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## European Perspectives on Borderlands Studies

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# **EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES ON BORDERLANDS**

(Introductory chapter to the Special Issue of the Journal of Borderland Studies)

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**Table 1.**

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| <b>European Union Landmarks</b> |
|---------------------------------|

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 1957 | Treaty of Rome (creates European Econ.Community, 1958)                      | Beginning of continental integration process   |
| 1965 | Euregio (Germany-Holland)   | Initial cross border association   |
| 1971 | Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)                               | Creates lobbying power for border regions & encourages more transborder associations.  |
| 1975 | European Regional Fund  | Creates a regional development policy to redistribute income to poor regions   |
| 1987 | Single European Act   | Sets 1992 as the year for the completion of the European single market   |
| 1989 | Berlin Wall falls   | Integration of Germany & Central Europe follows  |
| 1989 | INTERREG I (International Regions programs, 1990-3)                         | Creates funding base for cross border to collaborate (mainly for planning)   |
| 1990 | LACE Program (Linkage Assistance & Cooperation for European Border Regions) | EUREGIO (at Gronau, Germany) established to “grow” cross border associations under E.C./INTERREG regulations                     |
| 1992 | Completion of Single Market   | Eliminates barriers to trade, investment, and labor mobility for 12 countries  |
| 1992 | Schengen Treaty   | Establishes internal and external borders (introduces security issues)   |
| 1992 | PHARE Program (Polish-Hungary Aid for Economic Reconstruction)              | Establishes EU funding for Central/Eastern European countries and transborder projects   |
| 1992 | Maastricht Treat  | a) Establishes agenda for EMU<br>b) Establishes Committee of the Regions   |
| 1994 | INTERREG II (1994-9)  | Expands categories eligible for funding to cultural/social policy issues & establishes CBC (cross border cooperation) initiative |

**I. INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES**

International boundaries are a much more omnipresent and important aspect of everyday life in Europe than in North America. North Americans who are used to traveling hundreds or thousands of miles without crossing even one international boundary are quick to notice that in many parts of Europe one can easily cross two or more boundaries in a single day's travel. The number of borders that a European country can share with other countries is also mind boggling: Hungary, for example, a relatively small country of some 10 million people, shares borders with seven neighbors while Germany, Europe's largest country, shares nine.

There are many other differences between boundaries and border regions in Europe and North America. International boundaries in Europe have been much less stable than in North America. While the U.S.-Canadian and U.S.-Mexican boundaries were established during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and have experienced relatively minor adjustments since then, Europe's borders have, in comparison, shifted wildly, especially during the two world wars of the twentieth century. In this context the history of European borders is, in comparison with that of North American borders, an incredibly complex saga that has left large groups of ethnic-national groups "on the other side" of an international boundary, separated from their homeland and their native culture. Hungary might be the classic example here, when upon being on the losing side of WWI lost much of its territory, leaving hundreds of thousands of ethnic Hungarians marooned in neighboring countries ever since.

North Americans are also vaguely aware that in modern times neither one of our borders has been militarily defended and have, historically been quite open. In contrast, European borders, since the emergence of the nation state, have served as bastions of national sovereignty, military barriers to invading neighbors. This doesn't mean, however, that U.S.-Mexican relations have always been cordial. The large expanse of inhospitable desert in the northern part of Mexico served as a natural barrier to the expansionist tendencies of the U.S. after the Mexican American War of 1848 which resulted in the loss of a large piece of relatively uninhabited territory claimed by Mexico. Today this territory is loosely referred to as the U.S. Southwest.

Another difference is that North American boundary lines tend to be very long. The U.S.-Mexican boundary extends some 3,000 kilometers from East to West while the U.S.-Canadian border runs some 8,000 kilometers. Compare this with borders in Europe where some of the smallest countries such as Luxembourg and Liechtenstein have boundaries of less than fifty kilometers in length. Not even the largest countries in Europe have boundaries rivaling those of North America.

European and North American international boundaries and their respective border regions do share many similarities, however. For example, international boundaries, by definition, define the extremities of the nation state. Thus, border regions tend to be located in the periphery of their respective countries, far removed from their national centers of government, economy and

culture, and frequently cut off from interaction with their natural hinterlands on the other side of the international boundary. Additionally, international boundaries seldom coincide with natural boundaries (e.g., high mountain ranges or large bodies of water) thereby artificially dividing "natural regions" as viewed from economic-geographic-environmental and/or historic-ethnic perspectives. In this sense international boundaries historically have disrupted normal social and economic transactions while complicating the issues of fragmentation of governance in their respective border regions.

Nevertheless, Europe has, in recent years taken gigantic steps to overcome these and other disadvantages frequently associated with the peripheral, disjunctive status of most border regions. The evolution of the European Union since its inception in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome has resulted in the development of a formal regime for integrating transboundary regions and in so doing stimulating the peaceful integration of their respective countries. (See Table 1., "European Landmarks.") In contrast, two separate border regimes, mainly informal, for the two borders of North America have evolved independently over the last century.

This vast difference in the development of formal border regimes for facilitating transboundary cooperation is arguably the largest difference between Europe and North America in this area. As a result of these developments Europeans can now talk of "internal" and "external" borders while most North Americans are hardly conscious of the distinction and in fact both of our borders are, if anything within this framework, external. In fact, one of North America's "internal borders" (i.e., a border between two members of the North American free trade zone) looks more like a European "external border" in the sense that the asymmetries in income and development levels between the U.S. and Mexico are as great or greater than the asymmetries between EU countries and most neighboring non-member countries.

It is within this context of similarities, differences and asymmetries that a transatlantic dialogue on borders and border-regional development began in the late 1970s and early 1980s. During that period practitioners like Hans Briner began to visit the U.S.-Mexico border and invited practitioners and scholars to visit the now famous Regio Basiliensis. And during this time scholars such as James Scott (1978) and Niles Hansen (1984) began to analyze European experiences in cross-border collaboration and their application to North America. This dialogue has resulted in an on-going, fruitful discussion regarding the validity of the European experience within the context of the regime created by the European Community as models for other border regions throughout the world. Nevertheless, independent of such questions there are good reasons to have a closer look at the richness of Europe's experiences in both transborder collaboration and at the various theoretical approaches that have evolved in recent decades to explain the ever changing functions of international boundaries, border-regional development and transboundary collaboration.

It is appropriate that the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* initiates this current exploration of Europe's borderlands experiences and perspectives. In recent years this *Journal* and the Association of Borderlands scholars have gradually expanded the original North American focus to a more global one. There are many reasons for this change. Perhaps the most important of these are the recent changes in global economic, strategic and environmental realities that are dramatically transforming the functions of international boundaries and presenting new challenges and opportunities for cities-regions located near them. These changes are generally well known but still worthwhile noting here.

First, is the long term trend toward increased internationalization of economic activity throughout the post World War II (WWII) period, fomented by the two main multilateral economic institutions that came into existence after WWII: especially the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This tendency was reinforced in the 1980s by the formation and/or deepening of the regional trade blocs in both Europe and North America. Second, is the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. This event not only increased the number of countries and international boundaries in the global community but allowed festering ethnic-national hostilities to surface which, together with recent events in Africa, have opened up an important discussion of arbitrarily imposed borders in the popular press. (Davis 1994, Fisher and Onishi 1999). The post Soviet environment also allowed many previously closed external European borders to open up, while others, within the former USSR became more closed. Third, the emergence of "supply side economics" (Reagonomics in the U.S. and Thatcherism in the U.K.) together with Latin America's "Debt Crisis" of the early 1980s provided impetus to more open, market-oriented, economic policies throughout the globe. These market-oriented "structural adjustments" have forced countries throughout the world to struggle with increased macroeconomic instability and new restraints on national economic policies imposed by globalization, as in the case of the "Asian contagion" of the late 1990s. Finally, the recognition and growing awareness of an environmental crisis that threatens to dramatically lower the planet earth's ability to sustain human activity has stimulated interest in "sustainable development," a movement that transcends international boundaries.

