops (or at higher prices than on Western markets) – office furniture, computers and photocopiers, construction equipment, household items, washing-machines, car parts, mobile phones, etc.[8]

The first transnational flows that bloomed as early as 1991 were flows of people. The border became more porous than ever, with border-crossers of Finnish or Russian nationality growing from a few tens of thousands in the 1980s to more than 4 million in 1996. According to the Finnish Customs, the number of cars registered in Russia that crossed the border with Finland in 1994 was 25 times more than ten years before (quoted by Austin, 1996: 107). With the idea of both securitising the border and facilitating border-crossing, the Finnish government financed the modernisation of existing infrastructures on the Russian side. By the end of the 1990s, the number of border-crossing points had increased to 26 (of which 6 international).

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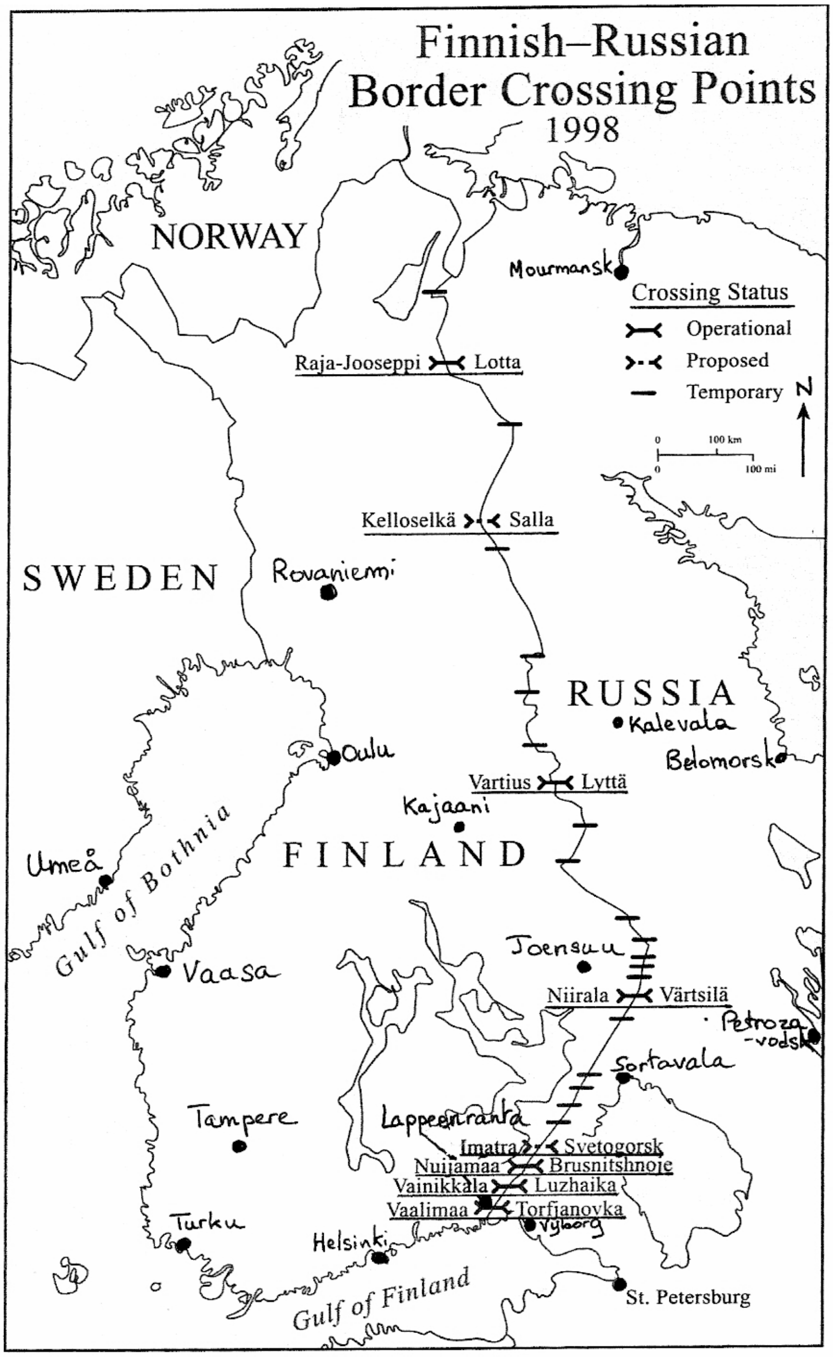
[8] Every evening in the years 1999-2003 when this observation was made, an average number of 20 Russian private busses full of "trader tourists" left Vosstaniya square in downtown St. Petersburg to arrive early morning in Helsinki. Passengers spend the day shopping and trading and return to Russia on the next night with Western/Finnish goods to sell on the marketplace or to customers of their personal network.

Map 1 The post-Soviet Border (1998)


Finnish–Russian
Border Crossing Points
1998
NORWAY
Mourmansk
Crossing Status
Operational
Proposed
Temporary
N
0 100 km
0 100 mi
Raja-Jooseppi
Lotta
Kelloselkä
Salla
SWEDEN
Rovaniemi
RUSSIA
Kalevala
Belomorsk
Oulu
Vartius
Lyttä
Kajaani
FINLAND
Umeå
Gulf of Bothnia
Vaasa
Joensuu
Niirala
Värtsilä
Petrozavodsk
Sortavala
Tampere
Lappeenranta
Imatra
Svetogorsk
Nuijamaa
Brusnitshnoje
Vainikkala
Luzhaika
Vaalimaa
Torfjanovka
Vyborg
Turku
Helsinki
Gulf of Finland
St. Petersburg

Source: “Boundaries as Social Discourses”, p. 119.

The border-crossing points on the Southern segment of the border soon became overloaded with truck freight - for them waiting time and customs procedures at the border can take up to 3 days. Traffic is so dense that queues of lorries waiting to enter Russia occasionally reach tens of kilometres. By the end of the 1990s, the absolute number of border-crossings on the Karelian segment of the border (800 000 people) even exceeded that of the Republic's own population (Vardomsky & Golounov, 2002: 167, 169). Among them were Finnish and Russian tourists, businessmen, smugglers, nomads, "remigrants"[9], as well as commuting or expatriated workers - mainly middle-aged Russians employed in Finland in sectors such as packing, services, trade, IT, etc. With these transfrontier migrations, new cultural interconnections emerged that manifest in the multiplication of bi-national weddings and births and the number of bilingual shop assistants in the Finnish borderlands. Transnationalism transpires as well from new geo-economic "re-appropriation" of the border that is evident in sectors such as tourism and real estate.[10]

Trade figures and statistics on foreign direct investment also illustrate how transnational flows of goods and capital circumvent the border. In 1991-1992, when a few Soviet border cities and regions were granted the right to establish free trade zones on their territory, nearly one hundred Finnish-Russian joint-ventures registered in the Leningrad oblast', mainly in Vyborg, the ancient capital of "Greater Finland". At present every fourth joint-venture operating in St. Petersburg involves Finnish capital. The borderlands became a springboard for third states and multinational firms investing in North-West Russia and beyond (e.g. in the Far North or Moscow).[11] The share of EU countries in the foreign trade balance of the republic of Karelia jumped from 25% in 1993 to more than 60% in 1998. Cross-border trade is dominated by Russian exports of raw material to Finland, mainly timber, paper pulp, iron ore and aluminium. When the FinMark and Deutsche Mark gave way to the Euro in 2002, Russians from the borderlands were the first to use it for their daily transactions in foreign currency. In

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[9] In the early 1990s, President Ahtisaari granted those citizens of ex-USSR who can prove that they have Finnish origins the right to be naturalised. The bureaucratic procedure and later on the socialisation of these Russian Finns takes a long time, but as of 2004, 33000 have obtained Finnish citizenship, thus becoming the first ever "Euro-Russians".

[10] Most well-off Russians living in Petersburg or Petrozavodsk own a villa in Finland, whereas Finns who cannot afford a summer house in their country have increasingly been buying dachas in Russian Karelia or on the seashores of the Leningrad oblast.

[11] Most joint-ventures and subsidiary companies of foreign firms located in the Russian borderlands have a Finnish PO box, bank account and mobile phone number.

North-West Russia the common European currency even challenges the supremacy of the US dollar.

Interdependence at the Finnish-Russian border in the 1990s is of asymmetrical nature. The interest in maintaining a situation of mutually beneficial commercial interaction lies in exploiting persisting factor price differentials and other locational disparities, as is usually the case at borders characterised by acute gaps in the level of development between a “rich” (dominant, exploiting, value-exporting) winner-take-all of CBC and its “needy” counterpart on the poorer side of the border (Perkmann & Sum, 2002: 6). Russians are discontent with the fact that the Iron Curtain has been replaced by a “Schengen Curtain”, a new border that excludes and alienates them from the rest of Europe. Politicians of both diplomatic and paradiplomatic[12] circles in Russia often criticise the policies of EU member states, which according to them maintain Russia in a position of raw material appendage and passive recipient of Brussels’ initiatives in Northern Europe (Deryabin, 2000; Shlyamin, 2002).

Conflict accommodation on the territorial issue – a corner-stone of good-neighbourliness

After the signing of the 1944 Peace Treaty, parts of the Finnish borderlands were incorporated in the Republic of Karelia and the Leningrad oblast’ and 436 000 people evacuated from Eastern Karelia and resettled in Finland (Forsberg 1995: 207-209). These forced “remigrants” remained nostalgic of Karelia, and so are their descendants who had a chance to visit their homeland only after the border was re-opened in 1991. Most of them were disappointed, for fifty years of Russification / Sovietisation had changed the natural and socio-economic landscape for the worse (Kosonen, 1999).

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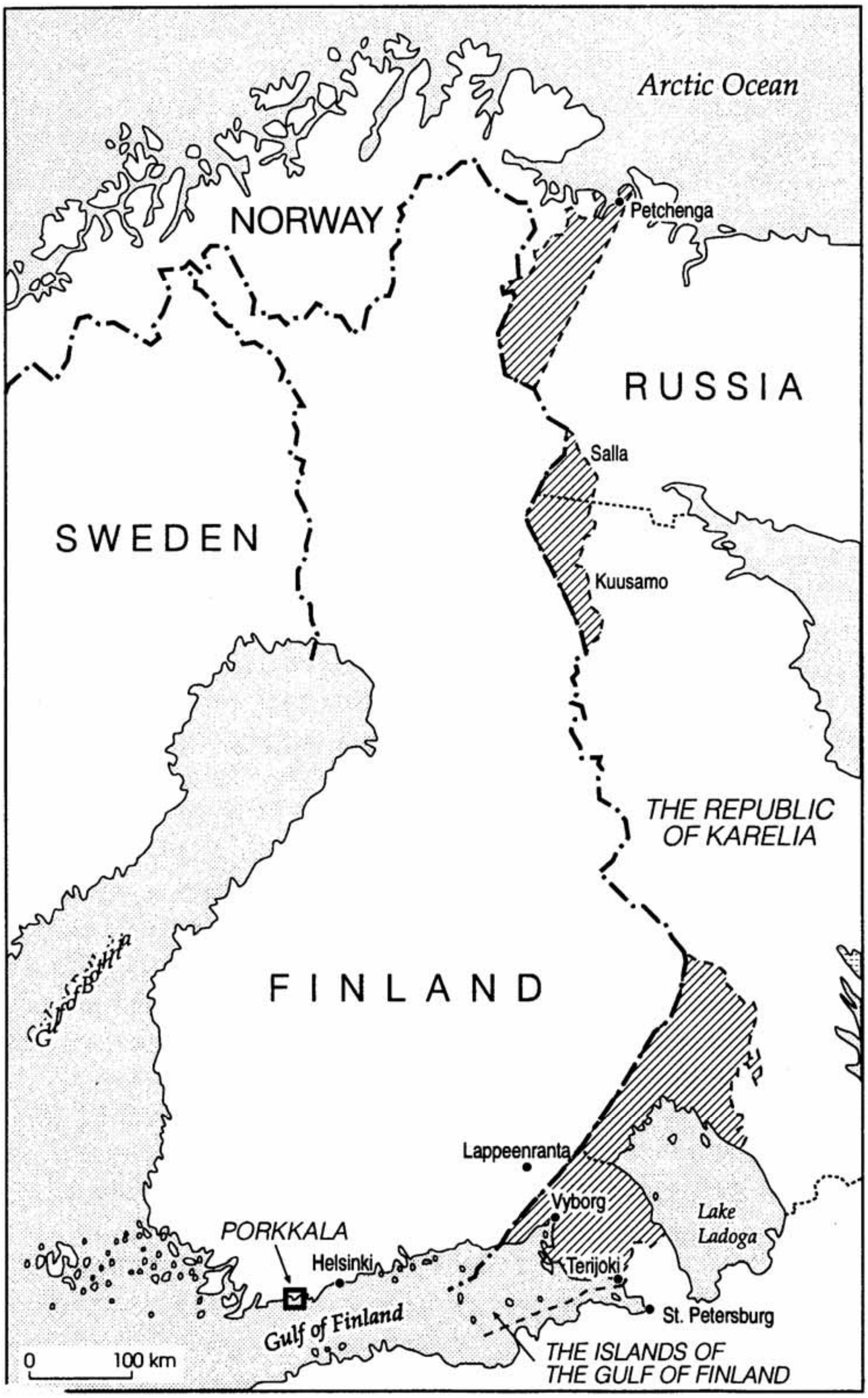
[12] The paradigm of “paradiplomacy” was coined by Ivo Duchacek (1988) for studying the autonomous and parallel diplomacy of Quebec. I use this notion to characterise the public policy activities of subjects of the RF that develop independent international and foreign economic relations (Marin, 2002).

