EU BORDER REGIONS

EU EXTERNAL BORDERS AND THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS. ANALYSING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS THROUGH POLICIES & PRACTICES OF CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

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EU External Borders and the Immediate Neighbours. Analysing Regional Development Options through Policies and Practices of Cross-Border Cop-operation

SSH-2010-2.2-1- 266920

State of The Debate Report
D 6 (WP 1)

Prepared 28 August 2011

EUBORDERREGIONS is funded through the Seventh Framework Programme of The European Union

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

EUROPEAN COMMISSION European Research Area

Funded under Sicio-economic Sciences & Humanities

EUBORDERREGIONS

State of the Art Discussion Report (Deliverable No. 6, WP 1)

Part 1: Bordering , Border regions, and Politics of Borders

Part 2: EU Policy, Cross-border Co-operation and Development as Geopolitical issues: A Focus on Civil Society

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Overview and Purpose

This state of the art report is conceived as a basic contribution to discussion about theoretical and practical issues regarding cross-border co-operation that are relevant to the EUBORDERREGIONS project. The report consists of two contributions; the first focuses on the concept of "bordering" as a theoretical and empirical approach to understanding the socio-political significance of borders whereas the second characterises the EU's geopolitics as a dual project of consolidation and co-operation and then addresses more specific questions with regard to civil society.

In the first part, the notion of bordering will be developed in order to reflect shifts in the more general discussion about the societal significance of borders. Rather than focus strictly on physical borders as legal institutions, the 'bordering' perspective investigates the establishment of categories of distinction: it is about the everyday construction of borders between communities and groups through ideology, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and agency (see van Houtum and Naerssen 2002). In the second part, bordering will be developed in terms of the 'politics of borders' that have been an integral part of the European Union's project of integration, enlargement and regional co-operation (as embodied by the European Neighbourhood Policy). This paper will also focus on the changing political significance and symbolism of borders in Europe. Examples of bordering processes will be elaborated based on discursive, practical, perceptual and representational framings of cross-border co-operation as border-transcending and border-confirming projects of regional development.

Paper 1: Bordering, Border regions, and Politics of Borders

Introduction

The issue of state borders, their functions, symbolism and changing significance presently looms larger than at any time during the last decades. The commonplace of global de-bordering, supported by optimistic notions of globalisation and a new post-cold war world order, has arguably succumbed to the reality of increasing complexity and instability in the world system. Even within an ostensibly borderless European Union (EU), national borders are again seen as central to the organisation of political community and the protection of group interests. Clear symptoms of re-bordering tendencies within various nation-states in the EU can be recognised in discussion on neo-nationalism, protectionism and illegal migrants crossing the EU's external borders – leading even to suggestions, as in the case of the Greek-Turkish border, of constructing formidable barrier fences.

These concerns are partly reflected by the contemporary state of the art in border studies; state borders are commonly understood as multifaceted social institutions rather than solely as formal political markers of sovereignty. In this view, borders help condition how societies and individuals shape their identities.[1] At the same time, borders themselves can be seen as products of the social and political negotiation of space; they frame social and political action and are constructed through institutional and discursive practices at different levels and by different actors.[2] As Albert et al. argue, borders can be conceived as 'social structures that are constantly and communicatively reproduced'.[3] Borders are reproduced, for example, in situations of conflict where historical memories are mobilised to support territorial claims, to address past injustices or to strengthen group identity – often by perpetuating negative stereotypes of the 'other'.[4] However, through new institutional and discursive practices contested borders can also be transformed into symbols of co-operation and of common historical heritage.[5]

While the above considerations are of more general societal importance, they are of specific relevance to Europe and the political, social and cultural evolution of the European Union. The European Union has in large part been a project of transcending national borders and their logics of division. In doing this, the EU has re-territorialised and reshaped nation-states

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[1] V. Kolossov (2005) Border Studies: Changing Perspectives and Theoretical Approaches. *Geopolitics* 10: 606-632; U. Meinhof (ed.) (2002) *Living (with) Borders: Identity Discourses on East-West Borders in Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate; A. Paasi (2001) A Borderless World" Is it Only Rhetoric or will Boundaries Disappear in the Globalizing World?, *in: Politische Geographie. Handlungsorientierte Ansätze und Critical Geopolitics.* Paul Reuber and Günter Wolkersdorfer, eds. Heidelberg: Heidelberger Geographische Arbeiten, pp. 133-145.

[2] See, G. Popescu (2008) The Conflicting Logics of Crossborder Reterritorialisation: Geopolitics of Euroregions in Eastern Europe, *Political Geography* 27(4): 418–438; H. van Houtum (2002) Borders of Comfort, Spatial Economic Bordering Processes in the European Union, *Regional and Federal Studies* 12(4): 37-58.

[3] M. Albert, T. Diez, and S. Stetter (2008) The Transformative Power of Integration: Conceptualizing Border Conflicts, in: *The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Power of Integration and Association*, T. Diez, M. Albert and S. Stetter (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 21.

[4] See Y. Papadakis (2005) *Echoes from the Dead Zone: Across the Cyprus Divide*, London: I.B. Tauris.

[5] Laine, Jussi and Andrei Demidov (in press) Civil Society Organisations as Drivers of Cross-Border Interaction: On Whose Terms, for Which Purpose? In: *On the Edge of Neighbourhood. The EU-Russia Borderland*, Eskelinen Heikki, Ilkka Liikanen and James W. Scott (eds,), London: Routledge.

through its policies and political institutions and through promoting a sense of supranational political community. At the same time, the EU is searching for a sense of political community based on (geo)political, social and cultural identity. For these reasons, the EU represents a particularly salient example of how the functions, significance and symbolism of state borders have shifted. While imperfect, the experiment of creating supranational sovereignty within Europe has not been attempted elsewhere and thus serves as a laboratory of political, social, economic and cultural modes of 'bordering'.

The notion of bordering that will be developed here suggests that borders are not only semi-permanent, formal institutions but are also non-finalizable processes. At its most basic, the process of bordering can be defined as the everyday construction of borders, for example through political discourses and institutions, media representations, school textbooks, stereotypes and everyday forms of transnationalism. There are (at least) two broad and often overlapping ways of how bordering can be understood: one *pragmatic* (deriving generalizable knowledge from practices of border transcendence and confirmation) and the other *critical* (theorizing and questioning the conditions that give rise to border generating categories). These bordering perspectives come together, among other ways, in the present geopolitical climate where, in stark contrast to the 1990s when discourses of 'de-bordering' Europe enjoyed substantial currency, the EU's external borders have become formidable barriers symbolizing civilisational difference between East and West.

This paper consists of three parts. In the first I will relate the state of the art of border studies to processes of European integration and enlargement. The second part will address the concept of bordering, both in more general terms as well as with regard to the 'politics of borders' that have been an integral part of the European Union's project of integration, enlargement and regional co-operation (e.g. as embodied by the European Neighbourhood Policy). The third section will then focus on cross-border co-operation as an expression of bordering within Europe and hence as border-transcending and/or border-confirming projects. These reflect the changing political significance and symbolism of borders in Europe but also raise serious questions as to the consequences of restrictive bordering practices − both for the EU and its regional neighbours.

European integration and the study of borders

Borders, whether de facto, de jure or popularly imagined, have had a powerful influence on the constitution of Europe. Throughout Europe's long history, empires, kingdoms and (nation) -states have sought to manifest their power and unify heterogeneous groups of subjects by the symbolic and spatial bordering of territory. Collective representations of borders have been constructed through various means, including limes, fortifications, monuments and maps. These representations of space continue to influence popular imagination and political discourse; together with various other factors, they give sustenance to notions of a shared European history but also serve as powerful markers of national and local identity. This is particularly visible in the post-Cold War context of European interstate relations. With the collapse of ideological borders and geopolitical categories of European space based on bloc confrontation, historical and cultural notions have re-emerged as important elements of regional identity and are captured by the renewal of concepts such as 'Norden', 'Central Europe', the 'Balkans', etc. Not surprisingly, the study of borders has rapidly developed within the context of European integration and its post-1989 enlargements.[1]

The suspension of hostile, dividing state borders and the negative impacts they have had on interstate relations is perhaps a uniquely European achievement. For this reason, the European

Union's political identity – and indeed its raison d'être – are closely intertwined with the symbolism of transcending and transforming national borders in the interest of integration and peaceful co-existence. For example, cross-border co-operation, supported by the EU since the mid-1980s, has become a 'trademark' of integration and Europeanisation and is now firmly established in many border regions within the EU and in numerous neighbouring countries. Furthermore, and in contrast to other international co-operation contexts such as North America, the European Union has actively promoted local and regional cross-border interaction through its regional development and structural aid programmes.

Processes of EU integration and enlargement have affected how borders and boundaries have been perceived, both in the academy and in everyday life. Similarly, momentous transformations in the constitution of Europe's territorial states during the twentieth century have been inseparable from paradigmatic shifts in the perceptions of the political function and socio-spatial significance of its borders.[6] Multifaceted changes in social life associated, for example, with globalisation, post-socialist transition and socio-cultural transformation have elicited re-examinations of received notions of state-society relations, citizenship and, as a result, state borders. The emergence of a European political community has itself shattered many certainties that have enshrined the nation-state as a locus of territorial identity. Nation-states have evolved into 'states' with political actors exercising more limited sovereignty in terms of territorial governance, and have been robbed of the exceptionalist myths that were reified by Ratzel's and Maull's investigations into the 'organic' relationships between cultures (Völker), territories (Boden) and the State (Staat).[7]

One of the major conceptual shifts in border studies thus lies in acknowledging that state borders are complex political institutions transecting social spaces not only in administrative but also in cultural, economic and functional terms.[8] Central to this perspective are multiple interpretations of border significance, border-related elements of identity-formation, socio-cultural and experiential bases for border-defining processes, power relations in society and geopolitical orders, as well as critical analyses of geopolitical discourses. Border studies have also been amenable to the cultural turn in the humanities and social sciences.[9] This is evidenced by a questioning of the essence and the assumed immutability of national identities as well as by challenges to the notion that nation-states might be – out of some civilisational necessity – a permanent feature of the world system.

One important characteristic of contemporary border studies is its frequent ethical nature. This is evident in the European context where the political concept of 'open' borders has been decoded as a partial policy of exclusion that emphasizes border management and that has

[6] J. Scott (2011a) Borders, Border Studies and EU Enlargement, in: D. Wastl-Water, (ed.) *Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, pp. 123-142.

[7] F. Ratzel (1903) *Politische Geographie: Oder Die Geographie der Staaten, des Verkehres und des Krieges*, Munich and Berlin: Oldenbourg; O. Maull (1925) *Politische Geographie*, Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger.

[8] H. Donnan and T. M. Wilson (1999) *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State,* Oxford:Berg; O. Kramsch (2010), Camuspace: Towards a Geneaology of Europe's De-colonial Frontier, in: C. Brambilla and B. Riccio (eds.) *Transnational Migrations, Cosmopolitanism and Dis-located Border,* Rimini: Guaraldi, pp. 87-118; I. Liikanen (2011) Origins of the Eastern Border as the Grand Controversy of Finnish National History Writing, in: T. Frank and F. Hadler (eds.) *Disputed Territories and Shared Pasts: Overlapping National Histories in Modern Europe. Writing the Nation Series Vol. 5.* London: Palgrave McMillan, pp. 177-199.

[9] See J. Schimanski and S. Wolfe (2010) Cultural Production and Negotiation of Borders: Introduction to the Dossier, *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 25(1): pp. 39-49.

submitted state boundaries within Europe to general policing and security policies.[10] By the same token, officially promoted European shifts in political/territorial identity and understandings of state borders often sits uncomfortably with identities that operate socially and culturally (and thus also politically) at the local level.[11] This dichotomy can be (and has been) expressed, if somewhat schematically, by simultaneous processes of 'de-bordering' and 're-bordering'. What this simplified dichotomy implies is that sovereignty and borders have been de-emphasised within the process of EU-integration and consolidation of political community. At the same time, borders as expressed by visa regimes, citizenship, residence rights and the physical control of the EU's external frontiers give evidence of the creation of new categories of cultural/geographical distinction and thus of new contested and partly dividing borders.[12] It is also necessary to interpret political, social and cultural framings of state borders as competing projects. While the softening of borders is often seen as a fundamental precondition for greater democracy, many critics consider, on the contrary, that national borders are the natural frame for political community. In this sense, the symbolisms of 'open', 'permeable' or 'closed' borders are an elementary part of the discussion on the future of national (e.g. European) democracies.[13]

The Bordering Perspective

Border concepts have evolved around specific aspects of societal transformation that problematise relationships between the state, state territoriality, citizenship, identity and cross-border interaction (these have often been referred to, and sometimes confusingly, in terms of 'post-national', 'post-Communist', 'post-colonial' and 'post-modern' perspectives). The central conceptual shift lies in an understanding of borders as something inherently social and cultural rather than exclusively political.[14] Viewed from a contemporary perspective, a major research task lies in understanding borders through comparative frameworks that express their multilevel complexity − from the geopolitical to the level of social practices at and across borders. On this view borders can, for example, be studied in terms of local coping strategies, the development of cross-border cultural, economic and personal networks and their use as place-making instruments.