All of these changes have had a profound effect on the functions and characteristics of international boundaries and in some cases dramatically changed the prospects of border regions with respect to transboundary collaboration and border-regional development. Borderlands scholars have responded to these changes in a variety of ways: by traveling to the border regions of countries previously not accessible; organizing conferences and networks with scholars and practitioners from those countries; carrying out studies; and publishing accounts of their experiences.

One of the relatively stable networks that has emerged out of such activities has been closely tied to this *Journal*. Beginning with informal exchanges between scholars from San Diego State University and various institutions in Finland and Germany, a first conference, "Borders and Border Regions:

New Roles in the Changing Global Context," was held in Berlin, Germany in 1994. This conference brought together researchers from Europe, North America and Central America and produced two books (Scott, et al. 1996, Ganster et al. 1997). A second conference assembled researchers from Europe and North America in Joensuu, Finland in 1997 and again resulted in the publication of a book (Eskelinen 1998). A third conference, held in San Diego, California, USA, in early 1999, again brought together researchers from Europe, North America and Asia and will yield yet another contribution in print although the exact title has yet to be determined. A fourth conference is scheduled to be held in 2001 in India. This network also aspires to establish a more formal framework for carrying out systematic studies of border regions throughout the world to create a new specialization, "International Border-Regional Studies," at the graduate level within established disciplines such as economics, geography, public administration and related social sciences.

The goals of this special edition of the *Journal of Borderland Studies* have been carefully framed in the context of the background provided above. These goals are:

1. To provide an historical overview of the changing functions of international boundaries, the development of border institutions and the development of transborder cooperation in Europe. This overview will also provide brief comparisons between the European and the North American approaches to the study of border, border-regional development and cross-border cooperation.
2. To provide a survey of the theoretical approaches that have been generated (in Europe) to explain those changes noted in 1.
3. To provide practical help in identifying and understanding European institutions which promote cross-border collaboration and are potential resources for borderland researchers.
4. To provide specific case studies of transborder collaboration from several countries in order to provide a sampling of the wide variety of border situations in Europe.

This special issue has been organized and edited by one North American and one European. All of the authors are Europeans with special expertise in borderlands studies. The target readership for this special issue is borderlands researchers and practitioners who generally are not familiar with the historical-institutional context of European border studies and trends. It is hoped that the ideas expressed here will evoke responses from European researchers and practitioners who feel compelled to challenge or to add to the perspectives advanced here. In this regard we invite them to submit articles to this *Journal*.

## **II. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BORDERLANDS AND TRANSBOUNDARY COLLABORATION IN EUROPE**

In Europe the study of borderlands and of cross-border cooperation has become a major issue for scholars from various disciplines at least since the beginning of the nineties. Lawyers, planners, geographers, economists, sociologists and political scientists have discovered a formerly rather peripheral field of study. This heightened scholarly awareness has been triggered mainly by the tremendous increase of cross-border activities facilitated by the development of cross boundary institutions within the European Union. In 1987 the Single European Act was adopted and led to the implementation of Single Market in 1992-3. In 1990 the first INTERREG (International Regions) program (1990-3) was introduced and provided a multi-faceted program cross border cooperation on both internal and external borders. Then in 1994 INTERREG II extended and expanded INTERREG I for a five year period (1994-99). In 1994 a new program was established that was directed at the new conditions in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs). This was called PHARE (Polish-Hungary Economic Reconstruction Assistance) and contained an initiative for Cross Border Cooperation (CBC). This initiative provides for funding for cross border projects between EU countries and those CEEC countries that have signed EU accession agreements.

Of course, Europe had a well-established tradition of borderlands studies, including an advanced state of the art in respect to more theoretical approaches to borderlands and transboundary collaboration, that pre dates these institutional developments. As noted above, borderlands have always been very precarious spaces in the era of modern nation states. Not only were they regarded as lines of defense and but some of them were heavily contested (like the Alsace region, for example). In the middle of the twentieth century, the disastrous eruption of nationalism in the Second World War and the "world order" imposed by the Cold War changed the perception of borderlands at least in Western and Northern Europe. It did not take very long after the first steps of supranational integration (Nordic Council 1952, European Economic Community 1958) that first attempts towards "Micro-Integration" were undertaken. The EUREGIO at the German-Dutch border and the Regio Basiliensis at the triangle of Switzerland, Germany and France began cross-border activities in the early sixties. In the following two decades, encouraged by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, local activists joined by planners and lawyers developed an agenda and the first institutions for cross-border collaboration between subnational units.

The breakdown of the Iron Curtain tremendously expanded the European borderlands picture presenting a different set of situations in Central and Eastern Europe and a new permeable interface between developed and developing countries. These external borders have many similarities with the U.S.-Mexican border and European scholars and practitioners were quick to look to North America to see what they could learn here. The resulting exchange between European and North American scholars and practitioners will, hopefully, take us beyond the



limits of the former debate regarding the validity of transferring models, toward an expanded and more informed set of empirically based judgements and criteria.

This new flurry of comparative studies, conferences and publications has been accompanied by a transformation of traditional borderland studies towards more theoretical and methodically sound scholarship.

For an understanding of the current changes in European borderlands a look at the history of European borderlands is both enlightening and necessary. Borderlands, as has been noted above, are products of the modern nation state, utilized to establish sovereignty of its territory and clear-cut geographical demarcations. The establishment of the sovereign nation state as the dominant political order is a rather young phenomenon in Europe, instituted by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 (Spruyt 1994).

### **The Middle Ages in Europe: No Clear Cut Boundaries**

In the Middle Ages the political order in Europe exhibited a quite different picture. The feudal mode of political organization was a decentralized, non-hierarchical<sup>1</sup> and non-territorial form of rule based on personal bonds between peasants and masters. States that could exercise sovereignty over a spatially specified and territorially consolidated area with clear-cut boundaries did not exist. Instead, there was an overlapping rule between the church, the king and local lords. The land, which was claimed by a ruler, was usually not continuous and contiguous as it is in modern states. Furthermore, land was not owned by anyone, it was held by superiors in a ladder of "tenures" leading to the king or other supreme lord. On the other side, authority claims by respective overlords were mediated through the vassal. German constitutional historians termed this situation a "Personenverbandstaat" (a state of associated persons) (Teschke 1998).

It took from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century for French kings to establish the hegemonic position among the lords that would finally allow Louis XIV to rule over a larger territory (Elias 1976). Furthermore, the French sovereign state had to compete against rival political orders such as the Italian city states and the northern Hanseatic League but eventually technological innovations (in land transport and military equipment) helped to win this struggle. Consequently, the sovereign territorial state gradually became the generally accepted political order all over Europe (Spruyt 1994) while city states and leagues disappeared from the political map. Exceptions like Monaco confirm the rule.

The French revolution (1789) and the ensuing process of democratization throughout Europe resulted in an exchange of sovereign power from the monarch to the people but the principle of absolute territorial sovereignty and integrity was further strengthened by utilizing nationalism to overcome traditional class cleavages.

