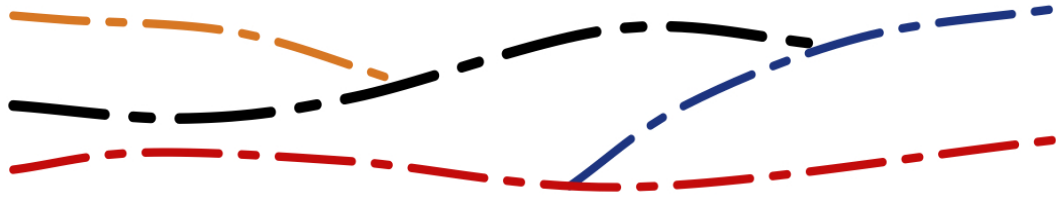


EUBORDERSCAPES



Working Paper 7

Bordering, border politics and cross-border cooperation in Europe

James W. Scott
(Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland)

December 2014

EUBORDERSCAPES (290775) is Funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7-SSH-2011-1), Area 4.2.1 The evolving concept of borders

Abstract

This essay provides a selective overview of debates on theoretical and practical issues concerning border politics and cross-border cooperation that are relevant to the interaction between the European Union border regions and their immediate neighbours. The working paper consists of two parts; the first focuses on the concept of ‘bordering’ as a theoretical and empirical approach to understanding the socio-political significance of borders both within and beyond Europe. Rather than focus strictly on physical borders as legal institutions, the ‘bordering’ perspective is about the everyday construction of borders among communities and groups, through ideology, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and agency. The second part characterises the EU’s geopolitics as a dual project of consolidation and co-operation. This ‘politics of borders’, it is argued, have been an integral part of the European Union’s project of integration, enlargement and regional cooperation and has been embodied by the European Neighbourhood Policy. 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, with a specific focus on the role of civil society.

Introduction¹

Contemporary border studies reflect continuity and change in scientific thought as well as innumerable contributions to the conceptualization of social space and its workings. Through the investigation of borders we realize that there can be no hegemonic dominance of any specific social theory, whether critical or not, in the understanding of space and its social significance. And whereas space is abstract and absolute, we now understand that it is borders that ‘fix’ space and make space concrete as lived and comprehensible social places. As a result of this realization, the study of borders has moved from a dominant concern with formal state frontiers and ethno-cultural areas to the study of borders at diverse socio-spatial and geographical scales, ranging from the local and the municipal, to the global, regional and supra-state level. Furthermore, the robust growth of border studies can partially be attributed to the emergence of counter-narratives to globalization discourses of the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. For a rather short but influential period, prophecies of ‘borderless worlds’ abounded in which global technologies, cyberspace, capital flows, East-West political convergence and interstate integration would make political borders obsolete. However, perhaps ironically, globalization has instead contributed to research perspectives in which borders have become ubiquitous - not always visible, but always with clear social impacts.

The present state of debate indicates that the field of border studies has opened up possibilities for questioning the rationales behind everyday border-making by understanding borders as institutions, processes and symbols. Borders are thus not given, they emerge through socio-

¹ Note: this essay will appear in *Neighbourhood Policy and the Construction of the External European Borders*, edited by Filippo Celata and Raffaella Coletti, Cham:Springer International (forthcoming 2015).

political border-making or *bordering* that takes place within society (van Houtum and Naerssen 2002, Scott 2012). Rather than focus strictly on physical borders as formal markers of territoriality, the bordering perspective is about the everyday construction of borders among communities and groups, through ideology, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and agency. As such, it is the process of bordering which brings diverse types of borders within a single frame of analysis. Furthermore, the strategic use of borders, characterized here as ‘border politics’, provides a perspective on bordering that reflects this contemporary discussion.

The concept of border politics raises a series of interesting questions regarding the power relations involved in the making of borders; this manifests itself, for example, in tensions between the local constitution and external determination of borders in society. This has, of course, been amply considered in debates on region-building (Keating 1997, Allen and Cochrane 2007, Davoudi and Strange 2009, Jonas 2012). However, these questions remain relatively underdeveloped in the border studies literature. With reference to debates on regionalism and citizenship, one underlying *bordering* narrative is the idea that bounding of social space can be an incremental and endogenously driven process that creates a shared notion of community (Scott 2007, Wallis, 2010). An alternative bordering narrative suggests, on the other hand, that the bounding of social space is increasingly characterised by adaptation to external pressures, producing, among others, ‘post-political’ reinventions of regions, territories and community relations in order to manage the territorial contradictions of global capitalism (see Allen and Cochrane 2007, Brenner, 2004). These two generalised border-configuring contexts are not mutually exclusive; they co-exist as elements of social construction that both reference specific geographical spaces as well as functional relationships that are often less territorially fixed.

In the following, the concept of border politics will be developed with regard to the European Union’s conceptualizations of supranational territoriality and its strategic use of state borders in order to advance its geopolitical goals. The EU’s border politics is a complex array of programmes, policies, and imaginaries of political community in which borders are used as resources for different specific aims. Cross-border cooperation, which is the main focus of this paper, is a prominent instrument of the EU’s border politics: it is assumed that with time, CBC will both break down barriers to deeper political and social integration as well as create new development opportunities through communication, ideas and synergies. Similarly, the European Union has attempted to appropriate the idea of ‘borderlands’ as part of its drive to create new spatial contexts for social transformation, regional development and innovation. Cooperation, on the other hand, has been framed as the actual regional-building process across borders.