This complexity is captured by the concept of 'bordering' in which borders are constantly made through ideology, symbols, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and everyday forms of border transcending and border confirming. Put in somewhat dif-

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[10] D. Bigo and E. Guild (eds.) (2005) *Controlling Frontiers: Free Movement into and within Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate; H. van Houtum and F. Boedeltje (2009) Europe's Shame: Death at the Borders of the European Union, *Antipode* 41(2), pp. 226–30.

[11] T. Tamminen (2004) Cross-border Cooperation in the Southern Balkans: Local, National or European Identity Politics?, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 4(3), pp. 399-418.

[12] S. Pickering (2011) *Women, Borders, and Violence. Current Issues in Asylum, Forced Migration, and Trafficking,* Berlin: Springer.

[13] See C. Jönsson, S. Tägil and G. Törnqvist (2000) *Organizing European Space*, London: Sage.

[14] O. Kramsch, Olivier and C. Brambilla (2007) Transboundary Europe through a West African Looking Glass: Cross-Border Integration, 'Colonial Difference' and the Chance for 'Border Thinking', *COMPARATIV*, 17(4), pp. 95-115; J. Scott and H. van Houtum (2009) Reflections on EU Territoriality and the 'Bordering' of Europe, *Political Geography* 28 (5), pp. 271-273.

ferent terms, bordering can be understood as the production and reproduction of boundaries in response to shifting relations between nation, state, territory and identities.[15] Through the concept of bordering, the somewhat abstract level of conceptual change can be brought to bear on actual 'on-the-ground' situations. In this reading, bordering is, by nature, a multilevel process that takes place, for example, at the level of high politics, manifested by physical borders and visa regimes, as well as in media debates over national identity, legal and illegal immigration and language rights.[16] Another important and closely related element in bordering is the embedding of social understandings of borders within everyday border-crossings associated with gender, family sexuality, and cultural expression.

The production and reproduction of borders affect, among others, processes of cross-border interaction, social and cultural relations, ethnic minority rights and everyday life in border regions themselves. Furthermore, as territorial markers of citizenship and 'belonging', borders define access to national welfare systems, making it often very difficult for many migrant workers and persons sanctioned for 'unauthorised mobility' to receive benefits or proper legal protections.[17] Similarly, borders can also be seen through the prism of gendered practices of migration in which women who seek to cross state borders 'illegally' for economic, family or other reasons are subject to specific forms of criminalisation and discrimination. Similarly, as Benhabib and Resnick show, female border-crossers face a set of specific challenges and dangers (such as sex-trafficking) that challenge traditional links between citizenship, social rights and cultural belonging.[18] Borders can also be interpreted in terms of 'ethnosexual frontiers', as 'the territories that lie at the intersections of racial, ethnic, or national boundaries … sites where ethnicity is sexualised, and sexuality is racialised, ethnicised, and nationalised'.[19] As Nyman has shown in the case of literary treatments of immigrant romance and marriage, borders can be used as strategies of 'hybridisation', contesting traditional, middle-class, (and often nationally oriented) notions of marriage as cultural assimilation.[20]

The bordering perspective provides a powerful link between and among processes of social and political transformation, conceptual change and local experience. It is therefore also a theoretical and empirical tool with which to understand the deeper significance of borders in different political and cultural contexts. Important historical processes in this regard include nation-building, post-colonial experiences, cross-border and transnational conceptualisations of citizenship and identity, post-socialist transformation and post-Cold War geopolitics. In

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[15] See J. Scott and H. van Houtum (2009), Reflections on EU Territoriality and the 'Bordering' of Europe". *Political Geography* 28 (5), 271-273.

[16] See H. van Houtum and T. van Naerssen (2002) Bordering, Ordering, and Othering, *Journal of Economic and Social Geography* 93(2), pp. 125-136; D. Newman (2006) Borders and Bordering: Towards an Interdisciplinary Dialogue, *European Journal of Social Theory* 9(2), pp.171-186; A. Linde-Laursen (2010) *Bordering. Identity Processes between the National and Personal*, Farnham:Ashgate.

[17] See Pickering (note 12).

[18] S. Benhabib and J. Resnik (eds.) (2009) *Migrations and Mobilities. Citizenship, Borders, and Gender,* New York University Press: New York.

[19] J. Nagel (2003) *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality. Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 14.

[20] J . Nyman (2009) From Black Britain to the Caribbean: The Return of the (Im)migrant, in: C. Phillips (ed.) *A State of Independence', in his Home, Identity, and Mobility in Contemporary Diasporic Fiction,* Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, pp. 37-56.

addition, all of these processes have profound political, economic and socio-cultural consequences: not least because they reflect tensions in state-society relations e.g. in challenges to the state`s monopoly of power, the emergence of supranational political institutions, processes of economic and political integration, processes of Europeanisation and reconfiguration of state borders.

Figure 1 provides a schematic overview of ways in which the notion of bordering has been employed in European border research based on specific political, social and cultural perspectives. The concept of bordering is a way of understanding borders rather than a grand theory. As Figure 1 indicates, however, it points the way to an interdisciplinary and critical dialogue that breaks down communicative barriers between different schools of border research and thus different framings of borders. Thus, geopolitical discourses that create or confirm categories of cultural difference are not privileged over popular forms of identity politics or media representations of 'otherness' – indeed, in this view they are often closely related. Furthermore, and as implied above, the bordering perspective in European border studies can be related to phases of EU integration, enlargement and post-enlargement, as well as the political rationales and discourses they have brought forth. This includes, furthermore, understanding European borders as symbolic representations of different degrees of cultural affinity, familiarity and said otherness.

Figure 1: Categories of Bordering

Bordering Categories	**Examples of Bordering Dimensions**
Discursive – (political and social framings)	- ways in which commonality/difference between groups is framed and referenced in cultural, ethnic, geographic and historical terms; - ways in which strategies, threats/common concerns, co-operation are framed through the use of border concepts
Practical – (material and substantive areas)	cultural, pragmatic avenues of cross-border interaction and conflict amelioration, economic agendas of co-operation, political agendas, life-world strategies
Perceptual – (group/individual/place-based interpretations of borders)	group specific, locally specific conceptions of borders in terms of: identity, community and belonging, everyday needs and strategies, everyday experiences
Representational – (cultural, media generated images)	Literary and artistic works that reference borders in terms of - resistance and challenges to exclusionary nature of borders - transformation of border symbolisms - expressions of identity and alienation related to borders

Arguably, the process of 'Europeanisation' – which involves a gradual diffusion of supranational and potentially 'post-national' understandings of citizenship, territoriality, identity and governance – is closely related to changing concepts of borders, both within the

EU and beyond the EU's own borders.[21] A central aspect of this process is the definition of rules, norms and practices that recast national spaces as integral elements of an international political community; from this derive the objectives and values that create a common set of discourses in which various political and social issues can be negotiated.[22] However, as Harmsen and Wilson indicate, Europeanisation is a multidimensional process of change rather than mere policy convergence; it suggests cultural hybridisation, social modernisation as well as the adaptation of national political thinking to local, regional and supranational perspectives.[23] One principal characteristic of Europeanisation is the transcendence of strictly national orientations in public policy, development policies and identity. Indeed, the construction of the European Union is in large part an attempt to create a coherent political, social and economic space within a clearly defined multinational community (the EU 27). Borders play an important role in the representation of European nation-states and the EU itself, as well as in the representation of the EU's relations to its neighbours. Cross-border co-operation (CBC) at the interstate, regional and local levels is seen to provide ideational foundations for a networked Europe through symbolic representations of European space and its future development perspectives. As Anderson, O'Dowd and Wilson have shown, CBC is not only a political but also a social and cultural arena; it has provided a framework within which new regional ideas and a re-evaluation of national histories have been promoted (see below).[24]

Nevertheless, the 'post-national' de-bordering of the European Union that CBC often implies is at the same time problematic. The political identity of an integrated community of states such as the EU begs the question of the geopolitical significance and ultimate geographic location of the EU's external borders. Similarly, it also implies processes of bordering through which the political, social and cultural foundations of EU membership are defined. Thus, if cross-border co-operation within the EU can be understood as an exercise in the symbolic dismantling of borders and the consolidation of political community, the external projection of the EU – as a political, cultural, economic and social space – involves an emphasis of the EU's outer border, both in terms of border policies and symbolisms.

This is not only an academic question. With the inauguration of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004, the EU has envisaged new comprehensive co-operation agendas that cut across political, economic and cultural dividing lines and, in effect, involve the partial transfer of internal (community) practices beyond the EU's own borders.[25] The EU's emerging geopolitics can be understood in terms of an internal consolidation of political community (in yet another sense of the term 'Europeanisation') and the development of regional partnerships with neighbouring states (that is, as a New Neighbourhood). Both of these processes can be understood as examples of bordering in which geopolitical discourses

[21] J. Scott and I. Liikanen (2010) Civil Society and the "Neighbourhood". Europeanisation through Cross-Border Cooperation?, *Journal of European Integration* 32 (5), pp. 423–438.

[22] O'Dwyer, Conor 2006 Reforming Regional Governance in East Central Europe: Europeanisation or Domestic Politics as Usual?. East European Politics and Societies 20 (2): 219-253.

[23] R. Harmsen and T. M. Wilson (2000) Introduction, in: R. Harmsen and T. M. Wilson (eds.), *Europeanisation: Institutions, Identities and Citizenship,* Amsterdam/Atlanta:Rodopi, pp. 13-26.

[24] J. Anderson, L. O'Dowd, and T. M. Wilson (eds.) (2003) *Culture and Cooperation in Europe's Borderland*, Amsterdam/New York, NY: Rodopi,

[25] J. Scott **(**2011b) Reflections on EU Geopolitics: Consolidation, Neighbourhood and Civil Society in the Reordering of European Space**,** *Geopolitics* 16 (1), pp. 146-175.

and practices can be related to regional development issues. On the one hand, these bordering practices establish rules, objectives and discourses that promote common political agendas and a sense of community. On the other hand, they create a strategic distinction between 'us' and 'them' that serves to orient international co-operation. Various aspects of EU-Europeanisation as well of the EU's relations within neighbouring states are quite revealing in this context and will be briefly discussed below. The picture that emerges is one of contradictory bordering practices in which a considerable gap exists between geopolitical vision and its translation into action.

As this EU policy instrument evolves, tensions due to simultaneous dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are very much in evidence. The idea of a European Neighbourhood is telling in itself: here, a sense of inclusion and belonging to a working political community is implied despite the fact that direct membership is not an immediate or probable option for several states that consider themselves very close to the EU.[26] Therefore, and as Dimitrovova, van Houtum and Boedeltje and others contend, bordering is taking place in the form of the creation of distinctions between groups of people according to varying degrees of 'Europeanness' (e.g. EU-European, non-EU-European, close neighbour, distant neighbour). This is a logic informed by security and control concerns, a logic very much associated with state-centred politics of interest.[27] Furthermore, while the EU expresses a desire to avoid new political divisions, new visa regimes and other restrictions of cross-border interaction threaten to exacerbate development gaps between the EU-27 and non-EU states.

Interpreting Cross-Border Co-operation Through a Bordering Perspective

In the previous sections, I have alluded to the multifaceted social character of borders as well as to the ambiguities of the European Union's bordering practices. Discussion will now focus on a specific issue – that of cross-border co-operation at the EU's internal and external borders. Cross-border relations in Central and Eastern Europe have changed dramatically during the last two decades. With the last vestiges of the 'Iron Curtain' removed, both between East and West as well as within the former Soviet Bloc itself, citizens, communities and regions have chosen to open new avenues of communication with their neighbours across state borders. Furthermore, in those contexts where states have (re)gained their independence and new borders have emerged, Euroregions, cross-border city partnerships and similar co-operation vehicles have also come into being.[28] These attempts at co-operation with the EU and at the EU's external border aim at managing issues that transcend the confines of individual communities – issues that include social affairs, economic development, minority rights, cross-border employment and trade, the environment, etc. Cross-border co-operation also involves attempts to exploit borderlands situations, using borders as a resource for economic and cultural exchange as well as for building political coalitions for regional development purposes.[29]

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[26] Smith, K. (2005) "The Outsiders: the European Neighbourhood Policy", *International Affairs*, 81(4), pp. 757-773.

[27] B. Dimitrovova (2008) The Re-Making of Europe's Borders Through the European Neighbourhood Policy, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 23(1), pp. 53-68; H. van Houtum and F. Boedeltje (note 10).

[28] J. Scott (ed.) (2006) *EU Enlargement, Region-building and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion*, Aldershot: Ashgate

[29] G. Popescu (2008) The Conflicting Logics of Crossborder Reterritorialization: Geopolitics of euroregions in Eastern Europe. *Political Geography* 27 (4), pp. 418–438.