The triumph of the sovereign nation state led to the recognition of territorial borders as important lines for defining the identity and security of society and the state. But the firm establishment of borderlines as lines of demarcation did not mean that these lines were stable. On the contrary, territories and borders were heavily contested in many parts of Europe and even more outside of Europe because of the parallel development of colonialism and nationalism. There are vast differences in the historical stability of borders in Europe. Whereas the Swiss have been able to preserve their territorial integrity now for some 500 years, border regions like Alsace and the region between Germany and Poland were heavily contested and saw drastic changes well into the twentieth century.

### **The Special Role of Germany**

It is not by accident that the above mentioned examples of controversial border zones both involve Germany. This points to the special role that Germany played in the process of nation state building in Europe. Whereas in France and England the process of state building paralleled or even preceded the process of nation building, this was not the case in Germany. There, a "Kulturnation" (cultural nation) based on common language and on the reference to the Holy Roman Empire of German Nationality in the Middle Ages was proposed by the intellectuals – but this did not result in a united nation state for a long time. The rivalry between Prussia and Austria delayed the process of national unity in comparison to other nations. Additionally, after its defeat by Prussia, Austria was not included in the new state resulting in a lack of congruence between the German nation and the German state. It has been argued that this German situation as a "latecomer" nation state in the center of Europe resulted in a feeling of inferiority leading to an extreme form of nationalism and eventually to territorial expansionism (Hesse & Ellwein 1997: 67). Similarly, the minor position that Germany held as a colonial power led to a policy of strong expansionist geopolitics within Europe from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. The total defeat of the Third Reich in 1945 brought Germany not just the loss of vast territories in the east (again leaving many Germans outside the German state) but also the division into two states split apart by one of the most fortified border lines in the world.

After the Second World War the geopolitical order in Europe was marked by two elements: the idea of (Western) European Integration and the East-West-divide. Shocked by the devastating results of nationalism in the two World Wars, many Europeans (and especially many Germans) became dedicated advocates of the idea of European integration. The Cold War and the aim to incorporate West Germany into the Western block provided additional incentives for supranational cooperation and integration in Western Europe. But these movements for a supranational European polity coincided with the heydays of national sovereignty and were only moderately successful. Moreover, in an attempt to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past -- the economic crisis of the twenties allegedly caused by free market

policies -- during the sixties and seventies most European countries implemented controls over foreign trade and exchange rates, central planning mechanisms and regional policies aimed at national integration and income redistribution (Neyer 1995).

### **First Attempts Towards Subnational Cross-Border Collaboration**

Within this contradictory context the first attempts for cross-border regional collaboration began in the sixties (ARL 1992). The creation of the European Economic Community in 1958 and the signing of the French-German Declaration of Friendship in 1962 provided the discursive context for some "political entrepreneurs" to engage in transborder collaboration. Once again, it is no accident that these attempts were made first at the western borders of West Germany. Germany kept its special role even though its orientation towards its neighbors changed from an aggressive towards a cooperative one (at least this has been the self perception in Germany). The Federal Republic of Germany has been called a "semi-sovereign nation state" (Katzenstein), relying heavily on its Western allies in its foreign policy. There still exists an ethnic, nonterritorial definition of citizenship and the subnational units (Länder) enjoy extraordinary rights and responsibilities in foreign affairs (Blatter 1999).

Thus, municipalities from both sides of the Dutch-German border around the city of Gronau founded the EUREGIO and jointly started to lobby for infrastructure projects in their domestic capitals. Similar attempts were initiated by municipalities on the German-French border, but there the mediating role of the Swiss was needed to pave the way to an ongoing collaboration in the Upper Rhine Valley. Politicians like Hans Briner and planners in Basle envisioned their city as a Swiss gateway to Europe and the economic center of the Upper Rhine Valley. After their regionalist visions were rebuffed, as voters in the two small half-cantons Basel-Stadt (Basle-City) and Basel-Landschaft (Basle-Country) voted against a unification of these two political entities, the advocates of regional cooperation founded the "Regio Basiliensis." This institution serves the dual role of official clearing house for the two cantons in all matters of regional planning and as a lobbying group for regional development in the cross-border agglomeration (Arnold-Palussiere 1983, Scott 1989).

The first official international activity of the Regio Basiliensis brought 1000 planners from all over Europe to Basle in 1965 to discuss the idea of building a "Europe of Regions" as a non-political, bottom-up approach for European Integration (Regio Basiliensis 1973). This conference was also attended by representatives from the Council of Europe, an organization founded in 1949 and encompassing countries from all over Western, Central and Northern Europe which is located in the neighboring city of Strasbourg. In the following years the Council of Europe developed a strong constituency for promoting cross-border cooperation between subnational political entities (Mudrich 1992).

In 1970 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe ordered a report on cross-border issues (Doc 2876) that resulted in the Association of European Border Regions. The first such conference was held in Strasbourg in 1972, six more followed in the next 25 years. In 1987, the Committee of Ministers (the decision making body of the Council of Europe) set up a working group on cross-border cooperation (Mudrich 1992). At the beginning of the seventies, the border regions not only found an ally in the Council of Europe but in 1971 also founded an organization representing their own interests, the association of Border Regions. The intellectual head of this association was Dr. Victor Freiherr von Malchus, formerly a planner in the Upper Rhine Valley and at that time head of an institute for urban and regional planning in North-Rhine-Westphalia (close to the EUREGIO Gronau). He also wrote the first comprehensive report on cross-border cooperation for the Council of Europe (Malchus 1975).

The first wave of Euroregion building was geographically limited mainly to border regions on the Western Border of Germany (and Switzerland); however, these attempts were limited politically because there was no real will to facilitate cross-border cooperation in many national capitals. Moreover, it was not very helpful that the Germans were the primary promoters of the idea of bottom up integration.

### **The Nation State Strikes Back.**

The Council of Europe not only helped the subnational actors in the border regions in their initial cross-border activities, but also initiated the first European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning in 1970 in Bonn. At this conference the national ministers proposed the establishment of planning commissions for border zones in order to deal systematically with transborder aspects of regional development plans, environmental issues and infrastructure (ARL 1992).

This "official" recommendation spurred a first "race" in institution building at many border regions. Local and regional authorities tried to capture this policy field and set up cross-border associations on a subnational level. However, national governments did not accept those associations and during the seventies established nation state dominated spatial planning commissions for borderlands, usually without international treaties.

A further initiative of the Council of Europe led the way to the "European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between territorial Communities or Authorities," signed in Madrid, May, 21, 1980. Since the Parliamentary Assembly had received the first report on border problems in 1971, the issue of legal preconditions for transboundary activities of subnational units had received a prominent place in all conferences and debates. Most nation states did not allow their subnational units to pursue formally binding, public law-based linkages across international boundaries. Therefore, it took a long time to find an acceptable compromise in the Outline Convention. However, since the measures spelled out at the Outline

Convention had to be translated into specific binational or multinational treaties it took another 10 years before the first of these treaties was implemented in the BENELUX countries in 1991 (Council of Europe 1991, Mudrich 1992).

In the nineties, more international treaties followed. Since national governments regulate the conditions of cross-border collaboration in detail through these treaties, not all subnational units are pleased with such a regulatory approach. In eastern Switzerland, for example, the cantons rejected their inclusion into a treaty ("Karlsruher Übereinkommen") that was signed by Germany, Switzerland, France and Luxemburg in January 1996 (Blatter 1999).

### **The Second Wave of Euroregion Building**

In the middle of the eighties a new era of cross-border collaboration began. The new dynamism was driven by the search for an appropriate response to the economic crisis in Europe at the beginning of the eighties. This crisis stimulated the president of the European Commission, Jaques Delors, to propose a European common market. Furthermore, it resulted in the formulation of new conceptual ideas for regional economic development. These parallel innovations led to the breakthrough of the "regionalist paradigm" (Joenniemi 1997) in European borderlands at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties which in consequence brought a "second wave" of "Euroregion building".

In 1986, the European Community proposed a Single European Market to be completed by the end of 1992 and initiated an ambitious program that would permit free movement of capital, goods, services and labor within the European Community. This program of deeper economic integration required the business community to adjust to the conditions of a larger and more complex multinational market. Additionally, politicians from all levels of government realized that this common market program could mean a reshuffling of power with new constraints but also new possibilities for regional governments in particular. The debate in Germany was especially heated since the powerful Länder felt that they would be the losers in a process that would redirect political responsibilities to the European level where the national governments and the transnational European Commission play the major roles (Renzsch 1990).

In response, the German Länder initiated conferences and associations of subnational jurisdictions to lobby for a "Europe of the regions" (Hrbek & Weyand 1994). The most important of these are the Assembly of European Regions (AER), created in 1988 and the Council of Regional and Local Authorities (CRLA). The European Commission supported these associations financially and included their representatives into its own Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities, that was institutionalized by decision of the Commission (Tömmel 1997: 423, 424). During the negotiations over the Maastricht treaty the German Länder vigorously demanded a stronger participation in European decision making. They were successful not only in the domestic realm where the constitution was altered to formally

provide the Länder a stronger role in foreign policy in general but also at the European level and in cross-border affairs in particular. On the European level the "Committee of Regional and Local Authorities" or shorter, the "Committee of the Regions" was set up and started work in 1993 (Hierl 1995).

The concept of a "Europe of the regions" had already gained momentum in the border regions. Especially important was the reform of the European structural funds in 1989 that were set up in 1975 to help less-developed peripheral regions. With this reform the Commission introduced many innovations to its regional policy it had already "tested" through pilot projects. One of those innovations was the "program approach" as the new mode of planning and implementing a set of coherent measures for fostering economic development at the regional level. Furthermore, there has been a much stronger emphasis on subnational, regional participation then before. Among various "Community Initiatives" the INTERREG initiative was launched to promote cross-border collaboration within the European Community. This initiative dedicated 1 billion ECU (European Currency Units) to the border regions for the period 1990-93 in order to prepare these regions to cope with the new integrated European market. Since the INTERREG initiative was seen as the most successful Community Initiative it was extended and expanded for another five years (Tömmel 1997: 422, Manthey 1992).

During this time the concept of cross-border collaboration was embraced in all "real" European border regions and expanded to allow such regions as the "Arc Atlantic" (the coastal regions of northern Spain, France, Wales and Ireland) and "Transmanche" (cities and regional authorities on both sides of the Channel) to qualify for EU funding. This flurry of cross-border activity was not limited to Western Europe. As a consequence of the lobbying efforts of the Association of Border Regions for the extension of the INTERREG initiative to the external borders of the European Union, the PHARE initiative was expanded. Consequently, it became possible to fund projects on border regions outside the European Union while many countries on EU external borders, including Switzerland, approved legislation allowing for governmental financing of border projects to match EU funding.

The EU Commission implemented procedures for developing programs in the border regions. Steering committees for "Operational Programs" had to be founded including members from the Commission, federal, regional and local authorities. The quest of the Commission to include private interest associations (especially employers and unions) still has not been fulfilled in most regions, but private partners can play crucial roles in many projects that are set up under the auspices of these steering committees (Blatter 1999).

The precise requirements of the EU Commission for the INTERREG committees made it impossible to use the older cross-border institutions as steering committees. But this was not clear from the beginning. Therefore, the launch of the INTERREG initiative produced a furious competition between existing and newly founded institutions and their initiatives in many

border regions. Cities, regional authorities, parliaments, political parties, chambers of commerce and private interest groups, attempting to enhance their cross-border collaborations and formalize their linkages, either tried to be included into the local official cross-border institution or they created their own organization, while some did both. Consequently, in most border regions within the European Union we see a multiplicity of cross-border networks and institutions (Church & Reid 1995 and 1996, Lezzi 1994, Müller-Schnegg 1994). The historical evolution of those cross-border institutions has led to a wide variety of organizational forms of cross-border institutions (Groß & Schmidt-Egner 1994).

The most important difference between the first wave of institution building in the sixties and seventies and that of the nineties is that now local and regional actors play the dominant role. This happened when new, more decentralized organizations took the lead in formulating cross-border policy as opposed to older organizations that had been dominated by the national governments. This occurred, for example, in the Lake Constance region where the "Bodenseerat" (Lake Constance Council), based on local elites around the lake challenged the "Internationale Bodenseekonferenz" (Conference of Government Leaders) in representing the Euroregion.

Another path of institutional devolution is illustrated by the trinational Commission in Upper Rhine Valley that was set up in the seventies. The regional committees that officially had working group status slowly evolved into the central bodies and merged in 1991 into the Upper Rhine Conference (Oberrheinkonferenz). From that time on, the trinational Commission, which formally had been the central decision making body, de facto ceased to exist (Blatter 1999).

In most Western European border regions we can find multiple cross-border institutions, each with their own set of initiatives. This multiplicity of institutions has evolved because of the complexity and variety of social and political systems in each country. Their relationship to each other is characterized by a mixture of competition and complementarity. In general, this situation seems to provide an adequate institutional setting for innovation and for the difficult search for pragmatic solutions in a complex socio-economic and politico-administrative environment. Nevertheless, problems of redundancy and transparency have to be acknowledged.

### **Between Supra-National Integration and Cross-Border Collaboration: The Formation of Meso-Regions**

Up to this point we have focussed on the main strand of cross-border cooperation as it is mirrored in the literature. Here, we have shown how strong the processes of micro-integration in the border regions correspond to activities on the macro-level of continental integration, which was first led by the Council of Europe, then later by the European Union. But this is not

the whole picture of multilevel integration in Europe – the picture is much more complex. The most important addition was the formation of cross-border multilateral cooperation on a "meso-level," between the continental and the border-regional levels. Two of those "Meso-regions" focus on binding natural phenomena, the Baltic Sea in the north and the Alps in Central Europe.<sup>2</sup> What is especially interesting about these two regions is that they transcended the former Iron Curtain and included national and subnational actors from Western and Eastern Europe. These regions began to cooperate even before the communist regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed -- with some, limited successes -- but have received a new lease on life in the nineties. Here, we also see the same gradual transformation from purely nation state dominated cooperation towards the inclusion of and devolution to subnational entities.

Regional cooperation in Northern Europe has a long tradition but was limited mainly to the Nordic Countries (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland) until the end of the eighties. In 1948 they formed the Joint Nordic Committee for Economic Co-operation, which was followed by the creation of the Nordic Council, a parliamentary institution, in 1951 (Finland became a member in 1956) (Laffan 1992). In 1971, the governments of these countries set up the Nordic Council of Ministers. A few years later, in 1974, the first institution to encompass the entire Baltic Sea was founded. The "Helsinki Commission" included all riparian states and aims at protecting the maritime environment. In the same year, the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission was formed. It is important to note here that all of these commissions are international institutions and subnational entities do not play an official role.

This situation changed dramatically in early 1990s. Within three years after the collapse of the former East Bloc a broad range of cross-border, Baltic institutions emerged. Initially, cultural institutions appeared, like Arc Baltica and non-governmental organizations like the Coalition Clean Baltic, Hanse Wirtschaftstage and the North European Club. Soon, public institutions followed, including: the Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, the Baltic Ports Organization, the Union of the Baltic Cities and the Conference of the Foreign Ministers (Jann 1993). Facilitated through EU initiatives, the cross-border "subregions" ("Trans-Baltic-Networks") of the Baltic Sea region meet regularly to promote infrastructure development

The cross-border activities in the Alps provide another fascinating example of the multiplicity of European cross-boundary region building. Dating from 1972, cross boundary cooperation in the Alps can be seen as another offspring from the first European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional Planning in 1970. In addition to the nation state-dominated spatial planning commissions, the subnational leaders of the German Land of Bavaria, the Swiss canton of Graubünden, the Italian region Lombardia, the province Bozen and the Austrian Länder Salzburg, Tirol and Vorarlberg, met to form the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpenländer"



(ARGE ALP 1992). In 1978, the subnational actors on the eastern side of the Alps followed. This group is called "Alpen-Adria" and includes parts of Germany, Austria, Italy and Slovenia. **[Is this correct?]** Four years later in 1982, another association of subnational units was formed at the western end of the Alps. The Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidental (COTRAO) encompasses representatives from the French regions Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, the Swiss cantons de Genève, Valais and Vaud, and the Italian regions Piemonte, Liguria and Vallee d'Aosta. These associations of subnational authorities together cover the entire alpine area.

Even earlier than these organizations of subnational governments, nongovernmental organizations formed a transnational alliance in the Alps. The International Commission for the Protection of the Alps is, albeit its name, an umbrella organization of 79 nongovernmental organizations from all Alpin countries and was founded in 1952. In 1995, the nation states followed and set up a Permanent Board for the implementation of the Convention for the Protection of the Alps that was signed in 1991.

In summary, the history of cross-border cooperation in Western Europe has many dimensions. Nevertheless, we can make some generalizations. Usually, the processes of supranational economic and political integration and cross-border cooperation have been closely linked. In some regions like the Alps, however, subnational actors usually have taken the lead in the process of creating cross-boundary organizations.

In Eastern Europe the situation is still quite fluid and is being shaped by a complex set of factors, some old, some new. Given that borders between Western and Eastern Europe during the Cold War had served primarily as barriers, the transition to borders as permeable membranes has presented new opportunities, challenges and uncertainties. On the one hand, East-West trade has expanded, access to "the other side" by local officials has improved and funding for cross border projects has become available through the INTEREG/PHARE programs. On the other hand, the presence of old borders, established by the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 based on the strategic concerns of the victors -- not the ethnic-national composition of the area. (Corrigan 1997) -- shifted during the German and Russian occupations and then reverted back to the earlier demarcations after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus, nationalist movements, which were formerly suppressed by the main hegemonic powers, have re-emerged and in many areas this has resulted in open conflicts, as in the former Yugoslavia. In all CEECs the transformation from state socialism to parliamentary democracy and market capitalism -- and the painful learning process that accompanies that transition -- has impeded cross border interaction and cooperation at all levels as state bureaucracies are reorganized and enormous asymmetries across international boundaries become apparent

(Scott 1997). Further complicating the cross border interactive process is the region's reinsertion into the West through the expansion of both the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) -- Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic became members in 1999 while other Eastern countries are expected to join within a few years -- and the expansion of the European Union itself, which, presumably, will bring peace, stability, and prosperity to the region.

Thus, the East-West divide, while still discernible, is no longer marked by an Iron Curtain, by a wide variety of cross border projects designed to solve mutual problems and integrate the East into the West. From Europe's "High North," marked by the recently invented "Barents Euro-Arctic Region" and the historically based Baltic Sea Region (Joenniemi 1997), down through the German - Polish- Czech border regions and the Carpathian Region (parts of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Ukraine) to the Austrian-Hungarian and Austria-Slovenian border regions, we find a panoply of innovative projects developing to meet the unique circumstances present in each region -- a border researcher's dream.

In comparing EU external borders and the U.S.-Mexican border, one can perceive certain similarities and differences with regard to the "debordering" of trade and investment flows and "rebordering" of illegal immigration and security sensitive areas (Spener & Staudt 1999). For example, along the Carinthian (Austria)-Slovenian border, which was relatively open during the Cold War and then much more open during the early 1990s, is now more closed since Austria's joining the EU in 1995. Austria, like other countries located on the EU's external borders, is obligated to enforce the security provisions of the Schengen Treaty (1992). Consequently, there are tighter controls on the flows of goods and people that also inhibit other cross border interactions. (Wastl & Kofler 1998) Similarly, but in striking visual contrast, all along the U.S. border one can witness the presence of military personnel and the construction of double and triple fences in urbanized areas that were constructed to impede the flow of North-bound migrants, drugs and other contraband. Long delays at the border also impede the integration of the transborder metropolis of "San Tijuana" (San Diego-Tijuana).

### **III. CONTRASTING EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON BORDER REGIMES**

Neither Europe nor North America have taken a single, homogenous approach to borderlands development and cross-boundary cooperation. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern a few typical features of cross-border linkages and of the scholarly work that characterizes the dominant perspective in different border regions. The purpose of this section is to point out the differences between Western and Central European perspectives and those of the U.S.-Mexican and the U.S.-Canadian borders. Some preliminary explanations for these

variations will be given; however, in order to make these comparisons there is a danger that we might exaggerate the differences and underestimate the similarities.

### **Similarities and Parallels Between The Continents**

On both continents the most obvious border-related development in recent years is the dramatic increase in cross-boundary interaction and the growing awareness of neighbors and their activities "on the other side." In Europe continental cooperation and integration as manifested in the Single European Market initiated and facilitated cross-border cooperation in most border regions independent of specific socio-economic conditions in local communities. In North America the North American Free Trade Agreement has deepened and, to some extent, regularized the sporadic informal cooperation that already existed on the U.S.-Mexican border.(Clement et al 1998) These phenomena highlight the importance of "ideas" and "paradigms" in triggering change (Blatter 1999). Furthermore, we can differentiate between "policy-paradigms" that provide dominant interpretations of problems and solution concepts (Hall 1993) and "polity-ideas," dominant conceptions of legitimate political orders and contain perceptions of identity and the relationship towards the "other" (Jachtenfuchs 1995).

In this context we can observe that until the end of the eighties the common perception of cross-border relations had been one of "problematic interdependencies," (i.e., negative externalities which "spill over" national boundaries). This policy paradigm dominated the public discourse and the political agenda in almost all border regions. Pollution of water sources was the most common issue, with air pollution and the risks of nuclear power plants ranking very high in many border regions (Ercmann 1987). Coordinated spatial planning was seen as the necessary reaction to reduce and avoid those problematic interdependencies (Malchus 1975, ARL 1992, Grotefels 1993, Becker-Marx 1984).