The EU’s politics of borders, moreover, is both idealistic and practically oriented as evidenced by the complex agendas of ‘Cohesion’ and ‘Neighbourhood’ within which cross-border cooperation discourses are embedded. For example, a central logic of INTERREG and other support programmes of CBC has been the creation of new communities of interest and

geographically flexible networks – and to break down territorial and administrative constraints to the exchange of ideas. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to state that the EU has envisaged a project of European construction through the transcendence of local particularisms and boundaries. This idealistic element of the EU's border politics coexists uncomfortably with the Realpolitik of implementation. CBC within the EU is embedded in Cohesion Policy and highly territorialised; spatially defined indicators, goals, remits and responsibilities create their own barriers to interaction. At the same time, national implementation of Cohesion policies remains guided by a fixation with physical investment and development and not on the development of cooperative networks across borders. Furthermore, the context of European Neighbourhood deserves attention as the EU's external borders lie at the intersection between the EU's ambitions for influence, acceptance and stability on the one hand, and its territorial anxieties on the other. Economic co-operation and cross-border dialogue compete with border security agendas and the Schengen visa regime (Scott 2005).

In the form of a selective overview, this working paper will relate CBC and the creation of cross-border regions to bordering by emphasising their political character within the context of European integration. Discussion will begin with a very general overview of the state of the debate in border studies and a specific focus on change and continuity in the framing of state territoriality. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the bordering perspective as a means of interpreting the European Union's role in configuring borders in a wider European context. What emerges in this discussion is that the EU is a border-making actor that reflects a number of different bordering logics. Among these logics we can include the creation of new post-national relational spaces, the consolidation of territorial development within the EU but also the creation of a highly selective border regime that regulates access to the Schengen Area.

Territoriality, Nationhood and Statehood – Change and Continuity in Border Studies

It is important to remember that border studies has its origins in historicist and cultural determinist traditions (inspired by specific interpretations of Herder, Hegel, Darwin, Fichte and others) – in which the emergence of nation states and their borders was understood as an expression of historical necessity and/or 'God's will'. Even without Hegelian undertones, modern nation-states continue to be understood as the highest form of effective social organization within the world system and remain major – if not always the principal – sources of political, cultural and social identity. Major classic studies by scholars such as Ratzel (1903), Hartshorne (1933, 1937), Ladis Kristof (1959) and Julian Minghi (1963) highlighted the co-evolution of borders and states. For Kristof (1959: 220), the primary function of boundaries as legal institutions was clear: "... in order to have some stability in the political structure, both on the national and international level, a clear distinction between the spheres of foreign and domestic politics is necessary. The boundary helps to maintain this distinction". We can also detect a clear Cold-War era reification of national hegemony, despite the fact that attempts to create supranational political and economic institutions in Europe began shortly after 1945. Almost sacrosanct was the principal of national sovereignty

as a source of geopolitical stability; a stability that national borders could (and should) provide by serving as effective markers of sovereignty.

In many ways and for good reasons, the state-centred tradition in border studies – and political geography in general – perseveres as a result of historical experience that has been reinforced by current events. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of Post-Cold War Europe – one which coincided with the proliferation of discourses of ‘borderlessness’ and nation-state decline – has been the drive for national self-determination in Central and Eastern Europe (Newman 2006). This drive for de-facto and/or re-asserted sovereignty has shifted the political map of Europe, created new borders and dealt a fatal blow to multinational federations such as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. At the same time, this drive for national statehood also brought with it destructive wars and brutal episodes of ethnic cleansing that have seriously damaged interstate and interethnic relations in Southeast Europe.

Although interdependence and processes of globalization have complicated the picture, the continuous (re)construction of borders based on forms of social-political organization and processes of nation-building remains a central problem in border studies. As Paasi argues (2012: 2307) understanding borders is inherently an issue of understanding how states function and thus: “(...) how borders can be exploited to both mobilize and fix territory, security, identities, emotions and memories, and various forms of national socialization”. Further, according to Paasi “this conceptualization of borders suggests that, while it is continually vital to examine how borders and bordering practices come about, it is also critical to reflect on the political rationalities and state-based ideologies embedded in these practices.” There are, of course, open critics of persistent state-centredness in border studies. Kramsch (2010) has argued that understandings of borders exclusively in terms of the historical emergence of states negates the importance of temporal specificity and everyday mentalities in creating border categories. Kramsch suggests in fact, that it is rather notions of possibilism, rather than a priori ‘state-determination’ that provide a way forward in border studies.

Perhaps in order to put the state-centric focus into perspective it should be mentioned this is not the end of the story; a reification of the state as historically inevitable is not at issue. What is at stake is an understanding of the state that is historically contingent. Additionally, most border scholars do not suggest an immutability of state borders nor an ‘end of history’ mindset, i.e. with regard to a final future world map of nation-states. Furthermore, within border studies it has seldom been suggested that state sovereignty is *absolute* but rather conditional upon many factors; contemporary analysis documents the challenges that transnational processes of an economic, social and political nature have visited upon states (see Flint and Taylor 2007, Held et.al. 1999, Agnew 2009). Thus ‘globalized political authority’ as conceptualized by McGrew and Held (2002) suggests a relative shift of political power away from rather than an obsolescence of states.