Referring back to the general categories suggested above, cross-border co-operation reflects the multilayered and multifaceted nature of bordering processes. The EU has played a crucial role in supporting local and regional cross-border co-operation as these are seen to be important aspects of interstate integration and a mechanism for deepening relations with non-EU neighbours. However, cross-border co-operation has not only been based on top-down projects of framing borders and their wider European significance, but also through everyday political, social and cultural practices of border negotiation.[30] So-called Euroregions were pioneered and developed as locally based co-operation initiatives in Dutch-German border regions as early as the 1960s.[31] The officially publicised goal of these organisations has been to promote binational initiatives that address specific economic, environmental, social and institutional problems affecting their respective regions. At the same time, Euroregions have been exploited as vehicles for cultural communication across borders and as a means to diminish resentment and mutually 'deconstruct' negative stereotypes.

Euroregions have also played an important role in channelling European regional development aid into border regions. In order to structure their long-term operations and, at the same time, satisfy new European requirements for regional development assistance, Euroregions periodically define Transboundary Development Concepts (TDCs) that identify objectives of cross-border co-operation and define possible courses of action. TDCs build the basis for concrete projects, proposals for which can then be submitted to the EU, national governments or other funding sources for support. The success of the Euroregion concept is undeniable. These associations are now a ubiquitous feature along the EU's external borders as well in many non-EU European contexts.[32] The EU structural initiative INTERREG, now in its fourth programming phase (2007-2013), has supported numerous transboundary and transnational co-operation projects between regions. Financed out of the EU's structural funds, INTERREG has disbursed well over 10 Billion Euros, making it the community's largest structural initiative. In addition, programmes targeted for Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, most prominently PHARE, TACIS and more recently the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, have provided supplemental funds for cross-border projects in regions on the EU's external boundaries.

At another more symbolic level, Euroregions can be understood as a spatial metaphor in the sense that they evoke a sense of transnational community, developed in free association and that contributes to wider European integration. Cross-border co-operation has thus been promoted by the EU on the assumption that national and local identities can be complemented (perhaps partly transcended) and goals of co-development realised within a broader – a European – vision of community. As such, borders have been used as explicit symbols of European integration, political community, shared values and, hence, identity by very

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[30] J. Anderson, L. O'Dowd and T. Wilson (2003) Culture, Cooperation and Borders, in: J. Anderson, L. O'Dowd and T. Wilson (eds.), *Culture and Cooperation in Europe's Borderlands*, Amsterdam/New York, NY: Rodopi, pp.13-29.

[31] J. Scott (2000) Transboundary Cooperation on Germany's Borders: Strategic Regionalism through Multilevel Governance, *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 15 (1), pp.143-167.

[32] E. Bojar (2008) Euroregions in Poland, *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 87(5), pp. 442–447; M. Perkmann (2002) Euroregions: Institutional Entrepreneurship in the European Union, in: M. Perkmann and N.-L. Sum (eds.), *Globalization, Regionalization and Cross-Border Regions*, Basingtoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.103-124.

different actors.[33] Consequently, the Euroregion concept has proved a powerful tool with which to transport European values and objectives.

Nevertheless, the normative political language of integration often contrasts with local realities where cross-border co-operation (CBC) reflects competing territorial logics at the EU, national, regional and local levels and conflicting attitudes towards more open borders.[34] As a result, cross-border co-operation is not uncontested. A resurgence of nationalism and retreat into national cultures have taken place in several EU member states and have, for example, affected local co-operation between Germany and Poland and Hungary and Slovakia.[35] Conflicts between 'Europeanizing' and 're-nationalizing' conceptions of borders can in fact be interpreted in terms of identity politics serving specific groups within border regions.

The EU has supported the establishment of Euroregions and other organisations that facilitate interregional networking but often attempts to impose its own particular agendas on local actors.[36] Furthermore, national governments, particularly those of new members and neighbouring states (such as Russia, Ukraine and Moldova), often view such border transcending exercises with skepticism and try to co-opt or regulate cross-border co-operation in ways that serve national interests.[37] Frequently, popular attitudes towards cross-border co-operation are a rather unpredictable variable. For example, Meinhof has demonstrated how borders influence collective memories in border regions that have undergone significant political changes.[38] As Meinhof and her fellow researchers have indicated, the trauma of cold war separation and fortification of borders continues to affect the action spaces and perceptions of the other side – as in Austrian-Hungarian border regions – years after the fall of state socialism and despite active policies of European enlargement and integration.[39]

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[33] (K.-L. Lepik (2009) 2009 Euroregions as Mechanisms for Strengthening Cross-Border Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region, *TRAMES*, 13 (3), pp. 265-282; M. Perkmann (2005) Cross-border Co-operation as Policy Entrepreneurship*:* Explaining the Variable Success of European Cross-border Region. CSGR Working Paper 166/05, University of Warwick

[34] Popescu (note 29)

[35] See Bürkner (2006). In its edition of 20 October, 2009, the Hungarian daily 'Népszabadság' ('Nem jött létre a 'régiók Európája', reporter: István Tanács) lamented a lack of true crossborder cooperation with neighbouring states, citing national particularisms and limited European vision.

[36] K. Nielsen, E. Berg and G. Roll (2009) Undiscovered Avenues? Estonian Civil Society Organisations as Agents of Europeanisation, *TRAMES* 13(3), pp. 248-264.

[37] G. Popescu (2006) Geopolitics of Scale and Cross-Border Cooperation in Eastern Europe: The Case of the Romanian-Ukrainian-Moldovan Borderlands, in: J. Scott (ed.) *EU Enlargement, Region Building and Sifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion,* Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 35-51.

[38] U. H, Meinhof (ed.) (2002) *Living (with) Borders: Identity Discourses on East-West Borders in Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

[39] Ibid.

The Case of the German-Polish Border Region

The German-Polish border after 1989 is an excellent example of the multilayered nature of bordering and border representations in the contemporary European context. Through the use of symbolisms of the border as a unifying element between neighbours, the German-Polish relationship has been recast in a wider European context of overcoming the "scars of history".[40] Because of the legacy of Nazi aggression and past conflict, the German-Polish relationship is a special one. Political co-operation, and most certainly cross-border co-operation, have been closely intertwined with rapprochement and desire to develop a culture of mutual goodwill. At the same time, the common border has become a backdrop for the orchestration of a new post-Cold War European order, one based on democratic values and with a clear mission of social transformation.[41] As a result, much has been invested in the symbolism of binational co-operation as a response to historical traditions of conflict and prejudice.[42]

Despite some hesitation on the part of more conservative groups, political discourses at the highest levels of the German and Polish governments have thus promoted a conversion of negative border images of closure, separation and aggression into a site of affirmation of a new European future (as borders of co-operation). Academic debates have mirrored these political and cultural re-interpretations of the German-Polish border with a view to transcending the historical legacy of national particularism and conflict.[43] Implicit in these debates has been a criticism of both Polish and German populist temptations to re-nationalise debate on territory and borders and to counter historical perspectives that might call into question the legitimacy of the post-1945 German-Polish border.[44] This has been accompanied by literary and other cultural representations of the border as a 'bridge' in which journalists, poets, writers and artists have participated. One example of this is the 'Slubfurt' artists' initiative located in the 'twin cities' of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice and which aims to bring local societies closer together.[45] A similar example is that of architects and art historians who have attempted to 'de-nationalise' the history of the border region by revealing its complex multiethnic past.

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[40] Robert Schuman's pronouncement that national borders in Europe represented scars of history ("Les cicatrices de l'histoire") has become an evocative political discourse in the processes of European integration and enlargement.

[41] S. Kratke, S. Heeg and R. Stein (1997) *Regionen im Umbruch. Probleme der Regionalentwicklung an den Grenzen zwischen 'Ost' und 'West,* Campus: Frankfurt; J. Scott (2007) 2007 Cross-border Regionalisation in an Enlarging EU. Hungarian-Austrian and German-Polish Cases, in: H. Koff (ed.), *Deceiving (Dis)appearances; Analyzing Current Developments in European and North American Border Regions*, Bern: Peter Lang Publishing Inc, pp. 37-58.

[42] A. Bielawska and K. Wojciechowski (2008) *Europäischer Anspruch und Regionale Aspekte: Grenzüberschreitende Universitäre Zusammenarbeit in der Deutsch-Polnischen Grenzregion Angesichts der Zukünftigen Herausforderungen in Europa*, Berlin: Logos.

[43] H.-J. Bürkner (2002) Border Milieux, Transboundary Communication and Local Conflict Dynamics in German-Polish Border Towns: The Case of Guben and Gubin, *Die Erde* 133, pp. 339–51.

[44] U. Matthiesen and H.-J.Bürkner (2001) Antagonistic Structures in Border Areas: Local Milieux and Local Politics in the Polish-German Twin City Gubin/Guben, *GeoJournal* 54, pp. 43-50.

[45] For a wide array of German-Polish cultural initiatives, see the website of the Büro Kopernikus (www.buero-kopernikus.org)

Meanwhile, the popular media have echoed tensions between official 'borderless euphoria' and rejectionism in the local populace, particularly on the German side.[46] Local press coverage of day-to-day relations between Poles and Germans makes quite clear that European orientations of the local populace are much stronger on the Polish side and that German border cities have struggled to exploit positively the benefits of open borders.[47] These have brought out tensions between political, intellectual, business-oriented and cultural initiatives to de-emphasise confrontational difference and fears of the citizenry of insecurity, a loss of identity and decreasing social well-being.[48] Within this context, German-Polish Euroregions have promoted a cross-border platform for political dialogue and regional development that has struggled to gain more popular acceptance.

Bordering, Cross-Border Co-operation and the Finnish-Russian Xase

The Finnish-Russian border, and thus the borderland, is an emblematic case of political change in post-Cold War Europe and an example where the reassessment of common historical experiences and relationships is serving to develop a new sense of cross-border 'neighbourliness'.[49] Of rather recent creation after Finnish independence in 1917, this border has been shaped as a consequence of wars, several territorial shifts and decades of closure. The EU-Russian relationship since 1991 has thus been one of cautious, perhaps uneasy, interaction; driven by pragmatism and the recognition of interdependence but yet informed by historical (mis)apprehensions. As a result, the Finnish-Russian border has remained in many ways a hard, separating border, albeit definitely more permeable since the elimination of Soviet-era travel restrictions. Within this environment, the bordering perspective allows for a highly complex interpretation of emerging cross-border co-operation in the Russian-Finnish borderlands.

Directly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, nostalgia, curiosity and the search for new opportunities generated new cross-border flows of people. Within this context of (re)discovering the 'other side', an often ambiguous politics of memory has emerged in which war memorials, lost territories, borders, battlegrounds, sites of conflict, abandoned homes, settlements, etc. have served to construct national identities but also to bridge cultural differences and transcend historical animosities. In this way, wartime experiences, expulsions and annexations are mixed with more positive historical associations with Czarist Russia in which Finland enjoyed a 'pre-national' autonomy. Of particular salience to this discussion of bordering is the region of Karelia which straddles the common border. In terms of its historical development, Karelia can be understood as a zone of transition, politico-religious division and, most recently, of a Finnish-Russian rapprochement and re-evaluation of common experience. The case of Karelia also reminds us that borderlands are often rich in historical memory and the nationally sym-

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[46] A. Kotula (1994) Die deutsch-polnische Grenze in der polnischen Presse, *Transodra* 4/5, pp. 38-40; H. – J. Bürkner (2009) Der lokale Staat als Akteur im Feld kreativer Nischenökonomien, in: B. Lange, A. Kalandides, B.t Stöber and I. Wellmann (eds.), *Governance der Kreativwirtschaft. Diagnosen und Handlungsoptionen* Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, pp. 247-259.

[47] S. Lenz, G. Herfert and A. Bergfeld (2009) The German-Polish Border Region from a German Perspective – quo vadis?, in: W. Strubelt (ed.), *Guiding Principles for Spatial Development in Germany German Annual of Spatial Research and Policy*. Berlin:Springer, pp. 51-66.

[48] H. Armbruster and U. H. Meinhof (2004) Memories of Home? Narratives of Readjustment on the German/Polish and former German/German Borders, in: J.Thornborrow and J. Coates (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Narrative*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 41-65.

[49] E. Belokurova (2010) Civil Society Discourses in Russia: The Influence of the European Union and the Role of EU-Russia Cooperation, *Journal of European Integration* 32 (5), pp. 457-474.

bolic. In the past, Karelia has referred to an indeterminate territorial but very symbolic space that has in more recent times been charged with meaning for the formation of Finnish national identity.[50] In a way similar to Rob Shields' notion of liminal spaces, Häyrynen has described Karelia as a periphery within the Finnish national landscape imagery but also as a place of powerful nostalgic significance.[51] Similarly, Böök (2004) describes the significance of Karelia (particularly the areas ceded to the Soviet Union after the war) as a past "heartland" of Finnish Orthodoxy and the mythical last reserve of the "original Finnish" *Kalevala* culture.