Map 2: Finnish territories ceded to USSR after World War II


Arctic Ocean
Petchenga
NORWAY
RUSSIA
Salla
SWEDEN
Kuusamo
THE REPUBLIC OF KARELIA
Gulf of Bothnia
FINLAND
Lappeenranta
Vyborg
Lake Ladoga
PORKKALA
Helsinki
Terijoki
St. Petersburg
Gulf of Finland
0 100 km
THE ISLANDS OF THE GULF OF FINLAND

Source: (Forsberg, 1995: 203).

According to the 1989 census, less than 12% of the people living in the republic of Karelia declared themselves of Fenno-Ugric origins (Karelian, Finn, Saami, Vepse). Thus, there is hardly any ethno-nationalist ferment for Karelian secessionism (Marin, 2002) – which explains why the Kremlin is confident in the loyalty of the Republic of Karelia and is rather opened to "border-breaking" (Joenniemi, 1998) initiatives. On the Finnish side of the border, irredentist claims for the restitution of ceded territories have sporadically emerged since the reunification of Germany.[13] It should be underlined that the Finnish government never channelled these demands onto the diplomatic arena and constantly aimed at defusing domestic claims on the "Eastern question".[14] This conciliating attitude of Finland towards its "big neighbour" on the Karelian issue is one reason why co-existence remained pacific during "Finlandization", i.e. why Finland remained an independent (though non-aligned) country during the Cold War. According to Sergei Medvedev (1999), relegating the "desire for Karelia" in the collective subconscious (together with some mythical idealisation of Kalevala Karelia) amounts to an act of "sublimation". Using this Freudian metaphor, Medvedev argued that the typical features of "Finnish-ness" in post-War IR – neutrality in relation to military blocks, peaceful co-existence with the Soviet neighbour, unwillingness to contest the drawing of the borderline, building peace through non-military means (as illustrated by ex-President Martti Ahtissaari's good offices in conflict-solving missions worldwide) – are a direct consequence of the traumatism provoked by the loss of Karelia.

The fact that Finland refrains from addressing the Kremlin any official territorial claims derives from many factors. First, the borderline's layout was legally confirmed by bilateral agreements and made imprescriptible with the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1992 CSCE Paris Charter. Therefore, in the mind of Russian diplomats, the "Karelian question" is a non-issue (Forsberg, 1995: 216) and there is no legal justification for Finland to claim the contrary. Secondly, some moves have been made in the 1990s by the Russian leadership to calm down Finnish public opinion.[15] Thirdly, Finns gradually admitted that it is strategically more rational to maintain peaceful relationships with Russia than to risk upsetting the “big bear” and thus hamper business contacts (as does Japan, which insists that its dispute with Russia on the Kuriles islands be settled before signing a peace treaty or implementing CBC projects). In this sense, Finland’s position illustrates that realism is still a winning tactic in contemporary IR for a small country that already suffered invasion from a neighbour, and whose interests are now of geoeconomic rather than geopolitical nature. For this reason, Finns are now “taking over” lost territories by other, “post-modern” or, rather, “post-territorial” means: in sending humanitarian aid for elderly people of Finnish origins in Karelia (the Lutheran church and the Finnish Red Cross are very active in this field), in supporting NGOs that strive for a revival of Fenno-Ugric languages in Russia (Austin, 1996: 165; Eskelinen & al., 1999), as well as in multiplying industrial investment and buying real estate in the Russian borderlands.

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[13] Two Finnish political movements want the opening of negotiation with the Kremlin. One is the semi-clandestine extreme-right party *Suur Suomi* (Greater Finland), whose irredentist claims extend to the whole territory occupied by Finland with the help of the Nazis in 1940-1944 (including Karelia, the Kola peninsula and part of Estonia). The other, *Pro Karelia,* whose discourse is much more popular in Finland, including among the political leadership, limits itself to claiming moral compensation, i.e. the recognition by post-Soviet Russia that the "rapt" of Karelia was a Stalinist crime that should be acknowledged and compensated for in order to lay down the basis for future good-neighbourhood (Forsberg, 1995: 211).

[14] At least from 1955 (when USSR returned the naval base of Porkkala on the Gulf of Finland) to 1989, when the fall of the Berlin Wall gave public opinion good reason to believe that the Eastern question" would not remain a "non-issue" of Finnish-Russian relations.

From a Russian viewpoint, the “Karelian question” is a non-issue, whereas looked at from Finland, the unresolved territorial dispute over “Eastern Karelia”, however accommodated with, remains psychologically more problematic. Seen from the sky, both parties’ pragmatic attitude seems to have led to some interesting “post-sovereign case”, “beyond restitution”, and whereby statist borders are being “adjusted” to local needs (Joenniemi, 1998). The border dispute in question, instead of being dealt with in the sphere of “hard” geopolitics, has been *depoliticised* (or at least deproblematised) by central governments and turned into a resource by social agents who re-appropriate the borderland and change its layout *via* cross-border interaction. This is but one aspect of the global dynamic of border de-territorialisation, by which this unchangeable borderline became a frontier area – which is the essence of “debordering” according to Pertti Joenniemi. [16]

Both central and local governments take part in this transfer of border interests from geopolitics to geoeconomics. In January 1992, Finland and Russia signed an agreement on the modalities of Finland's CBC with four Russian "adjacent regions" – the Republic of Karelia, Murmansk and Leningrad oblasti, and St. Petersburg. Sector working groups of representatives from both levels of government meet 3-4 times a year. At the time and until it "communalised" its border-problems by issuing the *Northern Dimension* initiative, it should be reminded that in the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' terminology, "adjacent" territories referred not only to these four regions, but also to the three Baltic republics. If not the same kind of aid nor goals (for only the Baltic States needed patronising from their Nordic neighbours to join the EU), at least the same spirit of cooperation characterised the Finnish government's philosophy and policies of good-neighbourhood in the whole Eastern Baltic sea area.

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[15] In May 1994, President Yeltsin and Patriarch Aleksey II acknowledged that the 1939 invasion was a Stalinist crime and regretted the “injustice” Finland had to suffer because of the 1948 Treaty with the USSR (Jakobson, 1998: 104). Under Putin's presidency, more good will signs have been made, e.g. when Putin visited Marshall Carl Mannerheim's tombstone while on official visit to Finland in September 2001 (cf. A. Khanbaben “Zachem Putin pereshel liniyu Mannergeyma?” [What did Putin cross the Mannerheim line for?], *Nezavissimaya Gazeta,* 4 September 2001)

[16] This change is not definitive – there are signs that the "ceded Karelia" question is again a matter of concern in Finland. Claiming restitution for the Vyborg area was debated in the press lately (Prozorov, 2004: 8)

The Russian government regularly underlines that CBC with Finland is a model of successful mutual understanding. It supports the idea of sharing experiences and coordinating policies across borders with such a friendly-perceived neighbour as Finland. In October 1999 at the First Conference on the *Northern Dimension* at the level of Foreign Ministers in Helsinki, Igor Ivanov argued that the best practices developed at the Russian-Finnish border were a "model" for Russia-EU CBC. The same month, answering to the EU's *Common Strategy on Russia* (CSR), Prime Minister Vladimir Putin presented in Brussels Russia's *Mid-Term Strategy for the development of relations with the EU*. The novelty of this Russian foreign policy concept, compared to previous programmatic documents, was that it viewed the EU not merely as a free-trade union of states or a civilian (and therefore weak) power, but also as a (geo-)political whole and a *neighbour* with whom Russia had at least one thing in common: a Northern border. Chapter 8 of the *Strategy* is entirely dedicated to CBC, seen as an instrument for Russian Western regions' integration into Wider European spheres of growth. It also advocated, for the first time in such a high-policy document, to further CBC by "elevat[ing] the level of trans-boundary inter-regional co-operation of both parties up to the standard established within the so-called Euro-regions". Marius Vahl argued that

> "the acceptance of the ND initiative as legitimate, and Russia's own proposals of asymmetric co-operation between Russian regions and the EU, implies a certain openness in Russia towards 'post-modern' mechanisms of co-operation" (Vahl, 2001: 8)

It also illustrates the extent to which good-neighbourhood and CBC are intertwined in Finnish-Russian relations. The absence of international conflict between the two states allows for more than mere "international conflict accommodation" (even if, in managerial terms, it should rather be called a "compromise on conflict avoidance"). A real partnership has been under way during the 1990s, whereby multi-level strategies of "debordering" have been agreed upon by central authorities and implemented loyally by sub-state authorities. Coming from Russian diplomats, such openness to the idea of devolution and post-territorial ways of handling the border is quite extraordinary. It is good news for the rest of Europe, even if the Kremlin is ultimately the authority that sets the limits to these centrifugal trends towards a "de-territorialisation" of the border. This is understandable, because if seen from a meso-/micro-level – e.g. that of the Russian borderlanders – good-neighbourhood is a diplomatic environment that suits the regional authorities' outward-oriented interests and desire for autonomy.

Otherness and separateness in the Russian borderlands

Border-location is thought to affect the sense of belonging, loyalty and desire for democratic participation among borderlanders, breaking with the assumption that citizenship, national identity and the state's bounded territoriality are congruent. Instead, new approaches in the study of borders, identity and "overlapping political communities" in Europe fashion a theory of citizenship that is

> "more complex, less exclusionary and better suited to an era of polycentric, multi-level governance and increasing cultural pluralism (…), [an emerging consensus that] both enables and requires the development of multi-layered identities and forms of citizenship." (Painter, 2002: 102)

Such theories find an echo in the local Russian press, which constantly recalls that Petersburgans or citizens of Karelia are more "European-minded" and mentally "nearer to Helsinki than to Moscow" for example. This shared "Northerness" or "Europeanness" is another feature that turns borderlands into an interstitial space of "Euro-Russian identity". This feeling of "otherness" (regionalism) eventually breeds one of "separateness" (separatism). Aware of the unique environment that shapes their lives,

> "Borderlanders think of themselves as different from people of interior zones and outsiders perceive them that way as well. (…) Remoteness from the heartland and sustained interaction with foreigners tend to dilute nationalism among borderlanders and make them more tolerant of ethnic and cultural differences" (Martinez, 1996: 12)

In the early years of transition, Petersburgans majoritarily supported mayor Anatoly Sobchak's project of elevating the city's federative status to that of a Republic or a "Neva krai".