The reality is thus one of multifarious persistence and incremental change with regards to the role of state in the world system. For example, one important strand of ‘post-national’ theorization is that of the emergence of new political and economic units that partly incorporate but also beyond the context of the nation-state. The development of multinational and geographically contiguous zones of economic and political co-operation, such as the case of transnational regionalism in East Asia, are one expression of the global forces that are restructuring the world system of individual states (see Perkmann and Ling Sum 2002). Transnational regionalism is a manifestation of ‘geo-governance’, implying the orchestration and regulation of globalization processes.

These questions have an important bearing on our discussion of border politics. European integration is an evolutionary process that has promoted perhaps the most concrete notions of post-national polities and borders proposed to date. 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 Europeanization. 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.

Bordering and EU Border Politics

What the above suggests is that contextually sensitive understandings of the concept of post-national borders in no way suggest a disappearance of states or the decline of state territoriality per se. They instead suggest the potential emergence of new borders, new border functions and/or new methods of territorial control that go beyond traditional notions of state territoriality. Post-national borders might thus follow either sub- or supranational logics of political interaction. Such borders are post-national because they create new political functions of integration and interaction across state borders. Understood in these terms, post-national borders might define polities that transcend the jurisdictional and conceptual limits of state-centred orientations, for example as a community of states, as networks of cities or cross-border regions.

Cross-border regions and cooperation thus provide a conceptual bridge to an understanding of borders based on transcending the limits of stateness and state-centred political action; they also indicate that it is processes of *bordering* that bring diverse spatialities and diverse types of border within a single frame of analysis of the European Union’s politics of borders. The notion of bordering 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. Henk van Houtum et. al. (2005) use the term 'b/ordering' to refer to the interplay between the ordering (of chaos) and border-making. Physical borders are not there only by tradition, wars, agreements and high politics but also made and maintained by other cultural, economic political and social activities. Everyday 'bordering and ordering' practices connive to create and recreate new social-cultural boundaries and divisions which are also spatial in nature. Everyday lived experiences include intersections, differentiations and similarities. Intersectional perspectives pay attention to how gender, age and ethnicity work together and mutually constitute each other through diverse categorizations and selected signs in different ways. What matters and to whom and how some are made more stable than others.

There are, furthermore, overlapping ways of how bordering can be understood (Scott 2011), for example a *pragmatic* approach that derived generalizable knowledge from practices of border transcendence and confirmation) a *critical* approach which theorized and questions 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 appear to have become formidable barriers symbolizing civilizational difference between East and West.

At one level, bordering serves to satisfy two basic needs of people – being protected from external and internal threats and determining the territories which belong to particular political, cultural and social groups. These goals are achieved, firstly, through the process of socialization in family, at school and by media, shaping a self-identification of an individual with certain territory, culture and political system. Borders are also necessary to determine not only internal but also external identities of territories, especially the states recognized by the international community, their right to maintain different relations, to create unions and associations, and to be represented in different unions, i.e. to be legal political actors. Secondly, security is supposed to be provided by a sovereign ruler or authorities looking for legitimacy in the eyes of citizens (Newman and Paasi 1998, Newman 2011). The sovereignty of a ruler or other authorities is extended to a specific territory with clearly delineated borders controlled by them.

On a more subtle level, bordering is about a politics of difference. Border narratives, for example, have always, consciously and sub-consciously, thrown up the notion of difference which exists on both sides of the border. In the classic chicken and egg situation, either borders are created to reflect existing difference between groups and cultures and are thus imposed upon the landscape (be it geographic or social) to institutionalize and perpetuate that difference. Or borders are imposed upon 'virgin' uninhabited spaces and, in deterministic fashion and are thus responsible for the evolution of difference on either side of the line of separation (which is equally a barrier to communication and movement). However, a closer analysis of cross-border narratives would indicate that the opening of borders highlights, rather than diminishes notions of difference.

New geopolitical perspectives, and the question whether Europe is engaging in post-colonial or neo-imperial bordering practices with new methods, inform much critical debate on the EU. 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 (2006) suggestion that a 'post-modern' European empire without immutable and excluding borders can generate a hybrid multilevel sense of governance, citizenship and identity. Other notions of European empire are much less sanguine. James Anderson (2007) 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. Similarly, Dimitrovova (2010) 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

Cross-border Cooperation and Politics of Borders

Much of the research of cross-border cooperation – as a project of region-building - has been focused on European borders. European border regions have been encouraged by European policy makers in the period leading up to the EU's eastward enlargement in 2004 as a means of gradually bringing people on both sides (in some cases it can be more than just two adjacent borders) to encounter and know each other before the final opening and removal of the border. The dynamics of what takes place in such regions of transition are not limited to state territories but also to the ways in which groups and cultures develop cross-border meetings of culture within multi-cultural societies as they develop new hybrid modes of cultural and social behavior.

CBC can be defined in terms of political projects carried out by private, state and, to an extent, third sector actors with the express goal of extracting benefit from joint initiatives in various economic, social, environmental and political fields. Through new forms of political and economic interaction - both institutional and informal - it has been suggested that greater cost-effectiveness in public investment can be achieved, economic complementarities exploited, the scope for strategic planning widened and environmental problems more directly and effectively addressed.