Politically, economically and culturally motivated cross-border co-operation (partly supported by the EU) is one aspect of this process. Contacts between universities have intensified and representatives of local and regional governments have developed working relationships. The Euroregion Karelia, established in 2000, has been marketed as a pilot project for the creation of joint administrative structures between EU-member states and Russian regional authorities. From the Finnish perspective, the institutional forms adopted with Russian counterparts are seen as exporting 'border know-how', generating a model or at least a set of experiences that can help elaborate co-operation policies at the EU's shifting external borders.[52] Thus, at one level, we can understand the Finnish-Russian borderlands as a product of "place-making" in the intentional sense of regional identity politics capitalizing on border locations, cross-border co-operation and a historical notion of cross-border region (the region of Karelia). At another level, these borderlands are characterised by more subtle processes of intercultural dialogue in which history and landscape and townscape symbolism are used in order to create narratives of cross-border 'regionness'. Finally, the borderlands can be understood as a state of mind in which local and regional identities reflect life on borders and where changes in the political, functional and symbolic meanings of historical landscapes have had deep impacts on local communities and consciousness.[53] While the Karelian landscape has changed, intercultural dialogue (as a result of nostalgic tourism and greater general interaction) has now contributed to a shared notion of Karelia, with different discourses of region possible; post-Soviet images are now cognizant of the political reality and the multicultural nature of Karelia.[54] For example, as Izotov illustrates, former Soviet border garrison towns have now become important tourist destinations, transforming both local identities as well as the perception of tourists from Finland, other parts of Russia and elsewhere.[55]

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[50] M. Häyrynen (2004) A Periphery Lost: the Representation of Karelia in Finnish National Landscape Imagery, *Fennia* 182 (1), pp. 23–32.

[51] R. Shields (1991) *Places on The Margin. Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, London:Routledge; Häyrynen (ibid).

[52] T. Cronberg (2000) Euroregions in the Making: The Case of Euroregio Karelia, in: P. Ahponen and P. Jukarainen (eds), *Tearing Down the Curtain, Opening the Gates. Northern Boundaries in Change,* Jyväskylä (Finland): University of Jyväskylä, Pp. 170-183; H. Eskelinen (2000) Co-operation Across the Line of Exclusion: the 1990s Experience at the Finnish-Russian Border, *European Research in Regional Science* 10, pp.137–150.

[53] G. A. Isachenko (2009) Cultural Landscape Dynamics of Transboundary Areas: A Case Study of the Karelian Isthmus. Journal of Borderlands Studies, 24(2), pp.78–91; (2004) The Landscape of the Karelian Isthmus and its Imagery Since 1944, *Fennia* 182 (1), pp.47–59.

[54] K. Niukko (2009 The Concept of Landscape Among Karelian Migrants in Finland, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 24 (2), pp. 62–77.

[55] A. Izotov (forthcoming 2012) Repositioning a Border Town: The Case of Sortavala, in: H. Eskelinen, I. Liikanen and J. W. Scott (eds.), *On the Edge of Neighbourhood: Regional Dimensions of the EU-Russia Interface,* London and New York: Routledge.

It is important to emphasise, furthermore, that broader political and geopolitical contexts are at work here. Finnish-Russian cross-border interaction is strongly influenced both by Russia's post-socialist modernisation project, the changing nature of Finnish-Russian relations and the increasing role of the EU as agenda-setter of regional co-operation. Karelia is a positive case of a mutual rediscovery and exploitation of historical commonalities, common landscapes and regional traditions, but it is not immune to the vicissitudes of security policies, strict border and visa regimes as well as the shifting fortunes of EU-Russia relations.

Conclusions

What is the practical utility of the bordering perspective? Bordering – used as an interpretive concept – brings out in rather sharp contours confrontations, for example, between politics of national historical memory and 'post-national' identity politics that are played out in everyday life and virtually everywhere within Europe. This perspective also allows us to understand borders in ways that question, for example, nationalist or hegemonic interpretations of history, the geopolitical traditions of nation-states and the European Union's manipulation of border symbolisms in order to further its community-building agendas. As this discussion has suggested, the European Union's project of supporting cross-border co-operation is as much about transcending borders as it is about confirming their community-building and stabilizing significance. In more recent years this has contributed to a trend of exclusion and closure that threatens to undermine the more progressive and idealist aspects of European integration.

In this reading, bordering is, by nature, a multilevel process that takes place, for example, at the level of high politics, manifested by physical borders and visa regimes, as well as in media debates over national identity, legal and illegal immigration and language rights. Within this context, borders can be read in terms of: 1) a politics of identity (who is *in*, who is *out*), 2) a geographical definition of difference (defining who is a neighbour, a partner, a friend or rival) and 3) a politics of interests (in which issues of economic self-interest, political stability and security play a prominent role).

Given this critical and contextualising outlook, border studies can provide substantial contributions to conflict resolution, cross-border co-operation, intercultural understanding, cultural policy and other areas where borders have ambivalent or negative impacts on society. Despite its historical achievements in overcoming borders of animosity and confrontation, the European Union has no reason to be smug on this issue. As the historian Jürgen Kocka writes: 'borders have to be drawn in the interests of identity, but they should be composed in such away that Europe can continue to practise that which has always been its special strength: being open to the world, absorbing from others and assuming foreign elements, difference and entanglement belong together, then as now.'[56]

[56] J. Kocka (2007) The Mapping of Europe's Borders. Past. Present and Future, in: H.-Å Persson and B. Strath (eds.) *Reflections of Europe. Defining a Political Order in Time and Space,* Brussels: Peter Lang, p. 48.

Part 2: EU Policy, Cross-border Co-operation and Development as Geopolitical issues: A Focus on Civil Society

Geopolitics, to an important degree, is about the projection of collective (local, regional, national, supranational) self-images onto the world scene as a means of interpreting the world and thus giving orientation to collective action. This is also evident in the case of the European Union, where security issues, notions of 'European values' and projects of regional co-operation are interrelated in complex ways. With this paper, I hope to contribute to ongoing debate on the emerging geopolitical role of the European Union. This will be done by portraying the EU's geopolitics in terms of a complex re-ordering of state-society relations. This involves, on the one hand, the consolidation of an economic, social and political European space, partly through the 'flexible' construction of Europe within a context of a composite polity. On the other hand, with its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU is attempting to 'project' its identity and in doing so promote a partial 'Europeanisation' of societies outside its borders. With its project of 'Neighbourhood', the EU seeks to establish a macroregion of stability and prosperity, informed by common goals and values and hence coherent in its response to security challenges.

One of the distinctive qualities of the EU has been its ability to 'reterritorialise' nation-states and their borders.[57] This has taken place in concrete forms of shared sovereignty and community policies, the support of local and regional cross-border co-operation and more subtle discursive and ideational forms of Europeanisation.[58] Territorial configurations of power in Europe have in this way experienced fundamental change: the exclusive nature of state sovereignty and citizenship has been challenged and the function, significance and symbolism of state borders have been transformed. There is, furthermore, the question whether EU geopolitics, born out of an experience with shared sovereignty, national heterogeneity, cultural difference and large regional disparities, represents an historical break from the power politics and 'will to hegemony' so characteristic of more traditional geopolitical doctrines.[59] This question is particularly relevant in regard to the evolution of national societies and interstate relations in Europe's post-Cold War context. Can the European Union, together with its many neighbours to the East and South, construct a mutually beneficial space of political, social, cultural and economic co-operation – even without prospects of EU membership for many of the countries involved?

I will argue here that the field of border studies can be enriched in (at least) two ways. The first suggestion is to take into greater consideration contextual factors that help explain geopolitical logics above and beyond abstract categorisations of 'security', 'stability', 'hegemony', etc. Context sensitivity requires that questions of identity, values and the sense of purpose that they generate be more directly addressed. Flyvbjerg reminds us that context-free definitions of action (that is, action conditioned by overlying economic and political

[57] See P. Joenniemi (2008) 'Re-Negotiating Europe's Identity: The European Neighbourhood Policy as a Form of Differentiation', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 23(2), pp. 83-94 and D. Newman. (2006) The Resilience of Territorial Conflict in an Era of Globalisation, in: M. Kahler and B. Walter (eds), *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalisation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 85-110.

[58] L. Bialasiewicz, S. Elden, S. and J. Painter (2005) The Constitution of EU Territory, *Comparative European Politics*, 3, pp. 333-363.

[59] V. Bachmann, and J. Sidaway (2009) Zivilmacht Europa: A Critical Geopolitics of the European Union as a Global Power, **Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers**, 34 (1), pp. 94-109.

conditions or by generalisations of rational behaviour) will seldom correspond to the pragmatic actions of individuals in concrete situations.[60] The second suggestion is that we should think more earnestly beyond the state and beyond the territorial forms of social organisation that have been historically dominant. While such thinking might perhaps be anathema to mainstream political science and IR, it is merely a consequence of taking seriously the multipolar nature of international relations and the relentless transformation of national societies.

However, in much of our critical debate on the EU and its geopolitical role, for example, reference is often made to the European past as a conceptual guide to understanding of how a future EU might relate to its citizens, its 'Neighbourhood' and the rest of the world. One result of this perspective is to see the EU as a quasi-empire, as a new supranational body that uses its considerable power to structure the world and, in particular, its more immediate region. Some readings of the 'Europe as Empire' metaphor are rather benign, if not outright positive, such as Jan Zielonka's suggestion that a 'post-modern' European empire without immutable and excluding borders can generate a hybrid multilevel sense of governance, citizenship and identity.[61] This interpretation of Europe is echoed by 'popular geostrategists' such as Timothy Garton Ash who agonise over the EU's perceived inability to organise itself as a political actor with not only normative but also peacekeeping powers in European, Middle Eastern and other international contexts.[62] Other notions of European empire are much less optimistic. James Anderson sees the EU as a Neo-Westphalian reconstitution of core Europe's political and economic hegemonic ambitions in which the EU is unilaterally imposing its norms (and interests) on new member states and beyond.[63] Similarly, Dimitrovova argues that the EU engages in traditional state-like politics of difference and exclusion with regard to neighbouring states in East Europe and the Mediterranean.[64]

While recognizing the value of these very different positions on Europe, I prefer to eschew *a priori* determinations of the EU's geopolitical ambitions and leave open an interpretative space that accommodates the possibility of a disjointed, often incoherent but nevertheless progressive shift in geopolitical relations. This is largely in line with approaches that Booth, Fierke and Krause and Williams have suggested for the critical study of security.[65] The basic

[60] B. Flyvbjerg (2001) *Making Social Science Matter. Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[61] J. Zielonka (2006) Europe as Empire*:* the Nature of the Enlarged European Union, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Or to quote Jose Manuel Barroso's famous comment made in Strasbourg on 10 July 2007: 'What we have is the first non-imperial empire...We have twenty-seven countries that fully decided to work together and to pool their sovereignty. I believe it is a great construction and we should be proud of it'. These and other statements made by Barroso have been taken up by Eurosceptics of all ideological colours. Most revealing are the reactions of extreme conservative and right-wing groups who see the European 'empire' as signalling the victory of multiculturalist cosmopolitanism over the nation-state, See, for example, (http://euro-med.dk/?p=376) or the Belgian website 'Brussels Journal' (http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/2244).

[62] Read, example, Garton Ash's article 'Europe is failing two life and death tests. We must act together, now', in the Guardian of 8 January, 2009.

[63] J. Anderson (ed.) (2007) *Geopolitics of European Union Enlargement: the Fortress Empire*, London:Routledge.

[64] B. Dimitrovova (2009) *The Re-Bordering of Europe. The Case of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Doctoral Dissertation, Queen's University Belfast.

[65] K. Booth (ed.) (2005) *Critical Security Studies and World Politics,* Boulder:Lynne Rienner; K. Fierke *Critical Approaches to International Security* (Cambridge and Malden (MA):Polity Press 2007); K. Krause and M. C.

assumptions I therefore operate from are: 1) that the principle subjects in world politics are *social constructs* – products of complex historical processes that include social, political, material and ideational dimensions, 2) that there are no immutable and 'objectively' existing structures, interests or identities in world politics – instead, actors in the world system constitute themselves, their identities and interests through practices that create shared social understandings and 3) that the 'state' no longer enjoys the exclusive privilege of performing international policies. Furthermore, the scientific goal of critical investigation can be understood to be one of interpretation, contextual understanding and practical knowledge of the social world, rather than the construction of sweeping causal claims.

In sum, geopolitics can be understood as a doctrine, as concrete policies and as an analytical tool that allows us to interpret geopolitics as statecraft. What I suggest here is that, in addition – and as suggested by Sanjay Chaturvedi – border studies as a discipline should also contextualise change in the world system by taking into account, for example, socio-cultural aspects, identity politics and the role of civil society.[66] With this perspective as a point of departure, the wider European 'Neighbourhood' can be seen as both a geopolitical project and a process that is not hegemonic but rather a patchwork of different forms of cross-border and interregional co-operation.