Even topics that nowadays are advanced in connection with proposals for cross-boundary collaboration were formerly regarded mainly as problems. An excellent example here is the phenomenon of cross-border (worker) commuters. In Europe, throughout the seventies, the fact that workers commuted across a national boundary was perceived mainly as an element of exploitation by the receiving side of border region. As a consequence, political representatives demanded monetary compensation and at the Swiss-French border areas of Geneva and Basle, for example, financial transfers were actually institutionalized (Boos 1982, Arnold-Palussiere 1983, Koch 1974, Blatter 1999). However, in the nineties, as the idea of developing cross-boundary synergies came to be a guiding principle in the new policy paradigm, the presence of cross-border commuters came to be perceived as a positive basis for developing transboundary synergistic relationships. And, instead of financial compensation, joint construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure is now seen as the appropriate response. This change of the dominant policy-paradigm has moved the emphasis from spatial planning towards "networking" as one of the central features of cross-border collaboration in all border

regions, not only in Europe (Ratti & Reichman 1993, Beck 1997, Cappelin & Batey 1993, Church & Reid 1996, Cooke & Morgan 1993, Maillat 1995, Mazza 1995, Bluechel 1991, Alper 1996, Schell & Hamer 1995, Artibise et al 1997, Ohmae 1993).

Although such a general shift in the dominant "policy-paradigm" during the eighties can explain many similarities between cross-border initiatives on both continents, divergent "polity-ideas" in Europe and North America correspond to some of the obvious differences in cross-border institution building. The central polity-ideas regarding cross-border institution building are the leitmotifs of continental integration because they represent the strongest challenge to the dominant polity idea of modern times, the sovereign nation state.

### **The Major Differences Between The Continents**

In Europe, at least since the Second World War, the leitmotiv for continental integration has been the concept of a "political community". Despite vast differences -- whether the goal should be a federation or just a confederation, for example -- it has always been clear for the proponents of European Integration that it should be a political, all encompassing project (Schneider 1977). The sharing of goals such as a stable peace between European nations, increasing the common welfare and building on a common cultural heritage, provided a basis for developing the European Union that today is involved in almost all aspects of public policy. Even if this has been reached primarily through measures taken in the economic sphere, the perception is that they were necessary strategic detours in reaching the goal of political union.<sup>3</sup>

On the other side of the Atlantic, such a political, encompassing leitmotiv of continental integration is clearly missing. In the seventies the term "continentalism" had a rather bad connotation in all three countries (Holsti & Levi 1976: 304). Mexico and Canada tried hard to reduce their dependency on their mighty neighbor. Only after the Europeans started their Single European Market project did the elites of North America turn to their own neighbors in the search for a larger market. Therefore, the American leitmotiv for continental integration is now one of a functional, single purpose community, basically limited to an economic alliance. Even though we already are witnessing cooperation that goes well beyond economic integration this has to be assigned to unintended side effects of ("spillovers" in terms of neo-functional integration theory) or strategic necessities to reaching the economic goal (Smith 1993, Randall 1993).

These different polity ideas with respect to continental "macro-integration" have become major influences in the process of "micro-integration" (Haefliger 1997) in border regions (Blatter 1999):

- First, in Europe the concept of continental integration has modified the political self-identity of citizens from that of a single identity (e.g., "German" or "French" to that of multiple identities (e.g., "European and French"). European integration is widely

acknowledged as a positive political goal, supporting, not threatening, the national interest. This is especially true in terms of determining the strategies of politicians in border regions (Schmidberger 1998, Fichtner 1988). In Europe, politicians now campaign as strong proponents of cross-border cooperation while in North America, many politicians back down, downplay this issue and even use the neighbor across the border as a scapegoat like Pete Wilson in California or Premier Clark in British Columbia did in the mid nineties. They don't do this by accident but because they know that among the majority of their constituency a national identity clearly prevails. Consequently, regional cross-border collaboration is usually less stable, less institutionalized and much more informal at the regional (local) level in North America than in Europe.

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- Second, in North America the private sector plays a much stronger role in cross-border cooperation than in Europe where such cooperation is usually stimulated by politicians and bureaucrats. The steering committees of the INTERREG programs usually consist mainly of bureaucrats from the various levels of government while the private sector is involved only in those projects already cofinanced by the INTERREG program. In contrast to this, many initiatives in North America initiated by local politicians have come to rely on private funding and as a result had to switch their center of activity from the public to the private sector. The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) is one example at the U.S.-Canadian border, the San Diego Dialogue is another one at the U.S.-Mexican border. This reflects different traditions of state-society relations in Europe and North America but also, in a more specific way, it is the result of the divergent leitmotifs of continental integration.

Emphasizing the relevance of "ideas" and the general global and continental discourse does mean advocating a determinism "from above," but it is important to demystify the widely held belief in much of the borderlands literature that transboundary collaboration is a pure "bottom-up" concept. The regionalist element and the emphasis on participation of subnational actors is only part of an "idea" that has gained prominence on both continents during the last two decades. Nevertheless, understanding of specific regional contexts has to complement such an discourse oriented perspective in order to achieve a full understanding of border situations and cross-border activities.

Any attempt to characterize specific scientific traditions to the study of borderlands and cross-border collaboration in Europe and North America leads us immediately to the necessity to differentiate between the U.S.-Mexican border and the U.S.-Canadian border which are quite different in most respects. Since we focus on traditions we do not make a similar differentiation within Europe. Research on East European borderlands is a rather recent phenomenon and from our point of view we have seen an explosion and a fusion of concepts regarding

transboundary collaboration in the nineties that has led to a blurring of the boundaries between the approaches.

### **The U.S.-Mexican Borderlands**

Perhaps the most striking element of the discourse on the U.S.-Mexican border is the fact that scholars here traditional have not focused on transboundary collaboration but on "borderlands" (Stoddard et al. 1983), not on transboundary interdependencies and interaction but on the situation of a "peripheral" region within the respective nation states.<sup>4</sup>

Drawing from data in Texas and New Mexico, the borderlands on the U.S. side were characterized as poor and neglected by the domestic centers (Hansen 1981, 1983). A first institutional response was the creation of the "Southwest Border Regional Commission" in 1976 which was eliminated at the beginning of the eighties when the budget cuts associated with "Reagonomics" brought an end to federal efforts to promote the development of lagging regions, as has been done in the EU since the mid 1980s.

Additionally, the Mexican discourse traditionally did not focus on the common border zone but on "Frontera Norte," an area primarily related to Mexican sovereignty and national identity under continual threat from U.S. expansionism (Fernandez 1977, Gutierrez 1978). The recent integration of the northern border zone with the U.S. economy has been accompanied by cultural and political transformations: after the market-oriented opposition party PAN (National Action Party) won several elections in border states and cities, some feared "another norteno revolution" (Martinez 1988) and cultural "Americanization" (Fernandez 1989, Pastor & Castenada 1988, Martinez 1986. In contrast to this position, Bustamente 1995).

Typical for this border region is the necessity of "parallel studies" where U.S. and Mexican scholars, working in parallel with common goals and methods, focus not on cross-border interaction but on comparisons and contrasts of their respective border regions. This was the case with the first studies comparing the political processes in border towns (Sloan & West 1970) and can be observed in more contemporary studies on the different styles of public administrators (Saint-Germain 1995) and in the multifaceted study of San Diego-Tijuana (Clement & Miramontes 1993). Mutual awareness of past U.S. dominance in all aspects of Mexican-U.S. relations and the desire of a cadre of well-trained Mexican scholars to avoid the mistakes of the past have contributed to this style of border inquiry.

Herzog's books and articles (1986, 1990 and 1991), while not emanating from parallel studies, characterize San Diego and Tijuana as a "Transfrontier metropolis." Nevertheless, the comparative parts are much more elaborated than the parts on cross-border interrelations.