Autonomist/secessionist movements popped up in 1993 and noticeably in the aftermath of the August 1998 crisis. The *Movement for the Autonomy of St. Petersburg* for example argued secession was the only way to avoid negative side-effects of the Kremlin's political games, ill-thought economic policies and diplomatic "aventurism" (e.g. support for Milosevic and Lukashenko). Most of these autonomist movements called for a rapprochement with Western European countries and condemned Russia's foreign policy towards neighbouring Estonia and Latvia for being neo-imperialistic and harmful for the Russia-EU partnership. Some, like the "Ingermanland Party – Free St. Petersburg" even envisaged that the Northern capital, alone or together with other border regions of North-West Russia, join the EU, either as an independent member entity or as a dominion of a confederal Finland. As argued by Tuomas Forsberg, a specialist on the Finnish-Russian border

> "reterritorialization does not necessarily mean renationalisation of the 'international' space, but that units other than nation-states will increase their territorial identity." (Forsberg, 1996: 371).

This process of "transboundary regionalism" (Scott, 1999: 91) illustrates how otherness and separateness – that are features of local political culture in most peripheral spaces – contribute to "debordering". In this process the nearness of Europe operates as a magnet. Pro-European regionalist discourses do not only remove the psychological Russian-Finnish border between "us" and "them", they also move this Self/Other boundary onto another "territory" of values and power conflict – that of federative relationships with a "centre" increasingly portrayed as "alien" to the borderlanders' identity and interests.

C) LOCATING THE FINNISH-RUSSIAN BORDER IN IR THEORY

> "As borders are normally associated with power relations – the power to keep in or out – the movement across borders, whether they be national borders, disciplinary borders or theoretical borders, carries with it the febrile fascination and flavour of the illicit." (Mitchell, 1997: 101)

One purpose of this paper is to go beyond this mental barrier and assess the pertinence of a multi-disciplinary and multi-level approach of borders. Reified centuries by lawyers, geographers and security policy-makers, borders have recently become a focus of growing academic interest from scholars of various disciplines – comparative history (Baud & van Schendel, 1997; Forsberg, 1995), cultural anthropology (Paasi, 1996; Donnan & Wilson, 2003), ethnography (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992), political science (Ruggie, 1993; Anderson, 1996; Berg

& van Houtum, 2003), sociology (Strassoldo, 1982; Delli Zotti, 1996), (international) political economy (Agnew, 1994, Ohmae, 1995), critical geography (Gottmann, 1980; Mitchell, 1997; van Houtum, 2000), political psychology (Medvedev, 1999), international relations (Rosenau, 1997; Newman, 1998; Albert, 1998), regional and European studies (O'Dowd & Wilson, 1996; Balme, 1996; Keating, 1998; O'Dowd, 2002), urban studies (Saez, Leresche & Bassand, 1997; Reitel & al., 2002; Schultz, 2002) as well as security studies (Joenniemi & Viktorova, 2001; Averre, 2002; Vardomsky & Golounov, 2002). Recent literature and research projects on borders give account of the attempts at theory-building in an inter-disciplinary way, with post-modernist approaches usually providing a "focal point for cross-disciplinary debate" (Albert, 1998: 65; see also Walker, 1993; Newman & Paasi, 1998). In recent years there has also been a remarkable growth of publications and policy brainstorming on the conflictogenous effects of post-Cold war border reconfigurations in the Balkans and the Caucasus, with a consequent interest for case studies focusing on Eastern European borderlands (Langer, 1996; Berg & van Houtum, 2003; Virtanen, 2004).

Borders are challenging objects of research for theorists because of their intrinsic dualism and the inherent paradox of their impact on adjacent territories, mentalities (borderlanders share a "world map" view of their own) and state policies (combining open-border and control regulations). Depending on the side from which one looks at it, the border is *Finnish-Russian* and a reminder of potential or imaginary threats coming from the East, or it is *Russian-Finnish* and represents an opening onto the West. If attempting to view it from the sky, one would not see many watchtowers nor barbed-wires, for the border cuts across a (Bi-)National Natural Park, the *Fenno-Scandic Green Belt*. Borderlands are places of contradictions because they host cultural overlaps characterised by a mixing of cultural styles. They concentrate incommensurable and often conflicting moral and legal rules that turn CBC into both a necessity and a maze for policy-makers (Anderson & al., 2003). As rightly noted by Liam O'Dowd, borders bear abiding ambiguity because

> "they can be seen as protections against violation and violence but also as enshrining considerable coercion and violence in their construction; they provide the conditions for social identity, for individual and collective action, but they also close off possibilities which might otherwise flourish" (O'Dowd, 2002: 113)

These features are also typical of the historical ambivalence of the Finnish-Russian border. On the one hand, the border with Russia, albeit blurred during the "Russian years" of Finnish pre-statehood, was a folding screen behind which Finnish national identity, the one taking its roots in Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* (1835), could forge itself (Paasi, 1996), in opposition to both

Swedish identity and "Russianness" - or at least to some of its negatively-perceived projections (bellicosity, familiarity, craftiness, and, in the sphere of cultural-political values, orthodoxy, communism and authoritarianism). On the other hand, despite being a major bridge for EU-Russia trade and a field for innovative CBC regimes today, the Finnish-Russian border is once again meant to play the role of a barrier against terrorism and illegal immigration since Finland joined the Schengen space.

This paradox points to the multiple missions assigned by theorists to a border, depending on the ideological/philosophical framework through which they perceive it – realism, liberalism or post-positivism.

From a statist/realist perspective, borders are the containers of state sovereignty and the security cordon defending its territorial integrity and national unity. The problem with this vision is that the muddling of state and nation on the one hand, and sovereignty and geographical boundedness on the other, leads to a definition of political identity in exclusively *state-territorial* terms, whereas in reality border identities may have a transnational and non-territorial component in them, as I suggested when evoking the European-stamped "Otherness" of St. Petersburg's "city-identity" and outward-oriented regionalism. The fact that realist theories have reified the border is but one dimension of what John Agnew (1994) calls the "territorial trap", in which conventional thinking has pushed IR theory and out of where critical geography should pull it.[17] In order to do so, one has to acknowledge that "the state's territory is only one of a number of geographical frameworks in which political power is operative" (Agnew, 1998: 501; see also Walker, 1993). Power relationships are better thought of in terms of *territories of power* and dispersed *influence networks* in which individuals, state and non- or sub-state actors are embedded and located spatially relative to one another (Ruggie, 1993).

Realism does not exclude inter-governmental cooperation, for it is deemed necessary in a Hobbesian setting. When it occurs at both diplomatic and local (paradiplomatic) level, CBC can build a "consociative model of peacemaking" (Henrikson, 2000) able to ameliorate relations between border communities and central states – if some conditions are met, though. According to Alan Henrikson, successful "transfrontier diplomacy" requires that a) states

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[17] According to Agnew, this conventional thinking relies on three (wrong) geographical assumptions: that states ares "fixed units of secure sovereign space", that domestic and international spheres are hermetically divided, and that the territorial state exists "prior to and as a container of society" (Agnew, 1994: 77)

"have one another's attention" (and, if possible, a good opinion of each other), b) domestic political structures are compatible, i.e. they allow minimal centre-periphery communication within the national setting on the issue of CBC; c) there exist some international agreement(s) (bi- or multi-lateral treaties) making the "peace through neighbourhood strategy" a legally-binding commitment on both sides of the border (Henrikson, 2000: 137). In the Finnish-Russian case, all three conditions for this "diplomacy of *bon voisinage*" are met. True, states are objectively not equal, for Finland is a "political dwarf" compared to Russia, whose economy is comparatively bigger, though less developed. Both states have each other's attention, respect and confidence.[18] True, their political systems are not similar, because Finland is a unitary state within which *municipalities* (and their groupings) constitute the only sub-state level of actorness, whereas in Russia (a federal system) some autonomy on international and foreign economic affairs is granted to the *regional level* of actorness (subjects of the RF). The very federative structure of the RF is potentially a favourable domestic factor for cross-border integration.[19] Lastly, transfrontier diplomacy is a characteristic feature of Finnish-Russian relations because there are multiple international agreements framing it. Apart from the 1992 bilateral treaty on CBC, it is worth mentioning international instruments such as the 1980 Madrid Convention on CBC, which Russia ratified in 2003. Functional and identity-providing institutions such as sector commissions, horizontal connections, political coalitions and consociational frames for community mobilisation across the Finnish-Russian border are all present to guarantee a sustainable architecture of multi-level CBC involving both public and private actors.

Since they conceptualise borders as barriers to friction-free flows and factors of peripheralisation for adjacent regions, neo-liberal theorists would point for their part on the interest of CBC to make interdependence a positive-sum game for all players and, at the end of the day, for international stability. From a liberal/institutionalist point of view, cross-border integration would depend on three possible categories of variables: a) pre-existent homogenous features of the borderlands (geographical, ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic "sameness" of borderlanders); b) functional needs and interdependencies within an "action space", calling for a pragmatic collaboration to facilitate cross-border flows; c) external incentives (both financial and immaterial) channelled by supra-national actors of integration at transregional level. These are the EU and "peak organisations" gravitating around the Council of Europe - the Association of European Border Regions, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and the Council of Maritime Regions of Europe. These features are to be found in the Finnish-Russian case, where two complementary peripheries meet across the border for pragmatic reasons and purposes, thanks to favourable historical conditions and external (mainly EU) funding.

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[18] This mutual interest for cooperation is evident in the number and regularity of meetings taking place at all three "levels of cross-border diplomacy" (Perkmann, 2003: 126): summits (at central level), ministerial contacts (at governmental level) and regional/local meetings (at sub-national level).

[19] I elaborate this assumption on Markus Perkmann's statement about what he calls "cross-border regions" (in Europe – Euro-regions) - that they appear mainly among states that have a federative system: according to his findings, 18 of the 28 most integrated Euro-regions are situated on a border with Federal Germany (Perkmann, 2003: 9)

The aspect of CBC which liberal neo-institutionalists would underline is whether institutional frameworks (an Euro-region, transregional urban networks, mixt sector commissions, regimes) create a "natural economic territory" - in an international political economy perspective (Ohmae, 1995) - or even a functional action unit (in a neo-institutionalist perspective). To provide an answer, one could adopt the insights of the transnationalist school and analyse how cross-border flows, including information flows, contribute to foster regulation (border regimes) as well as region-building. The circulation of transnational flows beyond state boundaries "challenges the connection between sovereignty and territory that has underwritten the conceptual bonding of political power to statehood" (Agnew, 1998: 513).

The problem with transnationalist theory of IR is that it is biased by the post-modernist assumption that transnationalisation leads to border de-territorialisation only. From this follows that the idea of an "end of territory" is taken to pose a deadly threat for state sovereignty. However pertinent, this conception may be misleading, since in the Finnish-Russian case, multi-level CBC, including the transnational and even paradiplomatic relations of non- and sub-state actors, is a power-multiplier for central governments (Marin, 2002). Therefore, as argued by David Newman, "the changing function of boundaries does not, by definition, mean a 'borderless' world" (Newman, 1998: 6). Much on the contrary, *territorialisation* is a dialectical dynamic in the way that it consists of processes of de-territorialisation (globalisation and transnationalisation) on the one hand, and processes of re-territorialisation (regional integration and localism) on the other (Albert, 1998: 61)

The best approach for assessing the extent to which borderlands' interactions contribute to cross-border integration and the emergence of frontiers as institutional "units of action" is probably the constructivist one. The constructivists focus on the symbolic impact of boundaries on socialisation and explore the interplay between structural change and social agency. This allows them to apprehend and analyse the conditions and implications of the emergence of new institutional spaces across borders. Similar to anthropologists, their object and field of research is not the boundary itself or relations across is, but rather the practices, beliefs and institutions of those it encompasses. Because of CBC interaction, borderlands take on significance beyond the frontiers themselves: constructivists focusing on the role culture plays in the social construction and negotiation of (international) borders claim for example that borders are not only sites and symbols of power, but in some cases *agents* of inter-state relations (Donnan & Wilson, 1999: 3-4), and ultimately potential agents of *change* in IR.