The EU as an Agent of Reterritorialisation: Between Consolidation and Regional Inclusion

According to David Newman re-territorialisation (as a concept of political geography) is a process through which 'territorial configurations of power are continually ordered and reordered (..) it is not something new. It has been taking place continuously as new states are created and others are vanquished'.[67] Put in different terms, re-territorialisation expresses acknowledgement of the fact that boundaries between territory, society and politics – as well as state-social relations – are subject to constant processes of re-definition. In this sense, the European Union is a major geopolitical project of reterritorialisation. It has shifted many central functions of political sovereignty away from nation-states, a process culminating in a state-like political community with numerous policy-making institutions. The EU has also reconfigured the borders of Europe – not in the sense of redrawing state boundaries, but in transforming their socio-spatial significance.[68] As such, the issue of re-territorialisation emerges as a strengthening of supranational competencies, the efficient international management of borders and new instruments which 'contribute to the export of European

Williams (eds.) *Critical Security Studies. Concepts and Cases* (London: UCL Press 1997). Critical security studies (CSS) is a relatively new way of thinking about and studying geopolitical issues such as security. CSS rejects the (neo-) realism, structuralism and statism that continues to inform much scholarly work on international relations, security and geopolitics in the post-Cold War context. It also openly criticizes the state-centrist assumptions of statecraft and aims for a fundamental re-conceptualisation of the notion of 'security'. CSS not only provides a post-positivist arena for debate on geopolitics and security studies it also helps us to think beyond misleading distinctions, such as those between 'internal' and 'external' security.

[66] S. Chaturvedi (2003) 'Geopolitics of India's Cultural Diversity: Conceptualisation and Contestations', *Groupe des Etudes et Recherches sur les Mondialisations* – GERM Ref. 000011963; (2005) 'Between Belonging(s) and Bounding(s): Representations and Resistance in Post/Colonial Sri Lanka', *Terra: Journal of Geographical Society of Finland*, 117(3)..

[67] Newman, (note 16, p. 88).

[68] L. O'Dowd 'The Changing Significance of European Borders', *Regional and Federal Studies* 12/4 (2002), pp. 13-36.

governance beyond the territory of the EU'[69] as well as rules, norms and practices that aim to 'Europeanise' national spaces.[70] From this derive the objectives and values that create a common set of discourses in which various policy issues can be negotiated.[71]

EU geopolitics can be seen in terms of a fundamental reordering of interstate relations. This involves, on the one hand, the consolidation of an economic, social and political European space, partly through the 'flexible' construction of Europe within a context of a composite polity.[72] On the other hand, with its 'New Neighbourhood" policy the EU pursues a role of stabiliser and promoter of greater co-operation.[73] This emergent geopolitics of the European Union is a project that is constantly in the making and that focuses squarely on issues of identity and cultural meaning.

Furthermore, the EU has played a key role in shaping the post-Cold War political order in Europe. Through the process of enlargement and the development of new political relations with Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and other states, the EU has exerted considerable influence on political institution-building and socio-cultural processes in the former 'Soviet Bloc'[74]. Regional co-operation is another defining element of the EU; it is informed by geopolitical discourses of 'partnership', 'co-development' and 'mutual interdependence' that are part of the ideational and visionary foundations of EU political community. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is at present the maximum expression of this new geopolitical project in terms of an emerging 'Common Foreign and Security Policy'.[75]

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[69] M. Fritsch 'European Territorialisation and the Eastern Neighbourhood: Spatial Development Co-operation between the EU and Russia', *European Journal of Spatial Development* No. 35 (2009) (www.nordregion.se/EJSD/refereed35.pdf)., p. 7

[70] C. O'Dwyer 'Reforming Regional Governance in East Central Europe: Europeanisation or Domestic Politics as Usual?', *East European Politics and Societies* 20/2 (2006), pp. 219–253.

[71] Europeanisation is understood here in terms of a diffusion of norms regarding political agendas and procedures, social values and societal self-definitions (see, for example T. Diez, A. Agnantopoulos and A. Kaliber (2005) 'Turkey, Europeanisation and Civil Society: Introduction', *South European Society and Politics,* 10(1), pp. 1 – 15).

[72] A. Faludi (2007) The European Model of Society, in: A. Faludi (ed.) *Territorial Cohesion and the European Model of Society,* Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, pp. 1-22; O. Jensen and T. Richardson (2004) *Making European Space. Mobility, Power and Territorial Identity*, London and New York: Routledge.

[73] B. Dimitrovova (note 27).

[74] A. Gawrich, I. Melnykovska and R. Schweickert (2010) Neighbourhood Europeanisation through ENP - the Case of Ukraine, *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 48(5), pp. 1209-1233; I. Sagan and R. Lee (2005) Spatialities of Regional Transformation in Central Europe and the Administrative Spaces of the EU, in: I. Sagan and H. Halkier, H. (eds), *Regionalism Contested. Institution, Society and Governance.* Aldershot:Ashgate, pp. 163- 176.

[75] Those who argue that there is in effect no EU Common Foreign and Security Policy are clearly mistaken. The reason for this error of judgement is an inability to conceive such policies beyond the traditional contexts of formal state-oriented policy. The ENP is a very influential instrument indeed and the indecisiveness it 'suffers' from is typical of the vicissitudes facing more traditional foreign policy at the level of nation-states. The promise of the ENP, however, is to do more than traditional policies dare venture - to promote deep regional co-operation through shared political agendas and co-ownership of co-operation programmes.

However, while the EU's geopolitical project of reordering Europe and its regional neighbourhood is – at best – incomplete, it remains highly influential and thus deserves critical investigation. Zaki Laidi has attempted to come to terms with the EU's fragmented and contradictory nature by focusing on its attempts to establish coherence within a complex global context.[76] As Laidi maintains, one vital element in the post-Cold War reorganisation of the world system is the construction of macroregional *spaces of meaning*, in which the 'deepening' and 'widening' of European Union has played a pivotal role. However, the physical control of space, either directly or by proxy, has never been a goal of the EU. Instead, it has been to create a geopolitical alternative (an 'Alter Ego') to the one-dimensional economic liberalisation logics and the reification of national sovereignty evidences in North America and other parts of the world. Such a geopolitical alternative is only feasible through the construction of a new symbolic order of state-society relations - captured by the EU as a model of a coherent supranational community, effective cross-border co-operation and peaceful co-existence.

As a 'space of meaning', Europe is defining itself both externally (e.g. as a regional and global player) and internally (as a political community) in terms of a distinctive set of values and a sense of purpose.[77] Furthermore, the notion of reterritorialisation puts emphasis on the fact that the EU's geopolitics are reflective of a complex hybridity that is at once concretely territorial and vaguely/abstractly spatial.[78] EU geopolitics thus combines formal policy frameworks with intangible but powerful cultural ideas of solidarity, prosperity and human rights (the 'model of Social Europe').

Internal Consolidation as a Geopolitical Project

The construction of the European Union is in large part an attempt to create a coherent political, social and economic space within a clearly defined multinational community (the EU 27). At the same time, and as will be discussed in greater detail below, a border is being drawn around the EU-27 in order to consolidate it as a political community and thus manage regional heterogeneity, core-periphery contradictions and political-organisational flux. As Matti Fritsch has indicated, the geopolitical consolidation of the EU is reflected in an increasing emphasis on territoriality rather than on more purely abstract notions of European 'space'.[79]

Attempts to create a Pan-European idea of social, economic and spatial development have, for example, culminated in the notion of 'Territorial Cohesion'.[80] With the strategy known as Ter-

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[76] Z. Laidi (1998) *A World Without Meaning. The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics*, London and New York: Routledge.

[77] Admittedly (perhaps somewhat ironically in this case) the geopolitical concept of Europe as a 'pan-Idea' is not new, Karl Haushofer's depiction of a European geopolitics saw a continent unified by history and a colonial empire pitted against 'Pan-Slavic', 'Pan-American' and British imperial spaces.

[78] See, for example, C. K. Ansell (2004) Territoriality, Authority and Democracy, in: C .K. Ansell, and G. Di Palma (eds.) *Restructuring Territoriality. Europe and the United States Compared,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 225-245; V. Mamadouh (2001) The Territoriality of the European Union and the Territorial Features of the European Union, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 94(2), pp. 420-436.

[79] Fritsch (note 69).

[80] Commission of the European Communities (2008) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.

ritorial Cohesion, the EU has created powerful underlying discourses in order to create consensus and a sense of coherence in terms of an EU identity and political purpose. One of the aims is to outline a distinctive European Model of Society based on solidarity and co-operative governance.[81] In addition, the concept of Territorial Cohesion more directly pursues economic competitiveness (according to the Lisbon Agenda) and the objective of 'positionality' with the global economic and geopolitical context.

The notion of a EU-European canon of values and principles is supported by the large body of basic documents and agendas that has emerged since the first European Treaty in 1957. This corpus sets the core parameters for europeanisation processes. Among the elements of this considerable ideational 'acquis' are the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the Lisbon Agenda of 2000, the 2001 Göteborg Agenda and more recently, political agendas that inform Cohesion and Regional Policy and the development of the European Research Area. Prominent among these documents is the Maastricht Treaty (Article 2) which defines the central development objectives of the European Union, namely: 'harmonious and balanced development of economic life with the European Union, sustainable, non-inflationary and environmentally sensitive growth, a high degree of convergence in economic development, high levels of employment, and social protection, the improvement of the quality of life, economic and social cohesion and solidarity between the member states'.

Since 1992, the achievement of 'good governance' has acquired equal standing with objectives of economic and social cohesion. Cohesion policies, such as those defined in the EU's 2000 Lisbon Agenda, seek to promote growth, competitiveness and employment while emphasizing environmental sustainability. With good governance, on the other hand, a responsive and democratic institutional architecture are understood to be prerequisites for an integrated political space. The 2001 White Paper on European Governance has defined five principles that underpin good governance: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. With its notions of governance, the EU aims at a process of community-building based on common rules as well as on adherence to a comprehensive set of political and ethical values.[82]

Within this ideational context of European re-territorialisation, regional scale has also played an important role. It is here – at least theoretically – where the EU's multiple objectives of economic dynamism, efficiency, democracy and empowerment translate into concrete development projects. Indeed, for over thirty years regions have represented a central focus and addressee of EU policies.[83] Re-territorialisation has also been characterised by a process

[81] A. Faludi (note 72).

[82] The Lisbon and Göteborg Agendas aim, respectively, at economic growth and sustainability. The Lisbon Agenda specifically signals a change in policy orientation at the EU-level in which 'neoliberal" goals of competitiveness and greater local and regional self-sufficiency are marginalizing more traditional approaches of economic solidarity and redistribution. These agendas are clearly manifested in the funding priorities of the EU's 2007-2013 programming period: while regional and social development funds aim at an internal consolidation through stabilizing and securing the enlarged Union, they also are seen as a means of preparing regions and localities for considerably reduced subsidies in the future.

[83] The European Regional Development Fund was established in 1975 in order to address industrial crises and underdevelopment within member states. During the first years of the Fund's existence, the European Commission acted as administrator on behalf of national development interests, disbursing regional assistance according to fixed quotas. However progressive reforms of the ERDF in the 1980s, accompanied by the accession of Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain to the Community, established a new regional development agenda with a much more differentiated approach. With the establishment in 1988 of the Structural Funds (in effect consolidating all regional and sectoral aid programs within one policy instrument) regional policy was

of region-building within the EU: that is, of a gradual creation of regional administrative units entrusted with various public policy remits. Since 1988, numerous programmes and initiatives have been launched with the express goal of creating new development perspectives for peripheral areas, agricultural regions, regions in industrial decline, areas undergoing rapid structural transformation, etc. In addition, European policy has established a framework for co-operation and knowledge exchange between different regions in various areas of economic, social and spatial development.[84] Regionalisation has proceeded apace with the most recent EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 as new member states with generally centralist traditions have experimented with the re-organisation of administrative space. In this latest regionalisation phase EU requirements have played an essential role; administrative decentralisation has been made a prerequisite for the disbursement of structural development funds.[85]

One principal characteristic of internal consolidation is the transcendence of a strictly national orientation in public policy, development policies and identity. Even if the EU's future institutional architecture has never been an object of consensus, the transcending of inner-European borders and the facilitation of cross-border exchange are largely seen as EU success stories. In fact, it is precisely the de-bordering of a major part of Europe that has fed notions of the EU as a force for good in the world. The 'europeanisation' of space is thus particularly evident in crossborder situations. Crossborder and transregional co-operation is seen to provide ideational foundations for the territorial cohesion of the EU based on a 'putative space of values and area of solidarity'.[86] This is reinforced by symbolic representations of a networked European space and its future development perspectives.[87] More importantly, however, the practice of establishing Euroregions, local and/or regional government associations devoted to cross-border co-operation, has spread throughout the EU, on its external borders and beyond (Perkmann 2002, Popescu 2006). Euroregions are an interesting case here; while necessarily referring to specific regional contexts, they are, in the aggregate, a spatial metaphor in the sense that they evoke a sense of transnational community, developed in free association and that contributes to wider European integration. Consequently, the Euroregion concept has proved a powerful tool with which to transport European values and

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essentially de-nationalised; the EU assumed a major role in defining specific target areas and regional problems to be addressed.