There is an obvious logic behind this kind of approach – a first step to building "bridges" across the border is to increase understanding and acceptance of "the other side" – a necessity still not fulfilled at this border where "North meets South" (Herzog 1990). Therefore, it is not surprising that the institutionalization of cross-border cooperation is not very strong at this border region. There are many actors and institutions dealing with border issues, but only a few of them are really transnational (Jamail & Gutiérrez 1992).

While it is extremely difficult to generalize, the following impressionistic categorization attempts to identify those subject areas that dominated traditional borderlands research on the U.S.-Mexican border prior to the mid nineties when NAFTA-related topics began to have a profound impact:

- Demographic development and settlement structures. This is not surprising, given the phenomenal expansion of population on both sides of the border, especially in an area characterized by an arid or semi-arid climate (Alegria Olazábal 1992, Herzog 1990, Weeks & Ham-Chande 1992).
- Environmental and resource issues. Given these climatic conditions it is natural that another major focus has been the availability and quality water. Anglos in the search for the sun and Hispanics in the search for work are competing on every drop of this life-giving resource. Technical and planning approaches, based on natural sciences and geography provide strong contributions to the borderlands literature. In recent years a new focus on "sustainable development" has appeared. (Mumme 1988, Kelly 1995, International Transboundary Resources Center 1987-present, Ganster & Sanchez 1999)
- Historical evolution, social and cultural aspects of border life. The evolution of border "twin cities" straddling the border, the "browning" of the U.S. Southwest as a result of Mexican immigration and the evolving middle class in the northern part of Mexico as a consequence of maquiladora-related industrialization has spurred many cultural and sociological studies (Martinez 1994, Griswold de Castillo & Leon 1996, Martinez 1997, **[joachim: The Martinez citation is not in the references]** Schmidt 1997, **There is no Schmidt in the citation! Ganster & Sweedler 1990 [the Ganster/Sweedler citation is missing, and I don't know what they have done in the cultural social area...mistake?].**.....).
- Political, administrative and legal studies. In comparison to other areas this one has been neglected. Only recently have political scientists and lawyers become aware of the border as important area of inquiry. In Mexico interest has grown in the governmental decentralization and devolution of powers to state and local governments. (Lowenthal & Burgess 1993, Reeves 1984, Guillén 1993).

- Economic studies. Prior to the NAFTA debates at the beginning of the nineties economic studies tended to focus on cross border, informal "border transactions" (i.e., unrecorded retail and tourist-related spending on the other side), the impacts of the numerous peso devaluations, which began in 1976, and cross border commuters. Hansen's 1981 book, a benchmark study, focuses exclusively on the development of the U.S. side of the border and the impact of U.S. Mexican labor there. In recent years many studies have appeared on all aspects of the Mexican *maquiladora* (assembly plant) industry which has become the main "driver" of Mexico's Northern border economy and one of the major forces contributing to that region's integration into the U.S. economy. Of special interest here are the many studies dedicated to the role of female labor in global production sharing. (Grunwald & Flamm 1985, Clement & Jenner 1987, Gonzalez-Arechiga & Barajas-Escamila 1989, Wilson 1993, Fernandez-Kelly 19)

In sum, U.S.-Mexican border transboundary collaboration is viewed as a necessity resulting from "objective" natural and socio-economic interdependencies. Practitioners and scholars advocating stronger political cooperation rely heavily on "hard facts" and "material" realities to overcome the dominant political perceptions and ideas in the two countries which continue to impede cross-border integration efforts. The U.S.-Mexico borderlands literature therefore has taken on a strong "materialist" bias. Cross-border collaboration is not a value in itself, nor is it an "idea" that politicians can embrace as a campaign issue. Only inevitable environmental necessities or extraordinary opportunities for exploiting economic synergies are admissible as arguments providing strong leverage for undertaking cross-border activities.<sup>5</sup>

### **U.S.-Canadian Cross-Boundary Linkages**

The U.S.-Canadian border presents quite a different picture. While there are certain similarities with the U.S.-Mexican case, characterized by an asymmetrical relationship between the neighboring countries, border situations as well as the scholarly awareness and disciplinary approaches to the cross-border activities are very different.

First, the border as a line of separation or as a specific and distinct zone of interaction is almost not existent. The "longest undefended border" has never been a sharp line of demarcation and "acts more like a sieve than a shield" (McKinsey & Konrad according to Gibbins 1997: 317). Additionally, since Canada can be described as "a borderlands society" (Gibbins 1989) since 80 percent of the population live within 320 kilometers of the U.S.-Canadian border, there exists no distinct border zone apart from the national center. Therefore, where transboundary interdependencies exist they are of national interest for most Canadians.

So not surprisingly, the International Joint Commission (IJC), which was created by the two national governments in 1909, has been the most important institution for dealing with transboundary issues and attracts most scholars' attention. Nevertheless, the International



Boundary Commission and the International Fishery Commission were set up one year earlier by the national governments (1908). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the federal government on the U.S. side had to establish its competence to act on behalf of American interests: before that time such affairs had been left to the states. On the Canadian side, up through the thirties, the Canadians were still struggling for independence from the United Kingdom (Willoughby 1979).

The IJC, founded by the Boundary Water Treaty, later expanded its agenda to a broad variety of environmental issues and under its auspices a vast web of cross-border boards and institutions emerged with most extensive collaboration focusing on issues related to the Great Lakes (Willoughby 1979). While Canadian provinces and U.S. states always exerted a large influence on the Commission the national governments still played the important "gate-keeper" role. Acting as a gate-keeper means that the national governments are the only actors that play in both "games" – the domestic game defining the national interest in an cross-border issue – and the "international game" where compromises were searched for between these national positions (compare the famous article by Putnam (1988) on "two-level-games").

From the nineteen seventies on, we can see growing involvement and activity by the provinces and states in transborder interactions. Quebec, the Atlantic provinces and later the provinces around the Great Lakes were looking for allies across the border in order to gain autonomy from their national government which at that time had adopted a nationalistic economic policy (Alper 1986, Atkey 1970, Fanjoy 1990, Lubin 1986, 1988, 1993, Fry 1993). Later on, the oil rich province of Alberta and the Pacific Rim province of British Columbia started their own cross border "coalition building strategy" in order to pursue their own regional economic interests which they felt were not strongly supported by their federal government " (Groen 1994 and 1995, Goldber & Levi 1992, Rutan 1985).

Provinces in Canada are not "periphery" but major players in the federation. In fact, the provincial level has become the most powerful level of government as a consequence of various attempts to secure the fragile national cohesion in Canada, especially as these questions are related to the "Quebec question." Cross-border collaboration is always unavoidably entangled with intergovernmental relations in Canada. Consequently, scholars focus on the intra-national motivations and the consequences of international activities of subnational actors (Groen 1994, 1995; Duchacek, Latouche & Stevenson 1988; Hocking 1986, 1993a, 1993b; Holsti & Levy 1976, Keating & Munton 1985, Leach 1973, Johannson 1977, 1978). From this perspective, transboundary collaboration between neighboring subnational units is seen as "transborder regional diplomacy" as one expression of a phenomenon Duchacek (1990) and Soldatos (1993) called "paradiplomacy". Other forms of paradiplomacy that tend to challenge traditional centre-to-centre (nation-to-nation) diplomacy are frequently referred to as "transregional paradiplomacy" (contact between subnational units that are no

territorial neighbors) and "global paradiplomacy" (contacts of subnational units to national and subnational governments on a global level).