According to Hastings Donnan and Thomas Wilson (1999: 33-34), the new interest of anthropologists in how CBC affects national centres of power has been partly influenced by historical and ethnographic analyses on the construction of national identities and the emergence of regionalism/localism. The question of how core-periphery relationships influence borders, and vice versa, have been numerous in political anthropology, a discipline which takes the dialectical relations between border areas and their respective political (or cultural) centres as its main focus of interest. For this reason, the US-Mexico and the Irish borderlands have been the panacea of border-field research for political anthropologists.[20] They somehow address the same questions as constructivist internationalists - namely the extent to which social agents "construct" an identity-related space of transfrontier interaction and whether this territory of action and identification is integrated enough to allow a cross-border region to speak "univocally" on the international arena when common values and interests are at stake.

Comparative studies provide sets of parameters and comprehensive models that are useful to study cross-border integration. Joachim Blatter (2004) for example analyses the level of integration at European and North-American border regions relying on two series of factors. He distinguishes first the function of "instrumental" and "identity-providing" *institutions* present at borders. The first are material (economic) interdependencies, sets of rules (regimes) and instruments meant to reduce uncertainty at the border. The second type of cross-border institution is more symbolic. Built by people-to-people contacts, they are grounded in common values and fulfil the task of reducing ambiguity (Blatter, 2004: 533). This template combines the factors considered as central by both the neo-institutionalist and constructivist approaches. A second analytical dimension of the model concerns the *architectures of governance.* Blatter distinguishes beetween "territorial" features of cross-border governance ("spaces of place" marked by vertical hierarchies and the exclusion of non-public agents) and "function-centred" ones (sector "spaces of flows" weaved by polycentric networks). This in turn reconciles neo-realist and transnationalist/post-modern assumptions concerning the political essence of an integrated border region. In combining the *institutional* and *governance* dimensions Blatter then suggests to position and represent the degree of integration of ideal-types borderlands in a four-compartments frame (Blatter, 2004: 540; fig. 1) as depicted by the following figure:

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[20] See e.g. publications in the American *Journal of Borderlands Studies* and those of the Belfast-based *Centre for International Borders Research.*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" rowspan="2"></td><td colspan="4"><i>architecture of governance</i></td></tr>
<tr><td>west</td><td>territorial</td><td>east</td><td>functional</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"><i>institutions</i></td><td>north</td><td>instrumental</td><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>south</td><td>identity-providing</td><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
</table>

This allows him to discern the fundamental differences in the nature and degree of integration of a) the Upper Rhine, an Euro-region which qualifies for a high degree of integration in all four squares of the frame; b) Lake Constance area, where identity-building is the dominant institutional feature and whose architecture of governance is more territorial than functional (south-east square); c) the Californias, where institutions are instrumental only, and governance equally animated by territory-centred and function-centred organisational features (northern squares); d) Cascadia, where region-building proceeds mainly thanks to identity-providing institutions (for the US-Canada border is culturally homogenous) within a functional (decentralised) governance setting (south-west square).

At first glance, the cultural and development gap at the Finnish-Russian border would make this borderlands' interaction comparable to the US-Mexico one. However, as I shall outline in the next section, the Finnish-Russian case fits in the north/north-west squares of Blatter's model. This borderland has organisational features of both territorial (inter-governmental, supra-state) and functional nature (business coalitions, CBC networks), as illustrated by the existence of Euregio Karelia, which has a seat in the Association of European Border Regions

(AEBR). Institutions are rather instrumental, although integration is progressing to the south-east square due to a Europeanisation of Russian borderlanders' mentalities and their permeability to European values conveyed by cross-border NGOs and other identity-providing institutions.

3. Actors and mechanisms of cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) is a multi-level interaction that requires minimal good will ("cooperativeness") from the sub-state, central *and* local organs of power of all neighbouring countries. The panorama of actors involved in CBC extends from micro-level groups of individuals to supra-national organisations. The latter have set up transregional frameworks for CBC – such as the EU's *Northern Dimension* - that "devolve" regions elements of actorness and responsibility for implementing common regional policies. Therefore, as argued by Markus Perkmann and Ngui-Ling Sum, European integration provides sub-state actors of CBC

> "opportunity structures to participate in international activities. These include: a) the recruitment of subnational authorities as policy implementation partners on the part of supranational authorities (Balme, 1996); b) an increasing role of subnational authorities in the formulation and implementation of 'their' nation-state's foreign policies ('catalytic diplomacy', see Hocking, 1996); c) a growing density of direct international contact among subnational authorities, bypassing superior levels of government ('paradiplomacy', see Duchacek, 1988)." (Perkmann & Sum, 2002: 5).

However, long before Brussels started showing some interest in cooperating with Russia, Finland had been the main artisan of "debordering" - on its own or together with other member states of various Nordic-Baltic "peak organisations" (regional bodies).

A) THE CBC POLICIES OF STATES AND REGIONAL BODIES

Support for democratisation, economic reforms, training of civil servants and activities of interest for civil society in North-West Russia has been a major concern of the Finnish government way before the EU started to develop a regional strategy on Russia. At the

Finnish-Russian border, financial incentives for CBC came first and foremost from Finland[21] and Nordic organisations. Following the signing of the January 1992 bilateral treaty between Finland and Russia a joint commission on CBC was established within which the authorities of the four Russian "adjacent regions" became Finland's main interlocutors. The goal of CBC consisted in disseminating information (especially about EU enlargement and how it would affect the conditions of Russia's trade with Finland) and in improving the skills of Russian public servants in matters of local governance. Within this framework practical problems were addressed and issues solved together with Russian delegations made up of regional representatives of sector ministries and regional/local authorities – the latter enjoying a relatively high level of autonomy from the centre. They had to meet Euro-Finnish standards in order to be in a good position to apply for external funding, from Finnish and, since 1997, TACIS budget. Local infrastructures and procedures had to be adapted in order to manage the daily growth in cross-border flows of goods and people. Russian border-guards took part in common training sessions with their Finnish counterparts, timetables of the customs and passport control authorities of both states were harmonised and a spirit of good-neighbourhood in "patrolling the frontier" together dominated the picture.

Devolution to regional and local authorities is an important feature of multilateral cooperation among the countries of the Baltic and Barents Sea Area. It contributed to downgrading the divisive function of borders between local communities. Russia's membership in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) gives its North-Western regions an opportunity to take part in translocal networking.[22] The BEAC's Regional Committee has a representation office in Brussels, meaning that the Russian sub-state units involved have an access to European institutions. Opening the 8th BEAC Ministerial Session in Murmansk on 14 March 2001, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov underlined that the border-crossing infrastructures, customs collaboration and flexible regimes for border-crossing established among partner countries and regions in the BEAC should serve as a "two-floor" model for the EU-Russia partnership at regional level and within the *Northern Dimension*.[23] The Gothenburg Report on the ND later emphasised that the expertise and practices provided by Nordic and Russian customs within the BEAC frame should be taken as an example elsewhere.[24]

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[21] From 1991 to 2000, the Republic of Karelia for example was the object of more than 200 joint Finnish-Russian projects of a total value of more than 30 million euros and 280 millions rubles. Interview with Valery Shlyamin, Minister for Foreign Relations of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk, June 2001

[22] The originality of the BEAC is that it works on two levels: a Council of State representatives and a Regional Committee involving participants at sub-state level - the regional councils of Lapland, North Ostrobothnia and Kainuu (Finland); Nordland, Troms and Finnmark *fylke* (Norway); Norbotten and Västerbotten *län* (Sweden); Arkhangel'sk and Murmansk oblasti, the Republics of Karelia and Komi, and the Nenets Autonomous District (Russia).

Whereas regional bodies and the Council of Europe have been very active in improving the *legal context* of CBC, especially in Central and Eastern European countries, the EU did play the most important role in terms of incentives, for it is the organization that provided the most substantial *financial support* for CBC initiatives (Perkmann, 2003: 3). At local level, CBC is usually confined to a relatively narrow set of people belonging to public administration of federal or local level, but in the Finnish-Russian case many other institutions are involved in *relations de bon voisinage*, such as schools, universities, research centres, cultural associations, NGOs, business guilds and transnational networks of epistemic communities.

B) LOCAL ACTORS OF REGION-BUILDING: THE "EUREGIO KARELIA" MODEL

According to Markus Perkmann, Euro-region has become "the standard model for pursuing CBC" in Europe and now forms part of the multi-level governance structure of the EU, even at its *external* borders. Euro-regions have played an important part in bridging cultural differences and administrative barriers between EU member states and post-socialist countries during their pre-accession reforms. The Commission influenced this process because it turned Euro-regions into "legitimate partners for the implementation of EU regional policy measures targeted at border areas" (Perkmann, 2003: 11-12). This enhanced the paradiplomatic actorness of Russian border regions.

In 1998, the leadership of the Republic of Karelia proposed its counterparts from Eastern Finland to establish a Euro-region. On 9 February 2000, Tarja Cronberg, President of the Union of Communities of the three Eastern Finnish counties (Northern Karelia, Kainuu and Northern Ostrobothnia), and Valery Shlyamin, Minister for External Relations of the Republic of Karelia, signed a joint statement formally giving birth to "Euregio Karelia".

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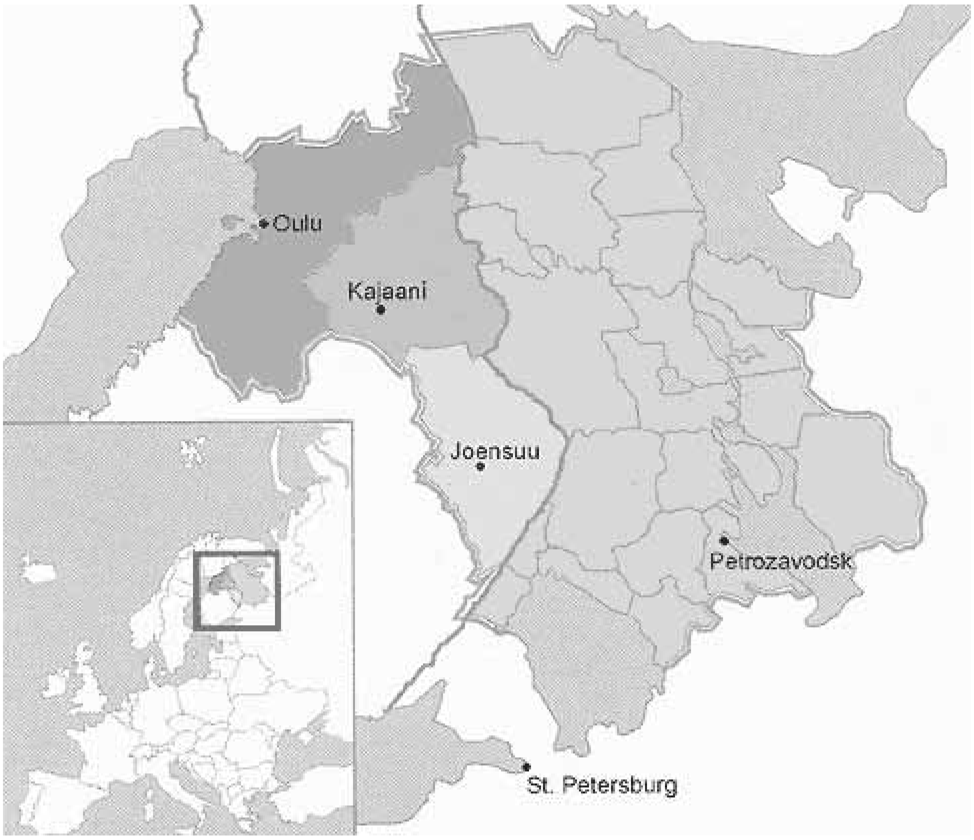
[23] Igor Ivanov "The BEAC – an effective model for sub-regional cooperation in 21st Century Europe", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 14 March 2001

[24] Council Presidency "Full Report on Northern Dimension policies", Gothenburg, 15-16 June 2001, p. 16

Map 3 "Euregio Karelia" members: regional councils of Northern Karelia (Joensuu), Kainuu (Kajaani), Northern Ostrobothnia (Oulu) and the Republic of Karelia (Russian Federation)



Source: Euregio Karelia website: http://euregio.karelia.ru/site/Map/?lang=eng (2003)

The programme "Our Common Border 2001-2006" was approved by the joint executive organ of Euregio Karelia on 2 November 2001. This 20 pages document (Euregio Karelia, 2000) proclaims three common stakes of CBC (common cultural heritage, common nature, common border) and three priority connections between the republic of Karelia's development programme and INTERREG III A Karelia in Finland. Three project fields (economic cooperation, culture of transparent border, public health), nine concrete priority projects[25] and two wider umbrella projects (development of civil society and information society) are now on the Euregio's agenda of CBC.