[84] Structural initiatives have included RESIDER (restructuring of steelmaking regions), LEADER (development strategies for rural regions), KONVER (conversion of military installations to civilian use), RENAVAL (assistance to regions characterised by large shipbuilding industries in crisis), and RECHAR (assistance to mining regions). INTERREG, now in its fourth phase (2007-2013), has supported numerous transboundary and transnational co-operation projects between regions.

[85] Needless to say, the process of region-building within the EU has, of course, been uneven. This is partly due to the lack of a unitary framework that defines regions as such, e.g. in political and functional terms. Whilst often based upon historical and cultural traditions, other regionalising policies have been adopted by states as a means of rationalising administration, managing internal change and satisfying EU demands. As a result, the participation of regions within national and European policy-making processes is dependent on their status within national contexts.

[86] L. Bialasiewicz, S. Elden and J. Painter (2005) The Constitution of EU Territory, *Comparative European Politics* 3, p. 335.

[87] J. Scott (2002) A Networked Space of Meaning? Spatial Politics as Geostrategies of European Integration, *Space and Polity* 6(2), pp. 147-167.

objectives. The popularity of the concept is evident in its proliferation within the EU and, more recently, in Central and Eastern Europe.[88]

In addition to regional policies and cross-border co-operation, spatial planning at the EU level also promotes a decidedly post-national perspective within the larger post-1990 geopolitical context of European development. Indeed, one of the principal assumptions underlying cross-border planning exercises is that symbolism guides collective action by creating a sense of common understanding and providing a 'language' that promotes consensus-building.[89] Alternative European geographies are being defined, among others, through symbolic planning concepts, the transnationalisation of space through networks and flexible regionalisation, and network-like forms of governance.[90] These initiatives have culminated in the elaboration of a European Spatial Development Perspective, or ESDP.[91] Although not a community level policy in the sense of agriculture or regional development, ESDP is a policy framework of an advisory nature agreed by the European Ministers of Spatial Planning in 1999 and that enshrines sustainable economic development and socio-economic cohesion. Central to ESDP is a focus on regional urban systems, urban-rural relationships, access to development opportunity structures and a concern for a diverse natural and cultural heritage. These spatial strategies cross-cut traditional nationally-oriented development practice; in effect, nothing less than an 'EU-Europeanisation' of regional and local political spaces is being attempted.[92]

Geopolitics of Neighbourhood: the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument

As argued here, 'internal consolidation' is an important geopolitical process because it provides the basic foundations for the EU's external relations in ideological, strategic and institutional terms. Having achieved historic enlargements in 2004 and 2007, the EU has set its sights further abroad and sees itself as developing a new kind of international political partnership. Furthermore, because of geographical proximity, long-standing (e.g. post-colonial) economic, social and political interrelationships and deepening mutual interdependencies, the EU is keen to assume a stabilizing role in Post-Soviet, Eurasian and Mediterranean regional contexts.[93] The geopolitical vision that underlies this ideational projection of power is that of 'privileged partnership' – that is, of a special, multifaceted and mutually beneficial relationship with the EU, in some cases in place of concrete perspectives

[88] E. Bojar (note 32).

[89] N. B. Groth (2000) Urban Systems Between Policy and Geography, *Regional Studies*, 34(6), pp. 571-580.

[90] Fritsch (note 69).

[91] European Commission *ESDP-European Spatial Development Perspective. Towards Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Territory of the European Union*, (Luxembourg:Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 1999).

[92] B. Waterhout (2007) Territorial Cohesion: the Underlying Discourses, in: A. Faludi (ed.), *Territorial Cohesion and the European Model of Society,* Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, pp. 37-59

[93] C. S. Browning and P. Joeniemmi (2008) Geostrategies of the European Neighbourhood Policy, *European Journal of International Relations* 14 (3), pp. 519-551.

of EU membership.[94] With this geopolitical vision, principles of (EU) European governance are being extend well beyond the borders of the EU.

The ENP is the most explicit form of geopolitical integration between the EU and its immediate region, it is a policy framework that aims to structure relations between the EU and its neighbours according to the criteria ostensibly set by both the EU and its partners.[95] As has been documented elsewhere, the ENP is thus a means by which to maintain the momentum of europeanisation and promulgate the values of the EU without actually offering direct membership to third states.[96] The countries involved are: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.[97] Additionally, the considerable geographical reach of the EU's Neighbourhood is not limited to the ENP. Russia, for example, is not part of the ENP process as such but participates in the cross-border programmes funded through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). In the case of Turkey, membership negotiations, although controversial, have been initiated. However, the long-term and ambivalent nature of the process dictates that Turkey will be subject to similar geopolitical agendas as ENP member states.

Ultimately, one of the central objectives of the ENP is to create a wider security community in Europe; illegal immigration, human trafficking, energy security, cross-border organised crime remain issues where intensified co-ordination between the EU and its neighbours is envisaged. However, the ENP's scope is complex and multilayered; it encompasses a wide range of economic, political and socio-economic issues. This is also due to the EU's broad definition of security as being environmental, economic and social (and not only military) in nature as well as a realisation (not always translated into practice) that security concerns must be shared rather than imposed externally.[98] As a result, the EU suggests that cultural

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[94] See S. Lavenex (2004) EU External Governance in 'Wider Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy,* 11(4), pp. 680 – 700. According to the ENP strategy paper (Commission of the European Communities (2004) *Communication from the Commission, European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy Paper*, COM (2004) 373 final, p. 3): 'the privileged relationship with neighbours will build on mutual commitment to common values principally within the fields of the rule of law, good governance, the respect for human rights, including minority rights, the promotion of good neighbourly relations, and the principles of market economy and sustainable development." It then states: 'The level of ambition of the EU's relationships with its neighbours will take into account the extent to which these values are effectively shared'.

[95] Above and beyond ENP, the Europeanisation of the Neighbourhood is being promoted through other means, such as research and education (priority 2.6 in the EU-Ukraine Action Plan as 'people to people contacts'). The EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technology (FP7), for example, contributes to the envisaged construction of a European Research Area (ERA) by promoting networks of universities and research teams not only within the EU but also internationally.

[96] Commission of the European Communities (2004) *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council Laying Down General Provisions Establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument*, COM (2004) 628 final; W. Wallace (2003) Looking after the Neighbourhood: Responsibilities for the EU-25, *Policy Papers of Notre Europe-Groupement des Etudes et de Recherches*, 4 see <http://www.notre-europe.eu/uploads/tx_publication/Policypaper4_02.pdf > (accessed 08 May 2011).

[97] While formally included in the ENP, no agreements have been established to date with Belarus, Libya or Syria.

[98] The EU's security policies with regard to the Neighbourhood are targeted at enhancing public security through combating environmental hazards, terrorism, organised crime, smuggling and other illegal activities. At the same time, peace and stability are to be achieved through closer economic cooperation and the avoidance of divisive gaps in living standards.

understanding and the recognition of mutual interdependence are means with which to establish a common political dialogue. Within this context, the achievement of co-ownership of basic policy areas affecting the EU and its neighbours is also emphasised. In the words of the EU Commission:

> 'Interdependence – political and economic – with the Union's neighbourhood is already a reality. The emergence of the euro as a significant international currency has created new opportunities for intensified economic relations. Closer geographical proximity means the enlarged EU and the new neighbourhood will have an equal stake in furthering efforts to promote trans-national flows of trade and investment as well as even more important shared interests in working together to tackle transboundary threats - from terrorism to air-borne pollution. The neighbouring countries are the EU's essential partners: to increase our mutual production, economic growth and external trade, to create an enlarged area of political stability and functioning rule of law, and to foster the mutual exchange of human capital, ideas, knowledge and culture".[99]

Furthermore, it is not only the enhancement of the EU's international influence that is at stake but also the strengthening of its identity as a stabilising element in the world system with 'exportable' (i.e. universal) democratic values.[100] Indeed, the EU pursues the objective of achieving community through 'shared' values (such as human and gender rights, commitment to an open market economy, democratic participation, etc.), common goals and intensive co-operation on a broad range of EU internal policies.[101] In addition, the practise of cross-border co-operation, a long-standing tradition within the EU, is a key priority both in the European Neighbourhood Policy and in the EU's Strategic Partnership with Russia. As the Commission's Strategy Paper on Cross-Border Co-operation states:

> A key objective of the EU in general and of the ENP is to enhance the EU's relations with its neighbours on the basis of shared values and provide opportunities to share the benefits of the EU enlargement, while help avoid any sense of exclusion which might have arisen from the latter. CBC is certainly an important means of addressing this, helping enhance economic and social links over borders as they now exist, by supporting co-operation and economic integration between regions.[102]

The cross-border co-operation (CBC) strategy embedded within the ENP pursues the following objectives: 1) the promotion of economic and social development in border areas, 2) supporting actions that address common challenges on both sides of the EU' external borders, 3) assuring efficiently managed and secure borders and 4) the promotion of 'people-to-people co-operation'.

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[99] Commission of the European Communities (2003) *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM (2003) 104 final; Commission of the European Communities (2004) *European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy*, COM (2004) 373, p. 3.

[100] See M. Emerson (2004) *The Wider Europe Matrix*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies and A. Guterres (2001) *The European Treaties Revisited: What Role for Europe in the Globalised World?*, speech delivered at a conference at the Walter Hallstein-Institute for European Constitutional Law, Humboldt University, Berlin, 7 May (2001).

[101] As defined in Commission of the European Communities (2003, note 56) pp. 11-12.

[102] Commission of the European Communities *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Cross-Border Cooperation. Strategy Paper 2007-2013, Indicative Programme 2007-2013*, (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities 2006), p.6.

Geopolitics 'from the Ground-Up': Civil Society Interpretations of the European Neighbourhood

As has been argued above, the EU is promoting forms of regional co-operation that – at least in theory – mark a decisive departure from traditional state-centred geopolitics. A further indication of this are the roles attributed to civil society and cross-border co-operation in deepening integration between the EU and its neighbours. In particular, the strengthening of a 'civil society dimension' within the ENP is promulgated by the Commission, the Council of Europe and the Parliament. According to the Commission: 'Civil society organisations have a valuable role to play in identifying priorities for action and in promoting and monitoring the implementation of ENP Action Plans'. Strengthening 'civil society' is also seen as a means of spreading western values of 'democracy', the rule of law', 'free markets' and 'good governance'.[103] Importantly, the European Commission has also suggested that civil society participation should go beyond exchanges and co-operation programmes:

> 'We must encourage partner governments to allow appropriate participation by civil society representatives as stakeholders in the reform process, whether in preparation of legislation, the monitoring of its implementation or in developing national or regional initiatives related to the ENP.'[104]

This aim is reiterated in the Commission's attempts to strengthen the ENP:

> 'The Commission will encourage a wide range of stakeholders to engage in monitoring the implementation of the ENP Action Plans, will promote dialogue in the partner countries between governments and local civil society and seek to bring more stakeholders into the reform process.'[105]

Given the significance of civil society, both as a medium for regional co-operation as well as a forum for social change, civil society actors should be understood as an important source of information on the ways in which EU geopolitics are received – both within EU member states and neighbouring countries.

In this section discussion will focus on Europeanisation tendencies from the ground-up.[106] The main concern is to understand how civil society actors interpret the EU as a political actor and how the EU affects their activities – primarily in regard to co-operation between the EU and neighbouring states. Within the scope of the research upon which this article is based, questions were asked regarding the EU's role in promoting co-operation, influencing co-operation agendas and opening new political spaces for the participation of civil society organisations in Neighbourhood policy-making.

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[103] Commission of the European Communities *A Stronger European Neighbourhood Policy*, (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2007), p. 11.

[104] Commission of the European Communities *Non-paper: ENP – a Path Towards Further Economic Integration*, (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, (2006), p. 7.

[105] Commission of the European Communities, (note 103).

[106] K. Nielsen, E. Berg and G. Roll (note 36).

One central issue that permeates these more 'straightforward' questions is that of 'European values' and the extent to which such values facilitate shared understandings of development, democracy, governance and security. As discussion below will illustrate, civil society actors involved in cross-border co-operation reflect the asynchronous and often contradictory nature of socio-spatial change. This is particularly evident with regard to transformations of state-society relationships and shifting understandings of Europe and national identity since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. EU geopolitics and processes of re-territorialisation within a wider regional context must be understood as contingent upon these contextual conditions.

Admittedly, this study involves a high degree of generalisation in order to uncover patterns with regard to the EU's significance for cross-border co-operation within the Neighbourhood context. In addition, the focus here is not on the entire geographical area of the ENP – instead it is limited to Eastern Europe and relations between the EU and countries such as Russia, Ukraine and Moldova. Despite this limited geographical 'coverage', however, the cases presented are emblematic of the challenges facing the EU's Neighbourhood Policy.