This perspective not only dominates Canadian discussion, it looms large on the American side, too. In this context, it is quite telling that the American State Department ordered a report on the "interactions" between American states and Canadian provinces (Swanson 1976, 1978) in the mid seventies. The debate on whether these international activities of subnational units posed a problem for a coherent foreign policy lasted well into the nineties (Hocking 1986; Stempel 1991, Kline 1986). In this debate, the most scholars looking at U.S.-Canadian border issues have come from constitutional law and the sub-discipline of federal studies in political science (Hocking 1993a and 1993b, Michelmann & Soldatos 1990, Duchacek 1984, 1986, Feldman & Gardner Feldman 1984).

In sum, at the U.S.-Canadian border transboundary collaboration is mainly seen by scholars mainly as a STRATEGY for focusing on the concerns of domestic actors. Actor and action-oriented approaches are typical as theoretical starting points for looking at transboundary links. Thus, it comes as no surprise that one of the most inspiring books on new landscapes of political order based on a rational choice perspective comes from this border region (Elkins 1995). Full blown integration has not yet become a goal in any of the three countries of North America as it has in Europe.

### **Western European Internal Borders**

In Western Europe, after the Second World War, cross-border collaboration has always been and still is linked to the European integration process on the macro-level. Until the seventies, however, this linkage had been formulated in "functionalistic" terms, in the sense that cross-border collaboration is a necessity for the successful functioning of an integrated Europe. When Victor von Malchus wrote his report on border problems and cross-border collaboration for the Council of Europe, the report was published as a book, *Partnership at European Borders: Integration Through Cross-Border Cooperation.*" (translation of Malchus 1975) Transboundary collaboration was legitimized primarily by referring to the broader goal of European Integration. Since a direct approach towards European Unity had failed in the fifties, a more indirect, non-political, technical approach from the bottom-up was seen as an adequate strategy to overcome the resistance of the nation-centered governments and peoples. Spatial planning, better coordination of the construction of infrastructure and tackling the environmental problems that spill across international boundaries were parts of such a functionalistic or technocratic approach. This parallels the traditional perspective at the U.S.-Mexican border, but in Europe the functionalist approach has always been much more linked to the "idea" of European integration and not so much to the "material" situations in the border regions.

As noted above, those first approaches towards cross-border collaboration were not very successful since for most people boundaries and border regions still represented lines of defense, and in that sense that they were core elements of national security and sovereignty. Twenty to thirty years after Second World War two factors joined in a paradoxical way to hamper the attempts of cross-border cooperation. On the one hand, the experiences of the devastating wars still overshadowed the first attempts for cross-border cooperation - the last "interaction" was still too close. On the other, twenty or thirty years of nation-state-oriented development in the border regions had led to very distinct social, cultural and political structures on both sides of the borders: the fact that fewer and fewer Alsatian people are now speaking German is just one very clear element in such a development. The common (positive) historical and cultural backgrounds of the cross-border regions were already disappearing and had ceased to serve as a viable basis for the transboundary cooperation in many border regions. At that time there was a growing literature appeared that, not by accident, looked at borderlands as lines of interface between different social, economic and political "systems" (Bullinger 1982). Even the grandmaster of system theory, Niklas Luhman, wrote about border regions (Luhmann 1982). His verdict, that territorial border should be seen as system boundaries that differentiate distinct social and political systems, has been quite influential.

At that time, differences between the administrative and planning systems of the neighboring countries were seen as serious obstacles to fruitful cross-border integration. Only after the dominant policy paradigm was changed during the eighties were common perceptions of those differences changed: As long as equality and harmonization were the overarching goals and coherent spatial development planning seen as an essential element of cooperation, differences between "systems" were viewed as quite problematic. However, as soon as efficiency and development oriented policies came into fashion, these differences were seen as offering opportunities for the development of productive and synergetic transboundary relationships. Many European border regions offered a much more hospitable environment for such an approach to cross-border collaboration: The asymmetries were not too large (as in the U.S.-Mexican border lands), not too small (as in the U.S.-Canadian borderlands), but exactly right for exploiting comparative advantages without the need for implementing politically explosive policies focusing on income redistribution. .

In conclusion, the border regions from the end of the eighties have been portrayed as "contact zones" (Ratti 1993) offering fruitful environments for national and border-regional economic development. Once again, this perspective has been framed as a functional necessity for the European Community at large, as a contribution to enhance the competitiveness of a common Europe. From a more distant, reflective point of view, it is that in the post WWII period the dominant perspectives regarding transboundary collaboration in Europe have been influenced by the dominant policy paradigms while actual transboundary activities have been driven by

ideas, events and actors on the continental level. Accordingly, we can conclude that (economic) regional science has surpassed planning and geography as the major discipline in border studies.

Apart from the general strong legalistic traditions of continental Europe, the strong strand of legal work on cross-border institution building (e.g., Beyerlin 1989, Lang 1989, Dupuy 1982) can be attributed to the fact that supranational institutions, the Council of Europe and the European Union, played an important role in stimulating transboundary collaboration. This work led to the search for general guidelines and rules for cross-border cooperation despite the tremendous variety of the initiatives grown from the bottom-up.

In sum, we can say that Western European literature on borderlands and cross-border cooperation has traditionally had a strong "functionalist" bias. That is, transboundary collaboration was advocated primarily as a *contribution* to the "idea" of European integration and later to the "idea" of European competitiveness, by reducing the high transaction costs associated with multiple border, currencies and legal-commercial systems (Clement 1998). Thus, we are tempted to call the European experience an "idea-driven" approach towards cross-border collaboration.

Having said this, however, we must also add that in the nineties we have witnessed both a rapid increase in borderlands studies and an expanding variety and mixture of approaches. International exchange obviously helps to overcome traditional perspectives and whether we perceive cross-border collaboration as a consequence of material necessities, as a result of strategic choices, or as a contribution to a higher goal is now up for discussion. Furthermore, with the debate on "globalization" and the ongoing process of "debordering the world of states," (Albert & Brock 1995) borderland studies is becoming embedded in a much broader discourse. Not only are the reasons and motivations for cross-border collaboration viewed as subjects of inquiry but the functions of national boundaries themselves as the cornerstones of modern social and political systems being questioned. (Ruggie 1993, Elkins 1995, Brown & Fry 1993).

**IV. Overview over the Special Issue** (4-6 pages) Here we will provide an overview of each article....after they are written.

### **List of References**

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<sup>1</sup> Simon has defined hierarchy in the formal sense as "near-decomposability," which means that the lines of communications and order are like a classic bureaucracy: everybody has exactly one person from whom he gets his orders. Non-hierarchical, as it is used here refers to "overlapping rule." That is, a

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peasant has not one ruler but many: the lord, the king and the religious leader at the same time and those rulers are not vertically integrated but parallel rulers.

<sup>2</sup> Another "Meso-region" involves the three adjacent countries of Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg (BENELUX).

<sup>3</sup> The former president of the European Commission expressed this by the following words: "Since the fifties all attempts to build Europe on a direct political way have failed. (...) That is why we are building the political Europe through the economy - the first is the goal, the latter the mean" (translation from: DIE ZEIT, May, 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> The only exception was the environmental interdependencies, especially water. See for example: Kelly 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Even the "cultural" studies usually had an "objectivist" or „materilist" approach in the sense that cultural differences between Anglos and Hispanics were seen as objectively given and not as socially constructed.