Research interest in CBC has been spurred by the momentous political changes of the past two decades. While the concept of CBC is not new, it is the context of Post-Cold War change that has elevated CBC to the paradigmatic status it now enjoys. 'De-bordering' within the enlarged European Union and new cross-border relations in Central and Eastern Europe indicate that not only states but citizens, communities and regions have chosen to open new avenues of communication with their neighbours across national boundaries. Furthermore, in those contexts where states have (re)gained their independence and new borders have emerged, Euroregions, cross-border city partnerships and similar cooperation vehicles have

also come into being (Scott 2006). CBC within the EU and at the EU's external borders 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 (Popescu 2008).

Cross-border co-operation between states has been the subject of interdisciplinary and comparative study for almost three decades. This research has been driven by at least one general core concern: i.e. transformations of nation-states and their consequences for economic, political, social and cultural life. Originally, research focused on urban and regional forms of 'subsovereign paradiplomacy'; the pioneering work of Duchacek (1986), Soldatos (1993) and others indicated how cities and regions have pursued economic development and political aims through international co-operation. For example, transboundary strategic alliances between cities, regions and other subnational governments as well as the initiatives of cities to promote their economic and political interests internationally received considerable research attention during the 1980s and 1990s.²

Partly spurred on by European Union, the focus of research shifted during the 1990s from empirical research on transnational urban networks and their co-operation mechanisms to a the study of local and regional forms of policy relevant cross-border interaction. A particular European characteristic of this emergent research field has been a more contextually sensitive understanding of the nature of borders themselves. In common understanding, borders are significant state-level processes of 'ordering'. Borders, however, also refer to symbolic boundaries and societal processes that help construct societies at a more general level. In terms of everyday life, borders are formed by the spatial organization of difference; both the reproduction of symbolic systems and the creation of subjective distinctions (borders) between self and other are central to human perception and the organisation of human societies.³ In some cases borders mark transitions, both physical and cognitive, between different spaces, 'borderlands' define these transitions in concrete spatial terms as evidenced by increasing tendencies towards cross-border co-operation – particularly in Europe (Kolossoff and Scott 2012). In sum and with particular reference to the EU-European situation, borders are seen to play an important role in framing and regulating social relations as well as setting conditions for local and regional development.

The process of 'Europeanization' – defined in terms of a gradual diffusion of supranational understandings of citizenship, territoriality, identity and governance – is closely related to

² See, for example, Briner (1986), Church and Reid (1996), and Steiner and Sturn (1993).

³ Two informative sources on border research in Europe and in more international terms are two major anthologies that have recently appeared: Wilson, T. and H. Donnan (eds) (2012), *A Companion to Border Studies*, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell and Wastl-Walter, D. (ed.) *Ashgate Research Companion of Border Studies*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

CBC as well as to changing concepts of borders, both within the EU and beyond the EU's own borders (Scott and Liikanen 2011). 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. The principal characteristic of this process 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 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.

CBC research has also focused on the European Union's impact on the nature of cross-border relations in Eastern and Central Europe (Popescu 2008, Zhurzhenko 2010, Scott 2006). The EU's influence has been felt at a geopolitical level but also at a more basic societal level (Scott 2005). On the one hand, prospective benefits of closer relations with the EU (including hopes of membership) have provided a context for rapprochement and development. On the other hand, concrete material incentives provided by the EU have been used to begin developing local and regional cooperation initiatives. In preparing Central and East European countries for membership, the EU adopted a strategy based on institutionalised CBC and aimed at a gradual lessening of the barrier function of national borders. These policies have also been aimed at integrating previously divided border regions in order to build a more cohesive European space.

Perspectives on Cross-Border Governance and Co-operation

Building upon the conceptual foundations of 'subnational paradiplomacy', border studies, particularly in the European case, developed during the 1990s and early 2000s a specific focus on cross-border policy integration as a form of multilevel governance (Perkmann 1999, Lepik 2012). This focus remains an important one in terms of CBC policy within the EU. However, if the former approach positioned CBC within a context of globalisation and transnational networks, the European perspective has been largely influenced by formal, structural understandings of transnational governance (see Blatter 1997, 2004). For example, in order to overcome traditional forms of intergovernmentalism, institutionalisation at the local and regional levels was seen as a necessary element for successful CBC (Scott 2000). Prospects for transboundary regionalisation have been thus defined by the outcomes of a gradual and complex process of institutional innovation and capacity-building at national, state and local levels. At the same time, the emergence of new planning forms across borders were prophesied in terms of regional dialogue. Dialogue, together with adequate strategies with which to reconcile and co-ordinate diverse interests, were seen to offer considerable promise

for developing transboundary alliances between cities and their regions (Leibenath et.al. 2008).