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[25] See Euregio (2000: 21; Appendix 1) and Prozorov (2004: 10)

Despite being located in the realm of public agency and limiting their scope of action to "low politics", Euro-regions make a substantive contribution to border stability, both in practical terms (day-to-day problem-solving) and in a longer-term perspective of building good-neighbourhood (Williams, 2002). Most Euro-regions therefore naturally evolve towards institutionalisation (Perkmann, 2003: 4), i.e. they establish a joint executive committee, as did the co-leaders of Euregio Karelia. Euregio Karelia was proclaimed "Euro-region of the Year – 2003" by the AEBR. It incarnates the highest level of intensity, cooperativeness and "integration" (institutional "depth") ever reached at a Russian border with a non-CIS country.[26] As a political construction it represents a successful downgrading of conflictness at the EU's Eastern border.

From a Finnish perspective, CBC was meant to stabilise the socio-economic and ecological situation in the ex-Soviet borderlands in associating local bureaucracies to EU-stamped projects. From a Russian viewpoint the interest of cooperation was both pragmatic and symbolic, for it could remove the historical burden of the latent "territorial question". Russian implementers consider Euroregions as useful tools for know-how transfers and thus a rebalancing of the international division of labour in Europe (Shlyamin, 2002). The shared idea was that the Euro-region might gain significance within the Wider Europe as a model for other border areas concerned by upcoming EU enlargements (Cronberg, 2000).

The Karelian-Finnish initiative was the object of great interest and support at "central" level (Brussels and Moscow). In the spring of 2001 EU Commissioner Michel Barnier paid an official visit to the border cities of Joensuu (Finland) and Sortavala (Karelia), followed on 10 May by the first visit of a Russian Foreign Minister in the Republic of Karelia. On his way to Helsinki Igor Ivanov stopped in Petrozavodsk and Joensuu where he delivered speeches that emphasised the achievements of regional authorities and underlined the positive impact of CBC on higher diplomatic relations. Decentralised cooperation has a "border-breaking" impact on the overall geo-psychological definition of territory and sovereignty in Russia because CBC is not *functional* only. It manifests itself in providing maps, fact sheets, common strategic plans but also some feeling of "we-hood" and shared fate. As argued by Liam O'Dowd:

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[26] Although at bilateral level CBC involving Kaliningrad is very effective, Euro-regions established together with the Russian exclave (Euregio "Baltija", "Saule" and "Neman") have not turned the borderland into one of "integration". This is due to negative pre-existent geopolitical factors, inadequate and underfinanced Russian involvement and a lack of motivation for institutionalising CBC at all levels.

> "Although most transfrontier or cross-border regions are created for pragmatic or instrumental reasons to access EU funding as a means of addressing shared environmental, planning or economic development problems, it may be argued that their real significance lies elsewhere [for] they may be seen as *harbingers of cross-national policy communities, advocacy and discourse coalitions, and epistemic communities* where the logic of communicative action, discourse and consensus creation may be just as important as the logic of instrumental action." (O'Dowd, 2002: 123)

Despite the commitment of political leaders to diffuse information in their constituencies, "Euregio Karelia" has not yet penetrated the lives of all members of the borderlands' civil society. In Russian villages remote from the border and on the Northernmost segment of the Euro-region for example, most people are still unaware of its existence or meaning. Even if they strive to have a say in policy decision-making, it would be wrong to assume that regional elites have much influence on central ones in the current state of centralisation in Finland, the EU and Russia. One example is that despite the active lobbying by local elites within their respective Parliament (Finnish and European Parliaments, Russia's Federation Council), the current visa regimes (Schengen and Russian) are far more restrictive compared to what they were in the 1990s. This border-*making* trend runs contrary to the interests of Russian borderlanders. The idea of establishing a special "Baltic Schengen" has been very popular in the Russian North-West since Yeltsin publicly mentioned it in 1997 – but such an arrangement never saw the light. The positive influence is that the best practices of Euregio Karelia emulated other regions to take similar initiatives. Pskov oblast', for example, has been cooperating with border counties of Estonia and Latvia with the project of establishing two Euro-regions as well (Makarychev, 2005). An embryo of Euro-region is currently being fed, for the first time with ENPI funding, on the South-Eastern segment of the Finnish-Russian border, between Finnish local authorities (Lappeenranta, Kotka), the Vyborg part of the Leningrad oblast' and the city of St. Petersburg.[27]

Most Euroregions suffer from a "crisis of governability" (Saez & al., 1997). This "Euregio syndrome" appears when, in a context of limited involvement at central level, local/regional authorities do not enjoy the minimal legal autonomy necessary for developing CBC. Despite Karelia being a Republic with considerable prerogatives in matters of foreign economic relations, its legislation is under-developed and it is always difficult to make ends meet when implementing a cross-border programme with Russian partners. One explanation for this shortcoming is that, more often than no, responsibility for implementing CBC projects was transferred under the roof of federal structures in Moscow, depriving local practitioners of a *droit de regard* on how to spend funds. Another problem was that technical assistance usually ran in close circuit within the EU itself, the experts appointed to select projects usually being consultants from EU countries, not Russia. Operational implementation was a puzzle and coordination not always facilitated from above. INTERREG and TACIS operate according to different procedures and timetables for budgetary allocations. EU internal rules set different legal bases and require a lot of unnecessary paperwork that ultimately slows down interaction. Assessing the results of EU funded CBC projects, Tarja Cronberg (2000) argued that "the great bureaucratic divide [at the Finnish-Russian border] is maintained by differences in decision-making practices (local/Brussels) that reinforce the conscious ambiguity or unintended inefficiency" of the EU's policies on Russia. Reforming the EU's funding policies and launching a de-bureaucratisation of application procedures were actually among the initial, auto-prophylactic goals of Finland's *Northern Dimension* Initiative.

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[27] Cf. the website of the South-East Finland / Russia Neighbourhood programme, http://www.southeastfinrusnpi.fi/

C) EU INVOLVEMENT IN "DEBORDERING": THE *NORTHERN DIMENSION*

After the demise of the Warsaw Pact, the EU committed itself to helping financially ex-socialist countries comply with democratic and market economy rules. From 1991 to 1999, out of € 3,8 billion available for the whole area, TACIS granted over € 2,3 billion for more that 1500 Russian projects[28] – which is three to six times less than what PHARE provided candidate countries. Russian border regions could apply for a special EU funding (maximum € 200 000 per project): TACIS CBC Small Project Facility is meant to finance CBC projects presented together with partner institutions (both public and private, NGOs, universities, associations, foundations, etc.) from the other side of the border eligible for INTERREG or PHARE funding. Under the TACIS CBC Programme, € 38 million were allocated for technical assistance and infrastructure at border-crossing points on the EU's external border, 40% of which was spent on the Russian-Finnish border.

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[28] From 1992 to 2000, there have been about 60 TACIS programmes running yearly in St. Petersburg city alone, for a total amount of 300 million Euros, 40 millions of which were funded by the Commission. Cf. International Conference *Ten years of EU TACIS programmes in St. Petersburg (experience and perspectives)*, St. Petersburg city administration, 20 April 2001 http://www.kvs.spb.ru/news/010420.shtml

Sharing the experience of CBC with Russia was the cornerstone of the *Northern Dimension Initiative* launched by Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen at the European Council meeting in Luxembourg in the fall of 1997. The following year in Cologne the Commission turned the *Northern Dimension* (ND) into a joint regional policy within CFSP. With the ND, Finland successfully "communalised" its approach of CBC with the Baltic Sates and border regions of Russia, thus sharing with other EU member states the burden of having Russia as a neighbour. Problems addressed in the ND frame are mainly "soft security" issues such as transnational pollution and obstacles (including low quality infrastructure) to the free movement of goods and energy across Northern European borders. The Finnish initiative had originally more philanthropic goals – sharing of best practices in business culture, democratic governance, social affairs, etc. – that with time lost significance for the Fifteen compared with other cooperation challenges (energy, transport and communications).

In the beginning, Russia adopted a low profile towards the ND because its policies were to be implemented without additional EU funding, turning the whole policy into a "poor joke" in the eyes of Russian partners.[29] Until it reached political heights from 2001 on (when Germany, Sweden and Denmark, while holding the EU Council presidency, enhanced the ND's profile), the ND was rather marginal. Moreover, the *realpolitik* way of apprehending Baltic geopolitics made Moscow reactive to policies fostering "regionalisation" and "interdependence" – words that ring bad to Russian ears. The fact that Brussels unilaterally declared Kaliningrad a central target and "pilot region" of the ND also irritated the Kremlin. Another obstacle to mutual understanding was that in Russia the ND was often mistaken with, or thought to be a submarine of, the United States' *Northern European Initiative* (NEI) launched in 1997 as well. The latter was thought to be a mean for Washington to make public opinion in Russian border regions less opposed to the idea of the Baltic States joining NATO (Yurgens & Karaganov, 1999: § 5.15). Nevertheless, under the pressure of sub-state implementers of ND policies, the Russian leadership started paying more attention to "dimensionalism" as one (regional and cross-border) ingredient of its cooperation with the enlarging EU.

In 2000 the EU Council presented the *Action Plan for the Northern Dimension in the external and cross-border policies of the European Union 2000-2003* (Council, 2000). The *Action Plan* (NDAP) is merely a guideline document making political recommendation for on-going and future regional cooperation involving countries of the ND area. The NDAP proclaims that CBC is both an instrument (for implementing ND policies) and a goal in its own right (as a "bridge" for avoiding "the emergence of new dividing lines" on the European continent). For this reason

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[29] Even if, on paper, financing ND projects was meant to rely on "synergies" between existing programmes, the TACIS regulation covering the 2000-2006 period augmented from 10 to 25% the share of funding for projects in (Western) border regions of the CIS, which implies that the Community budget actually financed the ND.

> "the comprehensive, crosscutting and horizontal approach [of the ND] (…) provides a framework *unlimited by traditional borders* to enhance constructive partnership and dialogue across the ND area at both the national and local leve."[30]

Having proclaimed the full right of sub- and non-state actors to participate in elaborating and implementing the NDAP, the EU's main contribution to "integration without joining" is that it supports previously existing cross-border partnerships (e.g. city twinning, transnational networks, regional projects undertaken within the Baltic Sea Sub-State Cooperation Council and the UBC[31]). In this sense, it provided an opportunity for "multiscalar regionalism" (Scott, 2004) in the Baltic Sea area. The other main advantage of the ND is that it is an ever-evolving lay-out for cooperation (thus more flexible than the *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement*). It is a multilateral frame that gives voice to actors other than EU ones (e.g. regional bodies such as the CBSS, local authorities[32] and epistemic networks[33]). Therefore, it is more collegial and cooperative than (unilateral) CFSP instruments such as the 1999 *Common Strategy on Russia.* Priority was given by the Commission to projects meant to increase nuclear safety in the Eastern part of the ND area, including that of Soviet nuclear power points located in the

[30] Commission/Presidency, Non Paper *The Northern Dimension after Enlargement*, 12 July 2002, presented at the Illulissat conference. Emphasis added.

[31] The Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is an inter-municipal forum for big and medium cities, with its own press organs for the exchange of information on urban planning, transport infrastructure, jobs creation, health, tourism, cultural events, etc. See www.baltinfo.org

[32] St. Petersburg governor Vladimir Yakovlev was the only Russian regional leader included in the Russian delegation led by then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin that participated in the first discussion of the ND at ministerial level in a 15+7 (held in Helsinki on November 12th, 1999).

[33] In September 1999, the Centre for Integration Research and Programs (CIRP, a think tank based in St. Petersburg) and the Karelian Barents Centre (regional branch of the BEAC) organised with the support of the Commission's Delegation in Russia a workshop on "Towards Closer Engagement: Russia and the Northern Dimension of the European Union" (Cf. http://events.cirp.info/eng/euconf99/report.shtml). One outcome of the discussion was that the ND concept should not be limited to economics and that its political component should be enhanced.

vicinity of the EU border - in Ignalina (Lithuania), Murmansk (Andreeva Bay) and the Leningrad oblast' (Sosnovy Bor, 60 km from St. Petersburg).[34]

Border problems are broadly understood in the NDAP. Water pollution ranks very high among the main headings of CBC for it is, by definition, a transnational matter of concern for all countries of the North.[35] North-West Russia is, after Poland, the second source of wastewater (13% of the overall wastewater drainage) polluting the Baltic Sea, with dramatic effects on the ecosystem, tourism and fishing in all riparian states. St. Petersburg for example treats water only up to 30% and throws the rest into the Neva river or the Gulf of Finland. In 2001 the Commission agreed a € 22 million contribution to the St. Petersburg South-West Wastewater Treatment Plant (YUZOS) and called for an enhanced financial commitment from the EBRD and other IFIs. This is the result of an effective lobbying of Finnish maritime regions (Helsinki city included) that were concerned by potential ecological threats coming from Russia and expected the ND to provide solutions.

Another sphere where the ND has brought some synergies in CBC with Russia is transport. This includes colossal investments for developing connected infrastructure along the "Arkhangelsk Corridor" (from Komi capital Syktyvkar to Sweden through Russian Karelia and Northern Finland) and the future "Northern Sea Route" (Arctic Ocean). "Via Baltica" (linking Helsinki to Warsaw by land via St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Riga and Kaunas) is another ND-labelled project, one of the oldest TransEuropean Corridor project in Europe. Its implementation required activating CBC with Russian border regions, including St. Petersburg. The Northern capital benefited from ND funding and Russian public and private investment to modernise the ring-road circumventing the city (the "KAD") and connect it to the E18 high-speed motorway (Turku-Helsinki-Moscow). The KAD is also a contribution to the "Via Hanseatica" multi-modal transport corridor project meant to connect the Russian North-West to Hamburg *via* Narva, Riga, Kaliningrad, Gdansk and Lübeck.

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[34] The Commission provided € 6 million technical assistance for managing spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste in borderland Russia. The TACIS Nuclear Safety Programme and the funds of the EBRD helped to increase the reliability of these outdated installations. Norway, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the BEAC have been channelling most of the funds available, through NEFCO for example.

[35] The guidelines for the Second NDAP (2004-2006) pointed to a specific water-motivated CBC project, the "Lake Peipus/Peipsi-Chudskoe Project" - an NGO involving Estonian cities (Narva and Tartu), Pskov oblast and Ivangorod (Leningrad oblast') that succeeded in fostering cooperative (though not integrative) relations of neighbourhood (Makarychev, 2005).

The last enlargement changed the ND format from “15 to 7” to “25 + 3” (Iceland, Norway, Russia) and put new pressures on the EU-Russia border. The “Russia first” objective of the ND has suffered from the latest enlargement round, which caused a shift in the balance of interest in the EU and affected its external behaviour (Kononenko 2004: 3). If, in the 1990s, Finland was eager to stabilise its border with Russia thanks to CBC, the same cannot be held true of Poland’s and the Baltic States’ policies towards their Russian neighbour in the years 2000. Third pillar issues (transnational crime, terrorism, illegal immigration) and energy safety are now ranking higher on the global agenda, whereas dimensionalism in relation to “new Nighbours” has lost significance within the CFSP. Let us turn to the way the EU manages “integration without joining” in relation to the Russian borderlands.

4. Assessment and limits of EU influence – an overview

–According to Prescott (1987: 161-173), the study of border landscapes and boundaries can give way to four research themes (see also Donnan & Wilson, 1999: 47). Firstly, the border is a dimension of the *cultural landscape* that can be studied as one element of a state’s institutions along the borderline. Second, as a *demographic container*, the border can affect the socio-economic landscape in adjacent territories. Third, since it has a psychological impact on the attitudes of borderlanders, the border should be taken into account when attempting to decipher the *origins and impact of cultural change*. Fourth, borders influence the way national policies are made and implemented, for their very existence affects *both the mental map and the strategic interests* of policy-makers. In this section, I discuss the impact of recent changes in the geopolitical environment and the functional meaning of the Finnish-Russian border on a) the political culture of Russian borderlanders, b) the national policies of the RF, with a focus on foreign policy decision-making processes and on regional policies (territorial planning) and c) the reforms attempted and that remain to be implemented for adapting the structural functioning of the EU to future challenges of good-neighbourhood.

A) THE CULTURAL IMPACT OF CBC: EUROPEANISATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC POLICIES

Borderlands are sites of communication and conflict that appear at any place where distinct cultures interact without losing their differences, though it is true that social preferences and identities can be affected by this interaction. This change interests post-modernist anthropologists, who define borderlands

> "[as] an interstitial zone of displacement and deterritorialization that shapes the identity of the hybridised subject. Rather than dismissing them as insignificant, as marginal zones, thin slivers of land between stable places, we want to contend that the notion of borderlands is a more adequate conceptualisation of the 'normal' locale of the postmodern subject" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992: 18)

The most easily observable interaction is border-crossing, a standardised activity revelatory of the behavioural patterns of adjacent societies and of states that enacted regulations border-crossers have to comply with. Due to the many rituals that accompany border-crossing, anthropologists consider that a border is an interface between symbols and politics, one that catalyses the intrinsic paradox of the border itself. At this interface between Self and Other, it is possible to examine how CBC leads to a transformation of the identity-related values shared by the individuals who perform physical translation through the border (Donnan & Wilson, 1999: 67, 107) and "deborder" it. Among regular border-crossers at the Finnish-Russian border one finds commuting workers, civil servants, truck and bus drivers, tourists, students, smugglers and shoppers. These individuals are two-way conveyers of cultural change because they bring into one country some of the consumer items and cognitive patterns that form part of the cultural landscape of another country.

> "Even the most uncomplicated and innocuous behaviour by those who cross borders to work or to consume may have a significance beyond that recognised by its participants (…) In one sense there is no more innocent activity at international borders than cross-border shopping (…) [However], an expanding literature on cross-cultural consumption has confirmed how *the value and meaning of goods are transformed by crossing borders*. (…) Because the border, all borders, play important roles in production, trade and consumption, borders become *marketable items themselves, commodities to be packaged or portrayed in ways which will sustain other economic processes, and support the image if not the facts of life in the country to which they act as gateways.*" (Donnan & Wilson, 1999: 117-118, 122; emphasis added).

The homogenisation of consumer customs and fashion standards, the export of culinary or musical tastes and the dissemination of information are but some signs of the cultural influence of border-crossers. At another level, business culture and behavioural standards in service activities (private or public) are also being exported from one country to a neighbouring area in the course of CBC *praxis.* The administrative culture of part of the local Russian elite is positively influenced by day-to-day interactions with neighbour Finnish civil servants, who are eager to share best practices of local governance with their Russian counterparts when the latter are invited for a professional training in a Finnish administration. The border regimes that have emerged over the past years are local incarnations of European standards, meaning that Russian CBC partners applying for external funding obviously need to comply with European rules. Since Finland is the main provider of information and know-how transfers in this matter, one can infer that the Finnish-Russian border gives EU-Europe a springboard to have its norms and values channelled into Russia by way of CBC – what can be called a form of "Europeanisation" (Scott, 1999).

In this paper Europeanisation is understood in a much broader sense that what is traditionally the case in works dedicated to Europeanisation of public policies in EU member and candidate countries. I define Europeanisation as a dynamic and ongoing process of both material and immaterial transfrontier influence by which European formal rules (legal standards defined by the EU and the Council of Europe) and common cultural values (agreed upon identity-related norms of behaviour that were socially constructed by the community of people thinking of themselves as Europeans) penetrate a polity located beyond the external borders of the EU. This broad definition allows me to incorporate in the picture, firstly, the institutional/functional dimensions of Europeanisation – how the *acquis communautaire* is translated into a non-EU polity's legal order and consolidated in local civic culture with the adoption of public policies that respect Brussels' guidelines. Secondly, Europeanisation also encompasses less palpable dimensions of the EU's outside influence – the transmission and incorporation of (Western) European values in non- or "less" European cultural spaces and them ultimately adopting a pro-European foreign policy behaviour.

In border regions, cultural landscapes transcend political ones (Anderson, 1996) and peripheral borders develop a culture of their own that is at the forefront of globalisation and regionalisation. This points to the "transformative effect" of dynamic borders that, when favourable conditions are met, can become the "motive forces in the evolution of nations and states" (Anderson, O'Dowd & Wilson, 2003: 14). The introduction of EU standards in the domestic legal order of many border subjects of the RF (Lenoblast', Novgorod, Karelia, St. Petersburg) is a process that signals some institutionalisation of cross-border influence. Even if cultural and administrative borders between North-West Russians and the EU are partially erased because of identity- and institution-building across the border, the reverse is not necessarily true, for in EU countries, Finland included, Russians are perceived in dominantly negative terms. However, the commitment of most Russian local actors – businessmen, urban planners, school teachers, customs officers, media – to benefit from cross-border activities in a spirit of good-neighbourliness signals a capacity for Europeanisation to extend way beyond the formal Finnish-Russian border.

Looking at Europeanisation in the Russian North-West through a constructivist lens implies considering the border as a socially-constructed institution across which borderlanders interact and that affects their self-perceptions (in terms of identity, values and interests). With this definition in mind, there is ground to believe that multiple-level interactions are gradually building a peaceful and stable "Northern" roof for the "Common European Home". People-to-people contacts, CBC and cultural interactions in the Finnish-Russian borderlands are grounded in the feeling that good-neighbourhood is necessary and, from a Russian viewpoint, that it benefits the whole country's economy. These inter-cultural relationships are actually constructing new *spaces* of belonging where Russians feel at home despite the fact that their field co-workers and the rules of the game in borderlands' interaction usually come from outside, i.e. Finland or the EU. A "we-feeling" emerges among some borderlanders, who think of themselves as "Northerners" (whatever their nationality) and are frequently stamped by the media as "cousins" of the Finns (Karelians and Ingermanlanders), "European-minded" (Petersburgans) and in any case fundamentally alien to Muscovites.

Narratives on the border are major elements of cultural delimitation, as much as are state-led and bottom-up processes of "mapping"[36] or the local variations in the semiotics of national identity (local anthems, flags, folklore images of the Other, war-time caricatures of the enemy). A border is not only shaped by state policies of securing, controlling and image-making. It also manifests itself in films, novels, memorials, ceremonies and public events (Newman and Paasi, 1998: 196) – cultural practices that inform the border-sociologist on the border's relative permeability and on its real (social) cognitive-imaginative layout. The social construction of a border is influenced by the new meanings and truths that are being produced about it, for example through activities such as historiography[37], journalism[38] and cinematography[39].

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[36] The notion of "mapping" refers to politics of "map-making" that interest border-analysts because of "the power of maps in the formation of foreign policy, reflected in the scales used, the semantics and naming of places and the extent to which they are used as part of a wider process of cartographic propaganda and territorial socialisation" (Newman, 1998: 4)

[37] The desovietisation of Russian textbooks and the holding of international scientific conferences have led to a new reading of facts related to the border.

[38] A bilingual newspaper, the *Viipurin Sanomat-Vyborgskie Novosti,* is now available in almost every border-crossing point of the Finnish-Russian border.

Discourses on and images of the border that are conveyed through these various communication means change the attitude of borderlanders towards their neighbours. They hybridise the collective representations of the border shared by adjacent communities who claim having an alternative identity not necessarily reconcilable with the customs and mentalities of people from the "centre" (Moscow, Helsinki, Brussels). Therefore, borderlanders' interactions change their social expectations towards central policy decision-makers, criticising them for imposing restrictive border-crossing rules or adopting a diplomatic posture that contradicts local interest in good-neighbourhood. In this sense, our findings draw us towards the same conclusions as Henrikson (2000), who argues that trans-boundary diplomacy in the frontier regions can "filter down" from periphery into the central/federal organs of power, a bottom-up influence of localized economic and social relations that positively affects the nature of inter-state relationships. In other words, CBC interactions consolidate fences of *bon voisinage*, much like in Robert Frost's poem "Mending a Wall" (Williams, 2002). In caring together about their common border, borderlanders force the central leadership of both states to work out ever more cooperative policies and "integrative" frameworks of joint border governance.

B) INFLUENCE ON RUSSIAN REGIONAL AND FOREIGN POLICIES: FROM INTERDEPENDENCE TO INTEGRATION … AND BACK TO ALIENATION?

Borderlanders' "multiple subjectivities" imply that they develop a strategy drawing on multiple repertoires of identity (Hicks, 1991; Welchman, 1996). It provokes a juxtaposition of projects on the border itself and involves sub-state actors in a double-edged game with central authorities and external partners. CBC gives regional leaders the opportunity to establish paradiplomatic networks and influence central decision-makers (Marin, 2002). The border situation is gives Russian regional authorities the opportunity to incorporate European identity-related norms and principles of behaviour as a way of erecting a moral border between them and the federal level of power in Russia.

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[39] Dmitry Rogozhkin's famous film "Kukushka" ("The Cuckoo", 2001) contributed to "restage" the Finnish-Russian border in common time and space. The movie highlights how understanding and solidarity in hard times (the end of the Continuation War) can bypass the culturally prescribed borders of language, culture and ideology between three characters (a native Karelian beauty, courted by a wounded Soviet soldier and a young Finnish deserter she both shelters and who compete for her love). The desterter's part is played by Ville Haapasalo, a Finnish actor who became famous after having shot in Russian comic films of the 1990s (e.g."Specificities of national fishing").

Europeanisation and nascent “transboundary regionalism” of the North-West border regions is not for the federal authorities’ liking, to say the least: in some respect, it seems the EU’s *Northern Dimension* policies fostered the adoption of *reactive* policies in Putin’s Russia since 2000. This reactive cognitive map of neighbourhood with Europe is evident mainly in matters of regional policy (intra-federal relations) and territorial planning. The first indication that post-modernist ideas do not appeal to the current Russian leadership was the establishment of federal districts in the spring of 2000. This re-centralisation was meant to strengthen the “vertical of state power” against the threat of extrovert regionalism that popped in 1998 in some Russian regions, especially border and resource-rich ones. In 2000-2001 the Putin establishment accelerated the working out of both foreign policy concepts[40] and Doctrines for the Development of each federal district, under the supervision of German Gref’s *Centre for Strategic Research*. The St. Petersburg based North-West Centre for Strategic Research (*Tsentr Strategicheskikh Razrabotok – “Severo-Zapad”*), a newly-created structure made up of young experts and civil servants from Moscow, drafted a 35 pages *Doctrine for the development of the North-West Federal District* that was made public in November 2001 (Shchedrovitskiy, 2001) It called for the “re-assimilation” (active scenario) of the natural growth potential of the North-West (raw material, harbours, industry, human capital) against a possible neo-colonial takeover by Western countries. This “passive scenario” option is to be feared at the horizon 2024 in case no comprehensive strategic plan for a (pro-)Russian-oriented development of the area is implemented.

In a way, the *Doctrine* attempts to oppose localism/regionalisation with re-federalisation and by re-building a border between the North-West and the interests of the ROW. It tries to re-russify the area in restoring solidarity links and feelings of we-hood among the district’s regions. The eight maps included in the document give the impression of a paranoid and defensive attitude towards the outer world in general, and neighbours in particular. One especially (“Russia’s Geostrategic environment”) represents the triple horror scenario of becoming the raw material appendage of the West, the target of Islamic terrorism coming from the South and demographic invasion from the East, with threats direction materialised respectively with violet, green and yellow arrows (Shchedrovitskiy, 2001: map p. 24-25).

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[40] The SVOP report on Russia's interests in the European North (SVOP, 2001) was drafted in the course of the winter 2000-2001 (see *infra*); on 13 February 2001 the Foreign Ministry adressed the government a communication for the press on the "Concept of cross-broder cooperation in Russia" (*O kontseptsii prigranichnogo sotrudnichestva v Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, soobshchenie n° 183); in the summer Russia's Border Concept was adopted by the President.

Another indicates the three (out of fifteen circled) “basic formats of international interaction in Europe” of which Russia is a member – Baltic, Barents-EuroArctic, and Arctic. The NWFD is not incorporated into the spaces delimited by the rings of membership in these organisations, nor do the layouts of the *Northern Dimension* area appear in any way (actually both the *Doctrine* and *Strategy* ignore the EU’s policies). Such cognitive maps do not match the way authorities of border regions usually represent themselves *within* their (necessarily external) environment – Euregio for the Republic of Karelia, the Baltic Sea area for St. Petersburg and Leningrad oblast’, the Barents sea for Murmansk). The *Doctrine* acknowledges the “fragmentation in four sectors” of the North-West economic space (industrial territories; raw material provinces; Kaliningrad exclave; St. Petersburg – a “transport-handling and trade-intermediate centre of international importance”) but it does not refer specifically to the border with Finland. In short, good-neighbourliness is nearly inexistent in the views drafted by the Centre for Strategic Research and it translates into a *Doctrine* that is not at all integration-friendly towards the EU. The same is true of a 400 pages Soviet-flavoured strategic plan called *Project Guidelines of a Socio-Economic Development Strategy for the NWFD until 2015* (Znanie Society, 2002) that was printed in 2002. In the consultation phase, consultation between regional authorities and the federal representatives on the field were quite low. Half of the regions under the jurisdiction of the NWFD rejected the views, manoeuvres and priority assignments of the Presidential Administration’s plan-makers. Governors and local organs in charge of social and economic development argued that it was drafted without them and for the sake of Russia as a whole, more than in their own interest, which is obviously more extroverted (oriented on Europe) than inward-oriented. However, the St. Petersburg, Leningrad oblast’ and Karelian leaderships seem to agree with central policies on one issue – that the Russian North-West should become an intermodal platform in the global freight transit from Asia to Western markets across Russian territory. But they do not want to stand out as little mice in this interstitial space between Russia and the EU.

According to then President’s Plenipotentiary Representative in the NWFD, Viktor Cherkesov, the fact that the EU and the United States have their own policies in Northern Europe for appropriating Russian energy supplies and trying to “assimilate” Russian borderlanders in their spheres of influence requires a “relevant answer”. Russia should defend its own interests in the area and lay control again on its borderlands. His aide Liubov’ Sovershaeva emphasised in November 2001 that for the sake of economic coordination, regions and the federal centre should work on elaborating a common strategy on the North of

Europe in response to the ND.[41] Such a coordinated policy never saw the light, despite the existence of a non-permanent Consultative body in the federal Foreign Ministry, the Council of the Subjects of the RF for International and Foreign Economic Relations. Border regions could have used this forum to influence the drafting of Russia's policies in its Northern Dimension, had it not been reshaped in 2003 into a "Council of the Subjects' Heads" whose role is more to channel top-down decisions on "re-integration" of the CIS than to popularise best practices of border-breaking cooperation with the EU.

Foreign policy decision-making has also gone through a process of re-centralisation in Russia. The Northern frontier is among the borders reshaped by these re-federalising discourses and patriotic images produced to counter regional claims for autonomy and solve various security dilemmas. The March 2001 political guidelines called "Russian interests in the North. What are they?", drafted by SVOP advisers[42], is a more progressive and pro-active document than previous foreign policy concepts. In its introductory section the document acknowledges the Pan-European North as an area of "outstanding stability" and Russia's North-western border as a "peaceful" one. It goes on stating the country's priorities in the area and suggest paying attention

> "to the further development of contacts and relations at the regional level, the most important Russian regions being those bordering on Finland and Norway. However, it is very obvious that the development of cooperation along these borders side by side with the political support from the federal authorities requires appropriate financing." (SVOP, 2001: §1)

The text goes on with a selection of spheres in which Russia sees a potential for positive interdependence with Europe across their common Northern border: freight traffic (from Central Asia to Finland through Korea, the Tran-Siberian and the NWFD ports), fishing and forestry, power engineering investments in the oil and gas industry, transport networks ("from Norway to the Urals"), transit infrastructure, science and IT, nuclear pollution. Cooperation within the *Northern Dimension* is mentioned, with special focus on the contribution of Euro-regions to the global architecture of stability and on the negative impact, from a Russian viewpoint, of NATO enlargement.

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[41] "Making Cross-Border Co-operation Work", seminar in Pushkin, 20-21 November 2001, press-release, www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/conf/sem11_01.htm

[42] The Council for Foreign and Security Policy (SVOP) is a para-Kremlin think-tank of a hundred or so Russian specialists. Some of them drafted what became the official foreign policy concept of the Russian executive (the Duma has geopolitical views and diplomatic discourses of its own) towards "Pribaltika", i.e. the three Baltic States, not the other Baltic neighbours (Yurgens & Karaganov, 1999).

The SVOP publications are independent, advisory publications that do not seem to have much impact on the course of federal policy any longer. There are clear signs that Russia is not ready to accept Brussels' unilateral regional and cross-border policies, especially when it comes to "hard security" issues and energy transit. The EU is criticised for maintaining Russia in a position of raw material provider for European markets and for not investing enough in the real sector (e.g. transport infrastructures, not only border-crossing ones). Russia asked for the Northern Dimension to become a funded regional frame for an equal partnership that would benefit not only North-West regions, but Russia itself. The leitmotiv is that the Commission should finance inter-modal transport corridors from the border with the EU to Russia's Eastern border with Asian markets. This can obviously not be done in the *regional* frame of the *Northern Dimension* because it has only limited direct *cross-border implications* for the EU itself. Within a progressive frame of co-financing such as the ND Environmental Plan, Russia is becoming increasingly involved as an active participant and equal co-financer of CBC.

One permanent feature in the Russian foreign and regional policies relative to its North-Western border is that it sees CBC institutionalisation (Euro-regions) as a success story of good-neighbourhood and an example of "integration" other Russian border regions are recommended to follow (Strategy, 1999; SVOP, 2001). On all other matters, it seems that asymmetrical interdependence and the continuing process of functionally and symbolically alienating Russia from the rest of Europe (Schengen and NATO enlargements; the "enclavement" of Kaliningrad) have led to a strengthening of the Kremlin's position against prospects of having the North as a regional laboratory for "integration without joining". Russian diplomats are not attracted by any idea of "debordering" or "re-territorialisation" of the border, and they are completely allergic to the idea of border regions being called "paradiplomatic units" of the RF. This is evident in the wording and spirit of the "Conception for the defence of state borders for 2001-2005" signed by President Putin on September 1st, 2001, which sets the basic principles for what Vardomsky & al. (2002: 140) call a concept of "zip-fastener" (*"zastezhka-molniya"*) in relation to borders. The idea is that borders should be opened for CBC only to the extent that it does not harm higher security interests, and in any case the priority is given to cooperation within the CIS space rather than across the EU border.

The main reason for growing reciprocal alienation is that the EU has not been willing to let Russia have a say in the definition of supposedly "common" frames for cooperation, such as the ND, thus fostering a process whereby Russia had either to comply with Brussels' rules, or be "othered" from the Wider Europe (Haukkala, 2001). As Sergei Prozorov argued in the third EuroBorderConf paper

> "The sustainability of EU-Russian cooperation in the North of Europe depends on the willingness and the capacity of the parties to find a balanced format of cooperation that accommodates both sovereign and integrationist logics. (…) It therefore appears that for both Russia and the EU the strategy of cooperation and border deproblematisation eventually encounters the limit posed by more state-centred exclusionary, boundary-producing or, simplistically, 'modernist' projects of the two parties." (Prozorov, 2005: 19)

Good-neighbourhood and CBC with Finland alone cannot help meet the challenge of furthering integration in "common spaces" of the EU-Russia partnership if both Brussels and Moscow stay on their paternalistic / protectionist positions. It is not surprising then that Russia is turning its back on Europe and looking for alternative regional partnerships (e.g. with China, India and Iran). To some extent, the Kremlin's attitude towards the EU – so weakened after the rejection of the European Constitution in the French and Dutch referenda – is becoming one of "benign neglect".[43] This is neither good news for the EU nor for Russian borderlanders interested in CBC. For the sake of good-neighbourhood itself, there was an urgent need for the EU to change the philosophy of its (regional) external policies on Russia – a difficult task at 25. Brussels and Moscow needed to agree on what they put in dimensionalism as a laboratory for integration in the common spaces, and on the level of subsidiarity and devolution they would accept for implementing CBC projects.

C) BEYOND DIMENSIONALISM: WHITHER GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD AT THE EU'S EASTERN BORDER?

The EU's borders are among the most interesting sites in today's world where social scientists can identify and assess the effect of major trends at work as a consequence of sub-regional integration – transfers of authority from state level "upwards" to supranational level (EU),

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[43] This is the overall idea defended by ambassador Nikolai Spasskiy, the deputy-secretary of the Russian Security Council, in a communication entitled "National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation and Russia's Policy towards Europe", Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), 19 January 2006.

"downwards" to local and regional levels (in line with subsidiarity) and "out/sideways" into transregional networks of interaction (Perkmann & Sum, 2002: 3). Borderlands are spaces where the challenge of governance becoming increasingly polycentric and multilayered are better analysable in the current state of integration within the Wider Europe. The question of whether Brussels succeeded in meeting this challenge remains an open one.

To most observers, in the late 1990s the *Northern Dimension* appeared to be an empty shell in a sea of existing processes, and even if some agreed that it filled with content incrementally over the years thanks to parallel contributions, the assessment of dimensionalism in the EU's external policies is mild. Among the positive signs in the latest evolution of the EU's policy on Russia is the fact that in early 2001, the Commission issued a "Guide to bringing INTERREG and TACIS funding together" to facilitate CBC at the external borders of the EU. Local authorities were the first who suggested enlarging PHARE regulations to regions of the North-West Federal District (NWFD) or adopting a single financing instrument for CBC across all the EU's external borders. The recent launching of a single financial instrument (the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, ENPI) for CBC projects implemented at borders "from Murmansk to Marrakech" signals that the demands of local practitioners of CBC, including those channelled by Russian and Finnish regional authorities implementing ND-labelled projects at their common border, have been heard.

At the St. Petersburg Summit in May 2003 the EU and Russia confirmed their commitment to a further strengthening and development of their cooperation (Commission, 2003). This was confirmed in 2004 in the Communication n°373 on EU-Russia relations that emphasised earlier commitments and expanded them even further so as to include Russia in the "ring of friends" (Liikanen & Virtanen, 2005: 7). In the Commission's policy proposal, the problem of Russia's refusal to adopt the New Neighbourhood frame (Vahl, 2006: 11) is bypassed by stating that the EU and Russia have decided in May 2005 to develop (integration-without-joining) relations in four "common spaces" (Economic space; Space of freedom, security and justice; Space of cooperation in the field of external security and Space of research, education and culture). CBC is recognised as a necessary dimension of both good neighbourhood *and* the strategic partnership. As argued by contributors to the EXLINEA project, the future introduction of the New Neighbourhood policies will directly affect both the regional and the European dimension of Russian border regions.

> "To some degree [Euregio Karelia]'s regional role will probably be promoted by the adaptation of ENPI, and the new policy framework is likely to further emphasise its role as a *European model*. At the same time the streamlined

> framework can limit the independence of the local actors and even weaken the legitimation of its activities *if it ignores the horizon of the local actors*. In this sense, the roles and influences of the Euregios on the external border of the European Union are not limited to the local scale but the future of Euregios is bound to larger processes of policy reformulation within the EU and on its (eastern) external borders (Virtanen 2004, 133). (…) [T]he potential future role of the Euregio is probably not so much to promote interaction according to a predefined European policy framework, but rather to *open a channel to mediate between supranational, national and regional ambitions*." (Liikanen & Virtanen: 16, 20; emphasis added).

Russian regions might well play such a mediating role from 2007 on in the frame of the *Northern Dimension*, whose profile within the EU-Russia architecture of governance has been reinvigorated lately. Significant changes in the philosophy and functional architecture of the ND frame have been introduced at the last ND meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers, held in Brussels on 21 November 2005 under British chairmanship. Firstly, the new ND concept will provide a "stable and permanent basis for cooperation", as opposed to the previous three-year action plans, meaning that the ND is being institutionalised as a joint EU-Russia platform. Secondly, the ND is to become the "regional expression" in Northern Europe of the four Common Spaces and their road maps, meaning that NDAP priorities, modalities and CBC projects selected for funding should be agreed upon by all participant countries, Russia included. The Guidelines for the ND III issued in late 2005 state that

> "… the ND requires some reshaping in order to better fit within the new operational environment. (…) The ND policy should be used as a *political and operational framework* for promoting the implementation of the *EU-Russia Common Spaces at regional/sub-regional/local level in the North* with full participation of Norway and Iceland. (…)The new ND basic texts should be *negotiated and adopted jointly* by the EU, the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland, leading to a *consolidated common Northern Dimension* policy, to which the parties should provide their full commitment."[44]

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[44] European Commission "Guidelines for the development of a political declaration and a policy framework document for the Northern Dimension Policy from 2007", http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/doc/guidelines05.pdf , § 8 and 17. Emphasis added.

This step illustrates the extent to which the EU-Russia partnership has "deepened" and "widened" (Vahl, 2006: 3), thanks in part to its being regionalised (dimensionalised) and improved by CBC. Thirdly, emphasis has been made on consolidating the principle of subsidiarity in the ND framework. The idea of turning Russia into a full-right subject of the ND, not anymore a "target" or "object" of Brussels' regional policies, was lobbied by Finland and Estonia, its nearest EU neighbours.[45] At the end of the day, this might mean additional stress on border regions of North-West Russia as the laboratories of "common policies without joining".

5. Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to venture an aphorism: the Finnish-Russian border is in the East, and the Russian-Finnish border is in the North. The thing is that the North is in Europe, it even *is* Europe. This dual environment is for the borderlands milieu a catalytic instrument for regional actorness and the construction of a unique frame of "integration without joining" in the Euro-Russian North.

The Finnish-Russian border has been a springboard and a window of opportunity for adjacent territories. The border is an interface connecting Russian North-Western regions standing in the perimeter of the EU's external border with European markets and Western culture. These Russian border regions are functionally integrated into Europe, not only thanks to trade and a growingly institutionalised CBC, but also because a good part of the regional elite took up the bet of adopting European behaviour norms – democracy in politics, reliability in business, honesty in civil service. Not all succeeded, it is true, but both Finland and the Commission may congratulate themselves on the achievements of those who became reliable cross-border partners sharing the democratic values of their European neighbours. In this sense, the Finnish-Russian border has gained prominence as a site of "integration without joining" and a cornerstone in the Wider European architecture of multi-layered governance.

In this paper I argued that the polities adjacent to the Finnish-Russian border are increasingly interdependent, drawing evidence that social interactions – trade, migration, cultural

[45] On 3 February 2006, Finnish and Estonian Foreign Ministers Erkki Tuomioja and Urmas Paet published a joint article on the ND in the *Helsingin Sanomat* in which they committed themselves to lead the way in "involving Russia as an actual party to the ND".

cooperation, cross-border diplomacy and paradiplomacy – are pushing back the limits supposed to be laid out by the physical borderline. The *champ des possibles* of international actorness for Russian sub-state actors has grown as a consequence of debordering. The contact function of the frontier with Finland has "thickened" and the border itself is becoming a relevant territory of (inter-)action. In some low policy and CBC matters, the borderland can even be said to be an institutionalised action unit – with Euregio Karelia speaking in one voice in the name of Finnish and Russian Karelian borderlanders.

In daily dealings with their Finnish neighbours to manage border-effects, Russian borderlanders are "integrated" into Brussels' sphere of immaterial influence and snatched up by contagious dynamics of Europeanisation. I tried to shed light on the levers and obstacles, in the borderlands' current socio-geo-economy, that could facilitate or on the contrary hamper a further "integration without joining" of Russia's North-West regions "in-with" one or another layer of the Wider European North's architecture of governance. *Complementary economies* is a factor that favours transnational trade between Russian and Finnish adjacent regions and fosters debordering. *Conflict accommodation* on the territorial issue (the Karelian "non-question") favoured a desecurisation/deproblematisation of the border in bilateral diplomatic frames as well as on the field, where new patterns of territorial re-appropriation have appeared. A *minimal formal autonomy* (within the RF) and *devolution* (in the EU system) have favoured the emergence of Russian regions as more or less autonomous ND-partners of the European Community. Not only do they exert a micro-diplomacy across the border – they also configurate their CBC projects within wider regionally integrated spaces (the *Northern Dimension* frame). Another necessary condition that is met in the Finnish-Russian case is the existence of *inter-governmental treaties and confidence-building measures of good-neighbourhood* at diplomatic level.

Until recently, three sets of obstacles to a furthering of "integration-without-joining" remained: insufficient financing, persistent centralisation (within both Russia and the EU structures) and decreasing mutual confidence in Northern-labelled dimensionalism on matters of supposedly "common" concern. This might have recreated conflict with the lower-level partners of the CBC triangle, knowing that roots of transboundary regionalism are persistent in some Russian North-Western regions. Fortunately, the adoption of the ENPI to finance future CBC projects with Russia, and the commitment of some political leaders within EU member countries to make Russia not a target, but a full-right actor of ND-stamped policies in the North, have restored some balance. Thus, the EU-Russian borders are becoming laboratories for border-breaking cooperation and the ongoing regionalisation of the Strategic Partnership.

Does growing CBC along previously alienated borders invalidate the point made by Jean Gottmann 25 years ago that "the record of history demonstrates that political limits in geographic space have been and remain a major source of tension and conflict" (Gottmann, 1980: 433)? However confident in the utility of post-modernist and constructivists insights for the study of contemporary borders, political geographer David Newman is among those who would agree with Gottmann that borders are still central in today's world, but as spaces of cross-border innovation (interaction and socialisation) rather than as conflict zones:

> "If there is anything that belies notions of a deterritorialized and borderless world more, it is the fact that boundaries, in a variety of formats and intensities, continue to demarcate the territories within which we are compartmentalized, determine with whom we interact and affiliate, and the extent to which we are free to move from one space to another." (Newman, 2003: 277)

Running against the post-modernist refrain of an end of history/ territory / sovereignty, some authors have argued that the question itself of whether the world is subject to a process of deterritorialization was a "misplaced", "too one-dimensional" and "misleading" one since "territoriality is but one way of organizing political control and relationships of authority" (Forsberg, 1996: 363-365). It is true that traditional state sovereignty is eroding due to a multiplication of transnational flows that deborder the equation of territory, identity and sovereignty. Both the EU and local practitioners of CBC take part in shaping the border as well, which creates a site of interaction where *regionalisation* meets *regionalism*. Among the many non-state actors that inhabit the international arena today, sub-state entities adjacent to land borders still remain the most vulnerable to constraints of territoriality though, especially in Russia (the Kaliningrad enclave/exclave is a case in point). However, not only is the borderland a model conflict-free contact zone – it is also a growth-generator, due to its transit corridor function on the Eurasian trade bridge and because the border itself has been the object of important lay-outs of EU money for the last decade.

In the Russian North-Western borderlands, territorially-bounded national identities seem to have lost some of their significance in the face of emerging transfrontier communication, with new feelings of kinship and citizenship producing alternative loyalties. "Northerness" and a much-desired "Europe of Regions" or "Wider Europe without borders" have become markers for an autonomous and outward-oriented strategy on the part of Russian municipal and regional organs of power in the 1990s. Alternative notions of "Euro-Russian" citizenship have grown in popularity and borderlanders share interests on many "common goods". The increasing transfrontier processes, transnational linkages and unprecedented cooperation between local actors of Finland and North-West Russia have created new spaces of interaction and identity, thus *re-territorialising* the border. The lesson one can draw from this case study is that CBC needs territory and regulation, meaning that national and international rules are indispensable. But it also *sustains* territory more than it dissolves it, with one specificity though – cross-border interaction pushes away the limits of the territory for social action and changes the borders of cultural identification. The very nearness of the border is for all adjacent communities – Republics, cities – a factor that fosters some kind of *re-territorialisation* of regional identity away from the centre and a re-orientation of local interests outwards, i.e. into the EU in the Finnish-Russian case.

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