Civil Society, Neighbourhood and Contexts of Socio-Spatial Change

The EU is promoting a regional space that is intensifying and gradually improving relations with neighbouring states such as Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and even Belarus. Civil society has been singled out by the EU as an important actor in the development of new regional partnerships - it is indeed vital if the EU's goal of achieving forms of regional co-operation that are close to the citizen is to be taken seriously. This is, without question, a challenging goal. It would not only signify a break from traditional 'statist' notions of international politics but also complicate the policy-making process by multiplying the number of supranational, national and local stakeholders. What is also evident is that a civil society perspective on the EU's geopolitics reveals the complex socio-spatial dynamics that re-territorialisation *beyond* the EU imply.

Civil society organisations must operate within different, often competing socio-spatial logics that result from their cross-border engagement within the immediate neighbourhood. To the extent that they benefit from co-operation, civil society actors have intensified attempts to transcend national territorial contexts in political, economic and social terms. Here the EU offers certain networking incentives as well as a vision of political community that promises greater citizen and community participation.[107] The 'European dimension' allows civil society actors (and as will be discussed below, local and regional elites) an opportunity to articulate social and political concerns in a much broader international context as well as obtain greater material and moral support. This kind of support along with the exchange of knowledge has also been essential in allowing civil society organisations in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova to provide essential public services (e.g. health services, drug abuse prevention, youth unemployment counselling, combating human trafficking, etc.) that financially strapped governments cannot.[108] These services are frequently provided in direct collaboration with

[107] A. Skvortova (2006) The Impact of EU Enlargement on Moldovan-Romanian Relations, in J. Scott (ed.), *EU Enlargement, Region-building and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 133-148.

[108] A. Demidov and J. Laine (forthcoming 2012) 'Civil Society Organisations as Drivers of Cross-Border Interaction: On Whose terms, for Which Purpose?' in H. Eskelinen, I. Liikanen and J. Scott (eds.), *On the Edge of Neighbourhood: Regional Dimensions of the EU-Russia Interface* (London and New York: Routledge).

CSOs from EU member states (in this case Finland, Poland and Romania) and other international organisations

Relationships between the EU and Eastern European countries range from the Russian case of 'self-exclusion' from Neighbourhood policies (although this appears to be changing) to the more enthusiastic but nevertheless contradictory engagements of Ukraine and Moldova with the ENP. This is due in large measure to the lack of membership perspectives for the two latter countries and other exclusionary aspects of the EU policies (e.g. visa restrictions). However, support for engagement in the Neighbourhood project at the national level often does not translate into support of informal cross-border networks. European cross-border co-operation and the notion of a transnational civil society have been seen to conflict with Post-Soviet nation-building projects that strive for a cohesive sense of national identity and citizenship.[109] For their part, national governments (Russia, Moldova, Ukraine and new member states such as Romania and Slovakia) often view such transcending exercises with scepticism and try to co-opt or regulate cross-border co-operation in ways that serve their political interests.[110]

Within this context of socio-spatial transformation the thorny issue of 'European values' – at least as framed by the EU – offers an additional layer of complexity. It is not the purpose of the discussion to assess the intrinsic value or the long-term feasibility of the EU's notions of common values. The purpose is rather to shed light on how these values are understood and interpreted by civil society groups whose public activities are affected by the EU. The EU sees its core values as entailing much more that general affirmations of 'democracy' and 'prosperity'. Instead, it is the adherence to more concretely defined principles that is at stake; many of these are enshrined in the corpus of formal and informal documents that define the EU's model of community, including: human rights, minority rights, responsive and ethical governance practices, social solidarity, concern for the environment and social responsibility. These are elements of a unique 'model' with which the EU aims to make a positive difference in the world.[111] While the EU makes no attempt to suggest that these values, individually taken, are exclusively 'European', it is their canonical quality as fundamentals of political community that gives them their EU-European distinctiveness.[112]

The point to be stressed here is that both EU-Europe and the emerging Neighbourhood are being defined by discourses and practices that extol the EU's core values. In geopolitical terms, the very norms, values and acquis attributed to EU-Europe (e.g. the virtues of co-

[109] E. Belokurova and M. Nozhenko (forthcoming 2012) 'Regional identity-building and cross-border interaction in Northwest Russia', in H. Eskelinen, I. Liikanen and J. Scott (eds.), *On the Edge of Neighbourhood: Regional Dimensions of the EU-Russia Interface* (London and New York: Routledge).

[110] G. Popescu (2008) 'The Conflicting Logics of Crossborder Reterritorialisation: Geopolitics of Euroregions in Eastern Europe', *Political Geography*, 27(4) pp. 418-438 and (2006) 'Geopolitics of Scale and Cross-Border Cooperation in Eastern Europe: The Case of the Romanian-Ukrainian-Moldovan Borderlands', in J. Scott (ed.), *EU Enlargement, Region Building and Sifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 35-51.

[111] A. Faludi 'The European Model of Society', in: Faludi, Andreas (ed.) *Territorial Cohesion and the European Model of Society*, (Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy 2007), pp. 1-22.

[112] Critical observers (including the author) see this canon of values with some justified reservations. For example, the increasing neo-liberal thrust of EU policies (e.g. as expressed in the Lisbon Agenda) does little to support goals of social solidarity, even though Billions of Euros are being spent on the most disadvantaged regions of the EU. Indeed, undermining the 'European' welfare state would torpedo the project of a coherent 'Social Europe'!

operation, democratic 'ownership', social capital and general values such as sustainability, solidarity and cohesion) are being projected upon the Neighbourhood in order to provide a sense of orientation and purpose to third states.[113] In light of this, one common theme in work on the ENP is that a 'politics of difference' is being played out; the closer the values and institutions of neighbouring states reflect those of the EU, the more they will be accepted as equal partners.[114] More seriously, the EU is seen to reproduce hegemonic understandings of European identity and values: the Western ownership of universal values undermines well-meant intentions of recognising cultural, socio-economic and political difference and suppresses voices from outside the core. [115]

How do local actors perceive the idea of 'common European values'? Almost all recognise the necessity of a basic set of principles that facilitates positive interaction and a sense of joint purpose. However, the idea that democracy and respect for human rights are somehow specific to the EU is clearly rejected. Russian, Ukrainian, Moldovan and other civil society actors understandably take umbrage to the idea that there might be an EU 'moral hegemony'. Civil society actors understand basic rights, the rule of law, social solidarity, etc. to be much more general in nature; they do not in themselves constitute a unique European identity or sense of purpose. EU-Europeanness in their view is mainly seen in terms of specific attitudes towards efficient governance, the value of work (e.g. reliability!) and related issues. These attitudes serve to distinguish between EU-European practices and the present situation in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova and can be explained by the fact that many CSO activists have received training and education opportunities through EU-sponsored projects. This has led to the absorption of institutional rhetoric that reflects an emphasis on effective and efficient problem-solving. Europe is also seen as a success story in terms of social development and welfare, which appears to be an important 'demarcation line' between EU-Europe and neighbouring states as well.

The European Commission attempts to downplay cultural difference and rather emphasises political and economic processes of approximation to the EU and its acquis. In fact, the Commission and the EU Parliament have so far largely skirted the populist anti-immigration debate prevalent at the level of national politics.[116] The focus has been more on finding

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[113] In its report 'A Stronger European Neighbourhood Policy' the Commission states (note 63, p. 1): 'The ENP is a partnership for reform that offers 'more for more": the more deeply a partner engages with the Union, the more fully the Union can respond, politically, economically and through financial and technical cooperation. Ultimately, what is at stake is the EU's ability to develop an external policy complementary to enlargement that is effective in promoting transformation and reform'.

[114] P. Bilgin (2004) A Return to 'Civilisational Geopolitics' in the Mediterranean? Changing Geopolitical Images of the European Union and Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era, *Geopolitics*, 9(2), pp. 269-291; see also K. Smith, (note 26).

[115] Dimitrovova, (note 27, p. 208).

[116] There is, of course, another aspect to the question of European values that must be mentioned here – that of the contestedness of what constitutes 'European identity'. Cultural concepts of Europe as a locus of Christendom and of the Enlightenment and thus based on civilisational, cultural and religious categories have emerged in media representations and in political discourses within member states of the EU (for example, in Austria, Germany, Lithuania, Poland). Contrary to what was expected when membership negotiations with Central and Eastern European countries were initiated, the last phases of EU enlargement have not always received the warmest welcome in western European countries. Nationalist populism has been strengthened by threat scenarios of an invasion of cheap labour and/or by islamophobic readings of a possible Turkish accession to the EU. Partly as a result of this, the reclamation of national identity and sovereignty and the emphasis of cultural-civilisational difference in defining what is and what is not'European' compete rather strongly with more inclusive notions of Europeanness.

balanced language in terms of security issues, framing them as common regional concerns rather than unilaterally imposed by Brussels. It is important to emphasise that the EU is partly facing a populist backlash against more inclusive notions of Europe, European identity and political community.[117] And yet, a clear tendency to differentiate between neighbours creeps through in EU discourse – and this is sensed by civil society actors. In fact, respondents in Ukraine and Moldova stated that the EU often understands cultural difference as an obstacle to co-operation that must be overcome. What is perceived is a differentiation between these states (among others) and 'EU-Europe' through discourses that emphasise domestic internal crises and political divisions (and especially the very thorny issues of Russian-European contradictions) and corruption as a systemic element. Frequently embedded in the EU perspective is a perceived duality of Ukrainian and Moldovan identity in which Russian and European orientations are seen as antagonistic opposites. This concurs with Tatiana Zhurzhenko's assertion that:

> 'The 'imaginative geographers' behind the recent EU enlargement – politicians, bureaucrats and intellectuals – were very slow and reluctant to recognise Ukraine as a European country, rather considering it as a buffer state undeniably belonging to the Russian sphere of influence, a grey zone of the Near Abroad. Long before the enlargement process had started, the EU preferred to define its relationship with Ukraine mainly in terms of security. Support for market transformation and democratic reforms in Ukraine (rather limited in comparison to other post-communist countries) was designed more with the aim to maintain political stability in the region than to help Ukraine prepare for eventual accession.'[118]

EU Geopolitics: Post-National, Neo-Westphalian, or Hybrid ?

The EU represents a multipolar and decentred situation where debate rages over conflicting notions of citizenship and cultural belonging. With the demise of ideological bordering after the end of the Cold War, EU-Europe is engaged in a struggle for political and social recognition, often pitting the EU not only against its neighbours but also its own member states. Opposition to the EU's attempts at consolidation – and the failure to ratify a constitutional framework in 2005 in particular – as well as a persistent lack of unity in issues such as immigration, foreign policy, citizenship and minority rights, point to the complexity of building a supranational political community. The geopolitics of the European Union is thus developing within a backdrop of 'struggle for meaning' that takes several forms. At one level, there are those who contend that Europe (that is, the EU) offers a prospect of post-national identity and citizenship – or at least a sense of supranational 'belonging' – that can transcend conflicts emerging out of fixed, supposedly 'immutable' territorial identities.[119] This, however, goes in the face of ongoing national struggles for importance within the EU

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[117] See S. Rosenberger (2004) The Other Side of the Coin: Populism, Nationalism, and the European Union, *Harvard International Review*, 26 (1), pp. 22-26; see also the Newsletters of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (http://eumc.eu.int). The EUMC has extensively criticised populist tendencies in EU and national political debates (see, for example, Newletter 15, November 2002).

[118] T. Zhurzhenko (2006) Regional Cooperation in the Ukrainian-Russian Borderlands: Wider Europe or Post-Soviet Integration?, in: Scott, J. (ed.), *EU Enlargement, Region-Building and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion,* Aldershot:Ashgate, p. 100.

[119] T. Diez (2002) Why the EU can Nonetheless be Good for Cyprus, *JEMIE:Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 2/2002.

(particularly since the 2004 enlargement) and powerful undercurrents of populism that characterise national politics in many EU member states. 'Enlargement fatigue', so pervasive in media discourses and public debates, appears to reflect a more general lack of orientation and, perhaps more seriously, enthusiasm with regard to the European project.[120] The EU, it would appear, is reacting to this situation with a show of state-like authority in its neighbourhood relations and policies of border control.

The EU, both by design and experimentation, has emerged as a geopolitical actor that simultaneously confirms and transcends its external borders. This is particularly evident in the case of border and visa regimes that complicate cross-border interaction. On the one hand, the EU is seen to pursue a new quality of non-exploitative and multidimensional regional relationships in which the neighbours are inclusively treated as partners. On the other hand, the EU's desire for a state-like political authoritativeness, combined with exclusionary populist discourses emanating from member states, has encumbered these partnerships.[121] Early assessments of the ENP indicated that a process of 'external governance' has expanded the EU's 'legal boundary' while limiting access of neighbouring countries to its institutions.[122] In addition, through the conditionality of its financial aid and visa facilitation promises, the EU has obliged Russia, Ukraine and other states to sign readmission agreements and thus take back illegal immigrants who cross their borders to enter the EU. Conditions mandating the readmission and preventative apprehension of undocumented immigrants put considerable pressure on the limited resources of neighbouring states (Ukraine and Moldova, in particular).