The EU has played a crucial role in supporting local and regional cross-border governance processes as these are seen to be important aspects of interstate integration and a mechanism for deepening relations with non-EU neighbours. The principal strategy pursued by the EU in supporting CBC has been to couple the development of local and regional cooperation structures with more general regional development policies. This has necessitated a process of institution-building, generally, but not exclusively, in the form of so-called Euroregions or other cross-border associations. In response to the EU's policy initiatives (and its more or less explicit institutionalisation imperative). The main goal of Euroregions and similar organisations is to promote mutual learning and co-operative initiatives across borders in order to address specific regional economic, environmental, social and institutional problems. These associations, many with their own cross-border administrative bodies (e.g. councils), represent an additional, albeit strictly advisory, regional governance structure and play a vital role in channelling European regional development support into the border regions. In order to structure their long-term operations and, at the same time, satisfy European Union requirements for regional development assistance, the Euroregions define Transboundary Development Concepts (TDCs) that identify principle objectives of transboundary 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.

Euroregions were pioneered and developed as locally based co-operation initiatives in Dutch-German border regions as early as the 1960s (Perkmann 2007). Since then, Euroregions have become part of complex policy networks at the European and national levels and have contributed to 'institutional thickness' in transboundary planning, particularly along Germany's borders. Indeed, the Dutch-German EUREGIO, a Euroregion with its own local council and close ties to German and Dutch state agencies, has served as a model of sorts for the development of border region associations within the European Union. In its different phases of development CBC been characterised by the adaptation of existing institutional structures to new opportunities and problems set by recent geopolitical changes. Given the long track record of cross-border cooperation in Western Europe it is not surprising that cooperation stakeholders in Central and Eastern Europe have emulated many of the institutions and projects pioneered within the EU.

Looking back on the history of cross-border co-operation within the EU, multilevel institutional mechanisms for transboundary co-operation in Europe appear to have contributed significantly to the development of new interregional and transnational working relationships (Perkmann 2002). The popularity 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 (Bojar 2008, Perkmann 2002, Popescu 2011). The EU structural initiative INTERREG, now in its fifth programming phase (2014-2020), 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.

Although the promotion of territorial co-operation and as sense of cross-border regionness through common institutions has been intensive in theory, in practice institutionalization patterns have been uneven – both in terms of governance capacities and their performance in terms of actual cooperation. Despite undeniable successes, Euroregions have clearly not automatically guaranteed the establishment of new public and private sector alliances to address regional and local development issues. European experience would also seem to indicate that, ironically, co-operation practices have maintained an administrative, technocratic and official character that as yet has not sufficiently encouraged citizen action and public-sector participation - particularly in areas characterised by stark socio-economic asymmetries, such the German-Polish border region (Matthiesen 2002).

In the most successful – that is, the most well-organized – border regions (e.g. the Dutch-German Euroregions), public-sector and NGO co-operation has been productive in many areas, especially in questions of environmental protection, local services and cultural activities. Additionally, successful cases (e.g. German-Dutch, Austrian-Hungarian regional projects) seem to involve a process of pragmatic incrementalism, with 'learning-by-doing' procedures and a gradual process of institutionalisation. As working relationships have solidified, experience in joint project development has accumulated and expertise in promoting regional interests increased, as has the capacity of regional actors to take on large-scale problems and projects. Furthermore, in well-organized border regions (e.g. the Dutch-German Euroregions), public-sector and NGO co-operation has been productive in many areas, especially in questions of environmental protection, local services and cultural activities. In less successful cases, cross-border projects have often merely served to enhance local budgets without stimulating true co-operation.

On the other hand, however, the research state of the art indicates a number of problems in CBC that appear to be a more persistent nature. In less successful cases, for example, cross-border projects have merely served to enhance local budgets without stimulating true co-operation. Generally speaking it has also been very difficult to stimulate private sector participation in cross-border regional development. Explanations for these mixed results have been accumulated through numerous case studies, but it appears that the transcending of borders is a much more complex socio-spatial process than most empirical research has been able to capture⁴. Furthermore, given the ambiguous results of institutionalized forms of local

⁴ See, for example, Henk van Houtum's (2002) essay on 'borders of comfort' and their effects on restricting cross-border economic networking.

and regional CBC within Western Europe, what can be said about the situation in the new member states - and, for that matter, at the EU's external borders? Gabriel Popescu (2006), for example, has critically assessed EU institutionalisation strategies in Central and Eastern Europe – an area of complex social, economic and political diversity. Popescu argues that Euroregions often tend to be co-opted by specific interests seeking either to benefit from direct EU support. As a result, Popescu states that Euroregions, especially those emerging in Central and Eastern Europe, are top-down creations, inhibiting processes of region-building through local initiative.

EU Border Politics and the Case of the External Borders

If the practice of cross-border co-operation has been a long-standing element of the EU's border politics as a means of consolidating political community, it has been employed vis à vis neighbouring states in order to enhance the EU's external role and to differentiate the EU from the rest of the world (Scott 2011). Cross-border relations between the EU and post-Soviet states have evolved rapidly during the last two decades with cities, regions, states and civil society opening new avenues of communication with their neighbours. One major conditioning factor underlying this cooperation is the EU's desire to assume a stabilising but also transformative role in the post-Soviet context.⁵ Announced with much aplomb in 2003, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) promised a new dimension in regional cooperation and interstate relations between the EU and its direct neighbours to the east and south. This policy represents one of the main instruments of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, the principal aim of which is to establish a greater regional context for economic growth and free trade, social modernisation, political stability and security.⁶ Evidence for redoubled EU efforts to promote cooperation with its immediate neighbours is provided by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which in the programming period 2007–2013 undertook investments in promoting cooperation and integration between the EU and neighbouring countries, advancing good governance and

⁵ According to the ENP strategy paper (EU Commission 2004e: 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'. The document 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.'

⁶ The countries involved in the ENP are: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. While not part of the ENP process in the strict sense, Russia participates in cross-border programmes funded through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI–CBC). No agreements have been established to date with Belarus, Libya and Syria.

sustainable socio-economic development in the respective states, and promoting cross-border cooperation.⁷

Thus, border politics of CBC work quite differently in the case of the EU external confines. The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), as it is now known, represents a framework ostensibly based on co-ownership of cooperation agendas. The geopolitical vision that underlies the EU's concept of Neighbourhood is that of 'privileged partnership' – that is, of a special, multifaceted and mutually beneficial relationship with the EU, in many cases in place of concrete perspectives of EU membership. Arguably, therefore, the ENI facilitates an ideational projection of power that – at least in theory – marks 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 particular, the strengthening of a 'civil society dimension' within the ENI is promulgated by the European Commission (2007), the Council of Europe and the Parliament. It seems to be widely understood that a civil society dimension is vital in order for the EU's policies to boost links with its 'ring of friends' and, thus, to deepen the integration between the Union and its neighbours.

However, at the same time that the EU-European space is being made 'exceptional' by a set of geopolitical discourses and practices that extol its core values, a sense of civilizational difference is being projected on its neighbours to the East and South (Boedeltje and van Houtum 2011, Browning and Joenimmi 2008). We thus see processes of geographical and cultural-historical differentiation between the present EU-28, prospective members (ex-Yugoslavia, Albania), associated countries such as Turkey and countries considered unsuited for EU membership (e.g. Moldova, Morocco, Ukraine).

While the ENI's scope is complex and multilayered, its main focus since 2003 has been the creation of a wider security community in Europe; illegal immigration, human trafficking, terrorism and cross-border organized crime remain issues that are seen to require an especially intensified co-ordination between the EU and its neighbours.⁸ Nevertheless, through a politics of borders the EU is pressing its political and security concerns onto the template of partnership. One example of this is the extension of the EU's border regime and security perimeter beyond its borders and deep into the territory of neighbouring states (Vacchiano 2013). Some recent critiques of the EU are quite pointed, suggesting that the EU's relations

⁷ Article 2 of the ENPI Regulation reads as follows: 'Community assistance shall promote enhanced cooperation and progressive economic integration between the European Union and the partner countries and, in particular, the implementation of partnership and cooperation agreements, association agreements or other existing and future agreements. It shall also encourage partner countries' efforts aimed at promoting good governance and equitable social and economic development.'

⁸ The EU's security policies with regard to the Neighbourhood are targeted at enhancing public security through combating environmental hazards, terrorism, organized 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.

with its neighbours are increasingly characterised by a ‘hard territoriality’ that privileges security issues, border management and sovereignty (Bialasiewicz 2012). This resonates with concerns voiced by Follis (2012), Scott and Liikanen (2011) and others that obsessions with undocumented migration, cross-border crime and terrorism as well as continuing visa restrictions on non-EU citizens could reinforce obstacles to co-operation, conjuring up fears of an emerging Fortress Europe that effectively divides the continent.

In the specific case of Ukraine, the EU’s border politics appear to be contributing to a new buffer zone between East and West. This is evidenced by the EU’s neglect of Ukraine despite this country’s attempts to adhere to EU conditionality (Korostoleva 2012). While highly exaggerated, fears that Ukraine will end up as a host country for unwanted immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers help cement EU–Ukraine divisions. At the same time, the EU has not been projecting its ideas very clearly – and thus is subject to misrepresentations. It is perceived as too aloof and distant and thus portrayed in very negative terms by nationalist groups. The EU might, ironically, be reproducing what it explicitly seeks to avoid: the creation of new divisions in welfare, social opportunity and political dialogue. The EU does hold great appeal for many in Ukraine as a model of a more open and tolerant society and has in fact promoted new social agendas and new ways of thinking about Ukrainian social and political transformation. However, having achieved its ambitious enlargement agenda, and now securing its eastern borders, the EU appears to have lost sight of the material and symbolic significance of regional cooperation. Civil society struggles to receive greater recognition and support from the EU even though its political salience continues to increase.

Conclusions

The present state of debate indicates that state borders not only have different meanings for different actors but are also manifestations of power relations in society at different scales. In particular, they reflect the normative power of international organizations, including the EU and asymmetries between states in different areas. As this discussion has illustrated, the EU has been actively involved in a highly differentiated politics of borders that seeks to break down barriers to intercultural communication and interaction. As the European Union can be understood to be an experiment in supranational liberal democracy, however, border scholars have attempted to outline some of the basic contradictions of EU’s politics of borders and its bordering practices. European integration has on the one hand signified a certain degree of progress towards a more democratic regulation of borders, partly through local cross-border cooperation. The question that arises with globalization and the new permeability of borders is whether this progress can be sustained. Paradoxically perhaps, Europeanization does not only imply *transcending* national spaces per se. It also serves to confirm state sovereignty. In effect, while the space within the EU is being gradually *integrated*, a border is being drawn around the EU-28 in order to consolidate it as a political community and thus manage regional heterogeneity, core-periphery contradictions and political-organizational flux. This also involves an attempt to structure EU-European space through, for example, central political agendas, structural policies, spatial planning strategies and research-funding programmes.