This situation has been captured in critical debate as a tension between post-national and neo-Westphalian perspectives on the EU. A post-national approach to geopolitics would indeed de-emphasise the 'foreign' in foreign affairs but without an attempt on the part of one actor to impose hegemonic agendas or values on others. One indicator of this would be the international co-ownership of policies, such as security policy, that until now have been largely the domain of national governments. A Neo-Westphalian interpretation of the EU's geopolitics, on the other hand, merely sees a shifting of scales rather than a profound change in doctrine and practice. National interest politics and the will to hegemony do not vanish − they are instead transported to the supranational level of a clearly defined political community that through its policies reconstructs the territoriality, restrictive border policies and particularistic visions reminiscent of the traditional state.

A compromise view is that, similar to Ansell's interpretation of the EU as a political community, the EU can be understood as a geopolitical 'hybrid' and that its geopolitical practices reflect this 'indeterminate' condition.[123] EU geopolitics is thus at once formal and policy oriented and informal, operating as a set of discourses and ideas that create a sense of common space. In the context of post-socialist transformation in Eastern Europe, the EU has offered considerable support for democratisation, economic development and the improvement of vital infrastructures. Furthermore, the EU has helped established new fora for

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[120] See 'Fighting EU 'Enlargement Fatigue', written by Alison Smale and Dan Bilefsky, International Herald Tribune, June 16, 2006 (www.iht.com/articles/2006/19/news/eu.php).

[121] H. Van Houtum and F. Boedeltje (note 10); H. Van Houtum and R. Pijper (2007) The European Union as a Gated Community of Fear: The Two-faced Border and Immigration Regime of the EU, *Antipode* 39(2), pp. 291-309.

[122] See, for example, S. Lavenex (note 94).

[123] C.K. Ansell (note 73).

interstate dialogue and co-operation. In difficult situations, such as the Romanian-Moldavian where cultural identity and national sovereignty issues have plagued binational relations, the presence of a 'neutral' partner in the joint programming of Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans has brought the two sides closer together.[124] Furthermore, in the case of Moldova, the EU's mediation with Ukraine and the breakaway territory of Transnistria has been vital in the search for peace.[125] With the European Border Assistance Mission to Moldavia and Ukraine (EUBAM), the EU is helping to manage the de-facto borders between Moldova, Ukraine and Transnistria and defuse potentially dangerous conflicts (see Figure 2).[126] To this end, several EU-funded projects such as BOMMOLUK (Improvement of Border Controls at the Moldova-Ukraine Border) are being carried out, partly in co-operation with UNDP. In effect, the EU has 'extended' its border security perimeter, but in an advising capacity.

With the ENP, furthermore, the EU envisages comprehensive co-operation agendas that cut across political, economic and cultural dividing lines. In addition, the EU seeks to make its policies towards neighbouring states more effective, coherent and responsive to local needs. Local and regional cross-border co-operation has in fact shown itself to be a powerful motivator of civil society networks between the EU and neighbouring states due to its practical and problem-oriented focus and the opportunities it provides for subnational paradiplomacy.[127] Cross-border co-operation as championed by the EU has thus contributed to regional empowerment, opening up subnational spaces of political action. In the case of Russian Autonomous Republic of Karelia, civil society actors understand their networking activities in terms of implementing a vision of Karelia as a 'pilot region' of greater EU-Russian co-operation.[128] This is closely connected with the overall positive evaluation of civil society development in Karelia.

The EU has undoubtedly pressed its political and security concerns onto the template of partnership (as defined, for example, in the Action Plan) and is re-cast them as 'common' interests. The ambitious goals of the Neighbourhood Policy – that is, of a new geopolitical model based on mutual interdependence, partnership, the co-ownership of co-operation policies and the inclusion of socio-cultural concerns – have thus been viewed with skepticism Nevertheless, changes have taken place since 2004 that signal a move to more genuine co-ownership of co-operation policies. More recent deliberations between the EU and Ukraine indicate a change in political language and attitude: the Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013, for example, is much more forceful in its recognition of Ukraine's geopolitical situation and

[124] I. Melnykovska and R. Schweickert (2008) Bottom-up or Top-down: What Drives the Convergence of Ukraine's Institutions Towards European Standards?, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 8 (4), pp. 445-468.

[125] As reported in: 'La UE gana peso en Moldavia", El Pais, 25 January 2007.

[126] 'Effective" border management is a keystone of Neighbourhood policy. According to the EUBAM Website: 'Borders are a vital tool in promoting a safe environment in which trade and people to people contacts can flourish. Effective border management should facilitate, not hinder, trade and contacts across the border. Within its own area, the EU has worked for over 50 years to break down barriers between its Member States that can hamper trade and personal, family and cultural contact. Under the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, the EU is reaching out to its neighbours in order to promote prosperity, common values and security as well as to help break down trade barriers". EUBAM European Border Assistance Mission to Moldavia and Ukraine (Source: EUBAM website, accessed 16 June 2007, http://www.eubam.org/)

[127] I. Liikanen (2008) 'New Neighbourhood and Cross-Border Region Building: Identity Politics of CBC on the Finnish-Russian Border', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 23 (2), pp. 19-38.

[128] I. Liikanen and J. Laine (2011) 'Civil Society Cooperation in Russian-Finnish Karelia: A Clash of Territorialities?', *Journal of European Integration*, volume 32.

in its support of Ukraine's regional role.[129] In this way accession to NATO, the maintenance of good relations and intensive co-operation with Russia and Ukraine's role in promoting co-operation within the GUAM region (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) are explicitly acknowledged. Furthermore, the EU has made overtures to Ukraine that, while not promising outright EU membership, offer prospects of an 'enhanced' partnership agreement, including the establishment of a Free Trade Zone.

This engagement with states outside its borders does not readily square with more traditional state-centred interest politics. The principal thrust of the EU's formal geopolitics has been state-centred and focused on capital cities and centres of power within the Neighbourhood.[130] Understandably, civil society actors in neighbouring states feel discriminated against and argue that this discrimination reveals much about the contradictions of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy. One major issue is that civil society is still marginalised in areas of formal politics. Even though civil society actors are being offered a prominent role in broader political and social platforms where policy issues are discussed, there appears to be a lack of communication between formal and informal arenas.[131] CSO representatives complain that there is little discussion and almost no consultation with CSOs in the design of EU co-operation policies within the scope of the ENP.

In a similar manner, EU funding mechanisms for co-operation activities between EU member states and neighbouring countries are seen to target state and governmental institutions and large, well-organised civil society organisations to the detriment of smaller, local and regional CSOs. In this way, a centralisation of funding mechanisms has taken place. By the same token this situation often forces CSOs in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova to act as quasi-governmental bureaucratic organisations.

One telling indicator of contradictions between EU promises of 'privileged partnership' and its regionalisation practices are the imbalances in resources allotted to cross-border co-operation. Cross-border co-operation simply does not enjoy support commensurate with the EU's discursive exhortations to greater regional neighbourliness. The EU's Cohesion and Regional Policy 2007-2013 has an operating budget of 321 Million Euros with a clear focus on distributing aid to poorer areas of the EU-27. By comparison, the ENP's total budget for the same period will be about 15 Billion Euros. In addition, and most surprisingly, out of this amount very few funds will be allocated to cross-border and interregional co-operation with neighbouring states. Ironically, over 1 Billion Euros will be dedicated to border security and technology studies within European research programmes, more than the entire CBC budget planned for the ENP.[132]

A further irony is this is that with the INTERREG IV structural initiative, which will also cover the 2007-2013 programming period, there is now one Europe-wide programme supporting cross-border, interregional and transnational co-operation. However, almost all of this is focused on co-operation within the EU and very little on projects involving

[129] Commission of the European Communities (2007) *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013, Ukraine*, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities

[130] B. Dimitrovova (2010) Re-shaping Civil Society in Morocco: Boundary Setting, Integration and Consolidation, *Journal of European Integration*, 32 (5), pp. 523-539.

[131] See K. Raik (2006) Promoting Democracy through Civil Society: How to Step Up the EU's Policy Towards the Eastern Neighbourhood, *CEPS Working Paper*, 237 (2006).

[132] See the Cordis website on security research at http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/security/ (accessed 15 June 2011).

neighbouring states. In the July 2006 ERDF Regulation, strict tenets of exclusive territoriality governing the use of regional development funds are not only upheld but underscored.[133] This rather strict separation of EU internal and external activities makes little sense in terms of regional development strategies aimed at avoiding wider divisions between the EU and its Neighbourhood.

A General Assessment

One of the major results of this research is that CSO representatives have a rather ambivalent perception of the EU as a facilitator of co-operation. CSO activists in EU member states and neighbouring countries, particularly at the local and regional level, see that the role of the EU in governing bilateral relations has in general terms increased. By the same token, many local and regional level CSO actors agree that the EU's ambitious geopolitical goals appear overly broad and distant. Furthermore, civil society actors have argued that the ENP must move away from (pre)structured dialogue and an 'imperative of consensus' that exploits power asymmetries inherent in the relations between the EU and its neighbours. One reason for this perception of geopolitical distance is the fact that the EU still remains rather insignificant in terms of everyday local and regional co-operation (e.g. facilitating practical contacts and co-operation initiatives across the border). For many small CSOs, participation in large EU-projects - or even going through the complex application procedures to receive funds - is associated with very high transaction costs. Furthermore, despite the recent strengthening of the role of the civil society dimension, EU policy frameworks for relations with neighbouring state still seem to be directed towards economic and political matters at the expense of social issues. This is not because the 'new regionalist tenets of the Neighbourhood Policy are seen to be undesirable. It is the weakness of the EU in actually implementing these ideas that is criticised. Partly because of the indeterminacy of socio-cultural co-operation evidenced by the relatively limited inclusion of civil society, it is the economic and security aspects of the EU's geopolitics that tend to dominate in practical terms.

Interviews with CSO activists reveal some of the main reasons why the EU's influence in promoting co-operation and a sense of Neighbourhood has been rather limited. One of the most problematic issues raised in this context has been a lack of connection with civil society itself, largely due to a 'state-centredness' that downgrades the role of 'citizen diplomacy' and socio-cultural interaction. The EU's perceptions of cultural difference, institutional asymmetry, and corruption as well as a stronger introverted territorial focus on the EU-27 are seen to contribute to this situation. Civil society groups therefore argue that, in order to succeed, the Neighbourhood Policy must operate more along the lines of a multilevel and reciprocal project of region-building rather than a one-sided attempt on the part of the EU to 'order' its external boundaries and – at the same time – improve relations with its neighbours. It therefore seems to be widely understood that a civil society dimension is vital for the overall success of EU policies that aim to deepen integration between the Union and its

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To wit: 'It is necessary to support effective cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation with the Community's neighbouring countries where this is necessary to ensure that the regions of the Member States which border third countries can be effectively assisted in their development. Accordingly, it is appropriate to authorize on an exceptional basis the financing of assistance from the ERDF for projects located on the territory of third countries where they are for the benefit of the regions of the Community". Text taken from Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1783/1999, published in the Official Journal of the European Union, L210/1, 31.7.2006.

neighbors.[134] From the actors' perspective, a greater focus on co-operation dynamics from below will help connecting citizens and communities with the EU and make the abstract notion of a co-operative Neighbourhood more credible.

This discussion indicates an urgent need to create a space for the CSOs, especially those working at and thus with the EU's external border. As has been mentioned above, the concept of 'network governance', when applied to civil society actors, describes an informal level of mutually reinforcing co-operation that transcends formal policy spheres. For example, decentralised forms of cross-border co-operation have helped put specific issues on the agendas of civil society groups in neighbouring states. According to many of those interviewed, co-operation has arisen from a general awareness of common interests or problems. Heads of Russian Karelian women's organisations have stressed that co-operation networks with EU partners have contributed to the promotion of gender-related issues in their region. Accordingly, it is often expressed that for CBC to be effective, the actual ideas and initiatives have to be derived from practical issues at the very border regions in question; the EU, in turn, should then support these initiatives and provide funding.[135]

Civil society organisations in all their diversity certainly should be playing a crucial role in policy proposals or in projects aiming to enhance the relations with the EU and its neighbors. Furthermore, in the view of civil society actors, instead of trying to change the societies of neighbouring states or merely import EU-European values and hope for the best, emphasis should be placed on people-to-people contacts and on more constructive dialogue between neighbours, which in turn is likely to result in more ground-level support for deeper integration. CSO actors are of the opinion that civil society co-operation should focus more on supporting local and regional organisations as these are better placed to shape preconditions for greater integration based on their understandings of Ukraine's, Russia's and Moldova's own historical development.

[134] H. Nielsen, E. Berg and G. Roll, (note 36).

[135] As the situation stands now, the majority of Finnish CSOs with working contacts to Russian counterparts operate across the border more or less independently of EU initiatives and polices. Indeed, the dynamics across the Finnish-Russian border can be characterised as more pragmatic – it is not the aim of this co-operation to focus solely on the democratisation of Russia or on building a Western type of civil society. Instead, the principal aim of Finnish-Russian civil society co-operation has been to solve practical problems, provide help and support Russians as they themselves build better preconditions to confront the specific conditions that have emerged as a result of Russia's own historical development.