Consolidation, and the border confirming practices it entails, is seen as a mode of establishing state-like territorial integrity for the EU and thereby also strengthening its (in part contested) image as a guarantor of internal security.

This process of EU-bordering has had serious consequences in terms of CBC and wider societal cooperation between the EU and its immediate neighbours. For example, the EU's failure to properly engage with Ukrainian society in its geopolitical strategy of Neighbourhood is a case of a one-sided preoccupation with border management, territorial issues and realist interpretations of cross-border interaction. The shortcomings of EPP are thus indicative of geopolitical visions that are embedded in asymmetric understandings of identity and interest, made from the perspective of hegemonic and uncritical geopolitical self-assessments. At the same time, the enforcement of exclusionary borders is a challenge to the identity of the EU as a supranational *force for good in the world* that transcends national and socio-cultural divisions (see Barbé and Nogue 2008).

To conclude then, the contemporary state of debate in border studies indicates that borders are a crucial condition for openness and cooperation. But non-exploitative cooperation goals can be achieved only through multilevel, multi-sectoral and long-term approaches that involve transformation at the international, national and local levels. This, in turn, demands new kinds of thinking on both sides of any given border.

References

- Agnew, J. (2009). *Globalization and sovereignty*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Agnew, J. (1994). The Territorial Trap: The geographical assumptions of International Relations theory. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1(1), 53–80.
- Allen, J. & Cochrane, C. (2007). Beyond the territorial fix: Regional assemblages, politics and power. *Regional Studies*, 41 (9), 1161–1175.
- Anderson, J. (2007). *Geopolitics of European Union enlargement: the fortress empire*. London: Routledge.
- Barbé, E. & Johansson-Nogués, E. (2008). The EU as a modest 'force for good': The European Neighbourhood Policy. *International Affairs*, 84(1), 81-96.
- Bialasiewicz, L. (2012). Europe in the world. EU geopolitics and the making of European space. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate.
- Boedeltje, F. & Van Houtum, H. (2011). Brussels is speaking: The adverse speech geopolitics of the European Union towards its neighbours. *Geopolitics*, 16(1), 121–145.

Bojar, E. (2008). *Euroregions in Poland*. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 87(5), 442 – 447.

Blatter, J. (1997). Explaining crossborder cooperation: a border-focused and border-external approach. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, XII (1/2), 151-175.

Blatter, J. (2004) From spaces of places' to 'spaces of flows'? Territorial and functional governance in cross-border regions in Europe and North America. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(3), 530–48

Brenner, N. (2004). Urban governance and the production of new state spaces in Western Europe, 1960-2000. *Review of International Political Economy*, 11(3), 447-488

Briner, H. (1986). Regional planning and transfrontier Cooperation: the Regio Basiliensis. In O. Martinez (Ed.), *Across Boundaries: Transborder Interaction in Comparative Perspective*, (pp. 45-53). El Paso: Texas Western Press.

Browning C.S. & Joenniemi, P. (2008). Geostrategies of the European Neighbourhood Policy. *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(3), 519–551.

Bürkner, H.-J. (2006). Regional development in times of economic crisis and population loss: The case of East Germany's eastern border region. In J. Scott (Ed.), *EU Enlargement, Region Building and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion*, (pp.207-237). Aldershot: Ashgate,.

Church, A. & P. Reid (1996). Urban power, international networks and competition: The example of cross-border co-operation. *Urban Studies*, 33 (8), 1279-1318.

Commission of the European Communities (2007). *A Stronger European Neighbourhood Policy*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities

Davoudi, S. & Strange, I. (2009). Conceptions of space and place in strategic spatial planning. London: Routledge.

Dimitrovova, B. (2010). Cultural bordering and re-ordering in the EU's Neighbourhood: members, strangers or neighbours? *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 18(4), 463–481.

Duchacek, I. (1986). International competence of subnational governments: borderlands and beyond. In O. Martinez (Ed.), *Across Boundaries. Transborder Interaction in Comparative Perspective*, (pp. 11-28). El Paso: Texas Western Press.

Flint, C. & P. Taylor (2007). *Political geography: world-economy, nation-state and locality*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Follis, K. S. (2012). *Building Fortress Europe. The Polish-Ukrainian frontier*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gualini, E. (2003). Cross-border governance: inventing regions in a trans-national multi-level polity. *DISP*, 152, 43-52.

Hartshorne, R. (1937). The Polish corridor. *Journal of Geography*, 36 (5), 161-176.

Hartshorne, R. (1933). Geographic and political boundaries in Upper Silesia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 23 (4), 195–228.

Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D. & Perraton, J. (1999). *Global transformations :politics, economics and culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Houtum, H. van (2005). The geopolitics of borders and boundaries. *Geopolitics*, 10(4): 672–79.

Houtum, Henk van & van Naerssen, T. (2002). Bordering, ordering, and othering. *Journal of Economic and Social Geography*. 93(2), 125-136.

Houtum, H. van (2002). Borders of comfort, spatial economic bordering processes in the European Union. *Regional and Federal Studies*, 12(4), 37-58.

Jensen, O. & Richardson, T. (2004). *Making European space. Mobility, power and territorial identity*. London and New York: Routledge.

Joenniemi, P. (2002) Can Europe be told from the North? Tapping into the EU's Northern Dimension. Working Papers of the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, No. 12/2002.

Jonas, A. (2012). Region and place: regionalism in question. *Progress in Human Geography* 36 (2), 263-272

Keating, M. (1997). The invention of regions political restructuring and territorial government in Western Europe. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 15(4), 383 – 398

Kolossov, V. & Scott, J. (2012). Karelia: A Finnish-Russian borderland on the edge of neighbourhood. In H. Eskelinen, I. Liikanen & J. W. Scott (Eds), *The EU-Russia Borderland. New Contexts for Regional Cooperation* (pp. 194-210). London:Routledge.

Korosteleva, E. (2012) ‘The Eastern Partnership Initiative: A New Opportunity for the Neighbours?’, in E. Korosteleva (ed.) *Eastern Partnership: A New Opportunity for the Neighbours*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Kramsch, O. (2010). The Rabelaisian border. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28(6): 1000–014.

Kristof, L. (1959). The nature of frontiers and boundaries. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 49 (3), 269-282.

Leibenath, M., Korcelli-Olejniczak, E. & Knippschild, R. (2008). *Cross-border governance and sustainable spatial development*. Berlin:Springer.

Lepik, K. (2012). *Cross-border cooperation institutional organisation*. Saarbrücken: Lampert Publishing.

Matthiesen, U. (2002). Transformational pathways and institutional capacity building: the case of the German-Polish twin city Guben/Gubin. In G. Cars, P. Healey, A. Madanipour & C. de Magalhaes (Eds), *Urban Governance, Institutional Capacity and Social Milieux*. (pp. 70-89). Aldershot: Ashgate.

McGrew, A. and Held, D. (2002). *Governing globalization: power, authority and global governance*. London: Polity.

Minghi, J. (1963). Boundary studies in political geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 53 (3), 407-428.

Mønnesland, J. (1999). Cross border programmes versus regional development programmes. The population density influence. *Paper presented at the Regional Studies Association Conference*, 21-24 September, Bilbao, Spain.

Newman, D. (2011). Contemporary research agendas in border studies: an overview. In D. Wastl-Walter (Ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* (pp. 33-47). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers.

Newman, D. & Paasi, A. (1998). Fences and neighbours in the postmodern world: boundary narratives in political geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, (22)2, 186–207.

Paasi, A. (2012). Commentary. Border studies reanimated. Going beyond the territorial/relational divide. *Environment and Planning A*, 44 (10), 2303–09.

Popescu, G. (2011). *Bordering and ordering the Twenty-first Century: understanding borders*. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield.

Popescu, G. (2008). The conflicting logics of crossborder reterritorialization: geopolitics of Euroregions in Eastern Europe. *Political Geography*, 27 (4), 418-438.

Popescu, G. (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 Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion*, (pp. 35-51). Aldershot, Ashgate.

Perkmann, M. (2007). Policy entrepreneurship and multilevel governance: a comparative study of European cross-border regions. *Environment and Planning C*, 25(6), 861 – 879.

Perkmann, M. (2002). The rise of the Euroregion. A bird's eye perspective on European cross-border co-operation. published by the Department of Sociology, Lancaster University (www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology).

Perkmann, M. (1999). Building governance institutions across European borders. *Regional Studies*, 33(7), 657–666.

Perkmann, M. & Ling Sum, N. (2002). *Globalization, regionalization and cross-border regions*. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan.

Ratzel, F. (1903). *Politische Geographie*. Munich and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg.

Scott, J. W. (2011). Reflections on EU geopolitics: consolidation, neighbourhood and civil society in the reordering of European space. *Geopolitics*, 16 (1), 146-175.

Scott, J. W. (2007). Smart Growth as urban reform: A pragmatic ‘recoding’ of the New Regionalism. *Urban Studies*, 44 (1), 15–35.

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

Scott, J. W. (2005). The EU and ‘Wider Europe’: Towards an alternative geopolitics of regional cooperation. *Geopolitics*, 10 (3), 429-454.

Scott, J. W. (2000). Transboundary co-operation on Germany’s borders: strategic regionalism through multilevel governance. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, XV (1), 143-167.

Scott, J. W. & Liikanen, I. (2011) *European neighbourhood through civil society networks*. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis.

Steiner, M. and Sturn, D. (1993) From coexistence to cooperation : the changing character of Austria’s southeastern border. In R. Ratti & S. Reichman (Eds), *Theory and Practice of Transborder Cooperation* (pp. 347- 376). Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhain.

Soldatos, P. (1993). Cascading subnational paradiplomacy in an interdependent and transnational World. In: D. M. Brown & E. H. Fry (Eds), *States and Provinces in the*

International Economy, (pp. 45-64). Berkeley: UC Berkeley/Institute of Governmental Studies Press.

Vacchiano, F. (2013). Fencing in South. The Strait of Gibraltar as a paradigm of the new border regime in the Mediterranean. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 22 (2), (prepublication version in Academia.edu).

Wallis, A. D. (2010). New regionalism. In R. Hutchinson (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Urban Studies*, (pp. 546–548). London:Sage.

Zhurzhenko, T. (2010). *Borderlands into bordered lands. Geopolitics of identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*. Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag.