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The Utopia of Cross-Border Regions

Territorial Transformation and Cross-Border Governance
On Espace Mont-Blanc

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The utopia of cross-border regions

Territorial Transformation and Cross-Border Governance
on Espace Mont-Blanc

een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de Managementwetenschappen

Proefschrift

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A scientific essay in Management Sciences

Doctoral thesis

to obtain the degree of Doctor

from Radboud University Nijmegen

on the authority of the Rector, Prof. C.W.P.M. Blom,

according to the decision of the Council of Deans

to be defended in public on Monday 15 may 2006

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The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of the juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed.

We are at the moment.

Yet it is necessary to notice that the space, which today appears to form the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems, is not an innovation; space itself has a history in Western experiences, and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space.

(Foucault, Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias. 1967)

'The concept of state, like most concepts which are introduced by "The" is both too rigid and too tied up with controversies to be of ready use. It is a concept which can be approached by a flank movement more easily than by a frontal attack. The moment we utter the words "The State" a score of intellectual ghosts rise to obscure our vision.'

(Dewey, The Public and Its Problems. 1927 [1954])

I n t r o d u c t i o n

CROSS-BORDER REGIONALISM AS A ‘TERRITORIAL’ UTOPIA

The title of my research suggests two interpretative terms as *utopia* and *cross-border regions* to introduce both the hypothesis and the subject of my work. While *cross-border regionalism* is the very subject of my study, *utopia* is here a provocative and ambiguous conclusion, which describes a critical conceptual model of our modernity¹. My thesis suggests the contemporary territorial democratic governance *across* and *beyond* the territorial borders of the nation-state sovereignty paradigm. I shall argue with my work that the policy-making analysis in institutional arrangements needs to focus on processes of different culturalisation of space than at present. Further developments of the notion of *governance* are the relevant subjects in rethinking the course of public domains in actions within a new paradigm of relational processes of ‘territorialising’ as space in ‘politicising’. The objective in my research is to contribute to a better understanding of the potential of new governance forms – i.e. a cross-border governance hypothesis – according to the perspective of being a system of innovation and democratic social regulation. Whereas a *non-Euclidean* approach of planning² is a framework for discursive institutionalisation episodes, ‘*événementialisation*’ linked to contemporary territorial policies configure social critical models based on institutional creative alternatives. Beyond the ‘territorial traps’, my suggestion is to consider the emerging forms of democratic governance breaking down unique visions of hierarchical state-centric sovereignty restructuring. The argument I defend here is that forms of social and political interaction and transaction are changing the spatial structures of our modernity. I sustain that cross-border regionalism is an interesting ‘sign’ where fruitful forms of dialogue, learning and alternative processes of institutionalisation converge, which can provide a horizon in actions towards positive ‘effects’ in the space-making of a contemporary society.

¹ My way to refer to the present in terms as ‘our modernity’ is inspired to the ‘Foucaultian’ ‘*space* and *time*’ question.

² Friedman (1993) sustained that ‘planning is that professional practice that especially seeks to connect forms of *knowledge* with forms of *action* in the public domain’. He suggested in thinking a non-Euclidean model of planning in questions of *knowledge* and *action* within a new continuum of *real time* and *local space*.

My 'utopic' hypothesis in cross-border regionalism thesis is here no longer inspired by the well-known Greek roots³ reported in More's neologism.

Utopia means here a critical model of our present, an ambiguous and meaningful model that embarks on the multiplicity of bodies⁴, of ideals and discourses in a collective coexistence. Utopia is here conceived as a proper form, which identifies spatial, strategic and social structures included in an ongoing process of *politicising*. Utopia is here the horizon in which the interaction between actors, actions and their consistency in the 'present' is 'situated' in an endless questioning⁵. In this light, the rules, the *habitus* and the behaviours in which actors and actions perform in a cross-border policy create *other* creative institutional perspectives of not given means, intentions and reality.

Research Subject and Line of Argumentation

The change in public action *at* and *across* the nation-state borders is the conceptual frame through which I will maintain the cross-border regionalism within a governance process on the example of the Espace Mont-Blanc case study.

The transformation, which concerns me, is an institutional process of alteration in social mobilisation and political participation as political space construction across the nation-state borders in Europe. A different mode of politicising spaces – which pertain to a different mode of interaction between actors and actions - is changing the institutional *fix* of the political space of nation-state as univocal pattern sovereignty. The European international borders can become the subject of a spatial 'becoming' in experimental institutional

³ The adverb 'Ouv' – not – and the noun 'topos' – place: no place. More also used the Greek composite *eutopia* as 'happy', 'fortunate' or 'good' place.

⁴ 'Antiquity had been a civilisation of spectacle. "To render accessible to a multitude of men the inspection of a small number of objects': this was the problem to which the architecture of temples, theatres and circuses responded. With spectacle, there was a predominance of public life, the intensity of festivals, sensual proximity. In these rituals in which blood flowed, society found new vigour and formed for a moment a single great body. The modern age poses the opposite problem: "To procure for a small number, or even for a single individual, the instantaneous view of a great multitude.' In a society in which the principal elements are no longer the community and public life, but, on the one hand, private individuals and, on the other, the state, relations can be regulated only in a form that is the exact reverse of the spectacle: 'It was to the modern age, to the ever-growing influence of the state, to its ever more profound intervention in all the details and all the relations of social life, that was reserved the task of increasing and perfecting its guarantees, by using and directing towards that great aim the building and distribution of buildings intended to observe a great multitude of men at the same time.'" (Foucault, 1977) From *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (NY: Vintage Books 1995) pp. 195-228 translated from the French by Alan Sheridan.

governance building. Not-given spatial forms are the ‘alternatives’, which emerge through processes of co-evolution. I will mention the *‘Border State’* (i.e. the nation state border in transition) to mean the actions of ‘crossing’ in altering the current modernity nexus between politics and territoriality in a synopsis of contemporary *‘governmentalisation’*.

‘By its very nature, a state is ever something to be scrutinized, investigated, searched for. Almost as soon as its form is stabilized, it needs to be re-made. Thus, the problem of discovering the state is not a problem for theoretical inquires engaged solely in surveying institutions which already exist. It is a practical problem of human beings living in association with one other, of mankind generically. It is a complex problem. It demands power to perceive and recognize the consequences of the behaviour of individuals jointed in groups and to trace them to their source and origin. It involves selection of persons to serve as representatives of the interests created by these perceived consequences and to define the functions which they shall possess and employ.... It is no cause for wonder, then that states have been many, not only in number but in type and kind’ (Dewey, 1927 [1954]: 31-32).

The *political spaces* and *territoriality* nexus across the Border State are investigated through the transformation of ‘public action’ in cross-border spaces. Analysing cross-border cooperation policy, ‘public action’ in ‘politicisation’ means to mull over regional experimental strategies, composition of new modes of governance, discursive and social institutionalisations in the direction of democratic deliberations. My suggestion is to explore the perspectives of cross-border arenas in regionalism process as ‘signs’ of dynamic in spatial modernisation. The transformation of the ‘locus’ in contemporary internationalisation or trans-national dynamism in which the cross-border policy is developed assumes in such, significance as very positive light.

New forms and meanings of public sphere are taking shape in cross-bordering spaces. ‘New’ forms of governance based on (attempts of) heterarchic cooperation (Falker, 1997; Marks, 1997; Jessop, 1998; Kohler-Koch, Eising, 1999; Hooghe, Marks, 2001; Borzel, 1997, 2001; Kohler-Koch, 2002; Kaiser, Prage, 2002; Kaiser, 2003; Eberlein, Kerwer, 2002; 2004; Cowles, 2003; Heritier, 2001, 2004; Eising, 2004) and territoriality as ‘space of relations’ (Amin, 1999; De Matteis, 2000; Allen, 2003, 2004; Massey, 1994; 2004) can find a field of ‘restructuring’ in an institutional building at the border based on an experimental alternative, dialogic and innovative regionalism processes yet in the ‘shadow of (existing) hierarchies’.

⁵ This theory of Utopia in relation to the present in a ‘critical model’ is inspired by the work of Elisabeth Grosz. I will come back on the conclusions much more with some authors who consider the ‘function’ of Utopias.

My study proposes cross-border regionalism (hereafter CBR) as territorial relational and democratic governance. Starting from literature on Europeanisation as a context on the relationships in changing in trans-nationalism and domestic structure possibilities (Cowles, Caporaso, Risse, 2001; Olsen, 2002; Blair, 2002; Featherstone, Radaelli, 2003; Mair, 2004; Caporaso, 2004;), my work focuses on cross-border regionalism as a frame of a process and a 'mode' of 'trans-local' governance. In the last few years an intense flow of literature on cross-border cooperation has pointed towards the configuration of new 'political spaces' at the Border State as new forms of institutionalisation (Church, Reid, 1995; 1999, Perkmann, 1999, 2002, 2003; Blatter, 2000; 2003). Specific processes of 'regionalism' across the border (Scott, 1999; 2000; Perkmann, 2002; 2003) have also been introduced as a strand of such literature. I propose to lead them further, stepping out of the technocratic meaning of the CBR. Institutional approaches on cross-border regionalism present question marks on the kind of 'regionalism' as building process, which CBR may introduce. In what way do we understand the region term declination in such a circumstance (functional, political, territorial or both?) Can crossing the folders of the regionalism dynamical discussion in terms of political space transformation be advanced across the border of the State? Interpreting governance as a practical form of public action: how does the 'public' change at the border of the State and along which trends of institutional evolutionary and adaptive processes? Is it in seeking the structuring of institutional domain features that modernisation can become a possibility for new perspectives of territorial democratic governance?

Structure and objectives of dissertation research

Dismissing 'territoriality' as bounded by the 'nation-state' sovereignty, the theories on globalisation or internationalisation and post-nationalism or trans-nationalism debate the '*beyond*' in 'deterritorialisation'. The '*beyond*' does not just refer to the nation-state failure; *borders* and *territoriality* are not just terms lost within *this 'beyond'*. Starting from such a corpse of literature, my **first chapter** argues about the change of the public action 'at' and 'across' the nation-state borders as subject of institutional transformation. In problematising the political space of the modern institutional setting in the transformation, cross-border cooperation is part of a conceptual politicising. The 'Border State' is here a different status of social regulation as regards the perfect correspondence between the political bounded space and the public action at the nation-state border. My first chapter suggests that at the

very 'Border State' the critical openings of political space in modernisation appear. Cross-border regionalism can be understood as emerging social space in effect of relational interactions of power. My hypothesis is that cross-border regionalism marks the change in public action transformation in the coincidence between nation-state borders; territoriality is thus in forms of relational democratic pattern of governance. Transgressing the state-centric territorial domain in decision-making, cross-border regionalism is a sign of the intensifying of generative forms of spatiality in which 'territoriality' no longer corresponds to nested hierarchies. In the context of the European trans-national policy, networked forms of governance represent a cultural turn in modernisation of social space reproduction. No longer does their attitude correspond to already given forms. The cross-border regionalism hypothesis is in my research agenda a form of democratic deliberation. This 'sign' provides for the social process to be included in a *politicising* space in question. As such, cross-border regionalism is a 'territorial' utopia, because it concerns a critical model of our modernity, which urges to be investigated according to a different nexus in the modern continuity between political space and territoriality.

The **second chapter** is devoted to the European trans-national context as a policy context, which transforms the meaning of the nation-state border in transcending its meaning of ancient division. Proposing a different pattern of action with regard to the nation-state as exclusive pattern in political spaces, the European ideal in trans-national integration follows my hypothesis a Foucauldian utopia⁶. Framing the emerging of institution building across the nation-state borders the mirror of the European ideal is projecting in consequential spaces in transitions where a different nexus in territoriality arrives on the scene. The 'Border State' as a complex of causes and effects in a frame of 'Europeanisation' transforms mutually trans-national and local institutional designs across the nation-state borders. Policy 'discourses' beyond the spatial divisions in nation-state patterns no longer direct to a univocal source in power as the main reference. This chapter suggests a direct relation between 'cross-border cooperation policies' in a European 'Border State' utopia. Cross-border regionalism is a conceptual Foucaultian heterotopia mirroring at local 'cross-border' the projections of trans-national spaces. Europeanisation in 'practices' and mutual 'processes' between local and trans-national capacity of governance changes 'public action' through its 'ancient divisions'. The Border State becomes a social construct and a subject of

policy processes beyond the limit of nation-state sovereignty. I conclude the second chapter with a kaleidoscope of current definitions and criticism of the existing literature in cross-border regionalism advancing the perspective for a new approach of study in terms of social spaces in *politicising*.

The **third chapter** figures the problem of cross-border regionalism as a territorial governance mode. Starting from the concept of regional space, I argue that cross-border regionalism attains dimensions in functional, political and territorial rooms. An interpretation of these dimensions suggests two phases in which the ‘institutionalisation’ path in cross-border regionalism takes place: institutional design and institutional building. Institutional design⁷ is an aspect of great concern to cross-border regionalism in an evolutionary process of re-designing the institutional change at the Border State. As such, I consider in this chapter a critical approach to the issues of CBR as: 1) regional cross-border identity question; 2) political mobilisations and social strategies of participation; 3) territorial mode of governance. This latter aspect is an opening towards a conceptualisation of CBR as institutional building in a synopsis of governance. To the cross-border governance mode understanding, I reserve an extended second part in this chapter. I argue that this abstract term identifies a process of re-composition in partnership in an attempt at heterarchic coordination. I conclude that cross-border as institutional governance building works as a relational form on coupling with other institutions and in interaction with other social actors in a regime of adaptation, alternative and learning. From this, cross-border regionalism can be considered as a form of discursive practice, or better as a tendency towards discursive forms of institutionalisation, which lives through relations.

The **fourth chapter** presents the Espace Mont-Blanc (hereafter EMB) case study. An overview of the policy making phases is proposed starting from issues of territorial transformation concerning the MB areas; at the border between Switzerland, Italy and France and on the slopes of Mont-Blanc Mountain. EMB births as a reaction to a policy planned by the central governmental settings for the construction of an inter-national Park

⁷ Olsen (1997) is my main theoretical reference to the institutional design concept. ‘Institutional design refers, firstly to a process aimed at producing prescriptions, organisation charts and plans usually with some adaptive rules for coping with unforeseen circumstances. Here, however, design signifies purposeful and deliberate intervention that succeeds in establishing new institutional structures and processes, or rearranging existing ones, thereby achieving intended outcomes and improvements. That is, design is understood in terms of a chain of effects from human purpose to desired results’ (Olsen, 1997: 205)

in this zone. EMB is an invention, which involve the ‘meso’ institutional levels in existing settings at the MB border. This concerns a ‘local’ alternative policy to a motion centralised, which accomplishes also the European vision of the border areas in the process of integration. The EMB policies during the time become discursively connected with other policies and their urgent necessities in problem solving that occur in the same temporality. EMB actors are more and more connected in networks; contrasting each other continuously implementing their discourses. This chapter suggests the partition of the policy-making phases of the EMB project according to an interpretative visualization. Five phases join together the role of the EMB in the making of ambitions in this cross-border project and in-between its arenas. A not-traditional discourse analysis is organised in this chapter. The narratives that the actors express through their behaviours are inventing by them time to time through the means of displacing their intentions *inside* and *outside* the EMB space. EMB reproduces outcomes in a path of institutionalisation in cross-border regionalism. The analysis of the media and a list of interviews on the field have been my sources through which I propose their languages and I analyse their multiple voices. Their different modes appear at the stage to frame the EMB project. Spheres of consequential ‘public’ in cross-border governance perspectives conclude that the nation-state border at the MB is an open visual for a domain where the space is like in a continue phase of ‘politicising’. This refers to the change at the ‘Border State’.

The **fifth chapter** analyses the case study of EMB according to some questions just emerged at the end of the third chapter. EMB is here studied as a social space in the politicising path. An interpretative policy analysis centred to the relationship actors-action forms the course of the actions in a not already given script in the EMB policy-making. The interaction between the actors on the stage of the EMB policy-making seems responding to a particular mode of governance in cross-border. The actors assume diverse kinds of behaviours during the development of the project. The first scheme defines actors and rules in the process of institutionalisation that takes place at the MB border. Here, the actors follow typologies as ‘activators’, ‘observers’ and ‘spectators’ in relation to their explicit actions, their institutional levels or sectors, which they cope with and their expectations during the progress of the EMB project. However, the roles of the actors during the EMB progress do not completely cover either the expectations or the rules, which are currently already defined within territorial existing institutional settings within the nation-state borders. The nature of the

actions, which EMB governance introduces, does not consist just of critical concerns. Although some issues seem evidently to return to questions such as the legitimacy 'within' un-decidable boundary situations, or the irreconcilable expectations placed on different focuses in existing current institutional setting agendas at the different facets of the border. EMB is not just exclusively object of states of indecipherability or inconsistency. In this chapter, I shall say that no room is left to define the terms of success or unsuccess of this cross-border policy application. EMB represents in my idea an innovation in expressions of governance. Innovation which resides in the sense making of a process in which the actors play their rules in a new way, responding to strategies in becoming during the course of the 'cross-border' inter-actions. EMB is thus a domain open to the occurrence of new actors but also to new 'games'. With this, I include the intelligence of the games, which Europeanisation offers to current ordinary actors. EMB is thus a 'niche' or a laboratory of experimentation in such instances. Hence, the 'local' institutions at the MB Border State are evidence for the challenge to chase different paths of interaction rather than those, which directly correspond, to normative regulations in current nation-state possibility. The European label provides for the local and regional demands to assume the 'institutional heart' of the EMB as a cross-border governance process. So that, EMB is a practice that appears criticised as a sequence of 'little steps', which do not solve in short temporal terms the urgency for explicit policies for needs and wishes. Nevertheless, EMB leaves visions of an emancipation space in politicising the social civil sphere as part of the reality of the MB Border State. Rethinking space maybe means here of passing the territorial transformations with nested categories of 'scale'. Finally, I conclude that the sense of not-concluded arenas takes part of continuous processes of mobilisation in relational forms of governance network. They assume the 'territorial' decision-making in another way.

The **sixth chapter** pertains to the EMB example on the issue of the 're-composition' in practices of cross-border governance. It assumes a diverse vocabulary in terms of territoriality too. In other words, this is a vocabulary, which exceeds the nation-state borders as limits of territoriality and in territorial policy-making. The previous chapter has introduced the theme of the structuration and institutionalisation of 'discursive practice' inspired from the Foucauldian stance. This idea does not concern just types of representations. In this chapter the cross-border governance hypothesis is included as a relational form of territorial governance. My interpretation of EMB policy-making thus results based on processes of

interaction between the actors in their building of a cross-border common discursive strategy of policy. This chapter attempts this interpretation of the issue of the actors and their dismissing in their rules in fixed territorial competencies. This is the possible interpretation of the cross-border governance mechanism, which re-organises the framework of meaning in the conduct of the social agents across the nation-state border territoriality. Their social relations through discursive positionalities take effect as deconstruction and reconstruction of interrelation, which take place in a novel cross-border space. This is the space where the play between the actors implies a specific technique, which organises a particular kind of interaction. A Pirandellian acting analogy is used here to understand that causality and expected results in discursive practices that can be included in a process of subjectification through inter-relations. These interrelations are the essential part of the strategies in consequential 'public actions' between the actors involved in a cross-border governance process. The social relations can work in features of network governance into a relational conception of space; de-nationalising territorial policy-making. This is also an account of identification of cross-border spatial features, which include the cross-border region between vocabularies of relational geographical conception. Are contemporary limits in territorial policy-making bounded by nation-state border patterns of governance? Although EMB and the cross-border regions are 'partial and local' episodes, perhaps they can give us some momentum of *reflexion* about the space making in our present.

The experience of my thesis open the issue of the processes and methods in which of practices of territorial transformation are politicising spaces in our present towards futures questions of legitimacy. Contemporary space-making crossing the nation-state borders 'locally' reproduce many elements still fugitive to our existent frameworks. Perhaps is there which the cross-border regions address our researches.

Part One

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

PROBLEMATISATION / CONCEPTUALISATION	CRITICAL / CONTRASTING CONTEXT	CONCLUSION / HYPOTHESIS
<p>Cross-Border Regional Policy as subject of institutional transformation at the EU border state as Practices and Processes of cross-border activity.</p> <p>Sense-making as politicising of space in-between mutual local and transnational processes.</p>	<p>Neo-Marxist modern state theory restructuring in relation of state or EU capital; 'hegemony' of power as authoritative legitimating in state scale; ix; technocratic language in border studies, technocratic meaning of cross-border cooperation arenas; prior relevance of the problem efficacy, prior to regional identity, prior to the ethics in cultural community; cross-border arenas as stakeholders in separate parts of the everyday life, isolation of culture from societal, the globalisation as border state elimination, de-territorialisation as capital accumulation and economical production</p>	<p>Border State matters in relation to institutional practices of politicisation space in relations to 3 kinds of problematic situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-border actions vs. cross-border regional identification question - Cross-border arenas vs. multiple social spaces - Cross-border interactions vs. cross-border governance mode linked to a relational territorialisation in politicising space. <p>CBR's are the perspective of European space in its political stabilisation as socialising institutional processes across the border state in hypothesis of 'enlargement' and 'embedding' of politicising in space possibility according to peace conditions. Cross-border regional policy represents an institutional alternative in terms of utopian emancipation practices of reflexive discursive and therefore deliberative democracy.</p>
RESEARCH QUESTIONS RELATED TO PROBLEMATISATION / HYPOTHESIS	CONCEPTUAL APPROACH	EMPHASIS TOWARDS EMPIRICAL CASE
<p>Cross-border as regionalisation processes and institutional practices; multiple social and discursive spaces at the border state vs. politicisation of cross-border space; hypothesis of democratic governance at/beyond the border state, territoriality vs. active declinations in territorialising.</p>	<p>Foucaultian inspiration to the concept of 'state' as 'relational power' and to the institutionalisation processes as 'practices'; 'hegemony' as process where cultural authority is negotiated and contested; institutionalisation as social process; cross-border institutionalisation process as societal source of plurality in discursive practices; community creating processes in local society; culture as integral part of 'governmental situation'; post-citizenship; heterogeneity in arenas' and actions come since; de-territorialisation; border state as subject in reflexive democratising processes; public actions and relative territorialising processes in politicising space.</p>	<p>Heterogeneity as qualitative mode of democratic governance in cross-border regional policy consists in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cross-border actions processes (i.e. multiple social spaces - mobilisation in regional identification question) - cross-border actors in arenas composition (i.e. multiple social spaces - participation in multiple voices of governance question) - social and political interaction (i.e. attitude in politicising space; cross-border governance question)

Scheme 1.1. – Approach of study for the Cross-Border Regionalism according to my conceptual framework

THE STRATEGIC AND SPATIAL DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN CROSS-BORDER REGIONAL POLICY: STEPPING OUT OF THE MODERN NEXUS BETWEEN POLITICAL SPACE AND TERRITORIALITY

This chapter explores a line of argumentation for the study of cross-border regionalism as institutional transformation at the nation-state borders. Speaking about the 'Border State' to frame such a form of transition, I maintain the perspective that cross-border regionalism is a 'sign' of emerging forms of spatiality in democratic governance beyond the territorial nested hierarchies within nation-state borders. European policy for cross-border cooperation changes public actions in a contemporary 'space-making' across the nation-state borders. The framework in the light of recent theories on globalisation, post-nationalism and Europeanisation overlooks the 'lost terms' of our modernity as 'nation-state border' and 'territorialisation'. I advocate that such terms have to be re-conceptualised as dynamic processes of 'becoming'. My text suggests a dynamic framework for the study of cross-border regionalism based on re-territorialisation as contemporary modernisation of political space. According to a Foucaultian 'governmentalisation', this chapter sees the 'Border State' as a lens through which the 'practices' in public actions and a relational geography of 'territory' transform the relations between social and political spaces. My suggestion is a 'wide think': thinking spaces across the nation-state borders in forms of governance transcending the meanings of 'political space' and 'territory' as exclusive domains of power-sovereignty.

Cross-border-region (hereafter CBR) is a recent⁸ inclusive term, which sums institutionalisation processes - such as Euroregions and Working Communities⁹ - triggered by the activity¹⁰ of crossing the state borders.

'...triggered by the activity of co-operating across the borders' (Perkmann, 2003: 168)

⁸ 'A Cross-Border Region is a territorial unit that comprises contiguous sub-national units from two or more nation-states (Perkmann, and Sum, 2002: 3).

⁹ As Heddebaut reminds us (2004: 70) 'the creation of formalised cross-border regional spaces and/or Euroregions occurred ten years ago, along the internal political borders within the European Union. The authorities of these cross-border spaces have conducted actions and developed interactions mainly under European Special Funds such as INTERREG'. Domestic and regional authorities can establish to cooperate signing an agreement for cross-border cooperation or a non-binding juridical agreement to create a certain kind of cross-border structure without its own jurisdictional personality. The common naming of such structures is 'working communities'.

¹⁰ Such a concept allows us to speak about cross-border regions in terms of public policy for what concerns the relevance of the action. 'A public policy is the whole of the actions lead by subjects (actors) which are in someway related to a collective problem that is a need an opportunity or an unsatisfied question which is generally considered of public interest' (Dunn, 1981).

and composed of:

'...local or regional associations of trans-border co-operation in the development of trans-border regionalism'
(Scott, 2000: 104).

This reference to the cross-border co-operation as 'activity' is rooted in involving a dimension of social relations and political inter-relations of power -in terms of space making -. The power relation has here a Foucaultian inspiration in the relevance to the forms of pluralistic, decentred and inclusive nature of the power; an idea of *'événementialisation'*. This suggestion is in line with an inspiration in 'territorialising' actions proposed by a relational geography (Allen, 2003; 2004, De Matteis, 1999; 2004). Considering such a scenery in the study of the Cross-Border Regions starting from the concept of public actions in forms of consequential 'public' (Dewey, 1927), the politicising of the cross-border space in territorial policy making is conceptually linked to institutional forms of social and political space-making (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, Fligstein, 2001). As institutional building (March, Olsen, 1989) process in practices of cross-border cooperation, my position is proposing lights in socialising and democratising processes (Rokkan, 1982), which appear at the cross-border in the form of institutional designs. A Habermasian regulative ideal of 'universal audience' in forms of perspectives for future 'democratic dialectic' just appear in the understanding of a process which a modern nation-state lens in framework would define as a form of weak institutionalisation.

Europe is a special context for this study.¹¹ Immediately to say that the building of Cross-Border Co-operation initiatives¹² (hereafter CBC) has been promoted by the progressing overtures of a special policy pursued in the making of the EU polity aimed at its internal

¹¹ For example, as Blatter and Clement remind us that while the research on the US-Mexican border traditionally has focused on 'borderlands' as peripheral regions, the European research has been concerned with trans-border collaboration, interdependencies and interaction. This difference is at least partially the result of the development of quite different border regimes (that is formal and informal rules and regulations regarding border-regional development and trans-border cooperation) that in turn reflects the differing goals of the two continents' economic and social integration. (Blatter, Clement, 2000: 85). Comparative research about similarities and differences developed till the late 1970s and early 1980s, from the 1990s has graded the validity of the European experiences within a context of the regime created by the European Community as models for other border regions throughout the world.

¹² Cross-Border Cooperation (hereafter CBC) is a distinct form as regards the trans-national cooperation or the interregional one. CBC generally implies a direct cooperation between neighbouring countries and regards many sectors as regards the relationships between borderlands' regional and local authorities. The topic of CBC concerns generally a wider fan of issues both as problems of domestic nature in everyday life or aspects more concerning international rights. Such issues can belong to initiatives and strategies 'bottom-up' for regional development or EU financial programmes.

nation-states' boundaries and best known under the chart of the INTERREG programme. However, the realisation of such a community initiative concerning both policies and arenas focused in crossing the state-borders is no longer an issue research consistently based or relativised into the existence of supranational *chances*' and consequential domestic *problem solving* ability. The formation and the function of more or less technocratic epistemic communities¹³ involved in cross-border co-operation activities although they can trigger learning processes between existing institutions across the border and consequential orientations in problem solving, perhaps even towards processes in *satisfying* expectation policies, are aspects not concerned in my study. The orientations in proposing the cross-border policy as efficacy in practices of problem solving -or as functional returns in the sphere of European continental integration in its technocratic expertness - is an argument which does not pertain to my work. Although all these themes are very often present on the current research agendas and debates on European cross-border cooperation research, my focus consists of another and more limited task.

Cross-border regionalism in space and spatial processes is the central issue of my work. A critical perspective in understanding the construction of fields in which the social actors are mobilised and how their interactions and actions are transformed into *patterns of agency* across the international borders are the very *subjects* of my lecture. I interpret cross-border regionalism as an institutional design, which draws a process of social and political mobilisation through which new ideas, and new (other) spatial processes are managed in agency where meanings, ways of organising and outcomes are interactively and communicatively negotiated and recognised. This approach allows an analogy with an institutionalist approach to spatial planning. For instance, Healey focused on agency as:

'the processes of adaptation and invention in which various actors are involved, and on the capacity of the actors, in interaction, to use spatial strategy-making to shape the flow of regulation and in development investment in their locality'. (Healey,1997: 22)

¹³ 'An episteme is fundamentally a system of concepts that specifies the nature and the structure of the knowledge in an intellectual era. In 'the order of things' Foucault bases his investigation of the epistemic foundation of 'reason', which he saw as a more fundamental level of conceptual history. 'In any given culture and at any given moment there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge' (Foucault, 1998: 178). The term epistemic community defines 'a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge' within that domain (Haas 1992: 3). According to Radaelli (1999) 'Studies have shed light on how knowledge shapes public policy formation owing to the presence of experts and epistemic communities'.

Cross-border co-operation in my case refers to a particular change in public actions, which at the EU's international borders are noticeable in a multifaceted convergence towards a cross-border institutional governance building¹⁴ (Perkmann, 1999; March, Olsen, 1998; Caporaso, Sweet, 2001; Kramersch, 2004). My hypothesis sustains that an emerging particular pattern of governance emerging at the European Border State as a form of regional policy and space-contingency in institutional shaping of 'practices'. I maintain that the Cross-Border Regions concern 'the EU (as) a special case since it represents a new type of political system, made up of national and European institutions that are constituted in relation to each-other' (Zurn, 2000:185), which constitute 'signs' of a different mode in politicising space. Under this hypothesis Cross-Border regionalism emerges as a part of the European institutional '*intelligence*'¹⁵, which attains through cross-border practices to the answers of a multiple expression of the society in its inter-relations. My framework looks at cross-border regionalism as 'social' account of institutional change approach (March, Olsen, 1989; 1998, Perkmann, Sum, 2002; Paasi, Newmann, 1998; Paasi, 2001, 2003) as part of Europeanisation *strategy*¹⁶ in adaptation processes. The cross-border governance (Scott, 1999; Kramersch, 2004) mechanism comes to light in such a relation as complex consequential 'public'¹⁷ (Dewey,

¹⁴ Perkmann (1998: 658) has introduced the term 'institutional governance building' for the cross-border co-operation case. 'These initiatives consist of more or less stable co-operative arrangements between neighbouring local and regional authorities across a European nation-state border' (Perkmann, 2002: 658). Cross-border organisations pertain to 'different arenas which are confronting several social and political forces which also have the ability to define values, norms, rules, identity' (Pasquino, 1999: 11) which derives from the 'institutionalisation' meaning (March, Olsen, 1998: 948) 'The process involves the development of practices and rules in the context of using them and has earned a variety of labels, including structuration and routinisation, which refer to the development of codes of meaning, ways of reasoning and accounts in the context of acting them'.

¹⁵ I wish to pick suggestions of institutional intelligence as social intelligence and means of social learning as hypotheses to apply as concepts to the cross-border regionalism as an institutional domain. Deleuze is an important input towards this meaning 'Institution is always introduced as an organised system of means. This is the difference between institution and law: the latter is a limitation of the actions while the former is a positive model of action'. 'A definition of institutional intelligence as a means and medium of social learning is also proposed by Donolo (1997: 212). He introduces as institutional intelligence its worth of double cut. 'On one hand we mean the intelligence that we, as empirical and social subjects are able to get; on the other hand intelligence is also that which the institutions incorporate, that which allows the actors, and what that they reproduce over time. Our collective intelligence depends on that of the institutions and vice versa'.

¹⁶ As a social construction, 'institutions are also the result of reflex and communicative relations concerning the formation of identity, equipment, ability and choices too. The institutional strategies appear at the moment of design through communicative means which are usually aimed at the institutional topic, the problem, its position in political agendas' (Donolo, 1997: 53) The strategies used in institutional creativity can be designed by relations of power which in cross-border institutional form can announce the creativity in power mechanisms. In this sense political ecology, exogenous factors (March, Olsen, 1999) and the contexts in which they happen include relations of powers, which can 'serve effectively'. (Foucault, 1977)

¹⁷ As in the following I will return afterwards starting from a methodological use of the consideration of Dewey, 1927 in 'The public and its problems' as 'public'. Especially considering the multiplex arenas' in which I will come back during the empirical work. To this specific note I would suggest the orientations towards the idea of *public actions* as consequences

1927) actions. Multiplex arenas reflecting social and political spaces (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, Fligstein, 2001), draw the CBR in the hypothesis of the various European (re)-territorial¹⁸ governance dimensions (Le Gales, 1998, 2001; Leresche, Saez, 2002) in a blueprint of 'miscellaneous' actions in which the border state is a significant 'site' of social inter-actions. Nowhere, 'Region, then, appears to be the meeting point of various concepts of space' (Paasi, 2001: 16). In cross-border manner, the regionalism path is indeed not unproblematic promising 'spatial process'¹⁹ (Harvey, 1978; Brenner, 2004). Indeed cross-border regionalism as spatial practice is influenced by the geographies of the border state in transformations which belong those of 'public goods'²⁰ (Donolo, 1997) in which new paradigms of thinking about relational forms of territorialising still need much more understanding. Policy discourses across the polycentric Europe transform the institutional setting of the national borders into Border States according to their systems of meaning and across new creative social approaches towards the future institutional forms of the territory. 'Strategic' in my assumption includes in spatial strategies the institutional constellation of European integration perspectives. Considering the other forces besides capitalist production that is the mobilisation and the participation in cross-border regional policy among actors and actions of various natures, the construction of cross-border space is in relation with the social groups and the cultural structures in change at the national border. A meaning of

linked to rational behaviour, which also Dewey re-called as a form of 'intelligence'. In his idea of 'public' individual or collective actions are not divided into private or public spheres, but rather they are considered together as in relations - transactions - with the consequences on the others in a timely existence. Moreover, the concepts used by Dewey concerning the description or analysis of the existing - because very rooted in the existing- run the risk of never bridging the gap between 'ideal' and 'real'. The considerations of Dewey are very relevant to the methodological approach of my research of public actions in cross-border regional policy.

¹⁸ The idea of territoriality as relational, which I shall argue is very far from the 'territorial trap' (Agnew, 1984) of irrevocable state-centric linkage between territory and nation-statehood terms. I will return several times to this issue during my work attempting a meaning of territoriality as relational.

¹⁹ I use this term 'spatial process' here provocatively referred to Harvey (1978) in his 'urban process' argument. In analogy with him, recently Brenner (2004) remakes a methodology linked to the 'state spatial process'. 'For Harvey the urban must be understood simultaneously as a presupposition, a medium and an outcome of the conflictual, changing social relations of capitalism. From this perspective any historical configuration of urban spatiality represents a sedimented crystallisation of earlier patterns of social interaction and an involving grid of possibilities for, and constraints upon, future social relations'. (Brenner, 2004: 451). My approach to the production of space is oriented in a different way from those of Brenner and other scholars (also Swynnedouw for instance) who approaches the issue of space-making related to globalisation and state in territorial restructuring, and on the priority of economic production in capital accumulation to the relations in space production. I consider more determinant the social reproduction in transforming space and the political spatial processes through which the social mobilisation and the civil participation are the subjects of the very nature of institutional change linked to form of political stability. My approach is much in line with the de-nationalisation theories on political identity and deliberative democracy although some works introduced in my writing are critically taken in an analysis of some crucial argumentations for the cross-border regionalism as a space process.

²⁰ 'Public goods or the common goods are a class of goods which are introduced by the social experience as presupposed by every form to act and at the same as outcomes - intentional or not intentional - of the interaction between actors'.

strategy as 'technique' is also related to the source of power to consider. A relational power, which is so described by Foucault:

' the relations of power serve but not because they are at the service of a given economical interest as original source but because they can be used within strategies. The resistance to power exists whereas the power is, therefore, multiplex and integral in global strategies'. (Foucault , 1977 : 89-97).

Cross-border regionalism as a space making in relations to diverse dynamical of power finds a line of continuity for example in Allen:

'spaces which are not bounded cells hollowed out within the structures of an over regulated system but more porous spaces of relational challenges between politics of connection' '..constituted through actions of those close at hand working in alliance with others more distant from the immediacy of power's presence...' and configure spaces whereby a process of collective mobilisation is sustained through networked interaction at points distant in space and time' (Allen, 2004: 29)

Such a quotation agrees with other notions proposed by relational geography as the '*territorial project*' (Dematteis, 1991, 2004) or '*territorial space*' (Thrift ,1994, 1998) where the association between territorial as relational is at the core of dynamical and social arrangement. If the disjuncture of our modernity is eroding the red line, which linked the public action to the political space and the territoriality to the nation-state, such fragmentation transcends the abstraction of new meaning through the lens of the public action's change at the nation-state border as 'State'. Besides economic relations of capital production in space making, my work advocates a problematisation in addressing the boundaries of contemporary theories of space making, scales, and territoriality beyond the nation-state borders. As I will argue during my introduction, although in recent years ferments in such a direction have been rethought by several research orientations, still many questions are still open on the path of the paradigms of space within the discontinuities of our modernity. My approach in cross-border regionalism study aims to give a contribution in conceptualisation 'space' considering the possibility for social groups in mobilising and participating *in* various forms of actions across the nation-state border. Cultural border 'state' in social structures, agency and 'bodies' of social reproduction²¹ report traces of significance in a (new) pattern of democratic governance. As regional policy of an ongoing process in democratic legitimacy question

²¹ Social reproduction can be intended as social relations, objects, and instruments that enable the maintenance of everyday life within capitalism (Marston, 2000). The possibility of social groups in cultural and social structures is taking body in everyday life in line or in counter-impact of capitalism seeking for their own recognition.

redefinition, cross-border regionalism appears ‘itself’ within a typical feature of the European political space. According to a deliberative democracy cross-border regionalism can be prefigured as a sign of practical ways in re-thinking the democracy itself in terms of future perspectives in force to which forms and contents of spatial socialising and democratising processes reflect the possibility of various groups in participating across interactive processes²².

1.1 CROSSING THE BORDERS AS “STATE”: PUBLIC ACTIONS AND SPACE-MAKING BEYOND NATION-STATE BORDERS

1.1.1 De-structuring the Modern Nation-State Model as Framework for the Change at the Border State

The European modern-state is a form of power organisation historically determined with characters which rend it peculiar to other forms also historically determined in their internal homogeneous in power organisation. Ernst Wolfgang Bockenforde reminds that ‘State is not a universal concept but it is used to describe and to indicate a European political order that arose from the XIII century till the end of XVIII or the beginning of XIX’.

‘The modern state characters are those to be essentially founded on the affirmation of the principle of territoriality, of the political obligation and on the progressive acquisition of impersonality of political command through the evolution of the concept of *officium*’. (Schiera, 2000: 1129)

An idea of ‘State’ in our modernity emerges in my research as the next assumptions underline.

‘State should be not understood as a singular sovereign action centre in a modern convention sense but as a plurality of action processes (see Scharpf, 1992 and Hueglin, 1999: 265).

²² With this sentence I clearly refer to a debate about ‘recognition’ and ‘identity politics’. As I will argue afterwards, my focus is not about the study of the cross-border regionalism in social group in ‘ethic’ but I maintain much more during my thesis is the potentiality of the cross-border regionalism as arenas having a value of opening and inclusively both in relation to the participating actors and to different mobilisation actions that can occur in interaction and to the participation in cross-border actions. Another aspect of cross-border regionalism, which I find more crucial in research, is somehow in heterogeneous arena the plurality establishes as a kind of regionalism as institutionalised pattern of cultural value based on a conception of justice in accommodating claims for recognition between the other European spaces. Such references attain to the theory of ‘recognition without ethic’ proposed by Fraser (2001).

'...The State is no more than a composite reality and a mythicised abstraction whose importance is a lot more limited than many of us think'. (Foucault, 1978)

'The state is made through institutions and relationships between them which nowadays need still to be re-studied according to processes of preferences and meaning which they assume for the citizens.' (Pasquino, 1999: 10)

Visible events of the last century have historically changed the public image of the nation-state border as 'Border State'. The end of the 'Cold War', the decomposition of the Soviet Bloc, the growth of the European Union as a '*sui generis*' political system with its progressing supra-state macro-regionality even through the East enlargement, have been determining factors towards this change. Border mobility and borderlands have assumed then the discursive face of a kind of locale²³, a symbolic turn out of an unambiguous different political order's insurgence.

In 1989, the falling of 'a border of the world'²⁴ indelibly marked the deconstruction of autocratic regimes. Since then, immensely upsetting sources of our modernity like 'globalisation'²⁵ and the 'network' society²⁶ consequences have become familiar concepts

²³ In such a circumstance my suggestion to the 'locale' speaking about 'border' as 'locale' is linked to its timely issue-meaning as well explained by Giddens 'The advent of modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. In conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly phantasmagorical: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them. What structures the locale is not simply that which is present on the scene; the 'visible form' of the locale conceals the distanced relations which determine its nature' (Giddens, 1990:18-19).

²⁴ In the preface to an Italian recent edition of 'Perpetual peace' (Kant) Salvatore Veca uses the words as 'the falling of a wall of the world' to indicate the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. The border between West-East Germany was from its construction (in 1961) a dividing barrier and symbol of East and West political systems in Europe. Its falling has represented the overture of an era of great political transformation together with other factors such as the democratic changes and the political and economical revolutions in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's 'Perestroika' and the radical transformation of economy with 'Glasnost' on political transparency. Such an event has symbolised the mix up between history and geography and the redrawing of many more 'borders' posing the urgency of a reflection on the crucial issue of the deconstruction of autocratic regimes and of the growing of political and economic pluralist models of public institutions.

²⁵ Many are existing definitions with regard to the meaning of globalisation. In line with my research intentions I suggest hereafter some of its social derivations from Held (2000), Giddens (1998) and Habermas (1999). 'Globalisation is neither a singular condition nor a linear process. Rather, it is best thought of as a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving diverse domains of activity and interaction including the economic, political, technological, military, legal, cultural and environmental. Each of these spheres involves different patterns of relationships and activity - each with distinctive forms of logic and implications for other domains'. (Held, 2000: 340). 'Globalisation is therefore a complex whole of processes, not just one, which works in a conflicting and contradicted manner ... in which the nation becomes not just too little to solve the big problems, but also too big to solve the little problems'. (Giddens, 2000: 25) 'I use the term "globalisation" to describe a process not a final stage. It designs the growing and the intensification of traffic relationships and exchanges beyond the border states' (Habermas, 2002: 38)

²⁶ To Castells (1996) is due the well known definition of the 'network society'. Some authors have underlined how the most relevant features of such a structure of society are those of being less based on 'proximity' and more based on

with a ‘passage at the nation-state border’ to endorse the very nature of our²⁷ complex society, where the Border State means no longer the end of a political system. The challenge of our modernity seems therefore increasingly to transgress this term. ‘Beyond-the-nation-state border’ has currently become a form of refrain in intellectual speeches whereas local and global ‘scales’²⁸ are questioning in re-articulating the contemporary linkage between political space and territoriality²⁹. Uncertain social, political, and economic institutions based on pluralist models are in such a perspective going towards this ‘beyond’.

The ‘redrawing of the borders, mixed history and geography, and pointed to pluralistic models of institutions more or less coherent with the protection and the respect of the citizens’ rights, no longer subjects or slaves’ (Veca, 2003: 8).

The state border in its persistence or porosity, in its articulations is no longer related exclusively to a power container of capital accumulation. Its locus has become a *litmus paper* of an ongoing social-cultural and political struggle. The contexts of this phenomenon are both linked to the time of a post-national³⁰ as post-sovereignty era and to the space of Europeanising governance regimes. Together these strands have provided to re-discuss the

‘connectivity’ of the social organisation. For instance Hajer, Zonneveld (2000: 347) say that ‘This is true to a different extent for district activities, yet by and large we see a new spatial configuration emerging that can perhaps be better characterised by describing the flows between ‘nodes’ as in terms of its land use patterns’.

²⁷ This reference to the term ‘we’ is not casual but pertinent to a cosmopolitical hypothesis ‘vision’ of democracy, as I will sketch afterwards in several passages.

²⁸ The notion of scale is very often called in the implication with the space. Marston (2000) underlines that in common with the various scholars’ approaches - to cite some: Smith, 1992, 2002; Swyngedouw, 1997; Howitt, 1998; Brenner, 1997 - there is the common denominator that scale is constituted and reconstructed around relations of capitalist production, social reproduction and consumption. The interrelations between such three elements are ‘critical to understanding fully the social construction of scale’ (Marston, 2000: 221)

²⁹ The references to this argument are rather diffused. For a survey, recent articles run in a brief but effective way through the topic of the relationship between ‘scale’ and territoriality or political space giving an explicit contribution to the issue of the ‘shifts of meaning of politics. Such an environment ‘no longer takes the nation-state for granted as its underlying territorial reference point’. Mamadoudh, Kramsch, van der Velde (2004).

³⁰ This term, ‘post-national’ is frequently used by some authors to specify a temporal passage between the hypothesis of end of the state-sovereignty and the undefined current situation of contractualisation of the ‘sovereignty’ in the hierarchies between state and capital. In this circumstance I use this word in opening a problematisation in terms of political space construction towards the EU plural perspective of trans-national spaces. In other words, the meaning of post-national is here intended linked to a concept of activity - governing - which is complexly related to change within the EU continental political integration. At the moment I would suggest disregarding all the details related to the theory of Schumpeterian Workfare Post-national Regime (SWPR) which is somewhat related to the use of the post-national term and I want just to suggest with this note a post-national debate. Jessop’s speaking is concerned with “as the national territory has become less important as an economic, political, and cultural ‘power container’. This is associated with a transfer of economic and social policy-making functions upward, downward, and sideways and the development of many multilevel government and/or multilevel governance regimes to co-ordinate such functions”. Others have pointed out how post-nationalism doesn’t recall a mere shift to some sort of ‘supranational state’ but instead it increases the qualitative transformation of political membership in geopolitical scale (Ferry, 1992: 45).

Border-State in a problematisation of policy actions wherever new political frames beyond the state occur. Especially after the opening of the Iron Curtain, new cultural interests have moved towards a framework of geo-political discussion about pertinent issues on the Border States' change.

Beyond earlier qualitative economic 'evaluations' on the possible functional advantage of opening borders to flows of goods and people across Europe, the synonym of 'border in opening' has become progressively a matter able to involve the problem of the polity's transformations; no longer included in a fixed dichotomy between social-political exclusion/inclusion but in dynamic of spatial processes. In terms of capital accumulation no longer are the hierarchies of power included in the economy of the state spatiality. The fall of Soviet communism has certainly signed a crucial passage for the study of political change at the nation-state border. The 'social and political distances' within the development of a unique economical world wide - or perhaps also better relativising to the European capitalist system³¹ - has powered the 'inclusion' of its political systems. Changes have occurred not just in the ecological sense but also in social and cultural terms³². The existence of a no longer 'outside' the nation-state borders has turned the issue of the border state into the fashion of an 'open mind' function inwards and outwards even forwards political 'beyond'. Whereas the Border States no longer hide the enemy in their 'beyond', a potential social space can develop in sub-straits of local and domestic levels in organising regional³³ experimentalism. The EU continental process has contributed in a determinate way to draw such new relational forms of spatiality between neighbourhood countries involving their political systems in an adventure of learning across the border-state. The trans-national European

³¹ This concept is here presented in a critical way and in part it refers to the well known theory of the Empire introduced by Hardt and Negri. Although in such a particular passage I refer much more to the theory of globalisation written by Giddens (1999, 2000). Especially I agree with Giddens about the necessity to adjust and to think of the institutions in a different way compared to the past, in that to intercept the factors and the modality both anarchical or accidental which involve the usual habit of our lives as well as the political spaces in which we are living.

³² The sociologist Richard Munch (1998) for instance, as reported by Habermas (2002) wonders if the force of a planetary capitalism, as an explosive force could be brought under control at supranational or global levels beyond the nation state.

³³ Several debates with this purpose have arisen in recent years about regional diversity and the regional term meaning within the European Union. Rather renowned Agnew (1999:95)'s affirmation in his aired proposal to use the term with a certain sagacity "Reading the emerging state for instance of the world is a risky business. With the weakening of the binary east/west with the end of the cold war much more fragmented world geography is in the ascendancy but it does not necessarily carry with it a single message such as the emergence of a 'word of (mesoscale) regions'. To this assertion are in opposition other assertions, related to new regionalism, as I will discuss during the first and second chapter, in particular. Paasi (2001), just to give a framework to the discussion about regional diversity, has pointed out how in the specific context of European identity the 'region discourses' is part of this identity. 'Regions are not, however, independent actors; they exist and 'become' in social practices and discourses' (Paasi, 2001: 16)

polity has given a great impulse in this sense facilitating the growing of institutional designs and creativity crossing the Border State. European cross-border regions have recently placed in question the actualisation and the articulation of EU political spaces as composition of public action models in change (Leresche, Saez, 2002) at the inter-national border where governance dialectics in action seem indeed to be materialising. The apparently disciplinary distances between a territorial hypothesis of rescaling or scale relativisation and re-territorialisation beyond the nested hierarchies of powers are calling the Border State into play as subject, whereas relational forms of a contemporary geography take body.

'The international context of domestic state action (whether national, regional or local) has therefore expanded to include a widening range of extraterritorial or trans-national factors and processes. This is also linked to an increasing role in domestic policy-making for foreign agents and institutions as sources of policy, ideas, policy-design, and implementation. This trend affects local and regional states and supranational state formations and is evident in growing interregional and cross-border linkages and multilateral governance regimes' (Jessop, 2002: 5).

If new alliances - no longer just in terms of economic or military alliances³⁴ - are drawing different kinds of borders 'beyond' the state, 'as' border-state social and political relations are designing regionalisation processes. As effects of cross-border policy also in terms of 'regional discourse', the cross-border regionalism announces with evidence the ability of the present European societies to self -modify their different modes of inter-actions in new or original ways of governance. These patterns of governance just show a change in social logic towards a stepping out of hierarchical models of the modern state. Regionalisation in cross-border space is the hypothesis of a meeting point where multiple social space and consequential political spaces -arenas, ideas, means, discourses- interact and are bargaining in spatial processes of institutionalisation. In such, cross-border regionalism finds a sense making (Weick, 1979) as 'site' where the region term is no longer conceived as a 'spatial target'³⁵. The consequential crucial problem is the 'institutional void' which cross-border regionalism addresses in terms of legitimacy criteria as social space in progress of politicising. Although new forms of democratic governance social mobilisation -inclusions – can find policy fields in which the participation and the actions are no longer covered by the nation-state as rule based and exclusive organisational political spatial form.

³⁴ Habermas in his 'The Post-National Constellation' reports as examples of this category of alliances NATO, OECD, the so-called Triade. Other examples are the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation.

'These regionalisations increasingly cross-existing state borders and some authors have been ready to raise regional (cross-border) spaces as the major sites of economic development. The production of space, scales, and associated meaning is a perpetual process. Social space, regions and places as well as spatial scales are simultaneously both products and constituents of social action...' (Paasi, 2001: 13)

1.1.2 Globalisation or De-nationalisation: European Border States in the Modernisation of Political Spaces

Modern State conventionally defines the passage between the last two centuries (and precisely coincides with the date of the beginning of the French Revolution), my attempt is to underline in this passage the wider process which includes Europeanisation and the Westernisation but that is also less ethnocentric. Pasquino for instance defines modernisation as

'...an open process, which affects all the spheres affects all the spheres of the social system in a continuous interaction between various cultures and techniques. In such a manner they even often join together all these aspects and aim to develop modes, which are together, both alternative and similar in their political forms. The more interesting aspect concerning modernisation is the emerging of various political forms, which are distinguished and differentiated. Political modernisation has a place when a more structural differentiation appears together with a more functional specificity and the integration of all the institutions and the forms which belong the political spheres. (Pasquino, 2000: 637)

The prerogative of the modern nation state is to govern a 'territory'³⁶ included within its borders. The institutional *clustering* of modernity in western countries is indeed based on the nation-state³⁷ (Giddens, 2000). As a political construction, the territory marks the *space* where a civil society has *place* and its representatives assume power for legitimate³⁸ actions or

³⁵ Spatial targets are the local, regional and/or national territorial matrices within which state intervention occurs (Brenner, 1997:280)

³⁶ In this I aim both at the meaning of 'territoriality' as the Foucault lesson on 'governmentality' (1978) that is the '...juridical principle which from the Middle Ages to the Sixteenth century defined sovereignty in public law: sovereignty is not exercised on things, but above all on a territory and consequently on the subjects who inhabit it. In this sense we can say that the territory is the fundamental element both in Machiavellian principality and in juridical sovereignty as defined by the theoretician and philosophers of right'. and those linked to a meaning of 'the modern sovereignty' which Hardt and Negri issue as 'linked to the perfect and the experience of territorial sovereignty'. On interpreting aspects on the Foucaultian governmentality linked to his meaning as 'state' I will return towards the end of this chapter.

³⁷ Giddens says that 'we have to consider various analytically separable features of modernity. In terms of institutional clustering, two distinct organisational complexes are of particular significance in the development of modernity: the nation state and systematic capitalist production. Both have their roots in specific characteristics of European history and have few parallels in prior periods or in other cultural settings' (Giddens, 1990:174).

³⁸ As well known Max Weber, (1922, Economy and Society) has given important input to the central element of the construction of European modern state in political order terms according to the character of 'centralisation' as that of 'monopoly of juridical force'. The history of the modern state's birth is generally the history of the tension between the

decisions within territorial borders. Modern nation state is an exclusive *territorial space* as a *political organisation* where citizenship and consequential regulatory activities are conceived in a conjuncture. The nation state guarantees effective democratic governance (March, Olsen, 1995) demarcating clear membership criteria (Cederman, 2001; Scharpf, 1999; Streeck, 1998). The existence of multiple scales of social movements occurs within nation-state borders, which enable or constrain the articulation of scale opportunity (Miller, 1997). Territorial scale is therefore synonymous with protecting collective interests within the nation's capital also with regard to other national capitals (Smith, 1992). In our modernity³⁹, an emerging interdependent world society works according to different trends as regards those based on that of nation-state. We may first call such a process 'internationalisation' (Kaiser, 1972; Held, 1996; Jessop, 2002). The more commonly visible and debated passages of this change are notably grounded in 1) the accelerating of global markets; 2) the occurrence of global problems; 3) the movements of capital which have created social consequences and local pressure in social willing.

'In a world always more strictly interdependent - from an ecological, economic and cultural point of view - the states which take legitimate decisions agree always less in their social and territorial range with the people and the spheres which are potentially involved by the effects of these decisions' (Habermas, 1998:44)

Authors working at describing the disjuncture between space and society of our modernity in international social terms of relations report redundantly the famous sentence of Daniel Bell: 'the nation-state has become too small for the big problems of life and too big for the small problems' (Giddens, 2000: 25; Nye, 2002: 4). The nation-state has become therefore a questionable space under the whole of processes, which involves economical, political, social streams in a world-wide civil society no longer 'confined' or 'represented' by the patterns of 'nation-state' borders. Some authors speak about a globalisation phenomenon to frame such a whole of forces (Held, 1995; Habermas, 1998; Giddens, 2000)

'adherents of what we might call 'the strong globalisation thesis' maintain that there has been a decisive scalar shift in the locus of power from the national to the global scale. National borders are significantly eroded as

polycentric developments as a typical form of feudal domination and the territorial state as Unitarian centre for the rationalisation of power.

³⁹ 'Our modernity' is an issue concerned in rethinking the meaning of territoriality not in historical conjuncture with the definition of contemporary nation state sovereignty. Although the major issue of contemporary state in political terms is that of considering crucial the relationship and the consequential co-existence between the 'state' as expression of 'state as law' forms and the contents of the 'state as social rights'. (Gozzi, 2000: 1103) However, such is also a central issue in our present.

barriers to economic, cultural, or social mobility, as well as political power, and this gives rise to a virtually borderless world where the prerogatives of national power are now severely circumscribed'. (Smith, 1999: 153).

At least these first wide categories of problems arranged as public action and territoriality appear as a discontinuity in that they are nation-state based. According to contemporary theories of globalisation, the nation state emerges indeed as a kind of polity space failure where a third dimension of democracy transformation (Dahl, 1989)⁴⁰ occurs. No longer does 'democracy' appear included or described exclusively within a state border (Held, 1996) but if such a formulation poses a new possibility in considering democratising processes, this is also the problematical starting point for the cross-border regionalism study. As a problematic framework, cross-border regionalism is situated in-between shift in the public action of political space making beyond the state and the meaning of territoriality, which is changing towards the polycentric spatial differentiation of geographical landscapes. In other words, if the nation-state is no longer 'the exclusive polity pattern' in which social and political spaces are framed in given scales of territoriality, the other actual spatial alternatives of 'governance' – in which the cross-border regionalism is - appear to confront a new course in these relations in a very problematic way. Some authors (Brenner, 1999, 2004; Jessop, 1998, 2002, 2004), for instance, suggest that the state as subject of political space is undergoing a fundamental change or restructuring, so that our dis-orientation regarding the disjunction between social space and the political spatiality disjunctive of nation-state territory leads us to step out of the Westphalian⁴¹ image of states as territorial arenas. According to this suggestion, hierarchical political systems are being restructured within 'scales' in processes of re-territorialisation.

⁴⁰ Dahl (1989) for instance reminds us that democracy was moved in three generations: the first consists of a direct democracy which has as reference the Greek city state; the second is instead based on the democratic rights of the masses; the third transformation precludes a post-national affiliation to democracy posing however new questions about the role of the state perhaps in a sort of 'guardianship'. Such transformations attend the role of the state transformation as 'sovereignty' within a democratic regime. A theory completely different is instead - as I will return to further - proposed by Held (1996) who thinks that the sovereignty itself as already divided among a number of agencies -national, regional, international - and limited by the very nature of this plurality. 'Democracy has to become not just a national but also a transnational affair if it to be possible both within a restricted geographical territory and within the wider international community. The possibility of democracy today must, in short, be linked to an expanding framework of democratic institutions and agencies' (Held, 1996: 354).

⁴¹ Westphalian is the adjective of the nation-state system emerged after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 which is often recalled as the starting point for the modern diplomacy based on the nation-state sovereignty as the highest level of authority. Westphalian is therefore the adjective that in some circumstances has been taken to clarify the failure of the nation-state system in Western countries. Well known the discussions related to the European political space formation in rejecting the hegemonic ambitions of individual states according to the Westphalia treaty (for instance Jochka Fisher's speech in 2001).

Much like the geography of the city, the geography of state spatiality must be reviewed as a presupposition, an arena, and an outcome of continually changing social relations. It is not a thing, a container or a platform but a socially produced, conflictual and dynamically evolving matrix of socio-spatial interaction. The spaces of state power are not simply 'filled' as they were pre-given territorial containers. Instead, state spatiality is actively produced and transformed through socio-political struggles in diverse *institutional sites* and a range of geographical scales. (Brenner, 2004: 451)

If this sentence⁴² allows critical interpretations I would suggest that territoriality as political space is under transformation at the present. Territoriality no longer has to be conceived as a 'trap' because it is being transformed in its essence through actions of active 'territorialising' in which other patterns of governance can be recognised through different 'institutional sites'. I maintain that territoriality is also going beyond the modern hierarchies of the 'scale' of the nation-state as well as beyond the economical production of scale in capital accumulation paradigm. I propose that the institutional sites - as the cross-border regionalism shows - can be framed seeing them both as outcome, which can be both explained and part of the explanation as political space making. Dramatic changes occur where multiple policy and 'institutionalised'⁴³ social spaces, although sustained by particular events,⁴⁴ are no longer exclusively engaged or based on state spatial tactics and are instead affecting multiplex geographical hierarchies of territories, crossing the state borders. Crucial 'local' evidence supporting this spatial tendency is the growing of social space through new forms of 'identity politics' (Young, 1990; Fraser, 2000) demanding recognition in accentuating the cultural significance/insignificance of national borders by crystallising ethnic structures in relation to memberships and territories. A hypothesis in this sense can

⁴² The Italics in Brenner's sentence is my addition.

⁴³ On the concept of institutionalisation of spaces, with reference to cross-border regionalism I will return several times in the course of my writing. As a starting point I report the definition of social and political space proposed by Stone Sweet, Fligstein, and Sandholtz (2001: 12) 'Social spaces are arenas, or current situations, wherein actors orient their actions to one another repeatedly. We call a social space 'institutionalised' when there exists a widely shared system of rules and procedures to define who actors are, how they make sense of each other's actions and what types of actions are possible. Institutionalisation is the process by which a social space emerges and evolves. It is important to emphasise that a social space can be fully institutionalised, despite the fact that it has not developed formal and binding rules'. This definition seems to me an interesting passage for the cross-border space analysis.

⁴⁴ Event is here a term which I refer to the CBR as a part of the historical-political Foucaultian "événementialisation". He refers to the event as: 1) the singularity in the breaking of evidence in which the practices, the acknowledging and the consensus are based; 2) the connections which are part of the casual demultiplication that is as analytical point according to the processes which constitute them are multiplex. If above all the latter hypothesis, which Foucault refers to as 'polyformism', sounds in abstract he refers to not univocal necessity, which is perhaps my suggestion to think the cross-border regionalism and the cross-border co-operation activity as an event, which pertains in forms of space to multiple relations of power. (Foucault, 1983).

include the ‘jumping scales’⁴⁵ or transgressing ‘gestalt of scale’⁴⁶ as the basis of an institutional new regional cultural configuration where cross-border regionalism can also be positioned. My hypothesis is more oriented to the cross-border regionalism study as social practices of institutionalisation in which recognition is not exclusively based on group-specific identity but instead aims to understand how different heterogeneous arenas can interact in reciprocal recognition in and for cross-border governance.

‘Institutions are both exogenous and endogenous. This becomes particularly clear in the more ‘sociological’ accounts of institutional change where social structure and patterns of agency are more or less co-constituted, or where the actors who have helped to build institutions are then induced to behave in ways that lead to further institutional change’ (Caporaso, Stone Sweet, 2001: 225).

This passage is the problematical framework in which my work takes place, identifying cross-border regionalism among forms of plural ‘institutional sites’ as ‘practices’ where the discontinuity of our modernity appear both as a problem and together as hope for future democratic governance(s). Doing that I join the use of the term ‘de-nationalisation’⁴⁷ where ‘space and the borders of spaces will remain of the utmost significance in the coming age’ according to Michael Zurn (2000: 187). Cross-border regionalism finds indeed place as a spatial process in a hypothesis, which would not agree with the theories of ‘globalisation’ aimed at a borderless world or the ‘de-bordering’ approaches – as exchanges of goods and people across national borders - where the border matters just in its consequential exceeding. In my suggestion cross-border regionalism is a spatial tendency, which is not aimed at the elimination of the nation-state border in its effects and neither to all responds to consequential constructs based on ‘deterritorialisation’⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Smith (1992: 74) considers for instance the possibility for social groups to create their own politics of scale as resistance to capital-centred scale constructions. Smith calls this hypothesis ‘jumping scale’ whereas the social groups attempt in cultural and social structures in everyday life. Around the concept of scale as geographical difference - which can in some way be considered as a social problematisation of recognising in cross-border regionalism - Smith includes the black reason: ‘who is included and who include themselves as ‘black’ (for example) can be recast as a question of socially constructed scale at which a black social as political identity is established’ (Smith, 1992: 74)

⁴⁶ Swyngedouw (1997: 169) refers to the gestalt of scale as a change of geographical configuration where a set of interacting and nested scales becomes produced as temporary stand-off in the social-spatial power struggle.

⁴⁷ Zurn (2000) uses this term with reference to classic works like Karl W. Deutsch (1969) and Eric Hobsbawm (1992). ‘De-nationalisation is an indicator of the weakening link between territorial states and their corresponding national societies, that is the contextual condition that made the national constellation possible’. (Zurn, 2000:187)

⁴⁸ Brenner (1997: 145) for instance recognises in the globalisation of capital the process which removes the state interventions that have indefinable profound territorial implications on the rescaling of the state territorial power ‘scaffolding of spatial scales’ as constituting a ‘hierarchical stratified morphology’ of capital accumulation.

From my standpoint the meaning of cross-border regionalism is more concerned with the 'integrated production' of a class of 'public goods'⁴⁹, which I refer to as cross-border socio-political interactions, where the border is a meaningful 'local' of a particular pattern of governance. My approach to cross-border regionalism study thus considers very significant both the border-state and the territorialisation of subjects. Rather than ghosts on the stage of our modernity, I consider that 'border-state' and 'territorialisation' constitute discontinuities, which crucially 'matter' in the urgent conceptualisation of contemporary politicalisation of space. *Borders* and *territory* recall the urgency to be included both in social⁵⁰ and societal construction and the need to no longer be relativised to a given scale of governing⁵¹ but to be fully included - and no longer rejected - in processes of 'becoming' in renewed features of governance. Transgressing a merely economical nature, the institutional forms of cross-border regionalism can be problematised through the crucial discontinuities between state borders and territoriality. In other words, no longer confined to an exclusive regional nature of the nation-state, the borders as forms of power can be grasped as relational forms, which both transform and are transformed through cultural and political societal consequences and societal willing.

'Denationalisation can be defined as the extension of social spaces which are constituted by dense transactions, beyond national borders without being necessarily global in scope. Even through the scope of most of these cross-border interactions is indeed not global, they still cause problems for national governance simply because the social space to be governed is no longer national' (Zurn, 2000: 187)

As contemporary spatial forms 'at' the Border State, cross-border regionalism appears according to the theories of globalisation as 'deformations of the borders' (Giddens, 2000: 26) according a transformation in social space. At present, the mechanisms of denationalisation, lead us to rethink the Border State as a problematic locus of change. As political strategic institution of the modern Border State, the border has a direct relation with a mode of territoriality - a territoriality that is 'inclusive' within borders and that is an

⁴⁹ Donolo points out for instance how common goods classes pertinent to institutional forms are social constitutive. They are essentially and virtually goods linked to language, knowledge, power and 'their dynamics don't depend simply on innovations and technology but also and especially on the dynamics of demand/offer in terms of expectations socially achievable. Therefore depending on the nature of the existing social communication (conflicts, compromises, bargaining, powers, hierarchies, hopes and fears, learning processes, negative capacity). (Donolo, 1997:21)

⁵⁰ The recall is as known to Lefevre, H. (1991).

⁵¹ This perhaps means also to refer to those 'Integral sense (which) also encompasses the indirect socio-spatial effects that flow from apparently a-spatial policies' (Brenner, 2004: 454).

associated construct of the nation-state as ‘sovereignty’ and ‘power container’. The nation-state’s decisions no longer have exclusive social/societal consequences within its administrative borders, the crisis of territoriality linked to the nation-state as a construction of power has arrived. This means that a certain kind of (given) territoriality is in crisis but not a (relational) territoriality, which attends to a social process. In the context of institutional clustering caused by Europeanisation, cross-border regionalism offers an assumption of territoriality as process towards an opening onto another meaning. On one hand the process of territorialising can be related to socio-spatial struggle, which includes, in other words, the social and political mobilisation and the participation in differentiated scenarios of actions, which to different degrees of consistency in reactive or conflict forms of communication are included in paths of agency construction. On the other hand cross-border regionalism is connected to political space in strategising the continuous process of mutual adjusting in institutional consistency between Europeanisation and localisation binaries collaborating in an exchange of coexistence in space-scale re-articulation. In both these stages cross-border regionalism can emerge as a form of active territorialising which pertains to relational forms of power outside the centrality of the nation state domain. As such, the transformation of the States ‘Border line’ towards ‘regional space’ embraces the ‘European’ ideological expression of ‘new representational sites’ at the moment in which the alternative to social and local societal ideas as a resource are oriented to reinforce. If we look at these relations in space making, cross-border regionalism doesn’t suppress or compete with the already current nested state-hierarchy of given powers but it substantially emerges on their side as a complementary and alternative form. In other words, cross-border regionalism is a *sign*⁵² of opening an era in which the geneses of other forms of spatiality, even in various local spheres, are ‘revolutionising’ the meaning of an exclusive, already given territoriality.

‘the scalar significance of particular events is certainly delineated, in first place, in relation to existing scalar hierarchies, but this also occurs within the context of real or potential political struggles. If we shift perspective now and take a stand not on a distanced vision of geographical hierarchies but on the ground of these political struggles geographical scale becomes a vehicle and strategy of political empowerment. To the extent that struggles can be contained at one scale it becomes imperative to ‘jump scales’ as a means of avoiding

⁵² In a provocative analogy, as I wish to consider the cross-border regionalism as a ‘sign’ of ‘revolution’ in assumptions in space-making related to territorialising process. In a lesson at College de France about the problem of the present in Kant’s work, Foucault refers to an idea of revolution ‘as spectacle’ in its value of sign. “Signum memorandum” because it relives a tendency with its presence; “signum demonstrativum” because it expresses the efficacy of this tendency; “signum prognosticum” because if it is starting from the revolution which also results begun, it is also from the tendency which can be posed the issues relived through it’ (Foucault, 1984).

containment, and the jumping of scales becomes the means by which new scalar arrangements are forged' (Smith, 1999: 156)

Stepping out of the political nation-state as political space means therefore to allow social and political relations and interactions to develop a new virtual spatiality across different political entities - governmental or non-governmental levels or sectors- thereby releasing the centrality of the nation-state. As well known, such processes are not just hypotheses but belong to a current shift between government and 'governance' modes outside fixed geographical boundaries. The debate nowadays is still open about the governance terms especially in the European Community context. Scholars are nowadays still divided on the approaches to the 'state-centric' or the more widely 'multi-level' or 'diffusion' governance approaches. The first is familiar to 'the effects of the government' inside the government borders (sometimes also defined as 'form of government' and in a trans-national setting is often compared with a federal United States of Europe or the 'Europe des parties' - for instance Wallace, 1998 or a synthetic explanation in Jessop, 2002); the second is instead released from a meaning linked to government forms and defines 'governance' based on the interaction mode between government levels and kinds of actors. Jessop defines governance as:

'complex art of governing a manifold of organs, institutions and systems which are both operationally autonomous in relation to each other and structurally connected through different forms of mutual dependence' (Jessop, 1990).

Governance becomes by famous quotes:

'...dispersed across multiple centres of authority. We define governance as binding decision making in the public sphere' (Hooghe, Marks, 2003: 233)

My research orientation is positioned in a governance meaning as interaction. Consequently new legitimacy questions are running together with the transformation of Europe at its borders. Issues and dynamics of political and spatial organisation in the development of power relations locate the Border State as a key site in the polycentric development of the EU continental internationalisation⁵³ process. In other words, the Border State is the subject

⁵³ Jessop (1998: 262) speaks about cross-national cooperation in the process of internationalisation as new legal forms and strategic alliances in an attempt to include such episodes in a framework of post-Fordist trend.

of a momentum of crucial cultural change within a trans-national space-polity. As such, both as a form of 're-building' or 're-structuration' which involves the 'architecture of territorial rule' as well as the declining process within which Western European continental integration interfaces with a post-national globalising present, the Border State is the crucial subject where multi-level, networked or perhaps local governance questions meet.

1.1.3 Crossing Borders in a Western European Regional Policy Turn

Even before the introduction of a special co-ordinated policy foreseen for all European borders⁵⁴ as a supranational programme, European domestic or regional borderland areas were already involved in co-operative public action across Border States. Developed essentially on the basis of local or domestic borderland identity features more or less historically rooted in different EU border contexts⁵⁵, cross-border cooperation initiatives were initially sustained by cross-border intergovernmental commissions around the 1970s although with limited scopes in practice⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Cross-border cooperation in Europe was developed especially from the 1980s and in particular starting from an initiative of the Council of Europe, which promoted the Madrid Outline Convention with other consequent protocols. Before this event which signed a date of starting and that constituted a base for the Madrid Convention were already represented connections between cross-border spontaneous initiatives and a supranational coordination strategy, it was the Council of Europe which in 1970 founded the European Spatial Planning Ministerial Conference (CEMA) and particularly within the issue of European Regional Planning Strategies. Also the Nordic Council Agreement on Cross-Border Cooperation between municipalities constituted a basis for further policy in this regard. (Source: LACE: Linkage, Assistance and Cooperation for the European Border Regions Report 1999).

⁵⁵ Since the 1950s at first groups of borderlands such as between Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Germany, France and Switzerland have started and developed organising cross-border cooperation activities focused on overcoming the historical barriers and above all on experimenting ways to overcome problems caused by peripheral conditions of national borders and to the consequential lack of coordination by national authorities to face up typical borderland problems.

⁵⁶ We can think about the pioneering cross-border co-operation groups for example: the Scandinavian (formalised in 1964 in the Oeresund Council and well-established by the Oeresund Contract in 1974 and later on with the Oeresund Committee in 1993 by the constitution of the Nordic Council Agreement), the initiatives on the border between the Netherlands and Germany started in 1954, as Euroregio in 1958 (conceived for cross-border co-ordination at local level on issues spatial planning, transport, environmental (Perkmann, 2002: 105) and on the same border the Euroregio Rhein-Waal, Maas-Rhein, Rhein-Maas-North, Ems-Dollart were established in the 1970s. The intergovernmental commissions started in the same years are an additional example like the Franco-Belgian development commission, the Franco-Genevan regional committee (1974), the Franco-German-Swiss commission (1975) (Leresche, Saez, 2002: 87); in December 1989 is a "Regio Turrhena" grew when trans-frontier co-operation was enlarged "Upper Rhine EuroRegion" under the application of the INTERREG project or the industrialised border regions based on coal-fields like Saarland and Lorraine (1939) and Upper Silesia industrial region on the Prussian German-Polish border (Mikus, 1986; Corvers, 2001: 371) or again the central commission for navigation on the River Rhine set-up by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 which started as international institutional building envisaged in some agreements of Cross-Border co-operation (Blatter, 2003: 509). But also interregional groups of Western Alps (COTRAO), the Pyrenees (CTP) and the Jura (CIJ) started on the wave of such initiatives.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, EU cross-border co-operation programmes⁵⁷ have swelled with further financial projects stimulating both existing and potential cross-border possibilities. From that moment, cross-border cooperation experiences have become formally a constituting part of the EU trans-national, macro-and-micro- regional construction⁵⁸, no longer just as fragmentary or sporadic experience. Both historical and recent cross-border co-operation experiences are nowadays included as part of the European integration process. In other words, they ‘cannot be seen as separate from the process of European integration’ (Perkmann, 2002: 103). Constructivist insights speak about cross-border regions (CBRs) in terms of *a model* of ‘EU micro-integration’ (Blatter, Clement, 2000: 94) basically founded on those EU ‘political principles and social values that support the notion of a unique European space’ (Scott, 2002: 149). Sometimes even compared to symbolic and ‘functional’ images of EU macro-region building (Goinga, 1995; Kessler, 1999), cross-border regionalism experiences fit into the EU integration framework as analogies at micro-scale – domestic and local –. ‘The Public’⁵⁹ behaviour at the Border State seems to embrace both the consistent availability of EU structural financing focused on cross-border cooperation programmes and the emerging strategies of coalition-building based on sharing common interests between the ‘peripheral’ regionalities of the states.

‘Joint, combined, associated action (which) is a universal trait of the behaviour of things. Such action has results. Some of the results of human collective action are perceived, that is, they are noted in such ways that they are taken account of. Then there arise purposes, plans, measures and means, to secure consequences, which are

⁵⁷ As known the INTERREG I programme was launched in 1990 (initially for the period 1990-1993 and then foreseen also for the following times of programming in the EU structural funds (1994-1999 and 2000-2006). In 1994 another special community initiative was created with a cross-border character, which was a special programme to sustain the peace at the border between Northern-Ireland and the other Irish borderlands (PEACE programme). For its implementation, which includes an apposite sub-programme to favour the cross-border development 8 intermediary programmes of financing have been adopted. An important programme created especially for the external borders of the EU was the institution in 1994 of the PHARE CBC programme for cross-border cooperation which regards the central East country borderlands (PEC) with the same duration as INTERREG in the period 1994-1999 it covers 15 national borders (Source: LACE Vade Mecum on Cross-Border and Inter-regional Cooperation on External Borders of the European Union 1999).

⁵⁸ The associations between Border communities were the first form of cross-border structures and on the basis of such organisations were born further umbrella organisations. The main difficulties for cross-border institutionalisation are generally: 1) the different national administrative systems especially in the existing power distribution and their sources between jurisdictional levels; 2) the principle that all the juridical personality has to be found by a legislate corpus; 3) the limitations applied in many cases to the local/regional authorities for the transforming of competencies or responsibility to cross-border organisms with or without the approval of the national level. (Source: Institutional Aspects of Cross-Border Cooperation, March 1999).

⁵⁹ In this sentence I just want to clarify that ‘the public’ that I mean is referred to ‘the public’ as a pure translation of its derivation from *res publica* (thing of the people). ‘The Public’ and ‘public action’ are taken as reference in John Dewey’s theory of the public as *consequence*. My idea is briefly traceable to the trend: ‘public’ as ‘thing produced by actions’ – ‘social space’ – ‘political space’.

liked and eliminate those, which are found obnoxious. Thus perception generates a common interest; that is those affected by the consequences are perforce concerned in conduct of all those along with themselves who share in bringing about the results'. (Dewey, 1927: 34-35)

EU 'internal' borderlands are today involving kinds of CBR formation at local-and-regional levels with pertinence to national or trans-national current or sectoral policies. The kinds and processes of institutionalisation - under Euro-regional forms⁶⁰ - are called and interpreted in missions of cross-regional policy. If the communality of a Border State is often the locus to share common social derivations across the nation-state border, new urgency emerges conceptually in structural domestic interests in a transformation in 'space making' as object of policy. 'Community' literally refers to the existence of exchanges between people or groups. Some authors have also tried to report such a term as consequential mechanisms in 'community creating potential' in a typical, post-nationalist perspective. For instance, Zurn (1998) examines three channels of interest: a) the 'community building' associative channel; b) the electoral channel; c) the civic channel. To the latter 'civil channel' I am particularly oriented speaking about cross-border regionalism in terms of consequential active *public actions* as practices, which include everyday habits. Indeed this third dimension transgresses the institutional domain, narrowly defined as 'democratic decision making' in dependency with nation-state border and announce a passage which emphasises the issue on the *civic infrastructures* in 'democratic governance' as particular meaning of 'demos' constituted by the *body* of citizens. *Public action* is at the base of a concept of *space production*, which is no longer exclusively included within the territory given within the nation-state borders. In space production beyond the nation-state as the EU, for instance, some authors have pointed out how in the case of the European Union, it would be a mistake to take for granted the

⁶⁰ Numerous cross-border organisms in Europe are called Euroregions. Although they are not identical in their juridical forms and in their organisation they present common characteristics as those to be institutions: 1) permanent; 2) with an identity distinct from their members; 3) which have their own administrative, financial and technical resources; 4) which follow an internal decisional iter. The geographical area of Euroregion is typically determined by the socio-economical integration level and not by administrative units. The Euroregional cross-border organisms don't constitute a new level of domestic or regional level but they are focused to be a point of exchange for the existing organisms of public or private sectors. An important role has been assigned to the EU Euroregions in the INTERREG programme, which their organisations act according to all the functions, required for the management or the activation of the operative corresponding programme. Central and Eastern European countries use criteria and similar names to Euroregion while in North Europe such institutions are associations of local authorities in the framework of a permanent and polyvalent character of Nordic agreement covering bigger areas than the former.

existence of a pre-politically defined population that already possesses the basic cognitive capacity and emotional commitment to participate productively in collective public actions⁶¹.

Crossing Borders as Mutations of Public Action

Leresche and Saez report that the border is the 'site' where a kind of transformation appears:

'The border is a good site (perhaps the best) for observing the re-composition of the public action model'
(Leresche, Saez, 2002: 89)

Since the end of the 1980s, the field of border research has seen a strong growth in various disciplines or sub-disciplines of regional European sciences. Economic and social subjects before⁶² and international relations just after, have also followed the interests notably of the framework of European integration (see Schmitt-Egner, 1994; O'Dowd, 1995, Christiansen, Jorgensen, 2000). Studies of the various passages regarding the need to intercept trends of persistence, resistance or failing of nation state borders have seen an opportune correspondence since the beginning of the 1990s with the programmes of the European Economic Area. With the focus to remove border-barriers to movements of people and goods in Western Europe under slogans such as 'borderless Europe' and the imagination of the 'creation of an area without internal frontiers'⁶³, such works have immediately favoured geographical studies over that of economic flows. Between academic spheres and the practices of sponsorship foreseen to promote cross-border cooperation experiences and the Euroregional forms at the EU supra-national level, (i.e. the invention of specific programmes included in the Community Initiatives), for two decades borderland studies of increasing of flows in Europe have underlined, especially on the waves of numerous cases studies, the dynamics of state borders no longer just in terms of goods and people - workers, tourists, labourers - but also in more open political terms (Jouen et al., 2001). Directions and perspectives foreseen on the wave of the new century have included the Border State in wider effects such as globalisation and shifts in powers between political -and market -

⁶¹ The reference in this circumstance differs from my point of view because for instance Cederman, 2001 reports in particular such an issue as reference to the collective decision making rather than to the cognitive capacity of citizenship bodies which is instead of interest to me.

⁶² For a survey, see van Houtum 2000 reported in reference. The anthology of Perkmann and Sum, 2002 is also a base of reference for an overview on this topic.

⁶³ Treaty on EU-TEU Article 2

driven 'invisible hands'. Such issues have not left the Border State unharmed. The cause of this involvement is not just the growing interest in concepts like the nation-state's failure in terms of submission to the global market which is instead claimed as indifferent - in terms of flows - to border states. Globalisation involves Border States because it creates 'new pressures in favour of local and regional autonomy creating new zones both economical and cultural within and across the nation-states and their borders' (Giddens, 2000:25). Moreover, the project of European integration has posed new questions about the meaning of 'territoriality' in politicising in constructing collective actions.

'Territoriality is one area where Europe matters more than economically. Although vague slogans such as 'Europe of the Regions' are no longer as much in vogue as they were ten years ago, the 'meso level' has grown in importance in both institutional and cultural terms. (Painter, 2001: 43)

The early EU cross-border institutions - Euroregions - overlapped onto state borders and the later numerous cross-border working communities with 're-bordering' proposals have contributed to the creation of orientations to think up joint actions across the states' borders drawing upon various policy origins. Social-cultural descriptions concerning borders in transition and mutation with the potential significance of European continental integration has furthermore posed the issue on incremental and voluntary institutional inventions speaking in terms of institutional creativity. The emerging concept of *cross-border regionalism* as a further pattern of governance in EU trans-national space is assuming significance between other political and social spatialities.

'We shift from an idea of intervention in a given, clearly delimited territory to intervention by problems or issues which are potentially multiterritorial, multisectoral and multi-institutional. New instruments are created for this purpose and with their use the construction of an identity or the need for one may also become a resource. Through these new modes of collective action we enter a process of re-composition which is both territorial and identity-related and which can spawn new territories (cross-border regions for example) and identities'. (Leresche, Saez, 2002: 94).

Domestic popular expectations bent on revalidating local identities across the Border State result today blurred and mixed with cross-policies, trans-national or international possibilities or new - even global - urgency⁶⁴ management. Cross-border regionalism seems at least not just to be an effect of cross-border policy, which determines an institutional transformation

⁶⁴ For instance as Habermas reports: '...a standard example is that of an atomic reactor which has been built by a neighbourhood government close to our border without considering the project procedures nor the security norms which are in our state' (Habermas, 2002: 44).

at the border state in technocratic structures, but is a reflection of the changes in socio-economic, civil and cultural conditions of the wider public actions in modes of spatial process. This is the whole of the 'practices' to which my work attempts to give a contribution.

1.2 RETHINKING CROSS-BORDER REGIONALISM: BETWEEN THE PLURAL GOVERNANCE(S) OF EUROPEAN MODERNISATION

What Le Gales re-called as 'factors' to explain the absence of a homogeneous regional government in Europe caused by

'1) Diversity of realities regrouped under the term region; 2) the rivalry between levels of government; 3) the re-organisation of states in relation with European integration' (Le Gales, 1998: 248)

appear with more evidence when a subject's research as cross-border regionalism calls a term such as 'region' to define a field of public actions, which cross the state government borders. A general connotation of the term 'region' within post-national Western Europe renders how the regional heterogeneity is a resource. EU regional diversity and border meanings face an apparently paradoxical-dichotomy and simultaneous processes of fragmentation and integration following characteristic features of a particular process of continental polity making (Christiansen, Jorgensen, 2000). State jurisdictional borders and regions if no longer coinciding with socio-political links to those of the nation-state, call for new relationships in social constructions - or de-re-construction - between 'container' and 'contents' (Anderson, O' Dowd, 1999). Cross-border regionalism (Scott, 1999, 2000; Perkmann, 1999; Perkmann, Sum, 2002), as a challenge in forms of 'bottom-up regionalism' (Raich, 1994; Grom, 1995; Gross, Schmitt-Egner, 1994), is a process of conceptualisation at the Border State which has launched on the one-hand opportunities for new social-political mobilisation but on the other hand has also underlined the increasing complexity of power relations (Gualini, 2003). Such a complexity of power being not included within nation-state borders presupposes networking and no-hierarchical interrelations of power. Cross-border regionalism in its own forms of regionalism 'beyond' the margins of nation state borders needs to be defined within a EU specific context. The process of continental integration is assuming therefore a particular form as a cultural and political construct (Scott, 1998; 1999; Leresche, Saez, 2002; Kramsch, 2001; Perkmann, 2003; Blatter, 2003) that operates in part to police identities

(Paasi, 2001); conceptually therefore cross-border regionalism is another face of the plural regionalism of European space. Shifts in cross-border regionalism as a field for an institutionalisation process, in forms of 'practices' which move 'public actions' in terms of 'space production', implies a series of reasons and interpretations. The red thread which links constructs such as territory, social representativeness, and legitimate political actions, changes in a cross-border transformation, whereas these terms have modern domains of consistency and qualification within nation-state sovereignty. Cross-bordering marks the difference in geographical organisation as a *sign*, even if the hierarchies and the borders of the modern state do not belong just to our past in European history.

'For much of the twentieth century the concept of nation-state has been widely accepted as a norm for territorial organisation, and Western Europe as its home' (Rokkan, Urwin, 1982).

'The new conception of a polity was a simple one: each state exercised an absolute sovereignty over its territory. Such a conception had an important spatial correlate ...it transformed borders into lines of sharp divide, where one moved suddenly from one political (and generally social and cultural) system to another (Claval, 2000: 73)

Indeed, even on the European scene there exploded some well-known literature on the nation-states end or its restructuring in economical and ideological terms⁶⁵ - Fordism⁶⁶ or

⁶⁵ Jessop sustains for instance that contemporary transformation of the national sovereignty of nation state depends on a process of *'hollowing out'*. For him two trends are transforming the contemporary role of the nation state: 1) the formation of international communities of nations (for instance the EU) which have transformed the national state ability to project its own power within its own institutional borders (this for a new necessity to respond to a *supranational* coordination formation); 2) the production of systems by the growing challenge posed by risks emanating from the global environment that create the space for sub-national resurgence (regionalisation). (Jessop, 1999)

⁶⁶ Naturally as in recent years some authors have diffusely argued about both the terms themselves and the passages which are in-between Fordism and Post-Fordism in an interpretative way. In general Fordist is an ideology where the State is an administratively primary while the Post-Fordist one points to the State as tolerate -even with encouraging actions - to geographical development as cities and regions - in capital accumulation opportunities. 'Fordism is a model of development, hegemonic in the developed capitalist countries after 1945' '...is a mode of regulation drawn upon collection agreements and the welfare state'. '...Fordist societal paradigm offered a conception of progress which itself rests upon three pillars: technical progress, social progress and state progress (the state conceived as guarantor of the general interest against the 'encroachments' of individual interests) (Lipietz, 1999: 342). In general the passage between Fordism (i.e. Keynesian welfare state) and Post-Fordism (i.e. Shumpeterian workfare state) is the transition change of the implications on the state's form and function from within a societal paradigm. As Jessop points out Fordism and Post-Fordism passages can be summarised into 5 factors of change: 1) the labour processes linked to debate on social relations production; 2) the regimes of accumulation linked to macroeconomic growth in capitalism production and consuming; 3) the social mode of economic regulation which concerns the ensemble of norms, institutions, organisational forms, social networks and patterns; 4) the mode of socialisation, is that the pattern of institutional integration and social cohesion or social mode of social regulation dominant in a wider society; 5) the social formation is that the contingent correspondence of all the preceding features. (Jessop, 1992 and 1999: 252). Fordist is led by mass production and the economies of scale based on national demand, aspects which are supported by central controls and standardised collective goods and services of the bureaucratic state. Post-Fordist is defined by flexible production processes and communication technologies which do not generalise the core workers but involve them in a worldwide demand which is less contained and regulated by the

Post-Fordism⁶⁷-, and prior to growing debates on the different senses of regional problems⁶⁸ on the meaning of territorial identity in ‘an imagined political community’⁶⁹, there has existed the concept of citizenship⁷⁰ outside of national cores.

‘Organisations and activists that claimed a regionally based group identity distinct from that of the ‘national’ population, and inspired to some forms of territorial change and political autonomy, were far more likely to be condemned as misguided criminal terrorists or ridiculed as quaint and irritating anachronisms⁷¹’ (Rokkan, Urwin, 1982).

Today studies and events linked to globalisation⁷² or de-nationalisation and the growth of trans-national polity bodies such as the EU with ‘new forms of governance capacity’ have generally contributed to changing this cultural framework. In particular, the European context has changed the wider socio-cultural and political context and the effects of policies - as cross-border co-operation -have imprinted new challenges with regard to space construction. The Border State has been subjected to other trends rather than to those, which correspond to modern territorial demarcations.

The organisation, meaning, and functions of state borders are being re-examined. Boundaries are no longer understood as exclusively national demarcations of state sovereignty. Instead, they are being analysed as multi-

national demand conditions. In the latter aspects the ‘mode of social regulation’ can respond to neo-liberal trends of political change but the social formation remains as a yet unrealised possibility.

⁶⁷ Reference examples are for instance: Amin, A. (1994) ‘Post-Fordism: a reading’. Blackwell. Oxford. Mathews, J. (1989) ‘The age of democracy: the politics of Post-Fordism’. Oxford University Press. Melbourne.

⁶⁸ I refer in this circumstance to the theories developed for instance by Massey (1979) in relations with the new interest of human geography in regionalism as caused by ‘the perceived breakdown of the (large-scale) Fordist production system initially in countries such as Britain and the United States which was seen as shaking up the conventional maps of economic geography’ (1996: 398) ‘production arrangements across regions, and the historical pattern of regional investment and emergent social structures, jointly condition the formation and character of regions themselves’ showing alternatives to Marx’s ‘spatialisations’ (as also Harvey and Soja do).

⁶⁹ As well known, I refer to Anderson B. (1991).

⁷⁰ New geographical conceptualisations about citizenship have moved beyond the nation state in recent years also relatively to the conceptualisation of spaces-scale and democracy in a transnational or cosmopolitan society (Smith, 1999; Sassen, 2002, Held, 2000).

⁷¹ They spoke in this circumstance about the problem of minority groups recognising – in a kind of ‘social regionalisation’ – between the 1960s and 1970s taking as examples the German-speaking population in Alto Adige and the Swedish speaking minority in Finland. In both cases although in discussion were also political sustained parties the legitimacy of the state was fully indisputable and also the minority speaking groups found themselves in its existing national territorial forms.

⁷² The globalisation process has at its base a concept of inclusion and interdependence. For Giddens, (2000: 175) ‘globalisation is a process of uneven development that fragments as it coordinates – introduces new forms of world interdependence in which there are no ‘others’’. For Jessop (1999: 271) ‘globalisation of the world economy means that the local economy can only be seen as a node within a global economic network (with) no meaningful existence outside this context’.

dimensional semiotic and political-economic practices through which state power is articulated and contested at a range of geographical scales and in a range of institutional sites. (Brenner, 2004: 448-9)

Manuel Castells' 'space of flows' (1989; 1996, 1997) is perhaps the most influential suggestion on the ongoing transformation which is revolutionising in our modernity the political order in destabilising the hierarchies and rules which guarantee the conjunction between space and societies. The 'network' has become the metaphorical representative image of contemporary societies, those hypothesised 'without a centre' (Melucci, 1996) which are in need of new paradigms for the 'architecture of their complexity' (Kenis, Schneider, 1991: 25). Network society means that policies are no longer based on hierarchical systems of different coordination but on relational, multi-level systems (Borzel, 1997)⁷³ and multi-level governance (Smith, 1996, Koller-Koch, 1999) processes. But how current societies are developing forms of 'spatiality' in civil society re-articulation comes under pressure: across spaces, producing space, restructuring traditional ones.

'Networks constitute the new morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experiences, power and culture' (Castells, 1996: 469).

'...new transnational forms of political organisation emerging in a context of rapid globalisation and proliferation of transnational activity ...including cross-border struggles around human rights, the environment,' (Sassen, 2002: 281)

As a socio-political structure, trans-border regionalism (Scott, 2000: 104; Perkmann, 1999, 2002) seems to be incrementally addressed in wider processes of scale restructuring, trends of de-and-re-territorialisation (Brenner, 1999; Jessop, 2002; Blatter, 2004), but remains under-question in terms of its legitimacy and accountability (Anderson, 2002). Cross-border regionalism as a form of spatiality no longer pertains to being analysed under labour and market flows economic dynamics stressed in economic transformations or as the protection of groups from market effects. My hypothesis is considering cross-border regionalism as forms of public policy in institutionalisation processes of cross-border practices. In a hypothesis of space in politicising by agencies, cross-border regionalism becomes part of a process of European re-structuration according to a mode of governance. This way of

⁷³ Naturally, the policy-network has provided as analytical tool to trace such changes in territorial politics and state-society relations. See for instance by Mayntz, 1983; Marsh, Rhodes 1992; Lehbruch, 1991; Benz, Scharpf, 1992; Grande, 1994; Heritier, 1994. For a brief survey on topic and bibliography see Borzel, 1997.

thinking about space construction as politicising relations of power calls us to rethink governance in terms of mobilisations and collective actions - and in producing public actions across the Border State – under a different logic of legitimacy. The case of cross-border regionalism leads crucially further towards debating a shift from government to governance in forms which intervene in various ways in collaborating with regional designs according to the special idea of a European continental integration process. Europeanisation and governance processes and concepts - multi-level or new - seem to provide additional insights into the new problems and opportunities for spatial configurations as cross-border regionalism, less based on ‘proximity in social organisation’ nor as forms of ‘container’ for powers of accumulation in relation to capital. Speaking of cross-border as space can be understood as just covering idealised visions of the ‘local’ or perhaps of an abstract European notion of space, place and scale in social reproduction of post-citizenship⁷⁴ (Sassen, 2002) and ‘cosmopolitan democracy’ (Held, 1996). The consideration that ‘space’ is then a ‘social construction’⁷⁵ (Lefebvre, 1991) constituted by ‘arenas wherein actors orient their actions’ (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, Fligstein, 2001) opens conceptual passages to plural forms of governance ‘regulations’ (Le Galès, 1998) whereas the social reproduction of spaces appears to adopt visions of emancipatory politicising of space as an integral part of reality⁷⁶ in becoming (Foucault, 1878; Claval, 2004). In such a cultural turn, the classical concepts, which are adapted in a novel way to a vocabulary pertinent to space production, of course have an impact in rethinking cross-border regionalism under a new, attractive vision of a relational ‘territoriality’ disconnected from a Marxist approach to the state restructuring as a power container.

⁷⁴ Post-citizenship is a concept argued by Sassen (2002) in terms of denationalisation as non-national forms of citizenship.

⁷⁵ Although the well known interpretations of Lefebvre theory which consider the socio-spatial configuration in production of ‘matrices of social space’ in state capitalism Marxist theory (especially oriented by Brenner in such), in the production and reproduction processes of capitalism. Lefebvre himself recognises that not only the means of economic production must be theorised in order to understand the social reproduction for instance also if under this profile the Lefebvre theory has been criticised as being not a guide to spatial analysis rather than as remaining a form of emphasis. My analysis indeed more concerns this latter interpretation of Lefebvre in not focusing on the political economy of capitalism per se, rather than on attempting the intersection of those social forces in the complex re-articulation between structure and agency formation as CBRs can be interpreted.

⁷⁶ Two the references to the ‘spaces of reality’ I mention as regards this interpretation of cross-border regionalism. The first is relative to the issue on the fragments of reality, which is proposed by Foucault. He said that ‘there are regimes of verity that do not constitute projects which then stop. They are instead fragments of reality that induce effects of really very specific like the partition of the true and the false in the way in which human beings ‘address’, ‘govern’, ‘conduct’ themselves and the others. To pick these effects in their form of historical events implies the issue of verity.’ The second is the suggestion which comes from Claval (2004) in considering the spaces of the ‘beyond’ in the trilogy of ‘lived-

Let me elaborate according to another problematic framework in the sense of questions open in relation to the social space-making conceptualisation at large which cross-border regionalism finds opportune insight. Since scales are spaces of interaction not defined a priori by the rescaling of temporal configurations in terms of strategy (Cox, 1998, 2001, MacLeod, 1998, 1999, Jones, 1998; Smith, 2001, Mamadoudh, Kramersch, van der Velde, 2003), the *policies* and their institutionalisation in 'practices' are performing through discourse practices and discursive institutionalisation (Foucault, 1971; Hajer, 1995). Regionalism is thus processes 'of becoming' (Keating, 1997; 1998; Paasi, 1986, 2001, 2003) and the redefinition of spatial processes occurs in relational forms through dynamics of territorialisation (Allen, 1998; 2003; De Matteis, 1995, 2004; Thrift, 1996; 1998). In this view, a new sense of citizenship and democratic transnational or cosmopolitan crossroads (Held, 1995; Sassen, 2002, Habermas, 1998) can be assumed as a constellation in which cross-border regionalism can find a meaning.

'A relational effect of social interaction where there are no predefined distances or simple proximities and where 'the re-distribution of power between institutions across the scale of geographical activity' happens (Allen, 2003: 21)

Power relationships - no longer expressed 'inside' boxes of power - wait with urgency to be conceptualised in novel ways that consider spatiality in terms of patterns of 'governance'. Cross-border regionalism allows insights towards how governance forms are being inserted into social and political activity in partnership with dynamic contingency. In a cross-border setting, governance runs alongside forms of governance beyond the state. In other words, inside those mechanisms which

'entail both a transformation of the institutions, of the mechanisms of participation, negotiation, and conflict-intermediation' (Swyngedouw, 2004: 6).

Governance beyond the state includes differences of process and complex transformations which come from various, fragmentary and multitude heterogeneous subjects⁷⁷ involved in

known-knowable' on the topic of the positive thought of space developed in imaginary spheres which guides human actions in orientation towards the horizon of expectations.

⁷⁷ Foucault (1983) reported that 'there are two means to define the word subject: subject to someone through the control and dependency, or legacy to its own identity from the conscience or the acquaintance of self. Both the means suggest a shape of power able to subdue or subject'. Foucault reports the issue of the subject related to dominance power saying that 'all the types of subjugation are phenomena derived that are simply the consequences of other economic and social

space building. Concepts of cosmopolitan, trans-national, multi-level, meta⁷⁸ or local governance are a more appropriate possibility to define a particular form of *cross-border-governance* - in which 'borders matter' – where an attempt to explain composite modes of social and political intervention 'beyond/across' the Border State are still in question.

'Cross-border governance (is) defined by a shift in decision-making capacity from national governments to sub - and supra - national actors whose horizons of action are partially shaped outside traditional frameworks of state sovereignty' (Kramsch, 2004: 70).

If such 'horizons of action' define an actual 'mode' of 'governance' at the border state, 'how' is it to be distinguished from other forms of democratic governance? 'How' rather than 'if' the state border matters, is it like a pattern of governance? In recent years the models within which actors are involved in a dynamic of construction referred to cross-border umbrella (see Blatter, 2000; 2003) for cross-border affairs have posed more general questions about the 'stake' in studying the contemporary dynamic of cross-border regions (Jessop: 2002: 25). This stake is placed in an 'environment which no longer takes the nation-state for granted as its underlying territorial reference point' (Kramsch, Mamadouth, van der Velde, 2004: 532). The approaches to cross-border action and governance between political-economic or symbolic-cognitive orientations are still open towards new institutional dimensions emerging today at state borders. A general evaluation in terms of 'outcomes' of policy-making effects according to technocratic criteria has ignored a wider political meaning to this space construction. Cross-border political arenas are moving beyond social-economic or technocratic stakes towards territorial governance terms in which social spaces, working in

processes: forces of production, ideological class fights and structures that determine the form of the subjectivity. The subjugation mechanisms cannot be studied outside the relationship with the mechanisms of exploitation and dominion. However, they do not constitute simply the terminal of more fundamental mechanisms. They have complex and circular relationships with the other forms'. Fraser (2001) speaks in terms of 'subjective freedom' in a claim of recognising 'as the hallmark of modernity, which assumes that it is up to individuals and groups to define themselves what counts as a good life and to devise for themselves an approach to pursuing it, within limits that ensure a like liberty for others' (2001: 27). In the Fraser approach to the conception of justice rather than to attend to a conception of good life in subjectivity is instead accepts the subjectivity as 'divergent conception of the good life'. She maintains in subjectivity the non-sectarian recognition in participatory parity.

⁷⁸ Jessop, (2002: 41), proposes the concept of meta-governance in this regard. He says that micro and meta levels will be more significant than the macro and meso levels in the governance mechanism which involve various forms of networking, public-private partnership, stake-holding arrangements and so on. An example is for Jessop the Council of Europe, which provides model organisational rules for cross-border regionalism arrangements under its Convention on trans-border co-operation.

our ‘modern’⁷⁹ temporality through political devices and discursive practices, implicate *us* as a direct outcome⁸⁰.

‘Reasons cross borders. I suggest that the ‘we’ without borders that ask us to think or to watch the world and the we ‘from the point of view of any other’ is connected in some way to the cosmopolitical ideal of peace’.
(Veca, 2003: 30)⁸¹

1.3 RESEARCH FOCUS: CROSS-BORDER REGIONALISM AS A DEMOCRATIC PATTERN OF GOVERNANCE IN TRANSGRESSING THE GIVEN TERRITORIAL DOMAINS OF DECISION-MAKING

The Political research agenda suggests that:

‘we need to understand contemporary Europe as an area in which the nature of borders is in a process of fundamental change’ (Christiansen, Jorgensen, 2000: 71).

⁷⁹ I use in this circumstance this concept to allow to open a certain hybridism regarding modernity and post-modernity binaries which is linked to my idea of cross-border regionalism as spatiality. I want to remember the reference to Giddens in ‘modernity’ as ‘a contrast with tradition’. According to him ‘modernity is marked by an appetite for the new’ ‘what is characteristic of modernity is not an embracing of the new for its own sake, but the presumption of wholesale reflexivity – which of course includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself’ (Giddens, 1990:39) especially related to problematic relations between knowledge and power. ‘Modernity is not only unsettling because of the circularity of reason, but because the nature of that circularity is ultimately puzzling’. ‘Modernity turns out to be enigmatic at its core, and there seems no way in which this enigma can be overcome’ (Giddens, 1990:49). The nature of modernisation as I see it is fundamentally contested and some authors such as for instance Hardt and Negri speak about modernisation as a phase of economical industrialisation and therefore defining the current economic process based computerisation and communication as a phase of post-modernisation (Hardt, Negri, 2000: 280, 289) in relations of the polyarchic systems of modern states. While Giddens speaks about ‘objections’ to post-modernity in terms of ‘radicalised modernity’ I find particularly interesting his idea that ‘defines post-modernity as possible transformations moving ‘beyond’ the institutions of modernity’ (Giddens, 1990: 150)

⁸⁰ At the base of this concept there is a position in terms of ‘hegemony’. Fraser has discussed the formation of social groups for instance in terms of social discourses. She (Fraser, 2001: 53) reports that ‘Hegemony in the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s (1972) term for the discursive face of power. It is the power to establish the ‘common sense’ or ‘doxa’ of a society. This includes the power to establish authoritative definitions of social situations and social needs, the power to define the universe of legitimate disagreement, and the power to shape the political agenda. Hegemony expresses the advantaged position of dominant social groups with respect to discourse. It is a concept that allows us to recast the issues of social identity and social groups in the light of societal inequality. The notion of hegemony points to the intersection of power, inequality and discourse. However, it does not entail that the ensemble of descriptions that circulate in society comprise a monolithic and seamless web, nor that dominant groups exercise an absolute, top-down control of meaning. On the contrary, ‘hegemony’ designates a process wherein cultural authority is negotiated and contested. It presupposes that societies contain a plurality of discourses and discursive sites, a plurality of positions and perspectives from which to speak. Of course, not at all of these have equal authority. Yet conflict and contestation are part of the story. Thus, one use of a theory or discourse for feminist politics is to shed light on the processes by which the socio-cultural hegemony is achieved and contested’. I shall take inspiration from this discursive approach to the topic concerning hegemony.

⁸¹ The original Italian version is: ‘Le ragioni attraversano i confini. Suggestisco che il noi senza confini che ci chiede di pensare o guardare noi ed il mondo ‘dal punto di vista di qualunque altro’ sia connesso in qualche modo allo ideale cosmopolitico della pace’.

'Our understanding has to be focused on an also wider conceptualisation where a contemporary border or border region demands some theoretical and historical contextualisation of borders in general' (Anderson, O' Dowd, 1999: 594).

'What is sorely lacking is a solid theoretical base which will allow us to understand the *boundary phenomenon* as it takes place within different *social and spatial dimensions*' (Newmann, 2003: 288; my Italics).

'Europe's internal borders continue the 'work' of covering up the arbitrary nature of the nation-state as the endpoint for politics... European demos is to be re-invented' (Kramsch, Mamadouth, van der Velde, 2004: 540).

'The institutional and scalar framework of European State space is in a period of profound flux, its future can be decided only through ongoing political struggles, at once local, national, and supranational scales, to rework the geographies of regulation and socio-political mobilisation' (Brenner, 2004: 482).

What is emerging is that, without any doubt, *space* as a social and political construction is calling with urgency for new conceptualisations using new paradigms in the heterogeneous consistency of arenas and actions. I maintain that such a re-conceptualisation has to start from the Border State problematic as the site of the transformation of public action.

The space in which *we* live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives. Our time and our history occur, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another. (Foucault, 1967)

My thesis assumes a descriptive type of conceptual framework speaking about the transformation of EU borders and their socio-political influences to them linked⁸² in terms of spatial process.

⁸² Van Houtum examined approaches to the border and borderland research according to three strands: flows (economic translations across the borders), border regions (and cross-border cooperation) and people (construction of the borders) (see van Houtum, 2000). The focus of this work was double: on the one hand he proposes a framework for cross-border studies within different strands but he also gives the perspective which a sort of dialogue between different approaches is necessary for understanding the border phenomena. Border needs of different points of view. This work is interesting because the author pointed out how every strand has not just a different focus in the study of border but a different way of seeing the border itself. Van Houtum points out for instance that in the economic approach (the flow strand) borders are physical hindrance to flow mobility while in the cross-border co-operation approach borders are barriers to exceed. The third approach that appears in this study and which van Houtum names as 'people' is focused on the border study as socio-spatial material which is a particularly symbolic phenomena and has to be understood through political and social influences over a set of individuals. My purpose is to interpret the cross-border co-operation in Europe (second approach) from a point of view typical of the latter 'people' approach.

My hypothesis runs with the current research branch, which sustains that new patterns of governance are emerging at the Border State (i.e. cross-border governance conceptualisation), as well as with current scholars who are reworking processes of re-scaling as politicised spaces of relational territoriality. Cross-border regionalism is proposed here as spatial construction where multiple publics occur and participate with various actions of social and political mobilisations and participation-indicating modernising ways of interactions. The space of cross-border regionalism is here conceived as a form of the creative and strategic institutional design of practices within the European spatial polity. My aim is not to demonstrate that the emergence of cross-border regionalism is another current sign of 'state failure' and neither is it based on a review of state re-organisation in its own capacities. The trends of internationalisation (supranational EU coordination) and regionalism (sub-national regional insurgencies) are just considered here as parts of contemporary political dynamism in which cross-border regionalism has a place. Notably such a concept can be framed within a concept of 'hollowing out'⁸³ of the nation-state, but in my work such concepts are not focused on forms of the demise of state sovereignty. As spatiality's construction, cross-border regionalism is in my work generated by the existence of mutual interrelations between channels of relations in power and means of social representation, yet in contemporary coexistence perhaps in a future complementarily with the persistence of 'fixed scales'⁸⁴. Cross-border institutionalisation is thus related to the contingency of EU 'border regimes' in which cross-border regionalism is rooted in an ongoing process as part of social and political change. Discourse institutionalisation is also a consistent part of the cross-border regionalism phenomenon. My thesis proposes two main reflections about space-making at the Border State and beyond the state borders: 1) the need for a new vocabulary concerning political space construction and ongoing social strategies in new forms of institutionalisation in practice formations typical of Europeanisation effects in the transformation of modern state borders; 2) a critical linkage between the social relationships which compose the contemporary production of political space and territoriality construction in a not unambiguous complexity of governance.

⁸³ This term as known is borrowed from Jessop who said that 'the 'hollowed out' national state retains crucial political functions despite the transfer of other activities to other levels of political organisation. In particular the nation state has a continuing role in managing the political linkages across different territorial scales and it is expected to do so in the interests of its citizens' (Jessop, 1998: 274).

⁸⁴ Rethinking from this standpoint Cederman (2001: 154) has given an important suggestion to my study: 'the connection between nation and democracy should not be seen as contingent through arbitrary. Democracy and the nation 'grew up' together does not mean that the two are indissoluble linked'.

I suggest that taking inspiration from Foucault, the study of relations can be seen in ‘patterns of re-territorialisation’ and that political space can be seen as a ‘politicising’ process which, though ambiguous has a value in anticipating democratic forms of governance beyond the state. New governance processes in this light are no longer associated with territorial ‘proximity’ or ‘levels’ but as ‘practices’ of the social and in a re-constructed functioning of *spaces* in the articulation of the relations between *power* and *citizenship*⁸⁵. The cross-border regionalism case can help us to rethink society and its development in terms of social *relationships* and political *interactions* stepping out the meaning of territorial ‘border’ as a form of limit or terminal of territorial sovereignty, legitimacy and peripheral institution of central power.

‘...The way in which the relations of subjection can produce subjects... instead of seeking a unique form, the central point which they derive as consequence or development...we need to exploit them in their multiplicity, their differences, specificity and reversibility⁸⁶.’ (Foucault, 1976).

If this topic is very present in contemporary agenda setting research - especially in European studies - still many orientations have to be theoretically approached and empirically proven, also using critical works on the effects of de-nationalisation and post-nationalism on regional meaning. Cross-border regionalism as spatial forms are in my work hypothesised as *alternative* socialising and *democratic* institutions in contemporary post-national⁸⁷ socio-political change⁸⁸. Drawing on a theoretical framework standing in a critical context to social constructivism,

⁸⁵ To the new forms of governance in relation to different articulations between power and citizenship Swyngedouw (2004:7) says that such is consequent to new forms of governmentality recalling the definition of governance derived from Schmitter (2002: 52) according to which ‘governance is a method-mechanism for dealing with a broad range of problems/conflicts in which actors regularly arrive at mutually satisfactory and binding decisions by negotiating with each-other and co-operating in the implementation of these decisions’. The reference to the new forms of governmentality is for me interesting at the point in which conceived in the meaning of activity of governing which can therefore being affiliated to the dynamic of the power interrelation.

⁸⁶ ‘Il faut défendre la Société’ – Annuaire du Collège de France, 76e année. Histoire des système de pensée année 1975-1976. pp. 361-366.

⁸⁷ This term, ‘post-national’ is frequently used by some authors - for instance Jessop - to specify a temporal passage between the hypothesis of end of the state-sovereignty and the undefined current situation of contractualisation of the ‘sovereignty’ between state and market. In this circumstance I use this word in terms of opening towards trans-national spaces such as the EU and plural perspective of society and political space construction. In other words, the meaning of post-national is here intended as a concept of activity - governing - which is framed in a continental integration.

⁸⁸ ‘...Behind the word ‘democracy’ alluding to a graduated scale of substantive difference between paradigms and models of development’ ‘...the birth of a new paradigm, expanding democracy by rendering visible new identities which demand consideration of their aspirations, is the concern of radical social movements. Even in the second sense (upgrading between paradigms) democracy is not a sphere to be managed or enlarged. It’s a continent to be discovered, from one century to the next’. (Lipietz, 1999: 340).

on the side of new institutionalism, relational geography, and border research, my attempt is to experiment with a ‘return’ of territory’ across the Border State in geopolitical terms. Whereas patterns of ‘regionalisation’ and re-territorialisation beyond-the-nation-state are derived from actions of socio-political interaction in ‘building’ released by fixed forms of power as containers, this theoretical framework allows to the cross-border regionalism to be considered as a ‘not-yet’ mode of territorial governance. I conclude that this responds also to a renewed need to *‘think wide’* about contemporary relations between territory and democracy, citizenship, society and space-making, not just by breaking down the sphere of a European citizenship society, but also opening the horizon to a cosmopolitan society. In the context of ‘no’ votes on EU referendum and descent of EU polity – at least for the time being – into fractions, ‘egoistical’ nationalisms, this ‘thinking wide’ is now rarer and more necessary than ever. In other words, it can almost be assumed as a form of ‘prescription’ on horizons of future as an answer. Within a kind of society that *thinks wide*, cross-border regionalism can emerge as multiplex politicised spatiality in-between current changes in ‘governmentalisation’⁸⁹. My conclusion is a perspective for the meaning of cross-border regionalism: that of being a kind of spatial process no longer included in the modern society of nation-state construction, one where political space as the construction of public actions and territoriality are in symbiosis. However, cross-border regionalism is not completely excluded from the nations-state gears because it is part of the modern need to re-create social and multiple spaces. Power relations are also related to normative systems of nation-state rules in the interference of interrelations in other powers – in resistance or reaction - which characterise our modernity. Struggles in relation to space making are also concerned with political stability in forms of social participation and in-between various policy domains and trans-national ‘political’ frames. Diffused and receding, they are interlaced within a range of institutional sites. I maintain that this situation which links the space-time of cross-border regionalism in an in-between is no-longer defined by a state-centric regime of territoriality but by a ‘not-yet’ responding to other forms of legitimacy than that of the ‘state’. As a

⁸⁹ Foucault defines the governmentality as the manner in which the direction of a whole of individuals is integrated in the exercise of power. For Foucault this term defines essentially three processes, but in the focus of my work more important is essentially the passage where he says that governmentality is ‘the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise in very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population as its principal form of knowledge political economy... (Foucault, 1978)’ Actually, I think that this concept is essentially pertinent to his concept of citizenship at the base of the idea of state. But this can be extended to form of power extended from the state border like the EU transnational integration process political system. Foucault indeed with this term would mean above all the activity of exchange active in a society to define mutual actions in a mentality of governing.

hypothesis of our modernity, EU integration produces multiplex 'governance' patterns, which conserve uncertain aspects of a yet emerging social and political order. However, a re-definition of the democratic process as 'reflexive' forms appear to be promising. Cross-border regionalism is running along these paths of a space-time in-between, on the horizon of a *discursive* democracy according to an alternative political order already perceptible and therefore necessary which joins perhaps in a different 'elsewhere' the relations between citizenship, civil society, institutionalisation, and territoriality in spatial processes.

'The legitimacy force of a democratic process no longer and neither above all derives from the participation or the exhibition of the willing but it can derive from the general possibility to enter in a *deliberative* process built in a way that the results justify the respect and the waiting is rationally acceptable'... ' This conception of democracy modifies the theoretical requirements from which the democratic polity legitimacy depends'.... ' The balances are modified because the attention passes from the actual explicit sovereignty of individuals to the *procedural claim* which actually burdens the communicative and decision-making processes' ... ' so that forms of legitimacy till that moment considered as weak can be presented under a new positive light'. (Habermas, 2002: 99)

As a positive form of spatial processes in democracy/ising, cross-border regionalism defines the hope that discursive and 'multiple voice' 'interaction' constitute the political spaces orientated to the horizon of actions in participating and socialising processes which change the consistency of public action at the Border State. If cross-border regionalism is conceptually a regional space which spans the sense of the border-line of state governmentalisation addressing the Border-State to alternatives concerning space making, and they make sense in relation to the European way of managing state borders, will such a path ever lead us towards 'perpetual peace'?

Summary Chapter 1

Dismissing the 'territoriality' as bounded of the 'nation-state', the theories on globalisation or internationalisation and post-nationalism or trans-nationalism suggest a debate of 'beyond' nation-state border and de/territorialisation. The 'beyond' considers the instance of nation-state failure, consequently 'borders' and 'territoriality' as terms lost. Starting from such a corpse of literature, my first chapter criticises these strands and enlarges the meaning of public action. As such, 'at' and 'across' the nation-state borders become the subject of institutional transformation. Cross-border cooperation is part of such public actions' course, which intervene, in a conceptual transformation of politicising the nation state border in

transition; towards the 'Border State'. In a different status of social regulation as regards the perfect correspondence between the political space and the public action within the nation-state border, this chapter has argued that it is precisely at the Border State, where the critical openings of political space in modernisation appear. Cross-border regionalism can be thus understood in dealings between nation-state border transformation and the forms of emerging social space in effect of relational interactions of power. My hypothesis is that cross-border regionalism is a *sign* of a diverse mode of democratic pattern of governance. Transgressing the state-centric territorial domain in decision-making, cross-border regionalism is raising generative forms of spatiality which step out nested hierarchies of territoriality. In the context of the European trans-national policy, networked forms of governance represent a cultural turn in modernisation social space reproduction. No longer does their attitude correspond to already given forms. Cross-border regionalism hypothesis is in my research agenda a form of democratic deliberation. This provides to social process in practices of inclusion in a questioning politicising of space. Cross-border regionalism is a 'territorial' utopia, because it concerns a critical model of our modernity which urges to be investigated according to a different nexus between a modern continuity in political space and territoriality.

In the next chapter I will focus on the hypothesis of the 'Border State' lens as nation-state border in transition. The specific European trans-national context is suggested as the policy context, which transforms the meaning of nation-state borders into forms of discourse. Transcending the ancient division in nation-state patterns of political spaces, the process of European trans-nationalism becomes the expression of European ideal in trans-national integration. A Foucaultian utopia⁹⁰ is in my idea the conceptual hypothesis of this trans-national setting. A congenial framework which sketches the emerging of socialising institution across the nation-state borders. In the mirrors of an ideal system of spaces in transitions beyond the nation state patterns, the 'Border State' appears as meaningful subject in trans-local possibility to 'regional' meaning. I sustain that the 'Border State' is not a direct and univocal source of a 'cross-border cooperation policy' but a complex of causes and

⁹⁰ Des Espace Autres," was published by the French magazine Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité in October, 1984 based on a lecture given by Michel Foucault in March 1967. Although not reviewed for publication by Foucault himself so that this work is not part of his official corpus in literature; the manuscript was released into the public domain for an exhibition in Berlin shortly before Michel Foucault's death. Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec in 'Of Other Spaces' (1967) Heterotopias.

effects in construction. 'Europeanisation' transforms mutually trans-national and local designs into policy 'discourses' beyond spatial divisions in nation-state borders. Cross-border regionalism is therefore in a direct relationship with the European 'Border State' utopia. Cross-border regionalism episodes are thus sorts of heterotopias, which mirror at local scale the projections of an ideal trans-national space.

'I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there'. (Foucault, 1967)

The utopia of European cross-border regionalism as a pattern of territorial governance in terms of agency and institution building process matures within the Europeanisation in 'practices' and mutual 'processes' between local and trans-national capacity in governance. The borderline as *ancient division* of nation-state border becomes in such a social construct. In such significance I will speak about 'permeability' of the Border State as course of action in transition towards cross-border regionalism. I will conclude the next chapter with current definitions and criticism of existing literature in cross-border regionalism and with the perspective of suggesting a new approach for the study of these processes in terms of social spaces in politicising.

CROSS-BORDER REGIONS IN A CONTEXT OF EUROPEANISATION: ISSUES
ON THE PRODUCTION OF EMERGING FORMS OF SPATIALITY AT THE
BORDER STATE

The European trans-national context is the policy context, which transforms the meaning of the nation-state borders in transcending its meaning of ancient division. Proposing a different pattern of action regards the nation-state as an exclusive pattern in political spaces, the European ideal in trans-national integration follows my hypothesis a Foucaultian utopia⁹¹. Framing the emerging of institution building across the nation-state borders the mirror of European ideal is projecting in consequential spaces in transitions where a different nexus in territoriality arrives on the scene. The 'Border State' as complex of causes and effects in a frame of 'Europeanisation' transforms mutually trans-national and local institutional designs across the nation-state borders. Policy 'discourses' beyond the spatial divisions in nation-state patterns no longer direct to univocal source in power as main reference. This chapter suggests a direct relation between 'cross-border cooperation policies' in a European 'Border State' utopia. Cross-border regionalism is a conceptual Foucaultian heterotopia mirroring at local 'cross-border' the projections of trans-national spaces. Europeanisation in 'practices' and mutual 'processes' between local and trans-national capacity of governance changes the 'public action' through its 'ancient divisions'. The Border State becomes a social construct and a subject of policy processes beyond the limit of nation-state sovereignty. I conclude with a kaleidoscope of current definitions and criticism of the existing literature in cross-border regionalism and with the perspective of advancing a new approach for the study of these processes in terms of social spaces in politicising.

2.1 EUROPE AND THE ART OF CROSSING BORDERS

The draft of the Constitution of Europe signed in summer 2004 was the manifested willing of the member states in harmonic political co-ordination of the European Union. With this document, the member states have supported the intention to share competencies on common focus towards a model based on 'common values'⁹² for 455 million European citizens. While the course of some national referendums in spring 2005⁹³ afterwards

⁹² This sentence 'common values' is present in several European newspapers on the topic of the European Constitution dated Saturday 19th June 2004.

⁹³ France and The Netherlands' referendum have resulted in opposition to the European constitution. Many debates are still ongoing at the time of my writing on the reasons for France and The Netherlands' citizens to affirm an opposition to this document.

obtained the opposition in popular votes to the approval of the Constitution for Europe,⁹⁴ the perspective of a 'Europe for tomorrow' seems an issue nowadays more actual than ever. An even more diversified territory with more or less bounded edges between 25 nation-states appears on the European political horizon. The 'internal borders' between the 'old' 15 seemed already transformed into peaceful grounds of co-operation. The European Constitution issue has revealed some difficulties in collective partisan uncertainties for future setting but such difficulties do not denote a failure for the general aim of Europe in representing a distinctive kind of 'integration model' to the world. A poetical sentence is placed in the preamble of the Constitution:

'Convinced that, while remaining proud of their own national identities and history, the people of Europe are determined to transcend their ancient *division*, and, united even more closely, to forge a common destiny'.
(Preamble European Constitution, 2004)

Although this speech is in a way lyrical and rhetorical, this sentence opens a further interpretation in the use of words like 'ancient divisions': neither borders nor frontiers but divisions. We have to go further in such a reading to understand what these 'divisions' are. Other terms emerge: 'building of space of freedom, security and justice' without internal frontiers with regard to the market 'which allows you to think of an (imagined) 'free competition not twisted'⁹⁵ in the freedom of movement of goods, people and services'. The idea of economic flows in removing borders as barriers between member states is here proposed again. The free movement of goods and people across the nation-state borders is for Europe as a geographical concept; defines a space or territory, which can be delimited and defined through transactions. The draft of the European Constitution offers various points concerning the co-ordinated policies aimed at removing the controls between internal frontiers and at reinforcing the external borders (which potentially, after the East enlargement should be 're-established'). The development of peaceful and closely connected relationships between (which will be) non-members states is also a current argument presented in the document. The emphasis about the co-operation between the internal member states is about the creation of co-ordinated actions in all-social policy sectors (internal social security, judicial and police, health, industry, calamities, and natural disasters) but excluding any 'harmonisation' related to the provisions of laws or regulations

⁹² Adopted by consensus by the European Convention on 13 June and 10 July 2003.

⁹² Art. 3 : 'Focuses of European Union'

existing within each member state. The EU's advisory institutions (and in particular the Committee of the Regions⁹⁶) indicated by the draft of the European constitution are consultative association⁹⁷ for what concerns cross-border co-operation. The language of the European Constitution draft is interesting for reasons of future perspectives and declared necessity more or less explicit about 'new regulations' at the borders between member states. In some passages, this text remembers those utopian⁹⁸ languages that Foucault⁹⁹ expressed as a form of comfort:

'Utopias comfort: if actually they haven't any real place, they open a wonderful and smooth space. To us cities with wide paths, well maintained gardens, easy places appear also if their access is chimerical ...utopias comfort because they consent fabulas and discourses and utopias are in the right dimension of language, in the fundamental dimension of the fabula' (Foucault, 1998).

Today cross-border co-operation experiences are particularly whispered in the European context. They constitute a full answer to a conceptual utopia in the strategic visions of the European space towards a trans-national, economical, social, and territorial orientation to the cohesion¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁵The Committee of Regions was instituted in Maastricht in 1991 as an assembly with the role of involving in the European decision-making arena, the local and regional representatives especially on legislative actions which foresee an application on local and regional levels (about 3/4 of the European legislation) concerning several aspects as social and economical cohesion and trans-European networks (but also other policies such as public health, education and culture) which have been improved by the Amsterdam Treaty with social policies, environment, transport (but also with occupational policies and professional training). The Regional Committee has been divided into several Commissions, the Policy of Territorial Cohesion belongs to the COTER..

⁹⁴The European Parliament, The Council of Ministers or the European Commission.

⁹⁸ As is known 'Utopia' is a Greek term introduced by an English Christian thinker in the Renaissance age, Thomas More who wrote about a peaceable island played with the ambivalence of the 'utopia' word. It derives both as 'place that is not' or 'happy place', the two meanings were both presented in More's work. The meaning of utopia as 'not yet' appeared only in the twentieth century by Ernst Bloch (Bloch, E. 'Geist der Utopie'. Berlin: Paul Cassirer 1923) who thought that the reality already given in the present never gratifies the human wish and therefore is not 'real'. Bloch basically worked out an ontology of 'not yet' within which he said that it is the human skill to anticipate and to focus on the future. The reality is in the future and the future is already real as objective possibility. At the centre of the utopia thinking there is a notion of dialectic as efficacy mean to link the actual contradiction of the present.

⁹⁶In 'Archaeology of Knowledge' (1978).

¹⁰⁰ Social and economical integration has been pursued at the EU level since the mid-1980s by the Structural Funds. The general meaning of social integration concerns the exceeding of divergences between elites and masses, between rulers and governed. The exceeding of the difference elites-masses is strongly conditioned by the quality of the leadership and the availability of and symbolic economic sources, which represent a not-negligible advantage in the attainment of social integration. (Pasquino, 2000: 525) EU policies have been focused on economic and social cohesion. Recently, the territorial dimension of regional disparities as an aspect of EU policy has gained importance. The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), adopted in 1999 supports discursively a balanced development of the EU territory. In some documents of ESPON Programme 2006 it is possible to find sentences of this kind referring to territorial cohesion. 'Territorial cohesion does not express a geographic unity, but a will to be together, it means a shared belonging. The territory founds the State, territorial cohesion founds a community'.

A Foucaultian utopia¹⁰¹ is in my idea the European nation-state borderline in becoming 'site' of transformation; a ground of 'cooperation' as suggested in the draft of the Constitution. This is because a radically different geopolitical idea appears as a novel way (compared with the modern nation-state framework¹⁰²) in the design of the contemporary nation-state borderline. The European nation-state borderline is becoming a subject capable of a social mutation, no longer to be perceived as 'division' but as 'space'¹⁰³ for 'practices' of relations. As new domain of possibility for socialising institutional processes, the Border State appears as the subject of a no longer geopolitical idealisation as inflexible limit of the State. The Border State is no longer the borderline in-between the pressure of different political systems, but an institutional expression to reframe in a trans-national context. The Border State is mobile, but not as a consequence of the war. The European trans-de-nationalisation process points out with more emphasis about the 'contents' of a kind of institutional creativity at the Border State. The Border State¹⁰⁴ in 'space-making' under the umbrella of a European ideology¹⁰⁵ is an agenda of peaceful relationships.

¹⁰¹ Foucault's definition of utopia in relation to heterotopias is also the main reference of my work because it does not just point to the 'happy' and the 'nowhere' as places and concepts as so often recalled in numerous existing literature on utopia. Foucault considers in the folders of utopias also its reverse; that is the heterotopias. 'Which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted'. Of Other Spaces (1967), Heterotopias.

¹⁰² 'The lines demarcating the territory of the state may still retain political significance but this, at least as far as Western Europeans are conceived, is dismissing in the face of new political, economic and information trends' (Newman, 2002: 288).

¹⁰³ There is a conceptual choice to my use of the word 'space' instead of 'place'. Such a distinction is one of the very problematised topics in political geography. Agnew has given a specific characterisation between space and place meaning which doesn't stop being discussed nowadays. (Agnew J.A. (1987) Place and Politics: the Geographical mediation of State and Society. Boston and London. Allen and Unwin). In 2002 Agnew takes again this concept of the possible intersection between place-making and politics saying that while 'the space' can be meant as 'top-down impact of institutional schemes of spatial organisation and representation' the 'place represents' instead 'the encounter of people with other people and things in the space' (Agnew, 2002:4-5). The intersection is 'the real' that is 'the everyday possibility of popular political action rather than the assimilation of places and their inhabitants into a commanded space driven simply by the imperatives of capital, the State or other single 'motor of history'' (Agnew, 2003: 614).

¹⁰⁴ The border becomes in this case the crucial subject of the idea of territory and society. On the wave of the need to pose more attention to building processes - territorialising - rather than to territorial forms already given of territory some contemporary geographers have reported in the light some concepts which starting from 'natural region' as *genre de vie* have challenged the 'a priori' of political geography. Re-calling for instance the 'flexible regions' of Reclus (La "conception globale de la géographie" développée par E. Reclus (L'Homme et la Terre, 1905-1908 and " problèmes de pouvoir et d'action "). According to these theories the borders are *mobile* according to the historical changing, languages and society and for this reason Reclus didn't draw the borders in his main works. His dynamics are structured through generically and constant 'laws': the bent of the human groups to structure themselves in hierarchies; the irrepressible will of freedom of individuals; the consequential balanced motion between these two tendencies as dynamics between human being-society-environment. (Eva, F. Workshop on Geography and Post-modernity – Società Geografica Italiana, Rome, 26 September 2002).

¹⁰⁵ I write 'ideology' because the concepts of mutation of the borderline into cross-border space imply a revolution in political geographical approach. The border is the political margin of the state; it contains the inclusive political space where the exercise of power container and sovereignty are fully inserted in an elective democracy of legitimacy. Such an

Between supranational and local agencies aimed at building up as such, the 'Utopia' is a concept which in my thesis synthesises this positive imagination of collective elaboration. The nation-state borderline is 'becoming' a discursive 'site' according to the mutation of spatial social forms such as the Working Community and Euroregions. Cross-border regionalism is thus an expression of politicising space at the Border State.

'Of course one might attempt to describe these different sites by looking for the set of relations by which a given site can be defined. For example, describing the set of relations that define the sites of transportation, streets, trains (a train is an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one goes, it is also something by means of which one can go from one point to another, and then it is also something that goes by). One could describe, via the cluster of relations that allows them to be defined, the sites of temporary relaxation -cafes, cinemas, beaches. Likewise one could describe, via its network of relations, the closed or semi-closed sites of rest - the house, the bedroom, the bed. But among all these sites, I am interested in certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect. These spaces, as it were, which are linked with all the others, which however contradict all the other sites, are of two main types'.
(Foucault, 1967)

Metaphorical 'rings of junction' or 'petite Europe' replace the patterns of the nation-state borders in alternative visions of discursive transformations within a trans-national context. New imagery of the 'beyond' in novel forms of meaning transform the nation-state borderline in a process of spatial transition. As analogy at the micro-scale, cross-border regionalism assumes the figure of co-operation model 'mirroring' the European wider integration political ideal of society at the 'local scale'.

'Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilisation, real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are

idea of the nation-state border is the basis of political geography. To Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) is attributed the birth of political geography and the geographic identification of the concept of State (people, territory and borders as proof of the existence of the concept of social order. In 1897, Friedrich Ratzel published *Politische Geographie*, the first systematic approach to political geography (Percy, 1957, p. 22). In this book, Ratzel develops the concept that views the state as "a particular spatial grouping on the earth's surface." The state, as defined by Ratzel, consists of "a human group with definite organisation and distribution" (Dickinson, 1969, p. 68). From these ideas, Ratzel developed the concept of *Lebensraum* or *living space*. Ratzel hypothesised that the state naturally seeks to increase its size. If the state's neighbours are weak, the state will grow larger and spread into other states. As evidenced, Ratzel believed that space was a great political force. This idea of thinking of the border is for me of great effect in the perception of what the cross-border spaces can mean in reporting a deep mutation of the relations overcoming the representation of the border state break down without implying an idea of war. The EU Cross-border co-operation ideal has as assumption the idea of a mutation of the border state that is so far from an 'expansion' idea of a power as state over another state but at its base there is a mutation of the idea itself of space as 'communality' and living space. If the idea of Ratzel could be misinterpreted and used for the wrong purpose as in Karl Haushofer and Adolf Hitler, in formulation of their own theories about world domination. Cross-border co-operation in space-making is essentially a positive utopia because it poses at its centre an idea of peace, opposite the idea of war.

something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place' (Foucault, 1967)

In the European context, the re-shaping of the nation-state borderline in cross-border space through the lens of utopia appears as an 'unreal space' at the moment in which belongs that...

'third level in the hierarchy of human spaces, the knowable one, which is as important as the lived and known ones' (Claval, 2004: 321)

The Border State reflects a positive sphere of society in a framework of European integration. As strategic site of geopolitical meaning it reflects utopia¹⁰⁶ in the relations between space and the society at the present¹⁰⁷. Western European political system has new creative discourses in 'practices'. The imaginary transformation of the nation-state borderline in 'spatial form' is thus within a perspective of trans-national modernisation.

Kotter and Sykes remind us that 'even before the last EU enlargement in 1995 there were about 10,000 km of state borders (60% internal borders, 40% external borders) and even before 1995 15% of the total EU space could be considered as a 'border region' in the wider sense, in which 10% of the total EU population lived'.

The Council of Europe (1996) counted 70 of 235 registered regions as trans-frontier regions within its member countries and at the same time (1996) the Association of European Border Regions (hereafter AEBR) claimed nearly 100 examples of cross-border networks involving regional and local authorities on the borders within the European Union (AEBR, 1996). The political geographer Michel Foucher (1998) has calculated that at the beginning of the 1990s over 12,000 km of new borders were created hence many new border regions (Kotter, Sykes, 2001: 154). Perkmann in his more recent work (Perkmann, 2003: 1530) reports that there are more than seventy cross-border regions in

¹⁰⁶ Utopia has been long time a term associated with the research of ideal models as control of the State in merely elitist paths. I wish to review the utopia term beyond that, towards a 'democratic utopia'. Kundera calls it 'novel'. A democratic utopia is the space where tolerance and curiosity more than research and tension for truth are the principal virtues. My idea of Utopia is conceived towards the construction of a technology of peace in the paths of European integration.

¹⁰⁷ The Utopia I mean is also rooted in relation to the discursivity and deliberative democratisation. In analogy with Habermas (1998) such conception of democracy discursive seeks for the construction of juridical-political 'reason' of justice and freedom.

Europe today operating under names such as Euroregions, Euregios, or Working Communities. At present there are virtually no local or regional authorities in border areas that are not somehow involved in cross-border co-operation initiatives.

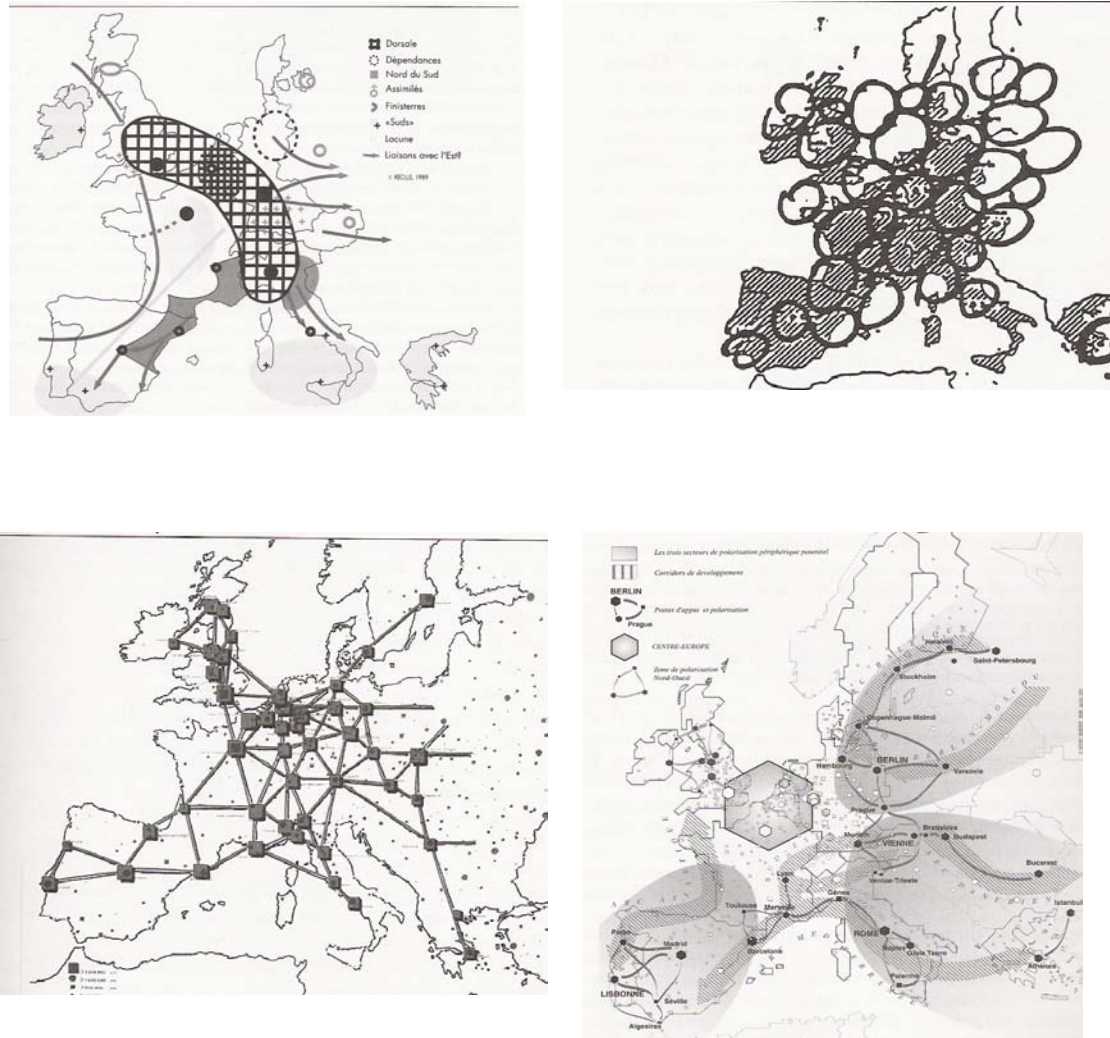


Figure 2.1. - European integration in some well-known visions of integration in a trans-national setting¹⁰⁸

The European Border State in its mutation as institutional process answers in being the tally face-to-face of a transcontinental process of integration as convenient space¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ 1) The blue banana indicating the (core) area with most cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants (Source: Brunet, 1989); 2) The bunch of grapes representing a diversified view of the EU (Source: Kunzmann & Wegener, 1991); 3) Urban Network in Europe (Source: Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and the Environment, 1991); 4) Possible Development of New Global Economic Integration Zones (Source: French Presidency, 2000b-; Guigou, 2002).

¹⁰⁹ Foucault speaks about the four similitudes of the world as 'spaces of similitude' in 'Archaeology of Knowledge' (1978). About the analogy Foucault suggests that they allow comparisons through the space but also within those systems of

My investigation in cross-border co-operation study is aimed at a conceptual problematisation in cross-border regionalism as a pattern of territorial governance. The Europeanisation process is mutually constitutive in trans-national and local settings and proposes a qualitative opening to a process of social construction in terms of agency and institution building in 'practices' at the Border State. I sustain with the term 'Border State' a change in public action transition at the European nation-state border. As I shall argue afterwards, a consistent part of the existing literature aimed at a social institutional approach in cross-border co-operation studies leaves unquestioned the issues of institutional building in terms of 'practices'. Nevertheless, such literature introduces interesting insights on the cross-border regionalism hypothesis. However, gaps on the kind of 'regionalism' which cross-border regionalism describes still miss being conceptualised in a cross-border governance hypothesis. I maintain in a novel way that cross-border arenas' composition is an expression of public actions¹¹⁰ in space making which assume a function of transformation at the Border State. Cross-border cooperation actions attain in porosity or mobility the nation-state border in a 'spatial' conversion. This social space, which surfaces from this process, no longer coincides exclusively with inflexible limits of the nation-state borders. If crossing the nation-state border means extending the potential political space no intimidations are remembered from the border mobility in ancient consequences of wars. The space-time of the European trans-national integration triggers processes of transformation at the Border State in actions of 'trans-local' cooperative policy, framing the intention of a continental stability between the 'European' nation-states. If 'European discourses' consider the 'region' term as a crucial expression, in actions of cross-border cooperation this expression is a conceptual problem¹¹¹ in research accomplishment. While current literature proposes the use of the 'term' as 'regionalism' for cross-border policy, still missing themes need to be addressed in the more actual governance problem.

adaptations and ties or joints. A Foucaultian similitude as '*convenientia*' appears in my idea as an interesting inspiration to the European macro-regional space where the cross-border rationalities transform the contact line at the Border State as strategic locus of neighbourhood partnership.

¹¹⁰ I mean the issue of the categorical elements of democratic governance beyond the state. Zürn (2000) for instance distinguishes a democratic process in both aggregate and deliberative elements. The *demoi* issue is a constitutive process of democracy and constitutive actors in democracy.

¹¹¹ The term 'region' reminds me of the wide range of meaning in the various disciplines of social sciences and in the historical tradition of European countries. In my study 'regionalism' refers to a concept of space. As in Keating, a region is the result of the meeting of various concepts of space. The notion of space itself can have several meanings: territorial space, political space and the space of social interaction, economical space, functional space. It's also an institutional system either in the form of regional government or as a group of institutions operating on a territory (Keating, 1998: 11)

My research investigates a consistent part of the cross-border regionalism literature. I shall argue that such literature remains substantially anchored to a Neo-Marxist theoretical framework. Likewise, recurrent research papers comment that cross-border regionalism in a highly technocratic modern fixed state/space relationships and scale restructuring. I claim that according to such a style of analysis, shifting the temporality issues, cross-border regionalism rests inherently the exclusive domain of the nation-state restructuring. In other words, the space conceived 'inside' a system of nation-state political level, returns to a space 'production' in terms of state or EU capital. Because any additional variable of the change in public actions at the Border State is contemplated, the emerging forms in 'regionalism' do not 'produce' innovation. A hierarchical power in scalar articulation is just re-established as re-composed without any space for questions in novel structuration. Conceptual lenses in current literature on cross-border regionalism label the innovation as such in modest terms. Although using a rather innovative expression as a form of regionalism associated to cross-border cooperation actions, the art of the technocracy composition of the arenas still remains the main topic of inquiry. I maintain that social arenas across the nation-state borders are an integral part of a public action change in active politicising. In such a frame, cross-border regionalism is not seen as social reproduction in 'practices'.

'These so-called cross-border regions are usually rather technocratic entities through which local and regional authorities in border areas pursue their usual goals. This is documented by the fact that Euroregions rarely meet any opposition as they usually engage in community-oriented issues that are aimed at improving the daily life of border populations. This goes hand in hand with their function as implementation units for EU regional policy programmes, which do indeed have a modernising impetus. However, this is far from stating that Euroregions would be able to use European or other funds for pursuing effective boosterist regional development strategies although discursively many of them claim to do so' (Perkmann, 2002: 121).

Various scholars working conceptually on the topic of cross-border regionalism have presented in recent years the same reframe in terms of technocratic results. From them, cross-border regionalism appears as outcomes of a political arena composition, very often ignoring the focus to consider cross-border regionalism as an expression of space making. Sparke, for instance in evaluating the case of Cascadia region building underlines the little resonance in cross-border policy-making terms (Sparke, 2002). Scott also sustains vis-à-vis such institutional processes that

[they] 'change immanently slowly and the region building, contingent as it is upon overlying political contexts can only be judged in connection with the long-term perspectives of European integration as a whole' (Scott, 2000: 105).

No room is given by the current cross-border studies to the actual terms of change at the Border State according to a conceptual relevance of social dynamic of politicising 'space'. Indeed, already from these few sentences it appears that a modest interest is reserved to the topic of cross-border cooperation process as discursive dialectic in 'practices'. My research focuses on the contents of social actions for different kinds of actors in various consistencies of cross-border regionalism as a domain of 'interactive' governance. This topic, in cross-border regionalism is still a missed aspect.

Despite many existing current approaches in literature, which do not problematise the institutional theoretical frames in cross-border regionalism, I sustain that it is in the forms of power relations framework which the public action changes at the Border State. Certainly, if the state-centric model leads our research, cross-border regionalism clashes almost immediately with the limit of not being a given political space expressed by a direct democratic form in reference to univocal hierarchic territorial 'fixed' scale. If the framework is 'a trap'¹¹² to the 'territory' in given power forms, the cross-border regionalism study can offer just a simple evaluation in efficacy of the problem solving in policy terms. As such, cross-border regionalism can be named as 'innovation' eventually in mere terms of policy, taking a certain distance from any factitive geopolitical transformation. Any 'sense-making'¹¹³ is posed in further discussion of cross-border regionalism. My hypothesis

¹¹² Well known and debated the reference to Agnew, J.A. (1987) *Place and Politics: the Geographical mediation of State and Society*. Boston and London. Allen and Unwin. The territorial trap is the territorial power of modern state. Recently Pringle has commented on this work about the persistent and unclear relationship between place and space in Agnew's work so socially oriented but especially in an attempt of general theory, which can emerge from this text. Such comments have obtained an answer from Agnew reading further some suggestions, which he proposed sixteen years ago. This dialogue form is possible to find in *Progress in Human Geography* (2003) V. 27 N.5 pp 605-614. What is relevant is that the theories of Agnew are pertinent to those social and spatial interactions across the border of territorial state as sphere of discussion. One rather famous sentence of his is that 'place is not just local, as setting for activity or social interaction, but also location. The reproduction of the transformation of social relations must take place somewhere' (Agnew, 1984) In 2002 Agnew takes again this concept between the possible intersection between place-making and politics saying that while 'the space' can be meant as 'top-down impact of institutional schemes of spatial organisation and representation' the 'place represents' instead 'the encounter of people with other people and things in the space' (Agnew, 2002:4-5). The intersection is 'the real' that is 'the everyday possibility of popular political action rather than the assimilation of places and their inhabitants into a commanded space driven simply by the imperatives of capital, the State or other single 'motor of the history' (Agnew, 2003: 614). I will return to a concept of power and state in Foucaultian terms, that is in an opening to seek for the 'territory' in the forms of dynamics of social relations as authors such as De Matteis, Allen and Thrift are doing for instance.

¹¹³ Sense-making is defined by Weick 1979 as a process for the creation and re-production of shared social meanings. Social relations are based on rules, habits, institutions, language, and communication, use of symbols and definitions of reality, which serve as a foundation.

is that cross-border regionalism is a form of space-making in institutional design, which implies the European Border State as subject of institutional transformation. In fact, whereas the dominant actors are perceived under a set of given descriptions, which have-or-should maintain the same control 'inside' and 'outside' the national practices, the meaning of cross-border regionalism in terms of policy appears rather limited. Within a framework of hierarchical powers, cross-border regionalism has to correspond to the same consequential models of legitimacy and democracy of 'a given power'. Through such lenses, cross-border regionalism appears within an *impasse* of democratic indecipherability, which with difficulties admits - outside normative forms of 'legality' - other forms of spaces in politicisation¹¹⁴. In order that, also a favourable hypothesis in cross-border regionalism cannot be led further.

'Cross-border regions have become specific objects of policy and not just spontaneous, natural economic territories and that therefore, they represent specific forms of innovation in relation to space, place and scale' (Jessop, 2002: 37)

Jessop poses an interesting hypothesis in a direction of cross-border regionalism as a system of innovation¹¹⁵ in relation to concepts of space, place and scale. However, his suggestion 'solves' the cross-border regionalism in a return to the hierarchical games of the 'political' 'given' as strategies in powers¹¹⁶. Running towards the implementation of strategies at various hierarchical levels - more or less local - all the gear turns once again in the technocratic nature of cross-border regionalism. My aim is to study cross-border regionalism as institutional process stepping beyond this matrix. I propose to change the conceptual framework for cross-border regionalism studies seeking the forms of *politicising*, which are based on relational approaches 'in becoming'. The Border State, similarly to all the other institutions, plays its role in the processes of change and variability of public

¹¹⁴ 'The limits of a theory of politics that derives its terms of reference exclusively from the nation-state become apparent from a consideration of the scope and efficacy of the principle of majority rule; that is, the principle that decisions that accrue the largest number of votes should prevail. The application of this principle is at the centre of all contemporary conceptions of democracy, and it is at the root of the claim of democratic political decisions to be regarded as worthy or legitimate. Problems arise, however, from a number of sources. In the first instance, they arise because many of the decisions of 'a majority' or, more accurately, its representative, affect (or potentially affect) not only their communities but citizens in other communities as well'. (Held, 2000: 337)

¹¹⁵ In this tread, just this third denominator - 'scale' - is actually made more explicit by Jessop. Recalling Jenson and Paasi he underlines that the 'scales' in a post-state system are not pre-given but subject to discursive struggles over mapping and naming and more substantive struggles over their social, material and spatio-temporal institutionalisation (Jessop, 2002: 30).

¹¹⁶ As I will return, in Jessop's theory of cross-border regions he defines nine ways in which such strategies are moving.

action under forms of practices, social identities, social conflict or contestation. As such, the territory as social construction assumes the meaning of active dynamical in societal processes of 'space'. I suggest that exceeding the composition of 'frames' of hierarchical powers, other forms of spatiality become feasible. I shall argue further that to understand the variability of the relations between nation-state border and territoriality at present, new ways in framing space are needed rather than the domains of re-constructing in given hierarchical forms and power accumulation of capital. I suggest the urgency to work conceptually at cross-border regionalism as an appreciable sign of ongoing processes of *politicisation* in current practices of space making. 'Transgressing the territory as a 'trap'¹¹⁷, as form and function¹¹⁸ I lead my research thinking the practices of public action, state and territoriality at the Border State as subjects of relational social interactions in a kind of 'governmentalisation'¹¹⁹. This is my hypothesis for the study of cross-border regionalism in a sense-making of 'practices'.

The kinds of practices are not just determined by the institutions, prescript by ideologies or lead by circumstances - whatever is the role of the one and the other - but the practices have their own regularity, their logic, their strategy, their evidence and their 'reason'. To analyse 'practices' means to consider them as 'site' of a coupling between what one says and one does; between the rules which one imposes on others; the reasons which one gives to himself and between projects and evidence.' '...what we discover is neither a configuration, nor a form, but a group of rules that are immanent in a practice, and define it in its specificity' (Foucault, 1978)

The reference to the Foucaultian 'practices'¹²⁰ is a central problematisation in my theoretical and conceptual framework for the study of cross-border regionalism. I decline the approaches, which lead the nation-state border to being the edge of the 'box' in terms of power. Space making as an institutional process no longer is a practice led exclusively by

¹¹⁷ The territorial 'trap' as very well known is due to Agnew's work. I refer in particular to his further observation (2002:113) on the idea that 'the link between political community and territory is an old one in Western political theory. But only with the rise of the modern territorial state in sixteenth-century Europe has finally a close affiliation between the two been made. Only since then have citizenship and territory been conjoined. This connection has become so taken for granted that much debate in political geography has assumed that territorial sovereignty is a realised ideal and turned to questions about the character of the state apparatus or political institutions associated with different kinds of state (capitalist-socialist, democratic-authoritarian, etc.). There is much to commend this approach, not least because questions about citizenship rights, access to institutions and the role of the states in legitimising social divisions receive critical attention'. (Agnew, J. (2002) "Making Political geography" Arnold Hodder Headline Group. London)

¹¹⁸ On this theme, Blake in *Geopolitics* Vol. 5 N 1 summer 2002 pp 1-8 titled 'State limits in the Early Twenty-first Century: Observations on Forms and Function'.

¹¹⁹ This verb is used by Foucault (1978) as active construction in his work on 'governmentality'. As contemporary internal and external forces to the State, it is for him the dynamic which defines what is pertained, or not to the State itself. Foucault says that the public or the private is included in the general tactics of 'governmentality' too.

¹²⁰ Tavola rotonda del 20 maggio 1978 "Perché la prigione? Quattro risposte di Michel Foucault." in Dalla Vigna, P. (1994) "Michel Foucault - Poteri e strategie" Associazione Culturale Mimenis.

stakeholders and strategies in institutional fix. The form of democratic governance in cross-border regionalism is observable in practices of heterogeneous social participation and in the strategies of political mobilisation. Social mobilisation is an essential aspect in terms of democratic governance because, more in general, social mobilisation is at the base of every democratic process. The attitude of processes of ‘regional’ institutionalisation includes in my concerns a passage to the concept of governance in relation to a meaning of ‘public’¹²¹. ‘Public action’ is in my idea a concept which links the idea of *governance* and *public to cross-border practices*. I consider ‘public action’ as variation during the development of social forms in *knowledge, known, and knowable* spaces according to perspectives of reflexive democratic processes. As a means of mobilising social capacities and resources, my hypothesis is that cross-border regionalism is therefore conceptually a useful means in re-thinking the problematic issue of unsolved ‘democratic demos’¹²² united by political ideals and issues’ (Scott, 2002: 164) as ‘sign’¹²³. My aim is to seek cross-border territorial governance question in terms of processes, which ‘provide orientations, shape identities, and mobilise activities (also) through emotional symbols’ (Blatter, 2003: 503). As such, I continue that cross-border regionalism does not respond - as a sign - to the complete work of an authoritarian model nor is the effect of emerging counter-cultures in complete resistance to authoritarian models. I sustain instead that cross-border regionalism is a ‘sign’ of a problematic path in a social mobilisation at the Border State where a space-making form appears as alternative figures of ‘relation’ and ‘interaction’ dynamics. I call such a process *Politicising*, that is the process in which social actors enter a process of participation

¹²¹ The idea of ‘public’ is here concerned to an idea of governance although it has roots in Dewey’s (1927) theory in my idea which has defined the public as not linked to a specific sphere of contraposition between public and private nor between collective and subjective but much more in posing the issue on the terms of the consequential nature of public. As well known, Dewey points out the ‘public act’ as ‘a collective name for a multitude of persons’ (1927: 75).

¹²² The demos always advocated in the issue or similarity of democracy’s ‘practicability’ especially within the issue of the European dilemma is neither a pre-political entity nor the result of a cultural apolitical sense or even ethnic homogeneity. The components of demos and democracy are mutually reinforcing. Zürn, for instance, said that ‘the borderlines of a *demos* are automatically identical with those of social spaces (see Zürn 2000: 201). Putting the stress on the civic infrastructures of democratic governance the demos has been also recalled as constituted by the body of citizens. Cederman (2001: 156) has also underlined how most post-nationalist proposals have targeted the membership criteria as rights of European citizenship.

¹²³ Of course the reference to the ‘sign’ is also referred to the CBR as a particular event deeply linked to the time of our modernity. Interpreting the CBR as sort of ‘revolution’ of political spatial forms the reference is once again of Foucaultian inspiration in considering how the social arenas that participate in the CBR politicising work also through the alternation of signs. ‘*Signum rememorativum*’ that is the tendency which is revealed by its presence; ‘*signum demonstrativum*’ because it expresses at the present the efficacy of this tendency; ‘*signum prognosticum*’ because from it can spring results that can be called into question. (Foucault, 1983 lesson at ‘College de France’ published in ‘Magazine Littéraire’ n. 207 (1984) ‘On the problem of the present in Kant’)

and mobilisation on the base of various practices aimed in experiment possible strategies in coalition building, experimental learning, and perspective of alternatives and possibility. Cross-border cooperation policy is a social domain inherently political at the moment in which a space for multiple voices opens perspectives for the creation of possible public arenas. Seeking for practices of 'politicising' means leading further the figure of the cross-border regionalism as technocratic arenas. As a domain of governance processes across the Border State, the composition of the social arenas and the articulation of their intentions is an issue crucial in my study.

'What precondition would be needed to achieve a type of territorial governance more attuned to the needs of transnational interest groups directly affected by cross-border initiative? What forms of rationality should be called on to guide its underlying action-frameworks? If there is an ethico-political dimension to this form of rationality how should it be conceptualised analytically? (Kramsch, 2001:42).

Two specific channels are pointed out in this sentence, showing up the problematic transformation of 'public action' in cross-border governance mode: 1) the first is the consideration of power in territorial forms; 2) the second refers instead to an 'internal' network of rationality in the composition of the cross-border arena which can have ethico-political derivation. My suggestion goes back once again to Foucault in an idea of power as a relation; advancing further some analytical categories in which the cross-border governance question will be elaborated. My fundamental query in cross-border regionalism is the politicising of the cross-border space as subject of social interaction.

'Instead of analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, we perhaps should analyse power through the antagonism of the strategies. For example in order to discover what our society means as normality, we shall have to inquire what happens in the field of madness' 'It is a double process, then: an epistemological 'thaw' through a refinement of power relations; a multiplication of the effects of power through the formation and accumulation of new forms of knowledge'. (Foucault, 1983)

Interpreting cross-border regionalism as cross-border governance pattern in Foucaultian terms¹²⁴, I will propose to follow the track of the Europeanisation as a mutual process – between local and trans-national 'contexts' - and the Border State as a variation in its social-institutional function. Cross-border governance can have the meaning of including different ways of social practices and discourses in the path of institutionalisation at the Border State.

¹²⁴ Foucault (1983) Why Study power: the question of the Subject (Introduction: Subject and Power)

In the next paragraph two principal categories are taken into account as forms and subjects, which enter in a cross-border governance conceptualisation.

2.1.1 Europeanisation at the Border State as a Mutual Process

In this paragraph I propose that cross-border governance conceptualisation in cross-border regionalism is a process very located in a mutual process between local issue and European transnational policies. Europe's architecture has provided 'numerous programmes and initiatives' which

'have been launched with the express goal of creating new spatial perspectives for cooperation between cities and regions' towards 'regional policy' where 'space, territory, identity and governance are being renegotiated (or re-territorialized) within (such) an international system' (Scott, 2002: 148-154).

If this affirmation is true it is also true that we are facing new challenges for an understanding of the regional policies, which are emerging from this trans-national perspective in terms of 'practices' and 'processes'. Taking the Border State as subject, the cross-border policies appear fully inserted within the EU trans-national programmes and domestic institutional agendas. The Border-state has also been involved in a process of 'becoming'¹²⁵ new spatial perspectives in regionalism, raising the mutual adaptation between local and trans-national policies. This mutual relationship is currently defined as Europeanisation¹²⁶. Claiming for some dominant features of the internal member states, the European Border State is not just a subject exclusively oriented by supranational intention in integration at macro-regional 'scale'. Nevertheless, the European Border State is not just a subject exclusively oriented by sectional 'local' policies expectations. The development of cross-border 'actions' and 'practices' between supranational and local

¹²⁵ The most inspiring Foucaultian sense of becoming is synthetically expressed when he expresses the institution of the prison saying that 'what I have intention to do is not the history of the institution-prison but of the practice of imprisoning...' '...the problem of the prisons is not to my eyes those of the social workers, but those of the prisoners'. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (NY: Vintage Books 1995) pp. 195-228

¹²⁶ My idea is in line with some reference assumptions: 1) 'European Community initiatives have *re-built the architecture of territorial rules* in Western Europe (Grande, 1994) by a *different institutional configuration* from both the nation-state and international organisation configuring a *sui generis political system* (Koller-Koch, Eising, 1999:1) 2) 'the European integration is a *polity-creating* process in which authority and policy making *influence are shared across multiple levels* of government (sub-national, national and supranational) (Hooghe, Marks, 2001:2); 3) *Political institutions and social agents* embedded within them *respond* in routine ways to changing opportunities and challenges. For example, *change may be a result* of rule following and the application of standard operating procedures to appropriate situations. It may be an *outcome* of problem solving and calculating expected *consequences* or of conflict resolution and confrontations. Change may also be *produced through experimental learning* or competitive selection, contact and diffusion, or turnover and regeneration (Olsen, 2002: 5)

agencies has taken to a mutual exchange with different outcomes in terms of policies and arena consistency. The European integration process has tailored also different meaning in regional declinations as regards the territorial diversity¹²⁷ during its development. Cross-border agencies are increased as interests and resources in domains of existing institutional settings across the Border State. Consequential cross-border policy proliferation has implemented the financial perspectives of the policy associated with the Border State. Within the European picture, in the sphere of potentiality, the borderland arenas have thus assumed a part of relevance in existing (separate) institutions invested in new (co-operative) policy expectations. Most important is that the cross-border co-operation policy; through a fan of actions and policies discourses in the course of cross-border co-operation agency progress has transformed the current public action (a 'transforming Europe') at the Border State. This is a conceptual *governmentalisation*¹²⁸ issue for the European process. If the little signs reveal the 'revolutions', cross-border regionalism as policy is mutating the re-production of 'practices' and 'processes' of social change in politicising space. Across the Border State, outside or in-between the nation-states it is still possible to investigate for new spaces¹²⁹.

¹²⁷ Olsen provides some starting points for this phenomenon in terms of adaptations 'Differentiated responses are likely because the West European political order is characterised by long, strong and varied institutional histories with different trajectories of state and nation-building, resources and capabilities. However, while some domestic actors are proud of their historic achievements and do their best to protect them, others are eager to get beyond 'the burdens of the past' (Olsen, 2002: 20).

¹²⁸ I refer above all to the studies on governmentality and new-governmentality led in the EU as governance context, in particular linked with the nation-state border meaning. Hueglin (1999) talking about the processes of European governance as a project defines 'of universalism' the re-articulation of political space, new constitutionalism and new governmentality. New governmentality 'meant to imply that ideological cohesion only extends to Europe's governing elites or top decision-makers, but does not necessarily include the European population at large'. (Hueglin, 1999: 250). This term refers to an interpretation of the original version given by Foucault (1978) which Hueglin mentions, it is not in my interpretation the main character of the 'governmentality'. Indeed while Hueglin underlines a meaning of governmentality which is linked to a Foucaultian 'state of governing' which no longer pertains essentially to its territoriality as surface occupied but to the people. The territory is a component in which the 'state of governing' is based on means of economical knowledge and security devices. I am in line with a Foucaultian governmentality but not for this passage. In other words, the importance of the Foucaultian thought about the meaning of 'governmentality' is for me not related to the idea of 'territorial' construct - which as reference to 'state of governing'. I sustain with 'governmentalisation' rather than with the current use of the concept of 'governmentality' the Foucaultian intelligence in the 'governmentalisation' of the state. I agree with Foucault on the meaning of state as composite reality in which the importance of our modernity is in the *governmentalisation* as activity. This is for me the essential message of his study on governmentality. The State which 'per se' (itself) is a static concept in this dynamical sense of Foucaultian 'becoming' is a fundamental inspiration in my idea of cross-border regionalism study.

¹²⁹ This term is particularly debated in contemporary political geography. Within such a debate it is my choice to speak about cross-border regions in terms of *space* that is in relation to power in regionalisation forms. My interpretation of the concept of space in this case means and recalls a space of relations of power (the Foucaultian relational power) in line with Allen's concept of 'spaces which are not bounded cells hollowed out within the structures of an over-regulated system but more porous spaces of relational challenges between politics of connection' (Allen, 2004: 29) 'constituted through actions of those close at hand working in alliance with others more distant from the immediacy of power's

The EU aim of integration constitutes a sort of policy-idea, the ‘paradigm’ for my line of argumentation. Cross-border co-operation experiences at the Border State in ‘trans’ ‘local’ contexts reflect moreover the ‘regional variety’ of European diversity. On the basis of Euroregions and Working Communities as institutional process of cross-border regionalism have been drawn. New patterns of governance in cross-border regionalism are emerging for social action. ‘*Europeanisation*’¹³⁰ seems thus the more appropriate concept to frame cross-border regionalism as processes of mutual adaptation in domestic possibilities and supranational intentions. Cross-border regionalism is a conceptual in-between ‘the emergence and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance on the domestic structures of member states (Risse, Cowles, Caporaso, 2001: 1). But also and above all cross-border regionalism is a conceptual in-between the *formal structures* and the shaping of *informal structures* which are not just ‘inside’ a process of transformation *on* the existing structures (Europeanisation and domestic change) but *part of* domestic change (Mair, 2004: 339) encompassing the penetration of European dimension in national areas of politics and policy (Featherstone, Radaelli, 2003: 29).

‘The concept of Europeanisation is important because it reminds us that integration is a complex process that can’t be reduced to one thing. 1) One way to think of Europeanisation is to imagine that it has created *two-level games* out of what were previously single or independent games. Domestic actors now have to act simultaneously within two arenas (before two publics), sometimes strategically and sometimes not. 2) One claim is that Europeanisation *strengthens the state*, that it empowers state actors, gives them capacities they did not have before...states have lost autonomy at the same time that they have acquired capacities (but not autonomous capacities, rather joint capacities). States can thus forge and carry out policies in many areas of complex interdependence where previously they just had to adjust to the unilateral policies of others’ (Caporaso, 2004)

Border State is a discourse of this interdependent process. Maps representing European border regions or the current metaphor of the borderlands as areas ‘bridged’ across the Border State communality as are part of the Europeanisation discourses. A tendency

presence..’ and configure spaces ‘whereby a process of collective mobilisation is sustained through networked interaction at points distant in space and time’ (Ibid.)

¹³⁰ Although this term is chosen in this circumstance for an explanation of CBRs emerging inside the EU process I need to immediately clarify a position between schools of thought and the red-line linked to this argument toward the Europeanisation dimension. Indeed the term has assumed different shadows of interpretations because ‘Europeanisation has not a single precise or stable meaning’ (Olsen, 2002: 1). The ‘bench-mark’ is for me a literature pertinent to the relationships between the EU international institution and domestic effects in *feedback and through political processes of mutual adaptations*: Conzelmann, T. (1998); Knill, C. and Lehmkuhl, D. (1999); Bozel, T.A and Risse, T. (2000); Schmidt, V.A. (2001); Goetz, Hix (2001); Cowles, M.G, Risse, T. and Caporaso, J. A. (2001); Olsen,J.P. (2002); Featherstone, K. and Radaelli, C. (2003); Mair, P. (2004) and Caporaso, J.A. (2004).

toward the cross-border spaces is in the air. Europe will transcend its ancient *divisions* within its time of ‘exploration/experimentalism’ and ‘institutional innovation’ in an expression: across the nation-state borders.

Within the Europeanisation project at least two of its ‘faces’ are completely exposed to cross-border co-operation policies as a dimension of institutional change at the Border State.

‘1) *Changes in political organisation*: cross-border co-operation emphasised) the development of an organisational and financial capacity for common action and (cross-border) governance through processes of reorganisation and redirecting of resources; 2) (cross-border co-operation emphasised the) *changes in structures of meaning* and people’s minds (linked to the border). That is, focus is on the development and redefinition of political ideas – common visions and purposes, codes of meaning, causal beliefs and worldview – that give direction and meaning to common capabilities and capacities’ (Olsen, 2002:8 – my additions between brackets).

The ‘practices’ of ‘regionalism’ at the Border State in a conceptual context of Europeanisation constitute a still missed topic in current studies. Starting from the two general sentences reported just above concerning Europeanisation I shall compose in the following a first elaboration in which I want to introduce cross-border regionalism in policy terms. The definition of Europeanisation (Caporaso, 2004) maintains that its functioning is moving through the creation of two level games. This means that the Europeanisation process includes the actors in a cycle of policy interdependence in multiplex adjustments, no longer based or founded on unilateral policy adjustments by member states. Let me elaborate this thought in the light of cross-border cooperation policies and further towards the changes that Europeanisation at the Border State introduces according to Olsen (2000). Re-thinking Europeanisation on the horizon of the cross-border cooperation policies can be useful for an understanding the transformation at the Border State in terms of politicising spaces. Europeanisation is a process that introduces a situation, in which the actors, working at existing institutional domains, are involved in trans-national policy possibility. In cross-border regionalism such a transformation concerns a process of new institutional form. The actors involved in the new spheres of cross-border policy struggle with their own original contexts of separated nation-state policies towards new cooperative possibility, rules, outcomes, and expectations. This is a substantial change in the frame of public action in cross-border cooperation policies. Part of this change is that the ‘local’ domains involved in a ‘definition’ of cross-border regional policy transform their usual aims.

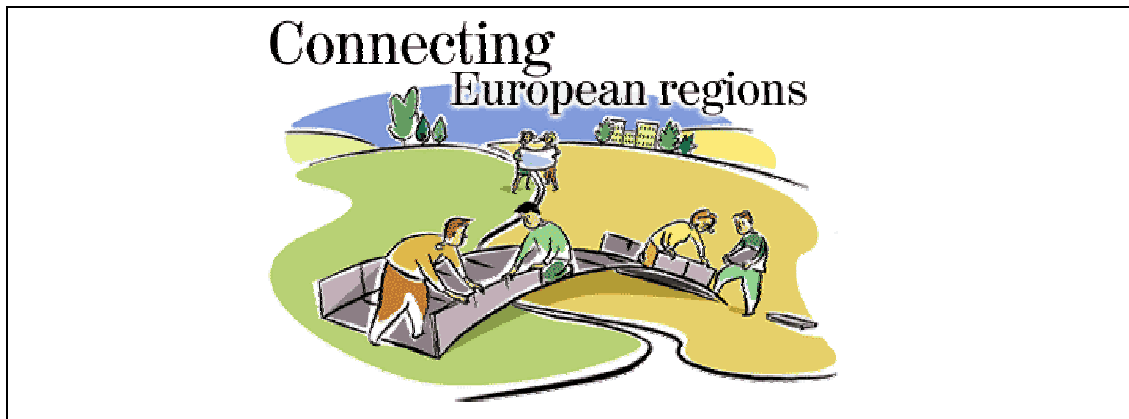
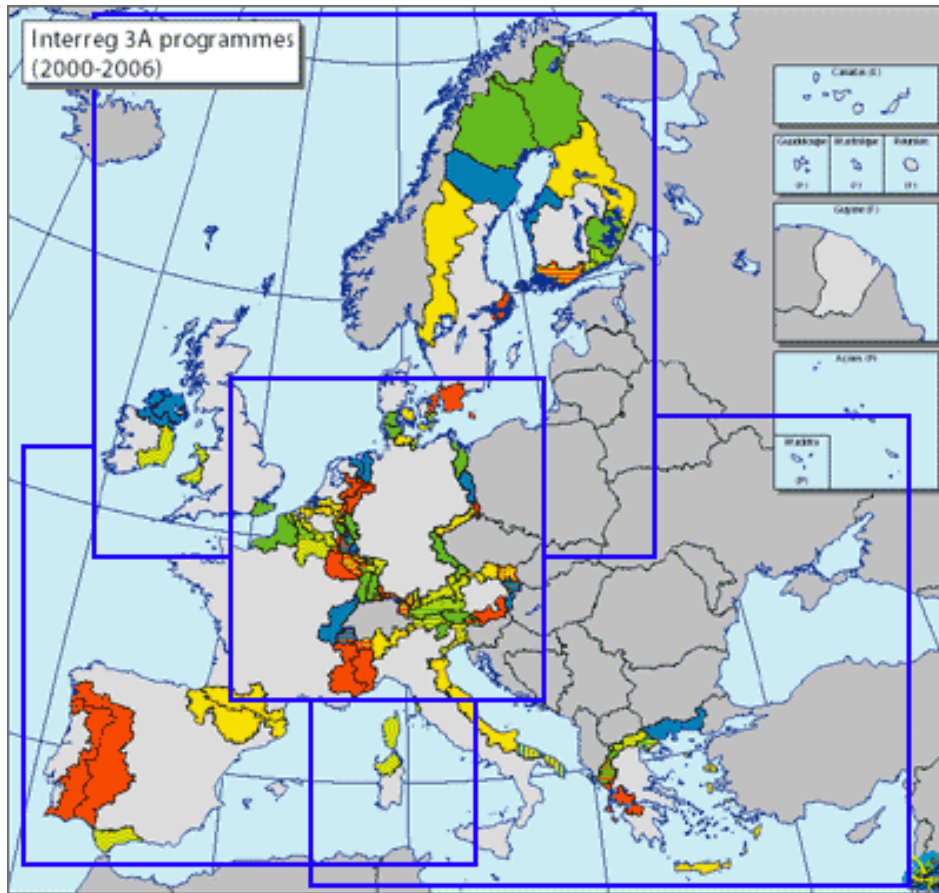


Figure 2.2. - Map of Europe at its Borderlands also as the metaphorical 'bridge' of the INTERREG programme areas

Even in considering just like example the case of a sectoral specific policy to manage through EU cross-border cooperation policy, appreciable changes occur. Indeed, in the hypothesis in which homogenous arenas, political actors participate in cross-border cooperation policy, the entrance of such a policy overlapped rules and routines in existing institutions within the nation-state borders. This has an impact on new requirements in terms of policy. EU cross-border cooperation raises 'itself' to the domestic domains because it consists of a new institutional path of co-operation across the systems of the

nation-state. Caporaso introduces the metaphor of the 'two-level game' to explain such a process. Such a simplification introduces the hypothesis that at the Border State in domestic domains, cross-border cooperation policy transforms: 1) the homogenous arenas in co-operative models of policy across the Border State (involving levels and sectors of non-homogeneity as different instruments and tools, different levels of 'practices' and 'normative' capacity, different possibility of 'actions' in implemented existing policies); 2) the heterogeneous arenas – more or less domestic - which in the existing institutional setting work currently in-between nation-state territorial spheres and local societies, in coupling. Cross-border cooperation transforms their fields of action into a not-given institutional design of cross-border regional policy intervention (both these spheres usually have their own expectations as regards the result that the cross-border co-operation should take up in symphony or in breaking with existing policies or institutional setting within the nation-state borders). In other words, the cross-border arena composition hypothesis is in itself a means for the actors and their actions to be inserted in a political state system to be immediately placed in another conceptual type of 'hegemony'. Cross-border regionalism is a process of negotiating and contesting 'powers' where 'the societies contain a plurality of discourses and discursive sites, a plurality of positions and perspectives from which to speak' (Fraser, 1992). So that, in an analysis centred on the actors, cross-border regionalism became first of all a strategy in communication. The actors, opening current rules and current practices to their expectations towards cross-border cooperation, can develop discursive figures creatively. Cross-border regionalism does not pose a problem of 'integration' in terms of 'harmonisation' of practices across the nation-state borders in institutional domestic domains. Cross-border cooperation is essentially a social process in which social conflict and contestation are an integral part of such a process in regionalism. As an institutional process based on the creation of a new ground, comparative characters of convergence or comparability between political systems are not indispensable. For this reason the conflict and the contestation between social groups and the political representatives on both sides of the nation-state border are part of the mobilisation and of the social attitude in cross-border regionalism creation. The existence of social contestations can actually have the function of mobilising certain spheres of interest between nation-state 'political' actors and other social and political systems across the nation-state border. Implementing the European discourses at domestic levels. Essentially all this gear is that which Olsen (2000) withdraws as a 'change in political organisation' as

one of the faces of the Europeanisation. As regards this topic of the change in political organisation at the Border State, cross-border cooperation is part of the Europeanisation phenomena. Aggregative institutional settings at both sides of the Border State through cross-border cooperation policy change their policy discourses too. The sound of cross-border regional policy is also that of being, for the domestic levels involved, a new possibility in alternative policy, shifting into other spheres of decision their voluntary participation. As a policy of Europeanisation, the cross-border cooperation policy works in the gears of the nation-state institutional existing setting in implementation. However, I continue that as already observed speaking about Caporaso's two-level game hypothesis, the meaning of the 'implementation' can follow a different path as regards the current policies between the actors involved. Naturally this concern has not just technocratic results in the composition of cross-border arenas. 'Implementation' can be a result in terms of social practices and in terms of policy discourses. Other spheres in the path of cross-border institutional design in progress can let actions not strictly marked by system of rules. Not a priori cross-border mode is given to the actors in interaction. The participation or the exclusion of certain kinds of actors in cross-border arena progressive definition or new actors on its stage has a high value as implementation of 'practices'. Authoritative control from current dominant actors, in cross-border cooperation policy is not direct but instead can reproduce a sort of *multi-level network governance* both as pertains to the participation of the actors or in mobilisation of actions. In other words, the cross-border regional policy in practices of institutional process changes the structures of meaning associated to the Border State in various ways. Olsen points out this issue in his second point relative to Europeanisation. Interpreting Europeanisation as regards cross-border cooperation it emerges that the definition of the 'practices' during the development of cross-border regional policy are extremely influenced by the Border State as a social idea. In other words, from common or shared visions of the Border State as imaginary transformation derive a consequential hypothesis of the contents in cross-border cooperation policy. The cross-border regional policy has *itself* its problematisation of change in the meaning associated to the Border State in domestic domains. Institutional social processes at the Border State, can show the tendency to share or to deliberate common problems towards a requisite of institutional transformation. The variation of organisations and agency at the Border State through cross-border cooperative actions re-frame a process, which enlarges the field of the dynamical politicising of the space. In this

case, collaborating in the stabilisation of a trans-national policy in regimes of peaceful practices.

2.2 EUROPE AS A CONTEXT FOR PUBLIC ACTION CHANGE AT THE BORDER STATE

In this section I elaborate a conceptual track to follow on the change of the conditions starting from current literature. The Border State is introduced as an alteration from the borderline to cross-border regionalism. I'm wondering if it's still necessary to start from a general definition of international 'border' or 'boundary' as perhaps a priority necessity to lead a thinking that is moved between 'containers' (borders), 'contents' (regions), and 'actions' (to cross). All these terms are in high favour of fluidity at a time in which

[The] boundaries of nation-states have to be conceptualised less literally and with more fluidity: the presence of a border affects local and regional conditions on both sides in varying ways' (Shelley, 2003: 605).

The patterns of nation-state territories are one of the main differences between modern European-style 'political organisation and the types of polity that prevailed in nomadic, clan, imperial, absolutist, and feudal societies around the world in the past' (Agnew, 2002: 113). The effects of the Europeanisation practices at the Border State correspond to a stage of our time in European modernity. This is the time in which another political spatial organisation across the nation-state border occurs and struggles with the terms born in the shadows of nation-state patterns. I propose the use of terms as 'region', 'actions' and 'to cross' in consequential form as conceptual choice in explaining the transformation of public actions at the Border State. My analysis concerns both the topic of the public action change and those of the 'territorial transformation' in cross-border regionalism as forms of institutionalisation change. Both such categories are considered conceptually according to social space processes at the Border State. My background is the assumption that, in such a matter, 'the container and the contents are mutually formative' (Anderson, O'Dowd, 1999: 594).

2.2.1 Borders as Lines: Constructs and Processes

Borders. Very well known are the linguistic variables of word¹³¹ and those attempts, made from different theoretical scientific approaches in social sciences to attempt qualitative

¹³¹ Several papers report similar distinctions, for example Anderson, O'Dowd, 1999 in *Regional Studies* Vol.33 N.7 pp. 593-604.

definitions. The Border State as a phenomenon in transition, as construction and meaning associated with political processes, has been supposed from many categorisations in physical and political geography theories. The variability of historical changes occurred in the main transformations in political system have passed through it. Beyond the attentions for the study of natural borders¹³² conceptualisation, the artificial human constructions of the borders has become a topic closely associated with the essence of contemporary political geography. In pre-modern time the distinct jurisdictions affected all areas of public life: foreign trade implications on tariff policies, language of education policy. The overall effect of these policies was to combine in a single line what was the state border, all possible distinctions between territories: language, law, security, and identity. With the construction of the 'national borders', these margins came to be seen as lines of conflict and consequently as security-sensitive zones. (Christiansen, Jorgensen, 2000: 74). The function of the nation-state borders is therefore synonymous with 'territory' in the course of the XX century.

'Borders' refer to the legal lines separating different jurisdictions; or to a 'frontier area' of variable width on either side of this legal line; or simply to a broad 'zone of transition' between different societies and centres of power, as was more typical of pre-modern states and their 'frontier societies' (in Anderson, O'Dowd, 1999 recalling Barlett and Mackay, 1989).

Newman reminds us that there is a distinction, which traditionally has been made between the notion of 'boundary' or 'border' and that of 'frontier'. The former is the line, demarcated and implemented by a government, while the latter is an area or region in close proximity to the boundary. (Newman, 2003: 280). But this area of proximity is socially definite or relative to the social perception of the Border State.

'The border is the peripheral organ of the State which bounds a territory in which the citizenship, constituted by a political group, exercises the sovereignty'. The border is the geographical linear limit because the sovereignty of two states needs a clear separation which cannot be overlapped. The border is a rigid line, which it is not possible to bend but instead can be broken for exceptional events like wars. It can be conceived as a balance-line between the political pressure of two national states which follow the tensions and the evolutive tendencies

¹³² Very well known the quotes of Hartshorn (1933) on the natural borders and the categorisations of Pounds (1951) and Jones (1943). For a discussion on the debate between concepts and conflicts of natural or artificial borders - from Kristof (1959) to Scholler (1957) and Boggs (1940) - in recent years some scholars in borderland studies - for instance Rykiel (1995), Van Houtum (2000), Newman (2003) have proposed some interesting overviews.

according to the relationships between the power relationships and the political doctrine which preside over the definition of borders¹³³ (Vallussi, 2000:5)

What is a suitable definition for the ‘internal’ (but inter-national) political borders of the contemporary European Union seems to be an issue in question today. Under different profiles they seem just a little alike the borders which Vallussi describes. Yet there is a cue to this very kind of border in some official documents concerning EU policies. Europeanisation has mined the domains of the ‘political pressure’, which the Border State symbolised, thus including the Border State as a subject of change in the framework of the EU transnational setting. The Border State as a structure of meaning in transition is nowadays open towards new social domains. Although the EU policy paradigm remains in many aspects still a conceptual framework for economical and social cohesion on the way to territorial cohesion, the Border State is the critical ‘site’ in such policy orientations. As such, the Border State becomes a sort of ‘invention’ in institutional creativity for a transnational stability. The Border State is a process originated by political sentiments and by practices of the everyday life. The Border State copes with social and political structure of meaning.

‘The presence of borders cuts off border communities from each other economically, socially and culturally and hinders coherent territorial management. In the past, national policy often neglected border areas, which were considered as peripheral within national boundaries. However, the single market and economic and monetary union (EMU), together with the prospect of enlargement, are gradually eroding this state of affairs and cross-border cooperation is becoming one of the burning issues facing future European integration. [Official Journal C 143, 23.5.2000]

The definition of political border is related to a concept of nation-state. In the context of nation-state the functions performed by the government are inevitably bordered in ‘spatialised’ and ‘territorialised’ governance. This is the concept of political border: an absolute division between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, which has defined the modern nation-state system on the principle of territorial sovereignty. The nation-states are bordered in the exercise of the power in their legitimacy, the citizenship rights, the investment subsidies, the welfare payments, the military defence, the laws, the media are subject bordered as well. All the most crucial elements of modern public life end and begin at the political nation-state border (Christiansen, Jorgensen, 2000). As Foucault considers in his

¹³ This definition is reported in Italian in the volume ‘Il confine Nord-orientale di Italia’ by Giorgio Vallussi in the new edition edited by Pio Nodari (Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia, 2000) in the introduction page 5. The English translation is by the author.

'governmentality' work, from Machiavelli to La Perrière and beyond, the 'subjects' of the power with reference to the art of governing. The 'government' is based on the principle of sovereignty always debated on the relationships between two 'things': the territory and its inhabitants. Sovereignty is the attitude through which the government exercises on the territory and by consequence on its inhabitants according to a juridical principle.¹³⁴ Within the Westphalian political order the territoriality and the people-hood concepts have been the two basic principles of political organisation, group formation, and identification in Europe (Bornerman, Flower, 1997). They are unthinkable without the presence of a boundary.

'Boundaries as lines that enclose state territories have constituted a major theme in the study of political geography...because they enclose the territory, which defines the spatial extent of the state. In the pre-globalised era of the Westphalian state, the boundaries defined the area within which sovereignty was exercised by the state (Newman, 2003).

According to Wilson and Donnan frontiers have three components: 1) a national legal borderline which divides and at the same links together the states; 2) the physical structures of states which exist to mark and to project the borderlines, deeply rooted in the state territory; 3) the territorial zones which can assume different width and in which people can bargain a variety of meanings and behaviours associated with their members and nations (Wilson, Donnan, 1998: 9). From these three types three signs linked to an existing state-nation emerge essentially: the territory, the State, the identity. The nation-state borders are government instruments created to distinguish between groups (in-group is that of the nation and out-group is that of those which belong to other communities and nations). Naturally the colonial era has disturbed this 'isomorphism'. Many scholars in recent years are still wondering if frontiers and borders are necessary in a Post-Westphalian State era; how they can be justified (Anderson, 1996: 1) and studied (Anderson, 2002). Some of them have raised the issue of the nation-state border in a framework of institutional change, which involves a social mobilisation. For instance, Anderson says that the borders between nation-states involve institutions and processes of institutionalisation and for this they have a meaning. A process of change at the Border State is mostly perceived as a social construct beyond the administrative 'value' of the border. The nation-

¹³⁴ Middle Ages in XV century: the sovereignty is not exercised on 'things' but on the territory and on its inhabitants (Machiavelli). XVII and XVIII centuries: La Perrière introduces the principle of governing on things, which is then taken also by Foucault (1978) on the reflection on the governmentality on the 'state of governing'.

state border is the political institutional base indispensable to every role of political, economical or social life contained in them and indispensable for every aspect of social organisation. However, it can assume the meaning of a 'social process'. In Anderson's work, we can find more explicitly the linkage between the three issues of the nation-state border study: territory, State, identity. The borders for him are mostly processes, which answer to four dimensions:

- 1) Borders have an instrumental dimension of the State's policy caused by their location. They can express a function, which is that to protect and to promote their interests. I think that this first dimension is linked to the territory as social use or land-use that is to the actions of policies foreseen by usual government levels;
- 2) Borders have the function to limit by the degrees of control the political dimension in government practices. At this point Anderson also points out the fact that the nation-state borders are not impermeable to external influences and that the flows of goods, people or information through the borders can change the nature of the States. As such, the Border State can work as 'indicator' of a change in the relation between 'control' forms¹³⁵
- 3) Borders mark national identity but the political identities can also be bigger or smaller with regard to the nation-state. Borders in this case are part of political beliefs or of the myths about the unity of the people and sometimes myths of imaginative communities which can transcend the national borders as a natural unit of territory;
- 4) Borders have a dimension as terms and discourses and the meaning of the borders change according to the context of study or the theoretical approach adopted. To this assumption is linked the fact that border can be a term which identifies a barrier or can assume a different meaning according to the everyday life of the people who cross them or involve the images which people have of the border.

Anderson underlines an important essential aspect: 'Borders represent' and the human beings that are regulated or bounded by them constantly build up what they represent. The different and divergent images of the borders are an integral part of borders as processes. Anderson particularly emphasises in his work borders and frontiers as processes in four

dimensions; discourse which leads further in his writing on the European frontiers. I found his concept of *reconstruction* of the borders and frontiers particular important. In a social constructionist approach any phenomenon is to be considered as a social construction and thus as an object of possible change and social re-construction. Social reconstruction means to refer to phenomena, which are shaped in communication, dialogue, and sense making. The meaning of reconstruction as resulting is also influenced by political changes. The term 're-construction' in terms of social constructivism with reference to the Border State change leads to the European supranational policy as part of its process of reconstruction. As such, this aspect has to be considered in conceptual terms concerning the *kinds* of change, which are induced at the Border State.

2.2.2 Border Changes and Permeability

Interregional and cross-border co-operation has emerged as a powerful instrument for the promotion of European integration. Starting with the official opening of the borders of the internal market on 1 January 1993 and the launch of structural funding for cross-border collaboration at the beginning of the 1990s 'Borderless Europe', 'the economics of co-operation' and 'the policy of co-operation' have become new streams of this promotion (van Houtum, 2000). In mutual adaptation with the Europolicy effect, the Border State as process (Anderson, 1996, 1998) no longer assumes the meaning of irremovable term, which protects the relation between political space and territoriality. New terms such as border 'permeability' or border 'porosity' have been introduced into a European vocabulary.

'The boundaries have become more permeable and impacted by trans-boundary movement of goods, people and ideas' (Newman, 2003: 277,278 citing also Minghi, 1963; Prescott, 1987; Hudson, 1998; Paasi, 1998).

The Border State is a process, which leads essentially social processes in two trends: de-construction and re-construction. Elaborating the dimensions explained by Anderson in the light of European policy, it emerges that such de-construction and re-construction processes change the nature of the nation-state borders. The Border State represents the contemporary synthesis of the mutual change in meaning border, regions and trans-nationalism in European space and time:

¹³⁵ Peter Sahlins has worked on this argument for instance about the relevance of the Franco-Catalan border transformation.

- 1) Border is no longer univocal instrument of the government in guarantee the protection and interests within a region; trans-nationalism has changed the process of governance at the Border State;
- 2) Borders no longer coincide with the politics and the practices of governing within a region; the Border State is consistent in 'practices' highly influenced by policies promoted across the member-states in a trans-national European space;
- 3) Borders are no longer coinciding with political local identities within a given region; the Border State consists in sharing common interests or desires of visions of a local cross-border society as an integral part of the political systems;
- 4) Borders are no longer fix structures of meaning, limiting to fixed regions, which divide the people in different sites; the Border State transforms the structure of meaning through the images of political community in cross-border community building.

All these aspects of transformation, which I have proposed starting from Anderson's categories, can address with more confidence the mutual adaptations I mentioned above concerning the Europeanisation phenomenon. The Border State as social dynamic is shifting essentially within a trans-national framework of references and possibilities (or windows of opportunities) versus domestic domains. Cross-border 'regional' policy dimension is perhaps situated in-between these spheres of socio-political influence. The change of meaning in permeability of the international borders is continuously caused by the participation of regional and local¹³⁶ institutions in cross-border cooperation policy. This has provided a substantial impulse for the construction of international arenas. Indeed 'for local and regional authorities engaging in cross-border cooperation it means they enter a field long reserved for central state actors' (Perkmann, 2003: 154). I want to propose a concept of local participation in cross-border cooperation policy at the Border State as not a direct concern with the creation of 'preferential channels' between 'domestic' and 'supranational' levels. 'Local' and 'European' are processes of governance which shift in continuous interaction between several scales of competencies pertaining to national, regional or municipal level. To be concerned about governance processes rather than 'scales' doesn't mean losing the 'territorial' paradigm. In governance processes, the

¹³⁶ Local institutions participating in cross-border cooperation policy can change their current style of exchanges in policies which are much more strictly led from the central government.

territory is 'becoming' a subject of relations; it means that the territory is no longer the model based on sovereignty in state-centric regulation. If the sceptical reader is still thinking that to speak about cross-border cooperation and cross-border regional policy is so far from 'territorial' paradigms, I shall say that territorial governance is not a static/perpetual concept. It shifts in time. The contemporary mobilising actions in favour of new modes of governance and new meaning of regulations are nowadays shifting our 'territorial' framework. Cross-border regional policy is a meaningful example of these 'signs' of territorial governance in alternative to the state-centric model. The Foucaultian suggestion of the State as 'composite reality' supports my hypothesis of a *relational territorial governance*. 'The state' is its essence an abstraction; it has no meaning 'per sé'; the activity of 'governmentalisation' gives to it a fundament. In my idea a concept of 'territorialisation' appears within such a concept of 'relation' and 'activity'. The Border State is thus the 'site' where interactions of 'territorialisation' are spaced by social relations in cross-border activities. In other words, the Border State is the subject of *relational territorial governance*. Leresche and Saez point out that

[The] border may be a barrier, a schema for the differentiation of systems of political organisation and economic exchange, and of cultural structures and feelings of belonging; [but] on one hand it may be a form of contact in which these diverse systems of differentiation connect with one another and with other systems and their experiences relatively' (Leresche, Saez, 2002: 77).

The 'governmentalisation' of the Border State implies that a system of relations in interaction across the nation-state borders occurs. The border as a function of contact-barrier in which 'Janus' re-emerges can also be interpreted as a kind of 'permeability' in transformation of the condition of the borders as subject in-between territorial entities, regional or local communities. The channels of interaction in cross-border cooperation activities involve also national borders and sub-national authorities.

'...on the increasing of permeability of the boundaries in an era of globalisation, characterised by growing levels of trans-boundary movement and cooperation is a particular characteristic of Western European experiences as this region moves ever closer towards a federated political union with the borders between states gradually being transformed into administrative boundaries' (Newman, 2003: 281).

Anderson and O' Dowd (O' Dowd, 1998; Anderson, O' Dowd, 1999) mention the 'Border change' as completely new, revived or geographically relocated state borders. As such, it consists in changing the symbolic meanings and/or the material functions of

existing borders in situ. This definition of 'border change' is similar to a more recent definition of boundary permeability, which Newman proposes as a kind of transformation

[in]to which interaction takes place in borderland regions on both sides of the boundary. This in turn reflects the nature of the political relations between neighbouring states and the extent to which trans-boundary interaction can facilitate peaceful political relations (Newman, 2003: 280).

The change in 'interaction' is a common theme in recent literature, which considers the topic of the border change. As such, European policies in a context of transnational governance change the traditional role the state-border 'dispersing' a variety of territorial levels across 'functional borders'. Shift in governance 'below the state'¹³⁷ and 'above the state' through the construction of the Europolicy, frames effectively this interactive process in which border change occurs (Christiansen, Jorgensen, 2000: 71-72). The multidimensional borders of the European context have no allusions with regard to the collapse of borderlines in jurisdictions. The borderlines between nation-states continue to exist and still have an important function. Nevertheless, they encompass new spatial phenomena 'subjects' of other complex multiplex social processes¹³⁸.

2.2.3 Crossing Borders: a Kaleidoscope of Actions for a Regional Declination

The contemporary geographic narratives on territorial boundaries point out the fact that, as also Newman reports, the boundary phenomenon is dynamic, rather than static and passive, and that the demarcation of lines (spatial or social) affect the people who live and the way in which communities identify themselves and interact with those that are located beyond their own specific compartment. (Newman, 2003: 282).

'The concept of 'border' is in a process of functional differentiation, which means economic, legal, political and identity spaces are increasingly bounded separately' (Christiansen, Jorgensen, 2000: 71).

The concept of border as spatial-process lets me find a line of continuity between the literatures, which consider the change at the nation-state border, and my suggestion of the

¹³⁷ This also through the local participation in policy foreseen 'transnationally' as for example cross-border cooperation in Europe

¹³⁸ This assertion mentions to a concept of space and territory not in a traditional way as I have sketched in the first chapter. The territory and the space are here intended as relational and outcome networks in interaction. Functional networks without a centre of final authority and sovereignty power (which is linked to the concept of territory in a traditional way) shift the attention in geographical space. I shall argue that that is not losing the 'territory'.

'Border State' as a 'site' where interactions of 'territorialisation' are spaced by social relations in cross-border activities. I will lead further my conceptual framework leading both such ideas towards a meaning of cross-border regionalism (hereafter CBR). Regions that straddle state borders - Cross-Border Regions - have grown in number and importance in Europe (Anderson, O' Dowd, 1999: 595) starting from the Euroregion experiences and the micro integration episodes at the Border between member states.

'The term Euroregion refers to a generic organisational concept involving voluntary cooperation between local governments (for example cities and countries supported by quasi-parliamentary councils) and devoted to the definition of regional transborder policies' (Cohn, Smith, 1995).

'Euroregion is a common board and administration of a small or large number of sub-national public territories at both sides of one or both sides of a common national border' (Walters, 1997: 226).

The CBR term has become a more inclusive word which embraces processes at the nation-state border that, caused by cross-border cooperation activities, have given 'regional effects' more or less institutionalised and shaped within Euroregional forms. In Europe the CBR is also contested as specific supranational strategy through 'a pincer movement from above and below'.

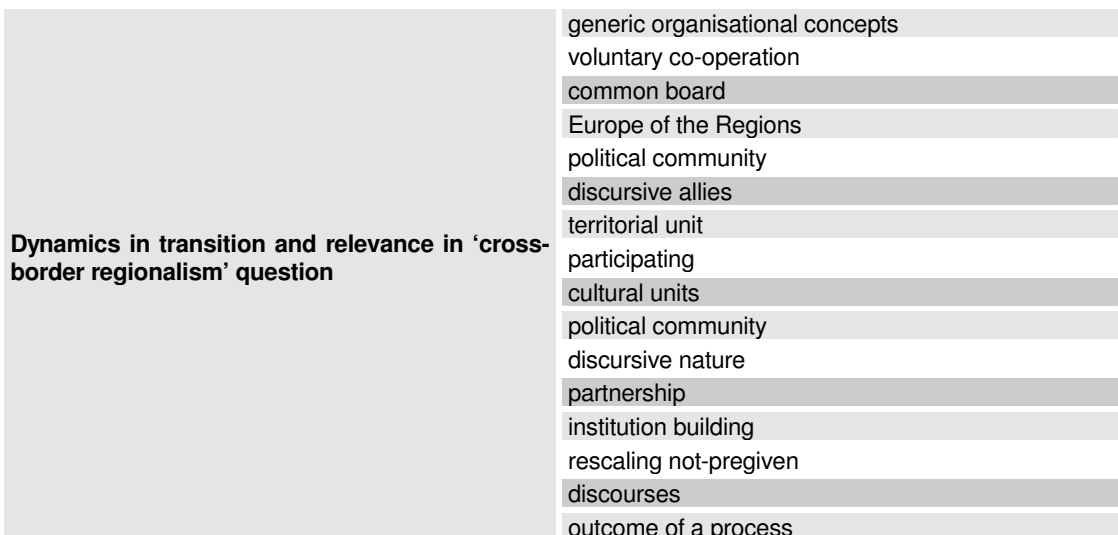
'This can be illustrated by the strategy of the Europe of Regions. This strategy involves inventing new, indirect modes and means of steering lower level tiers and non-state actors so that they become strategic allies of the European Commission' (Jessop, 2002: 11).

Perkmann for instance defines a Cross-Border Region as 'a territorial unit that comprises contiguous sub-national units from two or more nation-states' (Perkmann, 2002: 3) or more recently a 'bounded territorial unit composed of the territories of authorities participating in cross-border cooperation initiatives' (Perkmann, 2003: 157). This kind of *territorial unit*, which bases its subject of social relations is concerned in my thesis. In my view, the Border State is a form of 'space' composed of interaction between mutual politicising of the Europeanisation processes and of cross-border activities. Cross-border social spaces are emerging as a path of institutional democratising across the state borders, in other words in a structure of regionalism.

2.2.4 Cross-Border Regions: Gaps in Existing Institutional Approaches in Literature

Studies on cross-border cooperation activities in recent years have accounted a regional declination. However, the meaning of regionalism in cross-border actions appears still an unquestioned domain. Regionalism at Border State implies the definition of its consistency. Jessop reports that in CBR ‘the border is a unifying rather than a dividing feature, i.e. where the border functions to integrate not divide and which is therefore planned as a whole, not as two (or more) separate parts’ (Jessop, 2002: 5). As Anderson and O’ Dowd point out ‘the Cross-Border Regions may have an underlying cultural unity not congruent with state borders or, alternatively, their *raison d’être* may be the very border that divides them. In other words, regional unity may derive from the use of the border to exploit, legally or illegally, funding opportunities or differentials in wages, prices and institutional norms on either side of the border’ (Anderson, O’Dowd, 1999: 595). Scott points out that ‘trans-border regionalism is defined in terms of emergence of new political communities that transcend national borders and traditional mechanisms of interstate cooperation. Strategies through support for trans-border regionalism have been marshalled and are both material and discursive in nature and stress concepts such as ‘partnership’ and ‘institution building’ (Scott, 2000: 104). For Jessop the CBRs belong to the various regional sites and spaces of economic action in a wider context of rescaling of economic, political and social processes. He points out how in these (new) contexts it is important to note that there is no pre-given set of spaces, places, or scale that are simply being reordered (Jessop, 2002:3) because (recalling Newmann, 1993; Jenson, 1995; Paasi, 2001) they are subject to discursive struggles by mapping and naming and more substantive struggles over their social, material and spatio-temporal institutionalisation. Also Perkmann points out ‘how the ‘regionalism’ of a CBR cannot be taken for granted but has to be understood as the outcome of a process of social construction’ (Perkmann, 2003: 157). However, all these issues so sketched by these scholars remain too often anchored to label as ‘regionalism’ a phenomenon, which concerns ‘practices’ of ‘social contents’. The regional declination of cross-border cooperation is not problematised in current studies. What does ‘region’ mean in cross-border cooperation activities? Which shifts in processes open a specific regional system in terms of cross-border organisational coordination? Which features are at the basis to label such an institutional configuration? In the

kaleidoscope of definitions just sketched above about the definition of CBR many key open concepts, suggestions and tracks have appeared. However, the result of such a ‘reading’ I have proposed is no more than an abstract drawn of a disordered field of dynamics in transition (Scheme 1.2) where ‘generic organisational concepts, voluntary cooperation, common board, Europe of the Regions, political community, discursive allies, territorial unit, participating, cultural units, political community, discursive nature, partnership, institution building, rescaling not-pregiven, discourses, outcome of a process’ are different dimensions of the same phenomena. My research for ‘key words’ leaves open many questions which remind me as regards regionalism of the famous sentence of Keating ‘regionalism is a complex phenomenon which cannot be reduced to the notion of a ‘level’ in the new territorial hierarchy’ (Keating, 1998: 28). The Keating’s regionalism definition thus seems based on the essential reference to ‘space’. Another source in CBR comes to mind. Perkmann and Sum define CBR ‘regions *as* figures of non-bureaucratic institution building which are governed through partial and irregular structures that often operate in a *network-like* manner’ (Perkmann, Sum, 2002: 3). Also Walters speaking about Euroregions poses the issue on the *specificity* of the region term use. ‘It’s a region *in the sense of* a closed *geographic unity* with inclusive and sometimes exclusive characteristics such as cultural, economic or social ties amongst the constituent parts in different countries’ (Walters, 1997: 226).



Scheme 2.2. - The kaleidoscope of terms in use from different definitions of cross-border regionalism

Scott says that ‘cross-border regionalism *can be seen* as part of a process of *political regulation*, operating at different spatial scales and describing a *spatially integrated* approach to problem-solving involving actors from local, regional and central level (Scott, 1999: 606). More than to encompass the question about the kind of spatiality which the ‘regional’ term expresses in a cross-border domain, all these assumptions let me elaborate the thinking that the regionalisation in cross-border is in its very essence a process. A process where some conceptual forms ‘meet’ as ‘deterritorialised’ (for instance the reference to the networks, involving actors from local, regional and central level) but also others which are ‘reterritorialised’ (for instance the reference to regional identity, spatial integration, political regulation). In other words, CBR seems to appear fully inserted in a question of new types of regionalism in which

‘Regions are the product of *decomposition* and *re-composition* of the territorial framework of public life, consequent from changes in the state, the market, and international context. There is no new territorial hierarchy to replace the old one but a diversity of new forms of territorial action’. (Keating, 1997: 383).

Summary Chapter 2

This chapter started with a reference to the European Constitution concerning the European dream to transcend the nation-state borders in their meaning of ‘divisions’. I have proposed a reflection on the use of the language in the document as part of the discourses, which alter the geopolitical transformation of Europe at its borders. Ideal forms of transnational and peaceful relations emerge in-between the nation-state borders. The Border State is such a utopia of ‘comfort site’ able to ideally encompass the marks of the nation-state borders. The Border State is a spatial form, which has a direct relation of analogy with European society. This utopia transforms the nation-state borders into a space for socialising institution in cross-border activities. Cross-border spaces have the eventual function in maintaining peaceful relations of a transnational context. Cross-border regionalism reproduces the ideal of European transnational integration, mirroring the principles of the integration at the local domains. This chapter has then proposed a critical insight on current literature in cross-border regionalism, which pertains to the technocratic function of the cross-border arenas. I have sustained that frameworks based on exclusive domains of nation-state restructuring needs to be re-framed in the dynamics of societal processes in space making. In suggesting seeking Foucaultian ‘practices’ of politicising for cross-border

regionalism processes, I have sketched two channels through which ‘projects’ and ‘evidence’ of democratic territorial governance can converge in a ‘relational’ analysis of the power as ‘antagonism of the strategies’. As such, I have interpreted the seeking for intensification and ramification of ‘power’ in cross-border governance pattern. First, taking into account Europeanisation as a mutual process, which transforms the transnational framework and the local possibility at the Border State. Second, analysing through the current literature how a set of political situations and social necessities can be re-conceptualised by reason of changing conditions at the nation-state borders: from the *borderline* to the *permeability of the border* and to *cross-border regionalism*. From the latter, I have suggested a kaleidoscope of gaps and missed terms in current definitions of cross-border regionalism. My conclusion is that in new types of regionalism no territorial hierarchies replace the new ones but new forms of territorial action occur. In the next chapter I will take again such a concept of cross-border regionalism in a framework of regional space (Keating, 1998). More than a definition, my analysis aims at a ‘regional meaning’ identifying the categories, which can compose a framework for CBR ‘sense making’. A regional issue about *functional, political* and *territorial* space is leading towards two main references in literature on cross-border regionalism (Scott, 1999 and Perkmann, 2003). Starting from these references, I suggest a new interpretative dimension on cross-border regionalism in institutional design. Cross-border regionalism as institutional design is here an evolutionary process addressed in three strands: 1) the geographical scope; 2) the types of actors; 3) the cooperation intensity. All these strands are here associated to the transformation of ‘public action’ into actions of *regionalisation* in cross-border social space. The problem of institutional governance building in cross-border is then a problem of conceptual re-composition in democratic governance pattern. I attempt in the next section to give a contribution in this orientation starting from a shift in new governance. In a framework of ‘networking governance’ (Eising, Koller-Koch, 1999) and ‘political frontier regime’ (Leresche, Saez, 2002) I maintain that a meaning of cross-border regionalism as an institutional governance building emerges as a form of institution, which conceptually works by complete relations restructuring its ‘effects of truth’ also through its discursive practices. This can establish a line towards a *relational* geography of ‘territorialisation’. My chapter concludes suggesting the premises for advanced cross-border regionalism as a form of *relational territorial democratic governance* at the Border State.

EU CROSS-BORDER REGIONALISM: A TRANSGRESSING ‘TERRITORIAL
PATTERN’ FOR A GOVERNANCE ‘MODE’?

This chapter pertains to the problem of cross-border regionalism as a territorial governance mode. Starting from the concept of regional space, I argue that cross-border regionalism attains dimensions in functional, political and territorial rooms. An interpretation of these dimensions suggests two phases in which the ‘institutionalisation’ path in cross-border regionalism has a place: institutional design and institutional building. The institutional design¹³⁹ is an aspect greatly concerning cross-border regionalism in an evolutionary process of re-designing the institutional change at the Border State. As such, I consider in this chapter a critical approach to the issues of CBR as: 1) regional cross-border identity question; 2) political mobilisations and social strategies of participation; 3) territorial mode of governance. This latter aspect is an opening towards a conceptualisation of CBR as institutional building in a synopsis of governance. To the cross-border governance mode understanding, I reserve an extended second part of this chapter. I argue that this abstract term identifies a process of re-composition in partnership in an attempt at heterarchic coordination. I conclude that cross-border as institutional governance building works as a relational form on coupling with other institutions and in interaction with other social actors in regime of adaptation, alternative and learning. From this, cross-border regionalism can be considered as a form of discursive practice, or better as a tendency towards discursive forms of institutionalisation, which lives through relations.

The existing current literature in cross-border regionalism has left still unquestioned many orientations on the *kind* of regionalism in processes of the ‘practices’ CBR defines. Other dynamics of relevance intervene in cross-border as domain of activities more than in other contexts of ‘regionalism’. The existing literature has emphasised the social focuses of activities at the Border States in forms of regionalism taking for granted the specific context which they refer; a neo-liberal ‘Europe with the Regions’. I consider in this chapter some importance in conceptual issues about the change that cross-border regionalism introduces as an evolutionary process in relation to the ‘regional’ meaning. In public action of crossing borders this means considering at first the sphere of ‘structure’ of a process in

¹³⁹ Olsen (1997) is my main theoretical reference to the institutional design concept. ‘Institutional design refers, firstly to a process aimed at producing prescriptions, organisation charts and plans usually with some adaptive rules for coping with unforeseen circumstances. Here, however, design signifies purposeful and deliberate intervention that succeeds in establishing new institutional structures and processes, or rearranging existing ones, thereby achieving intended outcomes and improvements. That is, design is understood in terms of a chain of effects from human purpose to desired results’ (Olsen, 1997: 205)

‘new’ institutional design which works in regime of adaptation and learning in-between existing trans-national and local institutions. I attempt a classification of analytical categories, which emerge in CBR as a spatial process of regionalisation.

‘...a region is a framework and a system of action which has implications for the distribution of political power and the content of public policy. A region is necessarily a territorial demarcation but within this there is scope of variety of functional processes. It’s also an institutional system, either in the form of regional government or as a set of institutions operating in a territory. It may constitute itself as an actor in national and external politics, geared to the achievement of a social and economic project’ (Keating, 1997: 383).

CBR can follow trends of regional processes. Keating’s definition has given me some elements, which are in line with the CBR inclusion in such a domain of institutionalisation. Cross-border regionalism responds to the sentence that ‘the region is not a natural entity but a social construction’. However, the ‘regional meanings’ in CBR is concern more ‘a question’ rather than a ‘definition’.

‘We can speak about regional space as territorial space, a functional space, and a political space. Most of the regions appeared rather late on the institutional scene, but *wherever there is a space*, they can be institutionalised, they can become a *political forum* and *eventually* constitute themselves as *actors*’. (Keating, 1998: 18)

The ‘kaleidoscope’ (Scheme 2.2.) I just tried to explore in the former chapter composes a picture of terms in a framework of *regional space* (Keating, 1998). In terms of CBR problematisation the current literature does not pose with enough emphasis the regional issue in the light of ‘regional’ process (functional, political, territorial). This has conceptual consequences, which need to be addressed. Let me first go through these different aspects of CBR construction:

a) *CBR and the question of functional space*. This is perhaps the first question, which pops up in one’s mind if one think about cross-border regional construction. Such an aspect blends both the need for coordination to pursue common and shared intentions and interests on the border and to manage them ‘in cross-border manner’. Relative to the scheme 1.2 reported in the previous chapter, the functional question can group such terms as: generic organisation, voluntary cooperation, Europe of the Regions, political community, discursive allies, participating.

b) *CBR and the question of political space.* Keating's definition seems to be particularly suitable in this case:

'Political space means a space in which political debate takes place, a space recognised by political actors in which decisions are taken and legitimised. This may not necessarily correspond to autonomous government institutions.' (Keating, 1998: 21).

For Keating the construction of a political region - or perhaps politicising a regional process - depends on several factors: the construction of regional identity, the party system and the organisation of civil society. Some concepts sketched in the CBR 'kaleidoscope' return to this category such as: cultural units, political community, discursive nature, partnership, institution building, re-scaling, but also networks. Defining the CBR question in its political nature, the construction of the political cross-border arena and its influences involves mainly a pattern of governance as well as discursive practices.

c) *CBR and the question of territorial space.* The territorial demarcation of a 'given territory' is a process of construction and an eventual result of political and social interaction actions. A territorial demarcation can even be the outcome or the product of cross-border actions. As regards my initial kaleidoscope in this type find place the concepts of: closed geographic unity, common board, territorial unit, no-pre-given scale, and outcome of a process. This latter aspect can also be correlated to the policy orientations at the base of a cross-border policy domain.

From CBR studies specific other sets of problematical definitions occur within the set of this initial framework:

Perkmann (2003: 159) points out three relevant dimensions in his conceptual grid for exploring different types of CBR: 1) *geographical scope* (character dimensional, numbers of regional institutions involved); 2) *cooperation intensity* refers to the strategic capacity of cross-border body (degrees of autonomy vis-à-vis central state and other authorities); 3) *type of actors* (local authorities are distinguished from regional authorities). Scott (1999: 614) emphasises much more the issue of cross-border regionalism in terms of political and social processes creating 'new *spatial* contexts for action' founded on 1) 'particular *forms of political and economic regulation* that mediate between local sociologies and demands imposed on localities and regions from outside; 2) a *cognitive construct* that is shaped by regional self-awareness (for example in relation to shared problems), by material incentives and by

overlying discourses of interdependence and integration in Europe. For Scott such two tasks delineate three kinds of ‘sources’ for cross-border regionalism study in Europe¹⁴⁰ grouped into three strands: 1) *Cognitive* (defined as the process of creating regional self-awareness: identification with common problems and development contexts as precondition for establishing communities of interests): for EU CBRs he indicates types of actors mainly in the sphere of public-sector (and to an extent NGOs) develop regionalist focus in the management of administrative tasks and problems that transcend national boundaries; 2) *Discursive* (the creation of ideological platforms and paradigms which provide political legitimacy and orientation to cross-border regionalism): his association with EU CBRs is in this related to the greater European integration project and its economic, political and social perspectives; 3) *Material* (institutional framework: resources and incentives that encourage cross-border cooperation): multi-level cooperation institutions; prospects of European and national support for cooperation initiatives.

Such problematical definitions leave us with a number of ‘open questions’ about the processes of CBR construction. The examples just cited above are attempts which aim at CBR conceptualisation. Nevertheless, such concepts remain mostly anchored to a framework of legitimacy rather than to seek for a problematisation on the regional issue. In my attempt the political institutionalisation/legitimation is an aspect concerning the issue of ‘governance’ in politicising cross-border public actions.

In the more general definition of *regional space* given by Keating, the functional, political and territorial spaces can be addressed in terms of CBR according to specific categories to enquire. A review of all the issues posed according to this framework point to some evolutionary processes, which can identify a basic agenda for a re-conceptualisation.

For example:

- 1) CBR as space in which political debate takes place;
- 2) CBR as space recognised by political actors;
- 3) CBR as space in which decisions are to be taken and seek for legitimating;
- 4) CBR as pattern of governance processes.

Taking these aspects and reviewing the works of Perkmann and Scott I would like to propose the following qualitative dimensions for my re-conceptualisation of CBR. Each of these dimensions represents an important trend of qualitative change in CBR.

¹⁴⁰ As well known, Scott’s study (1999, 2000) is oriented to a comparative analysis between the cross-border regionalism in Europe and North America. I will take his study just for the part relative to the European context

- 1) *Functional*: Perkmann’s ‘geographical scope’ can be interpreted towards a regional cross-border identity in an aspect of qualitative transformation; this aspect is linked to the creation of a *space recognised* and following Scott, towards ‘cognitive’ processes;
- 2) *Political*: Perkmann’s ‘types of actors’ belong to both relations and diffused *strategies* between levels and sectors of interest which can converge in a cross-border regional space also through multiple social arenas – also in conflict concerning interests or strategies between them. Intercepting the domains where political debate takes place, this process can be related to an interpretation of Scott’s ‘material incentives’ and multi-level cooperation;
- 3) *Territorial*: Perkmann’s ‘cooperation intensity’ can be re-structured within a field of governance within the European political frontier regime; to this can be related Scott’s ‘discursive sources’ towards the process of cross-border regionalism.

Sources of Cross-Border Regionalism in Europe (Scott, 1999: 614)	Types of CBRs (Perkmann, 2003: 159)	Re-conceptualisation of qualitative dimensions of CBR	
		Regional spaces in evolutionary process	Qualitative change in CBR
Cognitive	Geographical scope	Functional/Regional	cross-border identity question
Material	Type of actors	Political/mobilisation	social strategies and ‘public’ in multiple social spaces
Discursive	Co-operation intensity	Territorial/ modes of governance	attitude in politicisation cross-border space

Scheme 3.1. – The interpretative dimensions of CBR problematisation starting from the approaches of Scott, Perkmann and Keating interrelated

These qualitative dimensions I have elaborated are analytical purposes for analysing the CBR and the problematisation of the transformation of public action therein.

While the functional and political dimensions can be part of a process of CBR as *institutional design*, in that as an expression of institutional intentionality, the territorial dimension is much more related to a concept of *institutional building* in an expression of interactive processes and negotiated policy definition in a hypothesis of politicisation of the cross-border space. Indeed as functional and political dimensions, CBRs call into play different hierarchies and

networks as patterns of interaction in social spaces and kinds of consequential 'public'. The territorial dimension further calls instead a question on the 'mode' of interaction, which is in my idea is the essence of cross-border governance pattern.

'Design' usually suggests a type of explanation that focuses on changes in the purposes, reasoning and power of identifiable political agents. A structure is created and changes as a result of problem solving and conflict resolution among purposeful actors' (Olsen, 1997: 204).

As Olsen refers, the 'design' is more likely when political and social actors evoke aspects other than an institution's instrumental value, in particular deontological concerns. The institutional design process is thus linked to an aspiration to specify how a restricted set of factors limits or expands specific historical and cultural contexts. In institutional design the aspects of learning processes and adaptations are also pre-conditions in the evolution of the design itself. The aspects functional and political, which I have just considered in scheme 2.1 as regards the CBR, are fully inserted in a 'projection' of institutional design. This is the domain where an institutional structuration occurs. The institutional design does not assume to be a domain structured in institutional building but it refers much more to all the characters of 'intentionality' which occurs for the structuration of a domain of interests, collective moral, causal beliefs in establishing new institutional structures. For this reason, the cross-border identity question and the political mobilisation are in my suggestion sources of a cognitive geographical scope and of types of actors mobilised by incentives and policy possibility in cross-border cooperation. The *'territorial' problem* as governance mode is no longer concerned with institutional design. The institutional building is a structured domain in which these issues of the institutional design are interrelated in the sense-making of a process of politicising, representativeness and legitimacy: a) CBR is a domain where taking decisions seek for *legitimizing*; b) CBR is a domain of governance based on coordination and voluntarism. Indeed Perkmann for instance gives an input to these two aspects solving the issue of CBR in institutional building in terms of 'autonomy' speaking about 'strategic capacity gained by the cross-border body and its degree of autonomy vis-à-vis central state and other authorities' (Perkmann, 2003: 159). Scott is oriented to propose the EU in its supranational and ideological form of integration as the discursive legitimacy criteria in cross-border regionalism. To this point I will return speaking about cross-border governance as a *mode of interaction*. However, in the consideration that 'governance' in cross-border includes processes which are more concerned with social mobilisation and participation in

multiplex social spaces in which the actors and the actions can change in their consistency with regards to the current regional policies, the answer to the models of 'legitimacy' which the CBR can find in institutional building re-structure can perhaps being projected in a future mode of democratic territorial relational governance.

3.1 CROSS-BORDER REGIONS AS INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

'In the current world, regionalisation increasingly reflects processes that are associated with the international division of labour, modern technologies and globalising markets, where social practices (in economy, governance, culture) occurring at various spatial scales come together in complex ways.' (Paasi, 2001: 8)

The kind of 'regionalism' associated with the cross-border activity is not void of ambiguities within a conceptual research of 'definitions' in CBR studies or in new regional studies. If suggestions are not lacking in the domain of 'regional' research, conceptual orientation about the linkage, which links the space-making as base of institutionalisation processes at the Border State.

'[Cross-Border Cooperation] participates fully in the re-definition of regions' relations with the state and territory, with regard to both representations and traditional territorial articulations. Thus, far from witnessing the demise of 'territory', we are witnessing the return of territories: fragmented territories, diversified territories, and recomposed territories, but nevertheless the return of territories as the subject and object of public action'. (Leresche, Saez, 2002: 93)

¹⁴¹In the previous chapter and in particular speaking about the regional evolution and the interpretative factors which 'matter' in a cross-bordering space configuration, I've assumed that functional, political, and territorial dimensions constitute a framework (also) for a CBR experimentalism. Indeed, if these characteristics are important and crucial in every regional building as design and setting, in cross-border terms they can assume interpretative aspects also in terms of discursivity. In scheme 2.1. I have proposed that the central problematic factors of my interpretation three phases are concerned which are of consequential importance for the regionalism in CBR :

¹⁴¹ Leresche and Saez include governmentality as one of the main issues together with production of wealth and identity in which the attention of social science is focused as the reshaping of social and political order (Leresche, Saez, 2002: 77). This concept is thus proposed by the same authors under shaping of framework to indicate the different regimes in the passage between government, governability and governance and proposing an interesting scheme which links these frameworks of public actions with the meaning of border as territorial status and its political expression of sovereignty as the indication of dominant actors, typical institutional form, representation of social group, types of public policy, form of cultural relations and frontier symbolism. An interesting interpretation from Leresche and Saez is moreover the using of the French language to propose in the different regimes a particular term to define the border: in the government one it is the limit, in the governability crisis is the marked term and in governance the synapses. (see Leresche, Saez, 2002: 82-84).

- 1) *Geographical scope* becomes a *cross-border identity question* in functional form;
- 2) *Types of actors* are considered according to their strategies in *multiple social spaces* as public action;
- 3) *Cooperation intensity* is interpreted as *cross-border cooperation* activity in a dimension of *political/ising space* and *territorialisation*.

All these three problematic dimensions constitute the main qualitative transformation of public action in CBR, which conceptually should be considered dealing with the issue of cross-border governance.

3.1.1. Transformations as Dimensions of ‘Public Actions’

The Geographical Scope: Cross-Border Identity in Question as a Functional Dimension

The functional dimension takes back a geographical scope that, as I explained above, can be interpreted as what a cross-border identity problem and as an aspect of qualitative transformation. This aspect is linked to the creation of a *space recognised* in ‘cognitive’ social processes. CBR processes proposing re-bordering spaces or admitting kinds of porosity on the issue of the border is an issue of ‘regionalisation’ as cross border regional identity problems. My issue about the cross-border identity¹⁴² does not seek for a definition, which ‘fits’. This section is oriented much more to study how identity problems enter a CBR building process as a functional dimension. I refer in this case to Bagnasco, who says¹⁴³ that *identity is*:

¹⁴² This cautionary way is caused by the fact that identity is often used in current vocabulary associated with ‘community’. CBRs are in my study considered as local societies and as structures of the contemporary society. According to Alessandro Pizzorno (Teoria Sociale all’Istituto Europeo di Fiesole), the identity term can be referred to ‘predictability of values’ for instance. To this concept I will return later during this writing.

¹⁴³ The author changes the original Italian version, Arnaldo Bagnasco (Literature and Philosophy University of Turin) refers to *individuals* instead of the *collective* in such a definition. In the original version: ‘Una problematica dell’identità riguarda i modi in cui gli individui definiscono la propria situazione e si collocano all’interno di un campo simbolico, tracciando dei confini; come essi stabiliscono modi di selezionare e ordinare le proprie preferenze fra sè ed il mondo, trovando il senso della continuità del proprio essere sociale’ (pp. 30). I’ve substituted the term ‘individuals’ with ‘collective’ referring to Alessandro Pizzorno who (referring to collective identity) says that ‘*the individual is a variable*’. He follows saying ‘when we speak about individuals we mean – in a social observation – a unity which is ascribable to certain acts. These acts have some characteristics (for instance: coherence, forms of referability), such refer-abilities can be between acts which are not performed by the same individual but also by more than one individual. More individuals are linked to a role. So, coherence, continuity and predictability (or not) can be related to a role as part of a system and not to a determined individual. With this turn of the concept is more ‘appropriate’ the meaning of a collective identity problem in a CBR social local reality.

'the ways in which [a collectivity¹⁴⁴] defines its own situation also within a symbolic field; drawing borders and how [this collectivity] *establishes* ways to select and to order its own preferences; how it maintains during the time its borders and the differences between itself and the world finding a sense of continuity of its own *social* being' (Bagnasco, 1999:30).

I chose this definition in starting my argument about identity in question because it is more aimed at a social meaning¹⁴⁵. The importance of borders is indeed very concerned with an identity issue and with processes of institutionalisation. At the Border States the path of institutionalisation can become subject to alternatives in the 'practices' themselves. This means to consider as an alternative the possibility of constructing or admitting in coexistence the desire or the need for a multiplex regional identity. Bagnasco's definition points out a series of important issues, which are also in line with the well-known assertion proposed by Paasi:

'Identity *is part of* the institutionalisation of regions, the process through which regions come into being' (Paasi, 2002: 140).

In the case of CBR such assertions cannot be taken for granted even if we can sense interesting perspectives of analysis in the sort of region 'in becoming'. The identity issue in CBR appears a complex argument because such a regionalism pertains to a domain of policy aimed at establishing relations of social nature across existing nation-state domains of public action. CBR is thus product of cross-border regional policy in public actions.

'Identity expresses an intrinsic sense of belonging to a particular group rather than to preferences across some set of policies...identity is a force for jurisdictional stability' (Hooghe, Marks, 2001: 15).

The question: what are the preferences, to which kind of groups they can be referred and how to join them in a jurisdictional stability are rather ambiguous because of the cross-border situation. I shall elaborate these concepts taking the last observation of jurisdictional stability introduced by Hooghe and Marks. I maintain that CBRs do not impose the creation of new jurisdictional 'lines of stability' (substitutive to the existing ones). The 'transformation' of 'public action', which occurs in crossing the nation-state border through various 'practices' in political arena construction or in every-day life. Cross-border regionalism lets in ways in which the collective actions are moved in

¹⁴⁴ Identity can indeed be referred to 'modi di essere collettivi' (ways to be collectivises) (Bagnasco, 1999:30)

¹⁴⁵ Indeed it is towards a social meaning that is much more oriented in my research and not to a 'community' meaning. I will explain during this writing why.

alternative ways, not just within the border but also across them. The topic of the juridical stability is thus particularly interesting in view to consider the CBR conceptualisation because it can involve a meaning of political stability¹⁴⁶. The political stability is the ability of a political system to last during time but it is not identified with a stable equilibrium. The equilibrium can be unstable that is, it can comprise situations in which stimuli and perturbations induce in a political system a series of arrangements according to which such a system assumes consistent or different positions regarding the previous ones. A democratic political system remains stable if it is able to adapt itself to the challenges that come from the 'environment'¹⁴⁷. The concept of stability can shift towards those of 'political community'.

'The whole of a group in which the members share the political work pursuing focuses that the members alone couldn't pursue' (Morlino, 2000).

However, to this argument about the community I will return later on. In the first chapter indeed I have spoken about the reference to a 'function', which is changed relative to the Border State according to a trans-national vision of the European political constitution. In my view the issue of stability is very crucial in the passage towards stability in a trans-national political context. In other words, the CBR is fully part of a political system - the EU -, which is looking for forms of 'stability' in trans-national and relational forms of institutionalisation. Of course this first suggestion is not the only one, which can be sustained conceptually together with a need for regional identification in cross-border manner. Reflections about European cross-border regionalism seem to me crucial in-between 'reasons' of 'identity problem' and 'regional identification' in terms of transformation of public action at the Border State. My first insight is dawn from a critical review of Paasi's work (2002) pointing out the problematisation of the CBR identity towards a regional identity. Secondly, I will turn to the issue about the 'regional identification' starting from a concept of 'cultural identity of region' (van Houtum, Legendijk, 2001). Both these strands are, in my opinion, very concerned with the

¹⁴⁶ Several are the definitions of stability of a political democratic system. Several authors have advanced definitions according to different 'aspects' or 'degrees of relations' to define the concept of political system in a democratic stability. Almond and Verba (1963) have spoken in this regard in terms of 'civic culture' for instance; Lipset (1963) has written about three components related between them in terms of 'system in stability' a) economical and social development; b) legitimacy; c) efficacy; Eckstein (1966) considers then the 'models of authorities' issue as in congruence with the civil society. The most interesting approach which I will return to later on is that proposed by Huntington (1968) where political stability is a balance between institutionalisation levels and an adequate level of participation.

¹⁴⁷ Such a definition of 'political stability' is given by Morlino (2000: 1097) *Dizionario di Politica*.

functional dimension of CBR. My attempt is the elaboration of these concepts in a 'transposition' on the emerging characters towards a cross-border region conceptualisation. In his 'deconstructing' Paasi distinguishes a process of regional identity analytically. My first passage is to elaborate these distinctions in terms of the cross-border regional problem:

- 1) In the first analytical category named 'territorial shape', Paasi gives greater relevance to the boundaries (or non-boundaries), which, by 'various social practices' provide to identify those regions by other regions. This first assumption has a relevant part of the CBR shape/ing process. In CBR the border is contained and identifies a particular characteristic: a cross-border region is 'making bridges' in figured crossing the nation-state borders through public action. As a result, the territorial shape in cross-border is not given a priori, but much more a state of mind. This means that it involves both the everyday practices (existence of 'habit' to cross the border for workers or to shop) or the symbolic character of the landscape (presence of parks, lakes or mountains across the border) can belong. The shaping in CBR is an incremental process design not defined a priori (it can become a focus and develop during cross-border cooperation regional policy; in general it cannot be a precondition). The cross-border regional shaping can eventually play high symbolic attitudes in which the existing nation-state border 'minds'. As a line of social contact between shared habits or as reference point across the border between communities. In other words, cross-border cooperation integrates the spatial practices and the function of a line-contact associated with the border and the intention to become a common 'ground' of action.
- 2) Paasi then introduces the concept of 'symbolic shape' which includes the name of the region, numerous other symbols and narratives. This is a topic very concerned with CBR. Cross-border cooperation arena can activate means aimed at communicating a symbolic re-shaping of a cross-border region (re-bordering); creating new maps (also not yet concluded) or/and new naming. Shared problems or conflicts around the construction of the arenas at the base of cross-border cooperation accomplishments can become part of CBR narratives.
- 3) A factor of resistance is introduced by Paasi speaking about a number of institutions which need to maintain territorial and symbolic shapes and which 'usually produce and re-produce distinctions between regions and social groups (us/them) these institutions may just as well be located outside the region'. Factors of resistance to

cooperate in cross-border between institutions at the Border State can emerge in local or national spheres of assumptions. CBR institutionalisation involves the identity of existing institutions in their own individuality; posing in discussion the issue of CBR as a means where multiple recognising of identity can converge.

- 4) In CBR the aspects of regional problematisation linked to Paasi’s ‘established identity’ are thus related to the practices of *establishing* identity.

‘An established identity in social practices and consciousness both internally and externally. An established region can be used by social groups and movements as a medium in a struggle over resources and power or – at the other extreme – against the other. Actors involved in these struggles often use identity among their arguments’. (Paasi, 2002: 140)

Distinctions 'Deconstructing' Regional Identity (Paasi, 2002: 140)	Categories in Cross-border Regionalism Identity Problem	
	What	Whom
Territorial shape	Various social practices across the border state (In everyday life or in political practices across the border)	Local Societies (Recognising in cross-border public activities as domain)
Symbolic shape	Maps, naming, means of communication used Elements of identification in the landscape Problems and conflicts existing and perceived at the Border State or across it	Cross-border arenas in mobilisation Local Societies Tendency towards 'Global' Societies
Resistance-Persistence of other regional identities	Factors of non elimination Recognising of multiple regional identity	Existing institutions involved, factors of shared interests across the border and social inclusion
Establishment of identity	Mobilising of social interests around a cross-border demand for regionalisation	Interests endogenous or exogenous in cross-border institutionalisation process

Scheme 3.2. – Analytical distinctions in Paasi (2002) towards a Cross-Border Regional identity problematisation

According to such an interpretation, the four analytical distinctions introduced by Paasi in the light of the CBR situation identify some factors, which can constitute forces or the weakness in a cross-border regionalism identity problem.

An *establishing* identity is here built-up internally (potentially local) solicited or externally (potentially global) perceived. This depends on the border presence, which in the CBR case is an element of identification, a meeting point to share practices of identification associated with it and a 'line' of symbolic contact. The cross-border regionalism shape (re-bordering) is a symbolic form and depends on an initial number of institutions available to supply a determination in common configuration. In the European transnational integration process, cross-border regionalism constitutes a means of ideal political stability at the Border State; a sort of 'bridge' institutionalisation between separated organisations. In cross-border regionalism the identity problem is a tendency in which factors of conflict or convergence such as everyday life across the border and the 'event' related to a cross-border cooperation policy work together. Starting from the analytical scheme sketched above, the issue of cross-border regionalism marks some crucial characteristics towards the regional identity problem. I would say that CBR is a way to move cross-border actions with more institutional flexibility also through those two-level games, which also Caporaso (2004) proposes as attribution of Europeanisation. It means that a CBR is not another level of fixed-scale¹⁴⁸, although if new institutions can create normative relationships with other institutions or institutional levels. Cross-border regionalism is a regional identity problem as a form of opening towards multiple regional identities. In other words, CBR have, generally speaking, much more to do with a '*regional identification*'¹⁴⁹ problem rather than with a 'regional identity'. The presence of the Border contributes as such to a regional identification in cross-border space. I will try to elaborate conceptually such an orientation starting from a 'not-fixed' identity concept studied by van Houtum and Lagendijk¹⁵⁰ (2001) according to an aspect of 'cultural identity'. They say that

'the common *cultural identity* of a region is not an *idée fixe*, a static phenomenon. It's a *dynamic* and ongoing process, through which the *collective* consciousness of belonging and imagination of *citizens* in a certain community may be strengthened' (Houtum, Lagendijk, 2001: 753).

¹⁴⁸ Scale is a term particularly debated as in the first chapter I pointed out. In this circumstance I refer to a scale of government (both national, regional or municipal).

¹⁴⁹ There is not a clearly true distinction in literature between regional identity and regional identification.

¹⁵⁰ This aspect of regional identification is, in the study proposed here, much more concerned with an application to an empirical research for the cases of Ruhr Area and Basque country for the concept of polinuclear urban regions (PURs) rather than in a theoretical aspect. Perhaps this study is much more concerned with 'top-down' processes and identities like a strategy raised by political actors, and in a way also linked to a concept already considered by Paasi concerning shaping. Anyway, I think it is interesting to recall the issue by the authors raised of 'cultural identity' assuming then an interpretative linkage with the conceptualisation of CBRs also because from their definition it is possible to extract some important concepts interesting for my conceptualisation.

Two concepts can derive from an interpretation of this sentence in a dimension - just seen above - of political stability as the response of a *political community*. This assumes that a political community is a whole of members, who share a common intention and focus, which they otherwise cannot reach. In other words, there is a mutual conditioning between *culture* and *structure*, which is distinguishable according to a clear way, a 'prius' for a society. However, the references introduced above to the concepts like *culture*, *collective/collectivities* and *dynamic* lead me to turn them into a more concerning way according to a cross-border regional identification to a *local society*¹⁵¹ which seems to me a more congenial term to use for the CBR study. Indeed a cultural aspect appears very crucial in cross-border regionalism in a dynamism, which does not isolate or associate the 'culture' to 'political culture'. With this term I mean the whole of behaviours and orientations that members of groups or communities develop in/versus the political system that they belong. In this sense the context for a 'functional' regional identification in the CBR problematisation is more in line with an interpretative meaning of 'civic culture'¹⁵² (Almond, Verba, 1963) or better to a 'civic participation' (Pizzorno, 1994). This opening to a path of social participation seems to me an essential extension for the process of regional identification in the cross-border context. *Civic participation* is a concept linked to the system of relationships which

'...links the civic society to the *state* as expression of the requirements and impositions that one part poses with regard to the other' [in other words it is an] 'expression of interests'¹⁵³ which receives positive appreciations within a dominant system¹⁵⁴, (Pizzorno, 1994:126).

¹⁵¹ As I reported in the beginning, my reference to an identity problem (in the particular CBR situation) is not referring to community meaning but to local society. Such a distinction is particularly raised by a part of contemporary Italian sociological approach with which I agree in use to refer in the circumstance to a CBR. (Bagnasco, 1999, 'Sociologia della comunità' - Sociology of Community).

¹⁵² Civic culture is participant cultures where the citizens are oriented to assume an active role to sustain the political system. As known Almond, Verba, 1963.

¹⁵³ With this word I interpret not just an economical interest, indeed the focus of the 'functional' dimension of a CBR is very distant from considering inside the priority aspect the funding offered for the cross-border cooperation. My meaning of interest has more sociological orientations, it is that concerning what Max Weber calls 'normal rationality' which is objectively confirmed by in the behaviour and which can also be motivated by irrational reasons. There is an example in Nietzsche's theory of 'resentment' also. In this sense interest is also intended as gratis act (a concept that I will take up again speaking about Bordieu). Adam Smith, David Hume and Adam Ferguson also consider motivations not economically interested in human behaviour such as 'vanity', 'proud-ness' for instance. The choices can be determined by behaviour habitus also by a predisposition for conduct at first sight dis-interested (from an economical aspect). But as Bordieu reminds us 'the social agents don't act at random, they are not crazy, they don't act without reasons' (Bordieu, *Raisons Pratiques*, 1994: 133)

¹⁵⁴ Naturally this concept of 'dominant system' in the case of CBRs requires more details about what is, as I will explain later on during this writing. But for now thus the 'multilevel institutionalisation' pointed out for instance by Kramsch and Scott

On the one hand, the civic participation confirms existing social structures while on the other hand does not exclude that the same actions of participation modify or correct such a system's working. This implies the essentiality of a system of dynamic relations between civic societies and dominant system(s)¹⁵⁵. The identity problem in the CBR case is not just linked with a certain strategy (this can be more concerned with an 'interest'¹⁵⁶ concept) but is part of a dynamic of cultural and collective construction in progress. This shifts the attention not from the objective to raise culture in community to wards certain focuses but to be itself a process of 'culturalisation'. Elaborating these aspects in the light of the CBR problematic it becomes essential to refer to the plural and the collective relevance. In other words, cross-border regionalism poses the issues of transformation of the geographical scope in the crossing border public action in dependence on 'political' focuses at various levels and sectors. In short, the regionalisation process in CBR is thus substantially a *politicising* of space. Collective identity realisation is the tendency in strategic engaging of interests¹⁵⁷. Taking again Pizzorno 'the interests raised can be 'expressive and participatory' 'participation'" but such

'Expressions can be less oriented to a negotiation conduct and more oriented to a conflict, so if on one hand conflicts can appear as instruments to the identity building they are not strictly necessary to track the focuses' (ibid.).

(in particular by Kramsch speaking about 'cosmopolitan governance in EU' 2001: 28 and by Scott in his work on the comparison between European and North American comparison for an emergent Cross-border regionalisation, 1998), the use of 'dominant system' here refers to the member state accepting for this stage of my work. Kramsch points out that 'within the framework of this multi-level institutionalisation' the subsidiarity conditions apply in the sense that Member States, rather than the Commission, are responsible for the allocation of funds' (ibid.pp.28).

¹⁵⁵ In this stage the concept of dominant system, which I refer to, is proprietarily the state and its internal juridical competences with an ordinary power of representative-ness (municipalities, provinces, regions). Indeed such 'public competences' are also called in their role of representatives in CBR making under a willing of voluntary participation in 'cooperation spaces' also taking a kind of legitimacy by European funding and aim concerning integration which triggers administrative mechanisms as in the case of formal Euroregions.

¹⁵⁶ In this case I don't refer to any negative definition of interest neither do I want to set identity against interest meaning. What I want to point out is here the tendency to use identity as an instrument of certain interests or part of certain interests, in which identity assumes much more those eternal unsolved meanings of representatives (or ways to represent) of interests. Indeed if we deprive the identity meaning of an immediate association to the word 'community' (intended as 'familiar linkages') - or if we try to dissociate them - and we consider this concept relevant in terms of a civil society, these two terms interests/identity building can work in a symbiosis which can also confuse or mix aspects between them. I refer above all to a current meaning of interest of 'advantage', 'utility', and 'attractive' in this circumstance.

¹⁵⁷ Also the interest term is glad of a double ambivalence caused on one hand by the Latin verbal construction of 'inter-esse' - being between, to participate - and an impersonal form which refers more to - being difference between - and from this last meaning derives a meaning of 'being important'. As Lorenzo Ornaghi observes (Political Science Cattolica Università del Sacro Cuore di Milano) the meaning of interest is linked to a meaning of value, which invests something or someone for the effect to be part of a relationship (2000:101). Bordieu also takes this concept in an interesting thought about the 'interest' word referred to the 'illusio' word. 'Illusio is to be part of a play, to be taken into a play, to believe that the 'play is worth the candle'. In reality the interest word in its first meaning has exactly the meaning of illusio' (Bordieu, 1994: 135). We can refer to CBR identity problems as a representation system of the collective interests involved.

In cross-border regionalism this expression is also grounded on voluntary participation. In that, the CBR case can find evidence in the fact that the differences between the legislative system on the different sides of the Border State can aim at separated focuses. Although, on these differences are grounded negotiations by different institutional administrative levels in the different nation-states contexts. While, at the same time the 'stake' is a cross-border regional policy. So, how does identity matter with cross-border regionalism? And then, where does a new collective identity come from? Pizzorno adds that it might be useful to think of *plural identities*:

'Why should a worker (who is already represented as a worker) want to be represented also as a woman, or young, or black?' (Pizzorno, 1994)

The plural or alternative identities can follow 'territorial' demarcations but can have a tendency in 'cross-border' character. The structure of *identification* in a given society can assume through a policy process the sense of an alternative 'configuration'. Pizzorno also gives us another example, which I wish reflect upon. For him the identification

'is not just a condition of minorities. For instance in the case of women, they cannot put themselves 'politically' as such, because they cannot propose to the political system to organise new categorisations which corresponding to their own identity'. 'What they want is a *recognising*, material or symbolic, of such an identity and not the power to govern over the others'.

Even if an affiliation between 'workers', 'women' and cross-border regionalism may appear at first sight odd, this concept is in my idea an inspiration to think of the CBR in terms of *social regional identification* as a more appropriate concept in the framework of cross-border regionalism. This is in my suggestion a base of geographical functional transformation at the Border State. Fraser (2001) proposes a concept very close to that I have in my mind when I speak in terms of regional identification in 'cultural' terms facing into account the concept of 'recognition'.

'This in turn requires that group members join together to refashion their collective identity by producing a self-affirming culture of their own. Thus on the identity model of recognition, the politics of recognising means identity politics' (Fraser, 2001: 24)

Recognition means aimed not just at valorising group identity but also rather at overcoming subordination claims for recognition. This is a status model, which seeks to establish the subordinated party as a full partner in social life, able to interact with others as a peer. Bearing this in mind we can think of CBR as a system of identification of a *local society* at the

Border States, which doesn't focus on changing of jurisdictional existing political consistency. As such, this system of identification develops 'inside' a political structure in which the EU aim of integration constitutes the transnational political reference that opportunely tends to recognise the cross-border regionalism within the plural (regional) identity of the European Union (Paasi, 2002). This implies to consider in a further way the forms of an emerging social constructionism towards the contents of *politicising*, which still has to be investigated more in the CBR cases. In other words, what I have entitled as 'functional dimension' in geographical transformation of the public action is highly founded in complexes of meaning founded in interpretative possibilities of a social identity. A set of descriptions derives from specific social practices through which cultural habits are produced and circulated.

'To have a social identity, to be a woman or a man, for example, just *is* to live and to act under a set of descriptions. Social identities are exceedingly complex. They are knit from a plurality of different descriptions arising from a plurality of different signifying practices. Thus, no one is simply a woman; one is rather, for example, a white, Jewish, middle-class woman, a philosopher, a lesbian, a socialist and a mother. Moreover, since everyone acts in a plurality of social contexts, the different descriptions comprising any individual's social identity fade in and out of focus. Finally it is not the case that people's social identities are constructed once and for all and definitively fixed. Rather, they alter over time, shifting with shift in agents' practices and affiliations'. (Fraser, 1992: 52)

Thus a segment of the cross border identity problem finds references to the functional form of the social identity. Identity is *being* at the border, across the border, subjected to a network of prescriptions and *being* part of a cultural-political system as regional identification. Forms of coexistence of multiple different forms of balance between processes of social mobilisation and the processes of social participation through which cross-border regionalism in practices of public action move are basic assumptions towards an institutional governance building.

The Types of Actors: Cross-Border Strategies in Multiple Social Spaces

In an interpretative dimension of CBR experimentalism, the transformations in which the cross-border public activities concerned involve different types of actors in their strategies. The subjects and means in cross-border interactions can constitute multiple 'social spaces' (Stone, Sweet, Sandholtz, Fligstein, 2001) in 'practice' of crossing the border. The site of political debate can thus be identified by diffused multi-level and multi-sectoral strategies as

well as by conflicts at and across the border. The EU material incentives for multi-level co-operation also play a role in this context. The social expectations are created generally by social mobilisations involving practices and sets of descriptions for a certain situation *in being*. The social mobilisation depends culturally on the existing opportunities within a society. The cross-border regional identification question is also included in a strategy or can be derived as an outcome from a series of political strategies. I start critically from the 'political and economical strategies' well described by Jessop (2002) in dimensions of the CBRs.

'CBRs have become specific objects of policy and not just spontaneous, natural, economic territories. In this sense they represent specific forms of innovation in relation to space, place and scale. They involve the production of new types of place or space for producing, servicing, working, consuming. And they refigure the scalar hierarchy and modify the position of specific places within these hierarchies' (Jessop, 2002: 8).

This sentence opens a series of perspectives for the actual study of cross-border regionalism speaking about innovation in relation to space, place and scale. At the same time this sentence does not lead further in the forms in which CBR can assume a character as space for 'politicising'. The evidence in this regard has to do with the 'specific objects of policy', which in CBR are 'in becoming'. Within a sphere of social space, they can be understood as an expression of institutional intentionality. *Who* and *how do* expressed interests between social and political actors and how do interactive and negotiated processes play a role for a policy definition and in the definition of new 'spatial' patterns of interaction. Most cases of CBR involve hybrid patterns through a simultaneous combination of factors. Jessop (2002) describes nine ways in which cross-border regionalism has emerged within 'political' strategies. Some of these interesting arguments are here re-addressed in the light of the European Union framework. As such, hereafter I would like to react to Jessop's categories pointing to the characteristics in politicising space related to European cross-border regionalism.

- 1) The resurgence of suppressed (but potentially still viable) historical *economic spaces*. This kind of CBR strategy is based on shared resources on the borders (rivers, lakes, coasts, forests); connections inherited from post-colonial empires; and the existence of a common language or ethnicity. This is reinforced where borders imposed from above had divided erstwhile 'historic' regions with their own identities and, in some cases, distinctive ethno-national groupings. This aspect can

be relevant also for the CBR micro-integration cases to establish/re-establish a political cross-border space based on a sense of community; European cross-border cooperation can trigger these processes also in a completely new way raising cross-border management of resources.

- 2) The spill-over of metropolitan hinterland and/or the growth of complementary towns on either side of shared borders. These aspects can be seen in the shadows of EU CBR political space in view to proposing an alternative mode to contrast the competitiveness existing between cities belonging to the same economic vocation and located on different sides of the border.
- 3) The creation of new functional economic and/or ecological spaces. Such a kind of CBR strategy is based on complementary resources, common economic and and/or environmental problems, or a shared peripheral status prompting a need for cooperation on issues such as the environment or transport infrastructure. Such a kind of strategy is directly linked to the EU CBR as political space building. Firstly, because cross-border regionalism is linked with innovation milieux, gateway cities, learning regions where the border has an important function to start a cross-border cooperation. Secondly, because the building of CBR as political spaces is linked to the cross-border mechanism that tends not to eliminate the territorial differential associated with the border. Cooperation across the border doesn't mean harmonisation but a collaborative management.
- 4) The restabilising of the national scale and enabling national economies to compete more effectively. The top down construction pointed out by Jessop in this case is very concerned with EU CBR as political space because linked with new territorial scales of action. Involving re-bordering as much as de-bordering within this strategy, cross-border regionalism works as a bridge to integrate national economic space into broader regional blocs and strategic alliances. This is particularly relevant for the issue of 'border permeability', that is the availability of the nation state 'levels' within borders to share some kinds of interests at the Border State. Such interests can pertain to also more pertinent traditionally 'territorial' topics (such as planning,

transport, environment) in a cross-border manner in a (new) vision of regional configuration.

- 5) The reaction to uneven development linked with other sub-, supra-, or trans-national region-building process. Jessop refers to this strategy as priority to the EU context for what concerns the less favourite regions during the period of single market construction. Meso and micro levels can get engaged in a cross-border cooperation strategy in order to gain a direct channel with the supranational level as a sort of representative for the local levels in such a European framework.
- 6) The nation-building projects in multinational territorial states are the reference to enhance national autonomy within a federal system. Jessop shows the example of trans-Pyrenean co-operation between Catalonia (Spain) and France. This is also a strategy very relevant in the political space making of many EU episodes of cross-border regionalism. As I will show in the Chapter 3 also the case study I concern as Espace Mont-Blanc presents a similar strategy. The Valle d'Aosta (Autonomous Region in Italy), the Departments of Savoie and Haute Savoie in France (in a system rather centralised like the French one) and the Valais Canton in Switzerland (within a national system traditionally federal) search for forms of 'local' autonomy as one of the reasons that has pushed for such a kind of initiative.
- 7) The institutional building initiatives as political entrepreneur exploit opportunities created by the crisis of national scale and the availability of EU policies and grants. For Jessop such a kind of 'grant coalition' rather than 'growth coalition' simply responds to windows of political opportunity in political entrepreneurialism. This is another important aspect for European cross-border cooperation even though such a window of opportunity. In my opinion a starting point to trigger a series of political and social mobilisations can aim at European grants; however this reason cannot be the focus of the cross-border cooperation. In other words, an evolutionary and incremental process can involve a complex series of actions and reactions in mobilisation of actors across the border.

Jessop provides a framework, which can be criticised for its implied cause and effect relations, and for the distinction of the different levels in (possible) domains of political

decision-making. I summarise these trends in an interpretative scheme (Scheme 3.3.), which is not an exhaustive elaboration aimed at relating the actors to their strategies but is a starting point.

Themes and functions of CBR according to Jessop	Strategic framework and guidance	Social spaces Actors who intervene in CBR construction
Historic economic aspects	Contrast the negative effect of border-barrier effect	Domestic and local societies in availability of actions across the border in everyday life
Spill-over metropolitan hinterland	Contrast in competitiveness	Domestic and local societies in actualisation actions and interests across the border in sharing policies
Creation of a new functional economical/ecological spaces	Sharing of common problems, needs to balance competitiveness	Normative or regulative policies on various government levels
EU trans-national region building	Material financing availability sources and will for Europeanised identification	Relations between EU cross-border policies and channel of receiving
Federal system	Autonomy and different levels of representations	Local and Sub-National levels

Scheme 3.3. – Conceptualisation of social spaces and their strategy in cross-border regional policy starting from a review of Jessop’s political strategies

The strategies enounced by Jessop distinguish specific *causes* and *effects* in the construction of CBR, which seem to follow a rather technocratic interpretation. In other words in the long list of possible ‘political reasons’ motivated by Jessop in the creation of CBR, the actual factors which make up the ‘innovation in relation to space, place and scale’ are still under debate. Leresche and Saez (2002) consider the invention of cross-border regionalism as not just based on the management of cross-border contacts which change through cooperation. Rather they state that a different organisation of representation emerges in the CBR. In other words, the actors in cross-border arenas who invent alternative forms of exchange and public modes of action versus new political regimes seem to be crucial in this respect. This is in my opinion the way in which the process is structured through a particular mode of governance.

Cooperation Intensity: Cross-Border Cooperation Activity as Politicising Space

The territorial dimension of cross-border regionalism means that the *types of actors* involved in a cross-border cooperation policy can be structured within social space. Cross-border cooperation can configure a field of governance in which actors work in interaction. The structuring of actors and arenas in cross-border is not a topic just pertinent to the creation of a *social space* but it pertains to the orientation that generates intentionalities and discourses. The way in which policies are interactively negotiated enters a game in which different hierarchies and networks of actors play a role. As such, the patterns of interaction in cross-border refer to a field of 'governance'.

'The reference to governance...over the nature and form of *territorialised political community* under conditions of late capitalism, signals the increasing importance of meso-level institutions, located between the state and the market, serving to regulate the latter through *diverse forms of associational networking*, linking disparate political and economic *communities of interest*...cities and regions constitute key sites for the establishment of such forms of 'institutional thickness' (Kramsch, 2001: 30).

Cross-border governance and its 'structuring' effects on 'actors' can be seen in relation to a territorialisation based on associational networks and communities of interests. This is similar to a type of regulation, which Le Galès names as 'cooperative-reciprocal regulation'¹⁵⁸.

'Cooperative/reciprocal regulations (sometimes called regulation by social or political exchange) [are] based on values and norms, on a *shared identity*, on *trust* which gives expression to forms of exchange and/or a solidarity between the members of a community' (Le Galès, 1998: 484).

Values, norms and shared identity are not just referring to a local dimension in the Europeanisation processes. Indeed according to Leresche and Saez (2002) the research on governance and particularly on multi-level governance in the European context doesn't jettison the state as actor even if they speak of '*governing cooperation*'. Also Hooghe and Marks (Hooghe, Marks, 2001) remind us of the alternative view of the European

¹⁵⁸ Le Galès (1998: 484) distinguishes three ideal types of regulations, which may be identified: 'state regulation'; 'market regulation' and 'cooperative/reciprocal regulation'. State regulation (sometimes identified with hierarchical or political regulation) [is] where the state structures, conflicts, distributes resources and coordinates activities and groups. This type of regulation implies domination and control as well as the capacity to sanction. As such, this type refers to authority as the principal moving force, even if only informally. Market regulation has played a growing role since the emergence of capitalism in organising exchanges between supply and demand, adjusted through prices (or sometimes through volumes). The cooperative/reciprocal regulation type is reported in the text of my thesis. In my interpretation this last type sounds similar to the cross-border cooperation aim in regulation.

integration as a polity-creating process. Authority and policy-making influences are shared across multiple levels of government (sub-national, national or supranational).

'the multi-level governance does not reject the view that national government and national arenas are important, or that these remain the most important pieces of the European puzzle' (Hooghe, Marks, 2001: 3).

What in this perspective changes the political monopoly of the national state in the EU transnational framework of public actions is the ability of the nation state to share 'control over many activities that take place in their respective territory' (ibid.). If we read this assertion in a cross-border cooperation perspective as territorial policy it becomes clear that CBR can be seen as a form of sharing interests between national and its sub-national territories. As such, the border admits a certain degree of permeability of the border as contact. This issue of the state restructuring and the role of the state as one of the 'carriers' of public actions is not the only aspect of the configuration of cross-border regionalism. Even if this reading allows us to see CBR from a certain angle, it is not sufficient to understand how cross-border regionalism creates new patterns of governance.

Topics in 'Political frontier regime' In EU Governance Framework	Topics in Border State Governance Framework
Territorial status	Border transcended
Political expression of 'sovereignty'	Contractualisation of cross-border space to cross-border regions, cross-border institutions as political expression of sovereignty
Dominant actors	System of relationships between public actors (state, regions, European Union) and private actors (associations, businesses, agencies)
Typical institutional form	Re-composition of institutions 'in partnership'
Representation of the social group	Recomposed territorial group 'popolo da sè'
Type of public policy	Polycentric cooperatives
Form of cultural relations	Geo-cultural identity logic
Frontier symbolism	Sign post, inter-urban transport, cross-border techno-pole

Scheme 3.4. – An interpretative extract from the 'Governance Frontier Regime' proposed by Leresche, Saez, 2002: 84.

With these I refer to relational spaces of power, which are not completely 'inside' specific hierarchical territorial levels. If governance also comprises such forms of relations of power like those beyond the state, we need to understand which kind of public action and agents at the border create a particular kind of governance. Leresche and Saez (2002: 84) provide an insight in this respect. They describe the process of change of the political frontier regimes in a synopsis – or general framework - of EU governance as 'framework of public action'. They speak of a 'return of the territory' (a new territorial paradigm to re-territorialisation) in cross-border regionalism but do not exemplify how and in which form this takes place in contractualisation of cross-border space.

3.1.2 Towards a Cross-Border Governance Question

Cross-Border governance is not a scale neither does it refer to a scale but rather to 'an institutional construct resulting from complex processes of co-evolution' (Gualini, 2003: 43). Political-economic strategic factors of legitimacy and symbolic-cognitive processes of territorial identity formations are included in such an evolutionary process as inventing community and projecting cross-border spaces. All of them converge in an institutional organisational setting as a combination of institutional design and institution building. In the first part of this chapter I have analysed the process in which cross-border regionalism can approach an institutional design. The three phases I have proposed define the categories of a qualitative analytical dimension in institutional design : 1) geographical scope, 2) types of actors and 3) cooperation intensity. As such, my interpretation reports them as a transformation of the agendas at the Border State led by cross-border intentions. Therefore, the geographical scope can suggest the cross-border regional identification based on multiple identities in a convergence of institutional design. The types of actors can emerge in cross-border regionalism in the strategies carried on by the social parts, which have an effect in a process of institutional design. The cooperation intensity implies the structuration of the social parts in interaction; this refers to patterns of governance, which collaborate in politicising the cross-border space. A CBR appears in such a framework as a form in which evolutionary fields of practices can compose the institutional design.

- 1) Practices of cross-border regional identification
- 2) Practices of cross-border regional mobilisation

3) Practices of cross-border regional interactions

As sketched above, the practices, which attain cross-border regional interaction, imply a structuration in a mode of governance. In other words, the cross-border governance issue opens a question in terms of CBR as institutional building. In the following section I want to discuss cross-border regionalism as a mode of *relational territorial governance*.

3.2 CROSS-BORDER REGIONS AS INSTITUTIONAL-GOVERNANCE-BUILDING

'Territory is transformed by ideas/representation of political elites but also by the sum of irrepressible pushes by individuals. It's not possible "to think" of the territory in a different way that is without taking into account who is in power and who manages it and who proposes a vision of an *alternative space*' (Eva, 2002).

The issue of alternative spaces in the framework of new territorial paradigm or new cognitive framework of public action (Balme, 1996: 19) is the particular context for cross-border regionalism. I maintain that 'the contexts of the policies are structuring/structured fields' (revising Giddens, 1990) and that CBR can even be understood as 'territorial projects' (De Matteis, 1999). Cross-border 'projects' can be observed as an outcome of an open interaction. Le Galès speaking about 'territorial governance' has clarified different modes of governance as 'different types of regulation in a territory in terms of political and social integration and, at the same time, in terms of capacity of action' (Le Galès, 1998: 494). He also defined governance in a political sociology sense as:

'...a process of coordination of actors, social groups and institutions in order to attain appropriate goals that have been discussed and collectively defined in fragmented, uncertain environments' (Le Galès, 1998: 495).

Or also as:

'...the capacity to integrate and give form to local interests, organisation and social groups and, on the other hand, the capacity to represent them outside, to develop more or less unified strategies towards the market, the state, other cities and other levels of government' (Le Galès, 1995, 1998: 496).

The definition of Le Galès is useful for essentially three reasons: 1) his emphasis on the 'European' context and on a particular frame of territorial policies in 'practices'; 2) his motivation to shift the issues of the efficiency and coordination of economic development and his orientation towards a political dimension; and finally because of 3) his reference to

a 'meso level' as unit of analysis. This enables us to interpret the CBR as a 'territorialised' or 're-territorialising' form of governance.

In general, 'territorial governance' can be analysed making use of: 1) types of actors and their resources; 2) linkages between different forms of regulation and the territory; 3) different analytical dimensions of governance and regimes/modes of governance; and of 4) the factors which may explain these different types.

This 'general framework' can also be applied to cross-border regionalism as a form of governance. Two of these analytical dimensions appear particularly linked to the functional, political and territorial aspects considered in the previous sections. Le Galès refers to them as '*internal*' and '*external*' integration.

The *internal integration* dimension of governance is similar to the construction of a formal cross-border political cooperation arena. Indeed for Le Galès the internal dimension of governance refers to the capacity to integrate organisations, actors, social groups and different interests in order to devise a *common strategy* or to develop policies. The *external integration* dimension of governance in contrast reflects two things: 1) the capacity to *defend a strategy* as versus the outside and, 2) the capacity to develop a *political capacity* to extract *resources* in unified collective representation as the state, the European Union and other local authorities. This aspect can find a conceptual relevance in terms of cross-border regionalism. Social and political mobilisation of interests in participation on cross-border policies is based on the creation of cross-border common strategies. The characters of 'in-between' internal and external integration in cross-border regionalism are in constant relation with the *beyond* the nation-state borders as a representational form.

Le Galès mentions moreover two further variables, which are important for the issue of territorial governance.

- 1) The capacity for collective action as public action in going *beyond* integration and *beyond* representation;
- 2) The *strategic* goals and directions.

In my interpretation, these latter aspects are particularly relevant for cross-border governance. The capacities in collective actions to advance strategic goals can be correlated to CBR according to two substantial spheres. The first is the context of EU trans-national governance framework, which is linked with cross-border cooperation policies; the second is the 'local spheres', which can be based on 'networked governance' too. As a first suggestion, the 'territorial governance' in cross-border regionalism can be devoted to such two forms of 'relational' territorialising. In the next, I will lead such an issue towards a possible meaning of institutional governance building in cross-border regionalism.

3.2.1 Governance: from 'Framework' to 'Mode'

In the previous section concerning the CBR in a process of 'institutional design', and in particular in the last part on 'political governance regime' as a 'framework of public action' discussed by Leresche and Saez I seek how CBR can be understood under the typical features of a multi-level governance. In doing that I have also emphasised that cooperative and not hierarchical social-political relations between government and other agencies can constitute these processes. The correlation between the concept of 'governance' and those of cross-border actions implies more conceptual course of theoretical choices. In the European context, 'old' and 'new' governance concepts have gained different theoretical perspectives by empirical research on policies as well as in the light of the strategies introduced by the White Paper on Governance (Eberlein, Kerwer, 2004). My interest is, however, much more oriented to understanding a possible way to investigate the cross-border governance mode as form of regionalism. From this point of view, I can only provide just a partial view of the complex dynamics of EU governance. Indeed the general definition of governance implies a particular style of governing.

'Governance is a particular *style of governing* refers to sustaining coordination and coherence among a wide variety of actors with *different purposes* and objectives; such political actors and institutions, corporate interests, civil society and transnational governments' (Pierre, 2000: 3).

Also in more open definitions related for example to local governance, the verb '*to govern*' in relation to the choices includes more or less defined territorial levels as important in such a process. Even if one translates the CBR into a kind of local governance one can always come across this verb.

'Local governance is the study which has as object the whole of the interactions that on a local scale *governs choices to take place*' (Bobbio, 2002:11).

In cross-border regionalism the choices are not led by an agent but by a process, which refers to the cross-border policy-making arena in which also the space and place beyond the national border belongs. Other definitions of governance, which are less linked to 'a scale of government or decisional agents', seem more adequate to define such processes. There are definitions of governance that transcend a concept of 'governing' emphasising the 'coordinating multi players in a complex setting of mutual dependence' (Koller-Koch, 1996: 16) proposed by Eising and Koller-Koch :

'Governance is the *structured ways* and means in which the divergent preferences of interdependent actors are translated into policy choice 'to allocate values' so that the plurality of interests is transformed into *coordinate action* and the compliance of actors is achieved...governance is not synonymous with a new process of governing' (Eising, Koller-Koch, 1999: 5).

This definition also seems to be in line with the one proposed by Kooiman (1993) relating governance to

'patterns emerging from the guiding, steering, controlling and managing efforts of social, political, and administrative actors which take place in *a more or less continuous process of interaction* ...which challenge governing activities and make *new concepts of governance necessary*' (Kooiman, 1993: 2-6).

A process of cross-border governance can mean a practice of public action changing through the border state. Eising and Koller-Koch also pointed to the emergence of what is named as 'network governance'. In their model they underscore:

- The role of the state as activator;
- The dominant orientation as coordinating related interests;
- Patterns of interaction as multi-lateral negotiations to approximate positions;
- Dominant actors as state actors and multitude of stakeholders;
- Level and scope of political allocation as functionally specific agreements cutting across different levels.

'Network governance' (Eising and Koller-Koch, 1999) is more than an analogy, as I see it, with the 'political frontier regime' (Leresche, Saez, 2002). The role of the state in the latter as 'activator' (no longer mediator nor container) is a concept comparable with a 'political

expression of sovereignty’ related to a ‘contractualisation’ in cross-border space (as a cross-border institution). Patterns of interaction are based on multi-lateral negotiations for a re-composition of cross-bordering institutions in ‘partnership’ and comparable to functional agreements on e.g. the scope of political allocation. In both cases, the dominant actors are included in a system of relationships between state/non state and public/private with a multitude of stakeholders. From this comparative interpretation also of critique emerge for a cross-border governance understanding. In the following I will compose a synthesis of the main factors particularly focussed on trans-national governance as ‘regime’ and how these can go into cross-border mode of governance as local regionalism. The critique focuses on issues like: ‘contractualisation’, ‘re-composition’ and ‘system of relationships’. These aspects suggest that there is a kind of ‘disorder’ left in the hands of heterarchic coordination. In my view, state and Border State matters as cross-border governance building in such heterarchic coordination.

Elements stressed in EU governance regimes	Features of cross-border governance
Role of the state and state borders	‘Contractualisation’ in cross-border space (towards cross-border institution)
Dominant actors	System of relationships between multitude of stakeholders
Patterns of interaction	Re-composition of institutions in ‘partnership’

Scheme 3.5 - Conceptualisation toward cross-border governance pattern from a crossed study of ‘Political Frontier Regime’ (Leresche, Saez, 2002) and ‘Network Governance’ (Eising and Koller-Koch, 1999)

In a state-theoretical but not state-centric approach to the Europolity, Jessop (1998) assumes that

‘Governance refers to *mechanisms* and *strategies of coordination* in the face of complex reciprocal interdependence among operationally autonomous actors, organisations, and functional systems’ (Jessop, 1998: 2).

His idea of ‘*re-composition*’ as a strategy of coordination can also be interpreted in a cross-border governance context. He distinguishes three phases that are also related in my idea to the *time* variable in which such strategies of coordinations occur (scheme 3.4.).

Jessop says that ‘states directly employ all the three forms of governance and that’ (they) ‘are not self-restricted to hierarchical command’. This latter aspect is particularly interesting in the case of a cross-border governance review, and is further defined by Jessop as ‘multi-level metagovernance’.

Time	Type of coordination	Order/Disorder
Ex-ante	Imperative coordination for the pursuit of substantive collective goals established from above	Hierarchical command
Ex-post	Coordination based on the formally rational pursuit of self-interest by individual agents	Anarchic market exchange
Continuing	Self-organisation based on networks, negotiation and deliberation to redefine objectives in the light of changing circumstances	Heterarchic coordination

Scheme 3.5.- From the definition of ‘governance’ by Jessop (1998: 2) to my interpretation relative to ‘time’

‘Metagovernance refers to an attempt to redesign diverse aspects of individual modes of coordination to improve their performance and re-organising the conditions of self-organisation through dialogue and deliberation’. (Jessop, 2003:11).

Jessop orients such a definition towards the EU institutional setting

‘as an institutionalised form of multi-level metagovernance where the emphasis is on efforts at continuing calibration in a changing equilibrium of compromise rather than on systematic consistent resort to a single method of coordination to deal with a fixed pattern of complex interdependence’. (ibid.: 11).

In the light of this discussion about network and metagovernance in the framework of cross-border governance, some elements are of special interest for the cross-border policy arena. 1) The first aspect is that state and state borders can be considered activators of a cross-border cooperation through contractualisation in cross-border spaces. This refers to an existing territorial and hierarchical order (national, regional, local) and the need to share interests (or to manage a conflictuality through a means or a possibility). Such an aspect is also related to the wider EU dynamic to promote cross-border policies and to a more domestic political arena to actually pursue such policies (also bringing into play domestic

expectations and cross-local government level asymmetries and focuses). 2) The second aspect is the social mobilisation perhaps already active in the cross-border community but still latent with regard to the formation of cross-border policies. This phase is characterised by an incremental system of relations between a multitude of stakeholders and dominant actors, which can be diffused in several channels of interests more or less 'g-local'. 3) The third aspect refers to a *re-composition* of institutions into 'partnerships' in a cross-border cooperative arena, which advocates managing conflicts through a re-organisation of the conditions and through self-organisation, based on a cross-border dialogue. Such an institution has the feature of a cross-border region based on heterarchic coordination as political space, which can 'mediate relationships of governments and connect multiply institutional settings' (Allen, 2004: 30).

3.2.2 Institutional Re-Composition in Experimental Learning

As I introduced above according to network and metagovernance processes, the institutional forms shaped by cross-border cooperation can turn out to be based on a re-composition into partnerships in an attempt at heterarchic coordination. This finds its roots both in informal institutions¹⁵⁹ and toward decision-making processes based on loose coupling forms (Benz, 2000; Eberlein, 1999; Eberlein and Kerwer, 2004). The institutional approach proposed by Perkmann is inspired by new institutionalism in sociology and organisational studies. He remakes the issue on CBR institutional building starting from a definition of Lanzaco (1995) who said that

'institutions: a) differentiate themselves from other sets of regularities, b) are self-validating, c) have a distributive nature that makes them difficult to change (Perkmann, 2002: 111).

Perkmann also points out how some authors have highlighted much more the cognitive dimension of institutions;

¹⁵⁹ Several authors have recently based their research on informal institutions or informal spheres especially I refer to Heritier (2001, 2003). Although in the CBR circumstance the meaning of informal institution is particular as I will explain in the following more deeply according to an interpretation. A definition perhaps traceable to CBRs is that proposed by Stacey and Rittberger (2003: 879). According to them the informal institutions are based on informal accords (created by more than one actor in CBR circumstances) in which the parties are not bound to their rules in terms of legal-force.

'Institutions constitute reality for social actors in the sense that they provide for inter subjectively valid and persistent modes of interpretation and ways of doing things' (ibid.: 111).

Recalling also the 'institutional isomorphism' and the 'institutional entrepreneur' elaborated by Colomy (1998), Di Maggio (1991), and Eisenstadt (1964, 1980), Perkmann sustains that the institutional building can be based on a 'nodal' institutional innovation brought about by institutional entrepreneurs together with their strategies to prepare a broader organisation field to accommodate a new organisation form.

'A nodal innovation consists of a new form created at a specific point in time and space which consequently spreads to other places'. (Perkmann, 2002: 114).

To this assumption he applies a wider inquiry to the Euroregions according to three domains:

- 1) *Institution*: the Euroregion is a blueprint for organising public cross-border intervention;¹⁶⁰
- 2) *Organisational field*: the EU enables and provides for the proliferation of Euroregions and their effective institutionalisation across the EU and beyond;
- 3) *Institutional entrepreneur*: the interests of border authorities on both the national and supranational level in Europe over the last two decades contributing to the institutionalisation of the Euroregions as a legitimate model of public agency.

This approach to CBR as 'institutional entrepreneur' and the reference to the 'nodal innovation' are useful to create a legitimate model of institution having the supranational transnational context as reference. However, the framework for an institutional structuration, in which the cross-border arenas in the particular EU context occur, still misses. In other words, in Perkmann's study, the forms of legitimacy are all included under a generic 'European umbrella' in which the domains of adaptations of the CBR is an issue still open. Blatter also provides an institutional approach to the CBR institutional building distinguishing in a neo-institutionalist approach (Gohler, 1996). Institutions can anticipate control (steer based on defined rules and norms) or they can provide orientation (identity based on emotional symbols for mobilisation). Reminding the formal organisations (hierarchies), the international networks (hierarchies), and the dialectical process of

¹⁶⁰ He remembers the first use of the Euroregio term in the fifties for the Dutch-German border area.

modernisation based on ‘structural coupling’ by Mayntz (1993), Blatter (2001: 186) proposes four ideal types of cross-border political institution.

- 1) *Commissions*: based on instrumental/control and formal/tightly coupled. Such ideal types are set-up as formal instruments of the nation states to solve problematic cross-border interdependencies. This means that the interests of the parties are aggregates along vertical lines with national governments representing these interests in international negotiations.
- 2) *Connections*: based on instrumental/control and informal/loosely coupled. Such an ideal type is not based on solving problems of collective actions but has a function of helping to overcome obstacles preventing the exploitation of positive externalities and synergies. Connections typically concentrate their activities in a specific policy field.
- 2) *Coalitions*: based on identity-providing/orientation and informal/loosely coupled. Blatter defines as an advocacy coalition such an ideal type where the political actors choose partners on the basis of idealistic affinity who share ideological orientation often against ideological rivals. Coalitions are partners dominated by horizontal linkage between public and private, their interaction is based on a common idea (ideology, system of beliefs).
- 4) *Consociation*: based on identity-providing/orientation and formal/tightly coupled. It is a type based on symbolic policy ideas, which shape identities and preferences, by logos, flags, maps, names. This form doesn’t define rules for collective decision-making but is aimed at mobilising public and private actors for cross-border activities and is based on a territorial demarcation of cross-border regionalism. The most important actors are territorial representatives and are not limited to concrete projects or specific goals.

In his more advanced research (Blatter, 2003) he identifies (yet starting from such an ideal-type model) different logics of consensus building. For him the institutional ‘contents’ of CBR can concern:

- 1) *Instrumental institution* (solving problems of material interdependency, rules, and information for decision-making). This form can be expressed: a) in a tightly coupled institution (finding authoritative truth) by *deduction*: it means by clear-cut rights and duties derived from universal principles (international law) or by

functional necessities based on natural and technical laws; b) in a loosely coupled institution (discovering useful synergies) by evolution: it means based on Pareto-efficient solutions on the basis of individual cost-benefit calculations or based on thrust and stabilised exchange on the basis of experienced reciprocity;

- 2) *Identity building institutions* (providing orientation, mobilising individual activity). This form can be expressed in: a) stimulating integrative sentiments by *induction*: of cross-border awareness and identification through affective symbols or of solidarity as a side effect of emerging feelings of common regional identity (and feeling of anxiety and about shared external threads); b) building of shared beliefs by construction: of joint cross-border visions on the basis of a system of shared beliefs or of new cross-border (non-territorial) collective 'egos' and 'alters' by competitive ideological discourses.

While in Perkmann's study the institutional features of CBR are still latent towards an attention to the *re-composition into partnerships in an attempt at heterarchic coordination*¹⁶¹ Blatter's study considers a rather rigid scheme of categorisations; although he also considers different possible models of coordination, these modes result quite static. In other words, his framework is fixed in *time* and the frame on types of institutions aimed at proving a 'deterritorialisation' of the relations left unquestioned many questions for an understanding of an institutional feature in which CBR can find a spatial *re-composition*. Also accepting a recall to the distinction between loose and tight coupling and preferring a loose coupling mode (Benz, 2000: 10-19), which is the more appropriate form to investigate a CBR? A horizontal form, which decouples according to the phases in a policy cycle or a vertical form, which couples according to different instruments of governance? What is central in a CBR as 'kind' and 'tendency' in institution building? What is the form of re-composition that they tend to have? What kind of modes of regulation and institutional change do they introduce? Institutions are systems of both formal and informal rules; they react to their environment but at the same they create it. Institutions also produce innovation in a cyclic process between hexogen and endogen processes.

'Enduring institutions can be remarkably adaptive, responding to volatile environments routinely though not always optimally. (March, 1981; March and Olsen, 2000: 235; Olsen, 2002: 7).

¹⁶¹ The *re-composition into partnerships in an attempt at heterarchic coordination* is typical of EU governance frontier-meta-net-regime. In my view this is the particular characteristic of these institutional forms.

In a basic vision, and starting from an assumption raised by March and Olsen, three factors should be taken into account in an institutional creation: a) the distribution of preferences (interests) between political actors; b) the distribution of resources (power); c) the constraints imposed by the regulations (building). In CBR case such elements (interests, power, and building) are particular struggles in a temporal circle. I maintain that two relevant conceptual lenses are particularly relevant in the CBR institutional making: the first one is about the *kind* of institution they bend to build (tension) and the second is about the process of *changing* they tend to trigger.

3.2.3 CBR in Institutional ‘Building’ Towards the ‘Kind’

Assuming that CBR represents sources of institutional ‘regulation’ I sustain that they define themselves as: 1) *socialising institution* (aimed at developing, through socialisation processes a territorial identity and a cultural local society with a sense of belonging, emotional attachment and shared codes of meaning), and 2) *democratic institution* (based on creating of democratic citizenship, representative institutions, equal rights of political participation, legitimised opposition, organised parties and for public debate and popular enlightenment) (see Rokkan, 1999). With respect to the CBR as framework for institutional ‘change’ I sustain that cross-border regionalism is linked to *adaptive processes of experimental learning*.

‘In experimental reading institutions change on the basis of experiences with, and interpretation of, how relevant actors in the environment respond to alternative forms of domestic organisation and governance. Environmental actors may be indifferent to the focal domestic institution or actively promoting specific forms. They may dictate prescriptions or allow considerable discretion and local autonomy. In all cases forms and actions assessed as successful are more likely to be repeated and developed. Likewise, unsuccessful forms are more likely to be avoided. We need to understand which experiences actors are exposed to, how they interpret and assess what has happened and why, and to what degree they are able to store, retrieve and act upon such information’ (Olsen, 2002: 63).

I shall argue that two main elements are very relevant to study the CBR institutional process inside the two trends I have mentioned just above¹⁶²:

¹⁶² The garbage can (GC) model is my main suggestion in considering the elements of cross-border regionalism as institutional process. The GC is a framework for analysing decision making in ‘organised anarchies’, that is organisations characterized by problematic preferences, unclear technologies, and fluid participation (Cohen et al. 1972). Organised anarchies can be understood as ‘collections of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might answer, and decision-makers looking for work’ (Cohen et al. 1972, p. 1).

- 1) CBRs is *alternative institutional form*; ‘the research for alternatives happens in a context in which not just the problems are searching for a solution but also the solutions are searching problems’ (Ibid.). In other words:
 - a. CBR is a *not exclusive* form where the decisions (as solutions) can take place. The CBR composition is highly influenced by expectations and feedback that move other institutional forms (exogenous) – or actors - involved in the participation (endogenous). CBR is a domain where interests which cannot find elsewhere a form of representativeness can find place; also in forms of problems which do not need to a direct solution;
 - b. CBR is a form of *weak institutionalisation* in form of power associable to a horizontal loose coupling such as voluntarism. The actors and institutions work in these ‘tables’ in a form of mediator or intermediary agent also with regard to other forms of *hard institutionalisation* or vertical loose coupling. CBR often are dependent on (other) powers (in a certain time); their weak institutionalisation (opportunedly based on loose coupling) can also work to gain popular consensus and thrust between communalities. The actors involved can often play simultaneously on other tables.
 - c. CBR is a process of *building* the constraints of which are imposed by the cross-border play in progress and are not defined a priori. The construction of constraints is not just focused on tightly coupled instrumental institution building. CBR constraints are not a limitation of the ‘freedom’ degrees of a cross-border arena but much more depend on the vertical loose coupling with other institutions. As sources of legitimation for actions CBR is just potential or consultative. This has feedback on the strategies in powers (powers which can be those of not having strong formal tightness) and on interest formation (because the creation of constraints can limit the field of interests).

 - 2) The second is that CBR as alternative institutional forms are linked to a *temporal order*. Indeed, at least there can be a certain agreement with the consideration that
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CBR have a temporal aspect led to the EU financing programmes. But this is not the only issue. As alternative institutions the CBR have something very pertinent to the structuring of decisions and the structuring of accesses proposed by March and Olsen: 1) to lead the choices by decision-makers (*structuring of decisions*); 2) to lead the problems to the choices (*structure of accesses*). (March, Olsen, 2000: 38). For them every problem and every decision can be linked to every choice in a *garbage-can*¹⁶³ theory in institutional configuration. The March and Olsen ‘review’ can be useful for CBR understanding. I will try to read in the following some characteristics that can be better explained following their terms:

- a. *Decisions and solutions* are in CBR not linked together in a direct way. Decisions and solutions in cross-border arenas are particularly linked to decisions and solutions taken in other arenas of decision-making (ex-ante or ex-post the cross-border decision making arena building). The decisions taken for a cross-border solution can be a non-solution for some of the existing institutions involved; or a cross-border non-solution can be a solution for some existing institutions involved. If the choices are made when there are no problems linked to them, the ‘freedom’ of cross-border alternatives can open proposals of choices linked to problems to take in other arenas of decision-making.
- b. *Net energy load*. The theory of the variation of load explains that the energy required to find solutions depends on the flow of possible problem solutions. When the environment of the organisation is relatively rich, solutions are easier to find and the net energy is reduced. CBR can be located in a domain of alternative solutions for existing organisation at the Border State. In this CBR can be seen as relatively easy access compared to other arenas for problem carriers in a certain time.
- c. *Decision-makers* and the *problems* run after each other across *choices*. The problems and the decision-makers belong to a non exclusive way to the cross-border arena. In other words, CBR are often derived from choices (or no-choices) operated in other spheres.

¹⁶³ The Garbage Can Model of Organisational Choice considers organised anarchies. ‘These are organisations – or decision situations – characterised by three general proprieties’ (Cohen, March, Olsen, 1972: 1): problematic preferences, unclear technology and fluid participation. This reference is an important suggestion for my study of CBR.

- d. *Highly interactive* process. CBR consists mostly of a table of dialogue and proposals aimed to this scope to refer to other arenas of decision-making.

The re-composition in partnership in an attempt at heterarchic coordination can therefore be synthesised in the CBR as based on processes:

- 1) which define interests between *decisions* and *solutions* disjuncture as present in *other institutional arenas* and which in cross-borders can find an access. However, the decision-solution relationship does not belong in an exclusive way to the cross-border arena which can work as an alternative with regard to other forms of decision-solving (within borders);
- 2) The cross-border arena can be considered as '*potential energy load*' for systems or institutions or actors. They can flow in CBR under the pressure of problem solving by other institutional setting (within borders). Working within an *alternative institution* CBR is based on loose coupling. It becomes possible thus to identify a series of coalitions or mobilise other social actors beyond borders;
- 3) The building of a cross-border arena is based on *tables of dialogue and proposals* to refer (also and especially) to other tables of decision (usually within borders). The process of alternative institutionalisation is in progress as well as instruments and constraints/rules of the cross-border cooperation arena, which are not given a priori. They depend on aspects of building of CBR also in forms of discourses.

The main characteristics which emerge from this analysis (Scheme 2.4) is that the factors of influence – or exogenous - of CBR can implement the availability of the resources influencing the dynamics of social actors and their mobilisation. In other words CBR can allow a circular process in the distribution of preference (interests), resources (power), and constraints (building) to refer to a path-dependency. March and Olsen elaborate a constructivist mechanism placing the garbage can (GC) theory in a larger theoretical framework of political institutionalism. Arguing that politics can be understood as the collective interpretation and enactment of meaning, they suggest that institutionalisation leads individuals and organisations to act according to 'logic of appropriateness.' (March, Olsen, 1989, pp. 69–116) An aspect of crucial interest at this point seems to emerge towards the notion of 'building' in institutional type of CBR. This can lead us to 'discursive

institutionalisation’, where social processes develop and institutionalise shared understandings.

Factors of Change in CBR as Institutional Governance Building	Structure of Accesses in CBR	Structure of Decisions in CBR as Alternative Institution
Distribution of preferences Interests	Decisions and solutions disjuncture in different territorial existing setting	Not exclusive/not substitutive/mediating and on coupling
Distribution of resources Power	‘Net energy load’	Weak institutionalisation
Constraints/rules Building	Tables of dialogue and proposals	Discourse structuration and discourse institutionalisation processes

Scheme 3.5. - Characteristics based on CBR as institutional arena from an interpretation of the Garbage Can theory model

3.2.4 Building ‘Public’ in Discursive Governance Institutionalisation

Scholars argue that different levels of governments become increasingly dependent on each other in European policy-making and that Europeanisation does not strengthen or weaken but transforms the state by fostering the emergence of cooperation between the actors at different levels of government (Koller-Koch, 1996; Rhodes, 1997). ‘Europeanisation also involves the evolution of new layers of politics that interact with the older one’ (Risse, Cowles, Caporaso, 2001: 3). The impact of Europeanisation on territorial institutions of the member states - being linked to their internal legislative and administrative competencies between state/regions – also increases the degree of decentralisation (Borzal, 2001: 140). In a similar way, one can think of CBR as polycentric cooperatives with elements of multi-level governance working in polycentric governance, multi-perspective governance and FOCJ (functional, overlapping, competing jurisdictions).

‘Each of these terms has its own particularities but all refer to the dispersion of authority away from central government – upwards to the supranational level, downwards to sub-national jurisdictions, and sideways to public/private networks’ (Hooghe, Marks, 2001: 4)

In other words, these modes of governance are

‘inspired by the multiple jurisdiction which for some authors can facilitate credibility policy commitments and allow for jurisdictional competition and can consequently facilitate innovation and experimentation’. (Ibid.)

New forms of governance such as ‘democratic experimentalism’ (i.e. decentralised and coordinated participatory rule-making) are emerging. Potential new forms of governance

are based on procedural, heterarchic and flexible styles moving different interests between member states and in new policy fields (Eberlein, Kerwer, 2002: 2). In the EU, CBR can describe as part of types of governance, which follow these 'new' phases. Indeed discussions about borders/policies transcending the jurisdictions find similar concepts with new kinds of governance: territorial overlapping jurisdictions mode¹⁶⁴ (Casella, Weingast, 1995:13) or with FOCJ (Frey, Eichenberger, 1999) or 'polycentric' in describing the coexistence of many centres of decision-making that are formally independent from each other. Hooghe and Marks define these kinds as

'an alternative vision of multi-level governance in which a number of jurisdictions is vast rather than limited; in which jurisdictions are not aligned on just a few levels, but operate at diverse territorial scale; and where jurisdictions are intended as flexible rather than fixed. (Hooghe, Marks, *ibid*)

As Hooghe and Marks (2001: 7) denote these kinds of governance as 'governance II' are allied to the emergences of: *flexible jurisdictional system*, in which jurisdictions are intended as *flexible rather than permanent in order to respond to changing* to citizen preferences and functional requirements. As such, the new governance becomes a framework of which policies are focussed on groups of citizens towards 'collective consumption units' to procure public goods. Collective action problems are thus dealt with in heterogeneous arenas mobilised by many kinds of groups. This kind of 'governance II' reported by Hooghe and Marks delineates a type of governance which considers the institutional architecture of *frontier governance* taking the cases of Euroregions as trans-national associations; they emphasise how these kinds of associations tend to connect private and public actors at multiple levels.

'Such arrangements are brokered by regional politicians, but most of the action is left to private actors who set up their own collaborative arrangements. The European Commission has also actively supported such a kind of governance as in the best-known programme, Interreg, explicitly aimed to facilitate inter-regional networks along the European Union's internal and external borders' (*ibid.*).

Under this kind of governance, also the appearance of those strategies enounced here above by Jessop in which local communities can deal with local common pooled resource

¹⁶⁴ 'There is generally no reason why the smaller jurisdictions should be neatly contained within the borders of the larger ones. On the contrary, borders will be not crossed, and jurisdictions will be partly overlapped. The 'nested' hierarchical structure of nation state has no obvious, economic rationale and that is opposed by economic forces' (Casella, Weingast, 1995: 13).

problems¹⁶⁵. These common problems can find a reasonable re-structuring in task-specific governance like in CBR. Speaking about inter-jurisdictional coordination, Hooghe and Marks point also to the problem of coordination requirement. They remind us in this circumstance of the concept of ‘nearly decomposable structures’. These structures refer to situations in which the ratio of internal to external interactions is maximised. While in the short-run the behaviour of actors across different governments is more or less independent, their long-run behaviour is only connected in the aggregate (recalling Simon, 1996: 178). For Hooghe and Marks, thus, the design principles that belong to the type of ‘governance II’ is based on functional specificity, low level of distributional conflict, ad hoc policy-specific architecture. This type works in path dependency with other forms of governance ‘that is the increasing return to concentration of competencies in existing jurisdictions’. March and Olsen (1989) say that politics is organised around the building and the interpretation of the meaning rather than or instead of the policy-making. Routines, regulations, and forms evolve by means of historical process and do not have a rapid path of univocal stages of balance. Political institutions are not merely echoes of social forces and the political system differs from an arena destined to the competition of interests. Changes and innovation in term of cross-border actions in the policies activated ‘at the Border State’ can lead us to seek for internal processes in continuous course of adapting. The participants vary in the amount of time and they devote to different domains the pertinence of problems, contrasts and conflicts as integral parts of the exploration of alternatives. The boundaries of such organisation in alternatives are uncertain and changing; these alternatives can also reach times in which they are no longer necessary but have constituted useful paths for the exploration of other alternatives.

‘Policies are not eternal truths but hypotheses subjected to be verified and to be replaced by better ones which will also be replaced’ (Wildawsky, 1992: 16).

As such, CBR are part of institutional continuous processes and part of social processes of institutionalisation (in which cross-coalitions, epistemic local societies and multiple streams of problems, policies and politics constitute the basis to think of alternatives within windows of cross-border opportunities) less related to ‘fixed-actors’ (interests/power) and normative circularity (power/constraints). A little literature has already taken the CBR institution for

¹⁶⁵ Scarce, renewable resources – for instance water basins, lakes, irrigation systems, forests, hunting grounds, common meadows – risk depletion

content in terms of function and utility. Studies have been developed around normative punctual inflection in orientation to the efficacy of the cross-border technocratic arena. Some results in terms of efficacy have also been studied in part to the dominant actors involved (Cappellin, 1992; Murphy, 1993; Gonin, 1994; Church, Reid, 1999) or in composing overall pictures which legitimate agencies in cross-border (Scott, 2000; Perkmann, 2003). The case studies pertaining to the role of cross-border institution in terms of success or failures have been proposed in recent years by a vast literature on border studies; various variants linked merely to technocratic function have also been a frequent topic. Financial programmes and qualitative reports in cross-border regionalism do not lack in literature. Yet my contribution in cross-border regionalism as governance follows a strand of recent research sensitive to the 'practices' of building; many orientations still lack in this regard. My theoretical framework is an attempt at an understanding of CBR as an institutional alternative, which opens its form to the institutional change at the Border State having territorial 'effects' in terms of relational democratic governance. 'Governance' is no longer attached directly or univocally to scalar existing topology as I have attempted to analyse through the tasks which refer to a geographical scope. The regionalism in cross-border becomes in this sense part of the social practices; 'practices' which are both 'instruments' and part of the everyday life in the transformation of public action across the border state. 'Practices' shift the interaction of the social parts in pattern of agency or fractions, which *structure discourses*¹⁶⁶.

Foucault ¹⁶⁷said that:

I would like to show that 'discourses', in the form in which they can be heard or read, are not, as one might expect, a mere intersection of things and words: an obscure web of things, and a manifest, visible, Coloured chain of words; I would like to show that discourse is not a slender surface of contact, or confrontation, between a reality and a language (langue), the intrication of a lexicon and an experience; I would like to show with precise examples that in

¹⁶⁶ To this topic I will return more diffusely in chapters 4 and 5. In this circumstance I refer just to the theories of Foucault of discursive practices as 'outside', 'inside' and 'on side' (1971) the forms of the practices and to the other hand I refer to the scheme proposed by Hajer (1995) speaking about the 'environmental politics' with regard to the phases of discourses in institutional path: 1) discourse structuration (that is the ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorisations in order to define a plausible problem situation); 2) discourse institutionalisation (whenever particular ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations are translated into institutional arrangement).

¹⁶⁷ La volonté de savoir (Annuaire du collège de France 71 année, Histoire des système de pensée année 1970-1971 pp. 245-246). Herewith I have reported the English version reported in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), Routledge, 1972.

analysing discourses themselves, one sees the loosening of the embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practice. These rules define not the dumb existence of a reality, nor the canonical use of a vocabulary, but the ordering of objects. 'Words and things' is the entirely serious title of a problem; it is the ironic title of a work that modifies its own form, displaces its own data, and reveals, at the end of the day, a quite different task. A task that consists of not - of no longer treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe. (Foucault, 1969)

Inspired by Foucault, I would like to propose the 'transformation' of public actions at the Border State not as a simple 'result', which can be taken for granted in cross-border cooperation as innovative policy. My aim is to consider the 'transformation' as 'effect' in relevance of discursive practice for cross-border arenas in forms of 'effects' in interaction as territorial relational governance. Cross-border regionalism can be interpreted as alternative spatial form. Thus its 'territorial effects' belong to new cultures of multiplex spaces according to a contested 'relational geography'. New governances are emerging in such a favourable relational similitude; networks of actors and actions are structured in a framework of public action which shifts levels and sectors and maintains heterarchic ways across nation-state borders. The Border State emerges thus as a domain of actions and social interactions as new spatial strategy in the modernisation of the political space. CBR is in line with novel forms of governance, which can work even 'on the side' of 'hierarchies'. Perhaps along these channels of exchanges new mechanisms can find their own forms of 'right' legitimacy acceptance in democratic criteria¹⁶⁸. I maintain that cross-border regionalism is an important sign of a system open to interests (also and above all turbulently competitive) in 'pattern' of governance. Shifting lines of nation-state territorial differentiation, cross-border regionalism confirms the idea of space as process of structuring.

'the constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both reaction and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. Structure is not external to individuals: as memory traces, and as substantiated in social practices, it is in a certain sense more 'internal' than exterior to their activities . . . Structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always constraining and enabling' (Giddens, 1984:25).

¹⁶⁸ As well known my provocation is towards Fritz Sharp's (1997) theory of 'output legitimacy' as acceptance created by systems of effectiveness and 'input legitimacy' that is acceptance created by democratic procedures.

CBR are part of structures that exist within our social world which are continually being created and recreated through active discourse. Forms of dialogue, learning processes and exchange, utopian visions, discursive trust and solidarity can provide important inputs to this. Perhaps future paths in directions and orientations of relational democratic governance can appear towards a 'positive aspect of the society' in processes of 'territorialisation'.

Summary Chapter 3

CBR have been considered by many studies as functional spaces in reference to a particular level of institutional success or failure; 'restructuring' or 'de-structuring' in state-theory and neo-Marxist positioning. With this chapter I have completed the first part of my thesis sustaining a re-conceptualisation of cross-border regionalism idea as a governance mode founded on Foucaultian practices. In the latter chapter I have proposed an overture starting from the analytical qualitative categories, which can sketch cross-border regionalism as a spatial process. I have interpreted general questions of new regionalism in the light of some conceptual dimensions in details of cross-border regionalism, identifying three strands devoted to such an evolutionary process. Following a general synthesis (scheme 3.1) I have considered qualitative aspects of cross-border regionalism as: 1) functional: debating a cross-border identity question; 2) political: sketching a frame of social strategies in cross-border public mobilisations; 3) territorial: attempting an approach to the cross-border governance problem. Through these three filaments I have just maintained two evolutionary aspects linked to the institutional design and the institutional building problems. I have argued that cross-border regionalism in institutional design problem (intentions and structuration) can be rooted mainly along paths of regional identification (Scheme 3.2) and through strategies which can be suggested by multiple spheres of social spaces (Scheme 3.3). The cross-border governance problem is positioned in-between the institutional design and the institutional building. The Border State is thus a process of governance of an EU 'political frontier regime'. Cross-border governance seems devoted to 'practices' of 'interaction', which 'network governance' assume to be metaphors (Scheme 3.4). Suggesting a 're-composition' in institutional experimental learning as relational forms based on socialising and democratic institutions in 'alternative' working (Scheme 3.5), I have anticipated new forms of governance in conceptualising the 'relational' aspect of a democratic emerging governance. Practices of interactions in forms of *discourses* can develop at the Border State 'territorial

effects' according to a relational geography. In the next chapter I will continue with the case study of *Espace Mont-Blanc* leaving implicit much of the concepts until here exposed. The focus is indeed on the evolutionary progress of the cross-border region *Espace Mont-Blanc* as a 'project of territory' that emerges as alternative institutional path in dependence on actors and actions originated in several domains of pertinence. Starting from preliminary actions developed historically in such a cross-border region as part of the description of the territory dynamic, local tourism offerings and international transportation are the assumptions in continuity, which take us along the 'making' of cross-border region *Espace Mont-Blanc* (hereafter EMB). EMB is a new mirror in-between local and trans-national settings and alliances. Hereafter, I will present the case study beating time of the 'policy making' phases according to five main sections. I have interpreted these through the emerging of continuity and discontinuity in 'public actions' at Border State of this tri-national area (Scheme 4.1). EMB is the subject of a cross-border identification through various spheres of policies, which involve over time towards its expression of being a 'social model'. EMB poses a high stake on territorial transformation for a mission that, since the beginning has represented a series of 'multi-level' wishes. In my analysis I suggest characters, which lead towards the politicising of this cross-border regional space at the Border State. I will lead my study on the expression, which EMB assumes as a tendency in *becoming* according to the construction of its own common discursive strategy. EMB results an institutional process, which lacks in juridical force, re-establishing in a cross-border arena, a different character of the actors involved. They rather loose their fixed existed and legitimated role within the nation-state borders. However new roles of the actors coexist in different networks of interaction, which change the vocabulary of territorial conception of space and its social strategies according to a relational (geographical) conception. EMB is a tendency towards a change of the relations between modern spatial and its policies, between territoriality and State towards the production of spaces with many elements - even those linked to a process of democratic regulation and legitimacy - are still fugitive.

ACTMB = Administration Committee of the Tunnel du Mont-Blanc
ARSMB = Association pour the Respect du Site du Mont-Blanc
ATMB = Autoroute et Tunnel du Mont-Blanc
CEAT = Communate' d'Etude Amanagement du Territoire
CIAMP = Comité International pour la Protection du Mont-Blanc
CTMB = Conference Transfrontaliere du Mont-Blanc
EMB = Espace Mont-Blanc Cross-Border Cooperation project
EOEC = European Organisation of Economic Cooperation
EU-ICS = EU Interesting Community Sites
FMB = Mont-Blanc Cable Car
GEIE-TMB = European Group of Economic Interest Tunnel of the Mont-Blanc
ICOMOS = International Council of Monuments and Sites
NGO = Non-Govermental Organisation
MB = Mont-Blanc Mountain
MW = Mountain Wilderness
PTCP = Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Paesistico Regione Valle d'Aosta
RAVA = Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta
SCH= Syndacat des Cheminot
SEV = Swiss Comité de l'Initiative des Alpes
SIENMB = Syndacat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc
SITMB = Società Italiana per Azioni per il Traforo del Monte Bianco
TMB = Mont-Blanc Tunnel
UICIN = Alliance Mondial Pour la Nature

Part Two

EMPIRICAL WORK

MAKING A CROSS-BORDER REGION: ESPACE MONT-BLANC.
AN ANALYSIS CENTRED ON THE 'POLICY MAKING' PHASES

Espace Mont-Blanc (hereafter EMB) begins as a 'trans-local' attempt to conciliate policies of protection and development in a new manner, in cross-border. In this chapter, an overview of the making of the project is proposed starting from issues of territorial transformation concerning this area at the border between Switzerland, Italy and France on the slopes of the Mont-Blanc Mountain. EMB was born as a reaction to a policy planned by the central governmental settings for the construction of an inter-national Park on the slopes of the Mont-Blanc Mountain. EMB becomes an invention, which involves the 'meso' institutional levels in existing MB border suggesting an alternative policy to a centralised motion. EMB aspires to being a local project but which accomplishes also the European vision of border areas in the process of integration. Its policies over time become discursively connected with other policies and their urgent need for problem solving. Also its actors are more and more connected in a network and contrasted by other actors. This chapter suggests the partition of the policy-making phases of the EMB project in an interpretative visualization. Five phases join the role of the EMB to the making and the aspirations of its arenas towards the discourse of a cross-border regionalism not yet accomplished. A method of analysis based on the interviews of the political arenas, the reading of newspapers and the INTERNET are here the source for the cross-border language I propose in this chapter. Spheres of consequential 'public' in a cross-border governance perspective conclude that the nation-state border at the MB has changed towards an open visual. The relationship of nation-state border in sovereignty and the contemporary European 'Border State' consists of a domain where space is in a continuing phase of 'politicising'.

The Espace Mont-Blanc cross-border project (EMB hereafter) was born at the beginning of the 1990s as an alternative 'social project'¹⁶⁹ to a protection policy foreseen in the

¹⁶⁹ This sentence 'social project' has been particularly taken as a flag above all in the starting phases of EMB project. In the beginning the construction of a local group as a cross-border committee which could be referred to regional and inter-municipality levels existing on the border between Italy, France, and Switzerland was willed by the national level. This committee had the role of identifying a series of national protected areas to insert in a future International Park of Mont-Blanc. Although this cross-border local committee was instated under such internationality it then took other roads especially caused by the contribution of some subjectivity. Indeed Michel Charlet (mayor of Chamonix) was a very important part of this issue. On the occasion of the official meeting with Brice Lalonde (secretary of French Prime Minister, Michel Rocard) in 1990 to discuss the Park project, Charlet retreated with this sentence: 'It is a centralised and rigid management without any social project. I prefer to look for an alternative with my colleagues of Valais and Valle d'Aosta' (reported in an interview of a press review in 1995). Indeed the idea to contrast the Park idea was already in the aim of the Italian and Swiss side and in their intentions.

political national level (France, Italy, Switzerland) agendas and there lay for several years under the issue of the International Park of Mont-Blanc. The creation of this name – Espace - is not an irrelevant event but a means and the first step toward current orientations no longer essentially linked to current planning instruments. ‘Espace’ expressed indeed another means: the synonym of a plotted and bargaining cross-border political arena which could assume a role of coordination, as first focuses, between the local interests and the national choices on environmental topics. At the end of the 1980s the urgency to provide protection for the Mont-Blanc Mountain and its pays though for years latent became huge under the impulses of the birth of environmental organisations’. Indeed in those years the inevitable impacts of tourist structures (responding to mass tourism) and the constant increasing of road traffic creation (responding to the international market heavy traffic across the Alps) procured a natural but difficult reflection on the destiny of an exclusive natural and sensitive patrimony, as is the Mont-Blanc territory. EMB is at first a reaction and a device to an environmental question willed and sustained by different existing institutions at regional and national level. In other words, EMB is at first a ‘trans-local’ attempt to conciliate protection and development in a new manner, in a context of cross-border. EMB as trans-local policy, speaking in terms of coordination and conciliation policies across the nation-state border has not had an easy and fluent life. Although it was born as the expression of an innovative tendency in perceiving trans-national EU policies for cross-border cooperation and as a potential alternative to a difficult regulations need (between protection and development) for this tri-national area. The reason is mainly because EMB and its gestation is linked and ‘placed’ in a tight dynamic territory where local and international interests are in conflict. Inconceivable and necessary hypotheses in development (tourism, transport) and protection (sensitive areas) emerge across the border on the slopes of the Mont-Blanc Mountain. The EMB cross-border arena synthesises this ‘impossibility’ and ‘necessity’ of the trans-border policy. The first actors to appear on the EMB stage cope with other political processes and decisional spheres in sectors and levels of government on the different institutional sides of the border between France, Italy and Switzerland (involving national and local levels and their (im)balances). On the wave of an initial policy on the protection of the Mont-Blanc Mountain, the starting idea concerning the (Inter)national Park changes during the course of actions and in the ‘making’ of this cross-border arena. Thinking cross-border actions, the initial policies change towards a meaning of the EMB

according to a different 'Border State'. This nation-state border is a condition of contact from which a cross-border policy became possible but the border issue in its 'position' was a controversial issue. For years and for political and historical concern the nation-state border was controversial on the top of the Mont-Blanc Mountain¹⁷⁰¹⁷¹ affecting its bowels in the namesake tunnel. EMB is no longer concerned within protection and national regulations and policies; this seems just an initial aim. EMB becomes a new possibility in shifting the course of public actions from environmental protection to the issue of a common cross-border regional identity construction on the slopes of the Mont-Blanc Mountain. EMB assumes the connotation of an incremental and not-ended bi-dimensional space at the borderline: a new social space in politicising. EMB is a vehicle and a device for territorial policies already existing in making a 'site' of dialogue and communication. EMB consists of a kind of transformation in the existing pattern of governance, which involves both new and old stakes and stakeholders around the *pays du Mont-Blanc*. EMB changes the public action at the nation-state borders transforming the different and separated institutional design into the Border State. The starting intentions from the beginning of the project have become fragmented in various forms of subjectivities and actions also not completely convergent and circumscribed within borderlands' local domains. EMB appears in-between them as a composite space, a plaiting of several problems, which go beyond the protection of their natural contexts. EMB speaks of different policy content, of cross-border regionalism and a path of discursive institutionalisation. EMB is the 'space' where the interests and the strategies of/for more or less local actors consent a new spatial possibility of 'opening'. EMB stalks a cross-border regional identification; nevertheless at the same time the kind of 'regionalism' in 'cross-border' is in question.

¹⁷⁰ In synthesis this border issue was discussed between Italians and French on the real propriety of the Mont-Blanc summit at 4,810m. This deed contradicted the French thesis, which sustained that the top of the mountain is inside the French territory. The proof was shown in two maps enclosed in the treaty of the assignment of the Savoie to France signed by Vittorio Emanuele II and also signed by Napoleon III. The Germans stole the original French document during the Second World War while the Italian one still exists in the Record Office and some copies are deposited at the Istituto Geografico Militare di Firenze. The real position of the border is an object of discussion that has gone on for years. The issue of this border was definitely solved with the help of the historical reconstruction work by Pino Crespi. As Crespi points out where the border is exactly in this area is not so important because he says, we are in the Espace Mont-Blanc, a cross-border common identity. (ANSA and LA STAMPA, 14 February 1996 and my interview with Crespi in February 2004). In 1996 on a national television programme the historic Crespi said that the border between Chamonix and Courmayeur is exactly at the top of Mont-Blanc according to some documents. The issue was posed again in discussion during the tunnel re-opening after the accident in 1999 on the issue of the shared responsibility for the Tunnel. Michel Charlet, the mayor of Chamonix is still nowadays accused for the Tunnel accident because it happened in French territory.

EMB as cross-border context has not a 'fixed' established shape, its re-bordering has instable borders, however its name and various symbols substitute more traditional expressions of a thus 'regional' dimension. EMB is the space where actions of social participation converge as in a form of 'open arena' but no means are already given in leading cross-border regionalism towards a framework of development. At the moment, EMB is better definable as a board aimed at heterarchic coordination in the intentions of the actors. A path of thirteen years has been based on the aspiration to a table of coordination where earnings are still a crucial aspect. In EMB as a cross-border arena various flows of interests and problems converge, which constitute the foundation of its alternative. In this suggestion, EMB is 'opening' across and beyond jurisdictional borders in the ways in which the participation of actors more or less 'glocal' is involved and admitted. Borderlands on the slopes of Mont-Blanc Mountain have been affected by common problems of policies increased from the 1970s. These have been the background of the dynamics of 'communality' and 'resistance' in the making of cross-border regionalism as EMB is here interpreted. The marks of these dynamics are manifested in the intensifying of international transport linked to the wider Alpine Arc and the growth of tourist infrastructures, which have become both problems of environmental concern. Issues like 'protection' and 'development' have increasingly mixed up expressions of policies and market. Territorial fragility and potential economy have convoluted local competencies and national organisms raising their 'asymmetrical' regulations. Existing routines and foreseen sectoral policies in each country in environmental protection, transport and planning instruments have been muddled between interests outside the local spheres and the cultural influences even introduced by environmental organisations. Other policies have a resonance within the EMB: the Alpine Convention, the International Year for the Mountains, Sustainability after Rio and Johannesburg. Issues concerning 'environment' and 'sustainability' are not ignored during the making of the EMB project. Wireworks of other topics linked to them are both influenced and influencing dynamics from which the EMB making departs. In other words, the environmental issues create a demand towards which EMB is a reaction. As a cross-border project, EMB produces returns to processes, which appear often slow, precautionary, stopped by inevitable and complex gears. Briefly, EMB does not produce punctual 'problem-solving' to policy needs. EMB is an attempt to respond to various punctual policies towards the creation of a space

in politicising. The issue on the modern nexus between political space and territoriality appears therefore in the course of the actions across and beyond the nation-state borders; in cross-border both the traditional means for the territorial regulation and the actors step out the pertinence of their fixed roles in actions given within the nation-state borders. During the progress of EMB 'policy-making', a framework of trans-national EU policy foreseen for cross-border cooperation and the current experiences led in cross-border contexts emerges highlighting no longer an exclusive EU trans-national reference but a mixed, applied 'multi-level governance'. Such an aspect seems to swell the legitimacy condition to recognize EMB as a territorial project through public actions of regional identification.

'Concluded the Twentieth century which admitted just one identity, the national one, today is opened the fan of the local recognising in the European system' (Martial, 1996).

The aspect of a 'local' recognising is thus no longer the particular one to take into consideration.

4.1 THE MONT-BLANC AREA: SYMBOLIC BORDER CROSSING ACTIONS IN-BETWEEN A GEOGRAPHICAL CONFIGURATION

The Mont-Blanc Mountain (MB hereafter) characterizes a massif on the border between Italy, France and Switzerland. It corresponds with the highest Alpine chain and the highest crossroad of Europe. The Massif of Mont-Blanc stretches for about 39 kilometres along a northeast to southwest axis for an average width of 9 kilometres. Three main resorts represent its valley floor and they use a label linked to MB: Chamonix on the French side, Courmayeur on the Italian one, and Martigny in the Swiss part. EMB is a cross-border cooperation initiative, which includes in a 'regional' aspiration all these areas in between a project of re-bordering even today still vague. EMB embraces a complex territory rich in contrasts between an undisputed natural patrimony on the slopes of MB and disputed actions in exploitation of these lands through massive infrastructure services for mass tourism and international transportation. The cross-border area of MB is, beyond the political nation-state borders between Italy-Switzerland-France, a homogeneous area. In other words, this can be understood also as a geographical unit of territory. For example, there are some internationally recognised tourist resorts like Courmayeur and Chamonix but also agricultural territories such as Beaufortin and rural landscapes such as the Swiss

Valleys. The EMB project aims to bond in one ‘reality’ a series of facets, which coexist together in the particular context of the slopes of MB. EMB was born at the end of the 1980s sustained by several causes and actors. As I will describe in this chapter, the socio-political and economical historical experiences in crossing this border before the EMB project had surfaced are also its foundations. EMB is a sort of consequence strongly inclined from both national events of the three countries and local dynamics. European narrations in symbolic and representative achievements also collaborate for this set of regions. From the time of the French Revolution, with the birth of mountain climbing, the slopes of Mont-Blanc became the symbol and emblem of this new interest, and thus its symbolic image. The promotion of the mountaineer has marked over the years increasingly the economic fortune of these areas around the Mountain. Localities like Chamonix, Courmayeur and Sion and the Mont-Blanc valleys have then become one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.¹⁷² The Mont-Blanc Mountain,¹⁷³ for centuries subject of popular superstitions and legends was vaguely portrayed in topographical maps. The French historic scholar Philippe Joutard has coined the expression ‘the invention of Mont-Blanc’ to draw attention to the fact that mountaineering and alpine tourism have been the consequences of a cultural elaboration. Images of hostile masses of glaciers and the hard work of the mountain dweller have been replaced by the fashion of the sublime, the purity of the snow, the scientific interest for high altitudes. This wave of interest has distinguished the west borderlands between France, Switzerland and Italy. For two centuries a business offered by one of the 7 wonders of the world has provided localities such as Courmayeur, Chamonix, Sion and Martigny with an impressive economic growth between the 1980s and 1990s¹⁷⁴. The marketing operational in the 1980s sped up thus a ‘requalification’ process. Image campaigns have been so persuasive as to allow localities such as Chamonix and Courmayeur to set a ‘fashion’ for mass elite tourism in the mountains. Environmental organisations have reported from their birth this growth in

¹⁷² After the Niagara Falls, the Mont-Blanc area is the most popular tourist destination.

¹⁷³ Mont-Blanc was for centuries called Mount Maudit, as a mountain, which had been jinxed.

¹⁷⁴ Manful numbers for that time: Courmayeur on the slopes of MB mountain counts less than 3,000 inhabitants and it registers about 2 million presences in the peak tourist season. Chamonix inhabitants go from 10,000 to 80,000 in peak tourist season.

terms of cementations and asphaltifications, smog, deforestations, glacier menaces, risks for flora and fauna¹⁷⁵.

'The impact of mass tourism on the environment can be measured in detail: kilometres of cable railways and systems for the ski-domains with their capacity load, the number of systems for artificial snow production...but the impact of these infrastructures on the sensitive areas is just a part of the Alps' problem. Second homes are one of the macroscopic examples of property speculation and the exploitation of territory of which traffic is an evident symbol...' (Moroder, 1998).



Figure 4.1. – *La Carta Itineraria Europae de Martin WALDSEEMULLER (1520). A European representation in the geographical maps of 1520 presented on the occasion of an international exhibition titled 'Traverser les Alpes' in 2004 in Chamonix. This map represented also the Mont-Blanc chain according to a very 'indefinite whole of mountains'*

From the middle of 1900s, just after the Second World War, preliminary actions across the MB border have represented symbols of peaceful contacts. For instance, the construction of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel¹⁷⁶ (hereafter 'TMB') has become the emblem of 'opening' across

¹⁷⁵ Helmut Moroder, president of the Italian session of CIPRA (International Commission for the Alps Protection which groups together environmental associations in Italy, Austria, France and Germany) in an interview given on January 1998.

¹⁷⁶ The Mont-Blanc Tunnel represented a very important symbol in a European transport axis and a strong input to promote the cross-border activities as peaceful actions between European countries on the wave of the post Second World War revival and reconstruction of stability and balance within the old continent.

the Alps as a corridor for international transport. The Mont-Blanc cable car¹⁷⁷ (hereafter FMB) has then assumed the figure of services and offerings in this exclusive tourist area. Although such actions were events planned by the minds of authoritative people¹⁷⁸ before the Second World War, they were actually realized from 1947. With this date was placed the Peace Treaty between the neo-Italian Republic¹⁷⁹ and the United Nations and just from this date the contacts based on a peaceful relationship between Italy and France¹⁸⁰ actually began. In June 1947 the United States launched the 'Marshall Plan' to give financial help to European countries subsequent to the Second World War. France and England invited Italy to participate in it and in 1948 Italy became a member of the European Organisation for Economic Cooperation (EOEC). From that moment, progress in the Italian and French relationship was made also because, from the Italian point of view, France was the only neighbouring country that the Italian Republic could lean on¹⁸¹. Diplomatic relationships started especially from the French side in a second time.

'France still had serious doubts with regard to Italy. The remembering of the war and of Fascism nourished, especially on the borderlands, strong prejudice with regard to the neighbouring country' (Guichonnet, 1967:28).

At the same time, Europe manifested a great will to overcome the vast reconstruction after the Second World War. The damage to roads and railways provoked a crisis on general economies and city poles. The economic depression and the need to overcome such an order of problems were the stimulus for the earliest cross-border actions across Europe.

¹⁷⁷ The highest cable car in the world linked Chamonix and Courmayeur across the Mont-Blanc Mountain; the famous cable car of the Glacier today is no longer used.

¹⁷⁸ The Italian Count Dino Lora Totino and the engineer Vittorio Zignoli were the main authors of this work. Count Dino Lora Totino was committed to challenging works and his presence was a decisive factor both for the Mont-Blanc cableway and for the Mont-Blanc Tunnel realisations which he thought up in all their details. Indeed his studies had already begun before the Second World War in the meanwhile he was already building the famous cableways on the Cervino Mountain or Matterhorn (between Italy and Switzerland).

¹⁷⁹ After the allied forces landing in July 1943 in Sicily and the fall of Mussolini, Italy was destroyed by the military operation. In October 1943 the Baroglio government declared war on Germany but Italy was actually liberated just after in spring 1945 when the army of Kesselring was defeated. On 2 July 1946 the Italian Republic was declared.

¹⁸⁰ In February 1945 the diplomatic relationships were favourable between Rome and Paris. The Official reports became more frequent also through sporadic meetings for example Sforza-Bidault in Turin (March 1948) and Sforza-Schumann in Cannes (November 1948). France, after hard fighting was liberated at the end of 1944, General De Gaulle remained in the provisional government till 1946 and just in 1947 the Fourth French Republic provided a constitution in spite of the political government instability which slackened the parliamentary activity with an 'immobility' over important decisions. Italy was occupied till 1947 and kept under protection of the Allied Commission and for the Soviet veto couldn't become a member of UNO. The Italian Constitution came into force in 1948 and a political coalition led by the Christian-Democratic Party inaugurated a stability in the De Gasperi Government which remained for seven consequential governments till 1950.

¹⁸¹ Switzerland was neutral; with Austria and Yugoslavia there were still territorial issues to solve such as those of Alto Adige with Austria and those of Trieste with Yugoslavia.

In particular, at this nation-state border at the Mont-Blanc Mountain evident steps forward from the concerning Italian desire to rise above the huge problems of unemployment (Aosta Valley Region)¹⁸² triggered convergent interests in both French participation (in particular the Savoie and Haute Savoie Departments) and Switzerland with the Geneva¹⁸³ Canton (before the Valais). In Italy great works were planned with the aspiration to employ the ex-military people and the large mass of unemployed. As such, these works mainly on the infrastructures were not just focused of 'internal' national development but also looking towards a series of international relations which could be launched and promoted. In France the situation was different, the 'internal' works constituted the main interest of the country and the cross-border actions between Savoie and Haute Savoie¹⁸⁴ constituted a surplus of possibilities. Switzerland in general was favourable from 1945 to collaborate with the neighbouring states especially relative to the centres such as Basle and Geneva.

4.1.1 Border Crossing in Actions: Sketches of Contiguity Between Past and Present

Horace-Benedict de Sussure was the actual promoter of cross-border cooperation visions in MB territories¹⁸⁵. In his first important scientific expedition climbing to the MB summit

¹⁸² The Aosta Valley suffered under the Fascist Regime in principle very far from the spirit of these citizens. The seasonal migration of Valle d'Aosta's people during the winter to France, Switzerland and Belgium was suppressed in Fascist time through an extreme limitation of passports. Valle d'Aosta's people also suffered the persecutions and the suppression of their ancestral language (the French, French-Provencal) which was always a potent arm for their existence. At the end of the Second World War in the Aosta Valley there were demonstrations and commotions because of the deed that had been sketched before and the provisional government in Rome gave the Valley, through an immediate lieutenant-ship, its own autonomous administration guaranteeing the teaching of the double language in the schools (French and Italian) already asserted in the Italian Royal Statute.

¹⁸³ Geneva suffered the crisis of the years 1930-1936 and the efforts towards its revival were paralysed during the Second World War. At the end of this the Government and public opinion intended to make up for the delay of the Geneva Canton to realise the aspiration to become an international centre. The support of the Geneva government was essentially important for the Mont-Blanc Tunnel realisation. Geneva was oriented to becoming a centre of the communication roads in the political intentions of that time and the true problems to realise that were focused, for Geneva, in its tension towards the external countries such as France and Italy in particular. For this reason the Mont-Blanc Tunnel had an essential importance for Geneva which gave its support through financial participation and its moral support to facilitate the concurrence of private interests (Guichonnet, 1964:39)

¹⁸⁴ The Savoie (Savoy) is divided administratively into two Departments: the Haute Savoie (High Savoy) with Annecy as capital and the Savoie (Savoy) with Champéry as capital. The Savoie held the monopoly of the trans-alpine linkages (through the pass of Piccolo S. Bernardo, the Cenisio and the Frejus) from the Middle Ages. The administration of this part of Savoie Department did not agree with the Mont-Blanc Tunnel realisation because it wanted to maintain a passage exclusively on its territory. The Haute Savoie on the contrary didn't have any communication line towards Italy either via railway or road and for that it was immediately favourable to the TMB, both on the Annecy side and in the Chamonix municipality.

¹⁸⁵ As I will report in the following speaking about the recent vicissitude of the Espace Mont-Blanc, its history begins in France in 1989 and the cross-border actions have historic-cultural roots. For the mountaineering demonstrations to ask for MB protection then it starts an actual action towards the EMB project. The reference to Sussure is important not just

in 1787 he predicted in his travel notebook the existence of an integrated space on the slopes of the MB Mountain. He wrote from the MB top:

'je vois deux vallées où parle la même langue, où les peuples sont les mêmes. Un jour viendra où l'on creusera sous le Mont-Blanc une voie charretière et ce deux vallées, la Vallée du Chamonix et la Vallée d'Aoste seront unies'¹⁸⁶ (Horace-Benedict de Sassenay, 1787)

Two cross-border actions were realised to link these valleys after the Second World War. In the 1960s the emblem of this symbolic contact between Italy, France and Switzerland across the nation-state border at Mont-Blanc was realised first of all with the Mont-Blanc Tunnel creation. The TMB attainment responded to a local, national and European demand for international linkage, involving the interests of all the countries of the future EMB. But also another precursor action well suggests some of the problems, which affect these borderlands: the Mont-Blanc cableways (Le Funivie del Monte Bianco). In the following I shall just provide a sketch of their realisations as preceding and continuous cross-border actions towards the EMB project. Such realisations would deserve a thesis apart because they also report the history of at least three nations after the Second World War in their need for revival. Nevertheless, the focus of this chapter is centred on the EMB policy so with the intention of suggesting the topics of the Mont-Blanc tunnel and cable car realizations in their pertinence with the EMB project. Such episodes of transformation have introduced issues, which are an essential part of the dynamics of these territories. The report that I highlight thus here below will be found again throughout the EMB 'policy making' phases.

Crossing The Top Of the Mont-Blanc Region: The Cable Railway Issue

The Mont-Blanc car construction began before the Second World War both on the Italian¹⁸⁷ and French¹⁸⁸ side. During the war the works were suspended. The Italian's first extension

because from this event the MB became actually the symbol of mountaineers but also because it was just on the occasion of the bicentennial of the first ascent by Sassenay that in 1986, the environmental organisations launched the debate of a public intervention to protect the MB mountain. With the connection and the cross-border actions between Italy and France started then the preparation of the first INTERREG I that actually launched the initiative of EMB. Perhaps it is useful to remember here that the programming of INTERREG I at that time was pertinent to zones classified as objective 1 in which the Aosta Valley's Aosta Region and the Haute Savoie were not included. It was therefore an exception to have this financial programme from them. The EMB arena spoke at that time about a confidence sign motion that the EU had given to the creation of the Espace Mont-Blanc.

¹⁸⁶ I see two valleys, which speak the same language, where the people are the same. One day will come a linkage under Mont Blanc a way across these two valleys and, the Valley of Chamonix and the Valley of Aosta will be united. This sentence is reported in the works of Paul Guichonnet dedicated to the Mont-Blanc Tunnel edited in 1963 and in 1967, works of fundamental importance to study in depth all the phases of the TMB.

(La Palud-Pavillon) was already functioning during the war¹⁸⁹, but the French air force's machine-gunning immediately damaged it. It was thus tested and started working again in 1947 and it was opened to the public the next year¹⁹⁰. From the French side of the Mont-Blanc, the existing track¹⁹¹ of the cable car was built in the 1950s, but already in 1924-27 its extension was built between Les Pélérins-La Para localities¹⁹² and planned to arrive as far as the top of Aiguilles du Midi¹⁹³. These final higher sections both on the French and Italian sides were realized from 1955 with enormous difficulties to work for meteorological conditions at those altitudes. The 'eighth wonder of the world' was realised and publicised like that in 1957 as the linkage between Chamonix and Courmayeur. Two other cable cars were also created: a first one linked the Italian side at the top of Punta Helbronner (that is the nation-state borderline between Italy and France; until a short time ago the customs office was also located there); a second one was on the French side the famous 'Liaison' (the glacier cableway)¹⁹⁴ which linked Punta Helbronner (I) with the 'Aiguilles du Midi' (F).

¹⁸⁷ Le Funivie del Monte Bianco, is the cableway company on the Italian side with public management by the Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta and Courmayeur municipality.

¹⁸⁸ The Compagnie du Mont-Blanc is the concessionary company for the management of the cableway of Chamonix. The person in charge today is the mayor of Chamonix, Michel Charlet and vice-president of the cross-border EMB arena from the French side.

¹⁸⁹ People say that it was realised for military purposes; indeed it was used to take military supplies to the Colle del Gigante during the Second World War.

¹⁹⁰ The Mont-Blanc cableway is in three stretches. The first one goes from La Palud (I) to the Rifugio Torino (I) and was opened to the public in 1948 exceeding a difference in height of 2,005 metres. The second stretch goes from Chamonix (F) to the Aiguilles du Midi (F) and it was started in 1951 and opened to the public in 1956 exceeding a difference in level of 2,812 metres. In this stretch the cableway connected Chamonix (1,030 meters) to the Plan des Aiguille (2,317) and the next year in addition the stretch till the Aiguilles du Midi (3,842 meters) was built. The third stretch was started in 1954 and tested in 1958 and connected the Rifugio Torino (I) with the P'Aiguilles du Midi (F) through Punta Helbronner (borderline I/F). From Punta Helbronner started the true 'glacier's cableway' a stretch which actually linked together the cableways already existing on the French and Italian sides. This latter stretch was possible to realize thanks to very original technical solutions such as the aerial pillar which allows you to exceed a distance of 3,300 metres in just a sole span. For this realisation about 300 kilometres of steel cables were taken to this summit.

¹⁹¹ On the French side there are two systems of cableways: the first stretch is Chamonix-Plan de Aiguilles and the other is the stretch between Plan de Aiguilles-Aiguilles du Midi, these systems were rebuilt in 1991 with new structures on Creissels' and the intervention of project Réel.

¹⁹² The project of this cableway was actually started in June 1910 with an agreement between the Chamonix municipality (the owner of this land) and a new company created for this scope the Société du Funicular Aérien de l'Aiguille du Midi Mont-Blanc with a concession of 65 years to favour this company in the cableway creation. During the First World War the works were interrupted and in 1922 a new company was created the Société Française des Chemins de Fer de Montagne in order to be ready for the First Olympic Games in winter 1924 for the bobsleigh competition. In 1933 for financial difficulties the company failed and only in 1937 did the works begin again but the works were again interrupted by the Second World War and after that these works were seen as not urgent so the activity of the construction started again only in 1950 with the Compagnie du Telepherique de la Vallée Blanche as concessionary company.

¹⁹³ These cableways have no longer been functioning for years but it is still possible to see the stations and the lines from the French square at the entrance of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel.

¹⁹⁴ Also this is no longer in function and its dismantling has been debated by environmental organisations since the end of 1980s, for the head of the Compagnie du Mont-Blanc the old cableways are an integral part of the historical patrimony of

Beyond the beautiful landscape which it crosses the creation of the air pillar of the ‘Gran Flambeau’ this construction is very famous and is still considered today one of the most important innovations of funicular engineering. These cable car structures are an important symbol of the ‘hard’ tourist offerings of this area and also an icon of contestation started in 1991 with the environmental organisations from which the dynamic of the International Park of Mont-Blanc began. Indeed in more than 50 years the Mont-Blanc cable cars have transported more than 10 million people in the cross-border heart of the Mont-Blanc Massif. A metropolis bigger than Tokyo has seen the Vallée Blanche, the secret soul, invisible from the valley floor. This cableway became a system of notable importance for tourism and mountaineering from its opening.



Figure 4.2 – A ‘map’ of the Mont-Blanc cableways

Tourists can arrive rapidly until 3,400 metres of altitude and have an extraordinary sight on the landscape of the Mont-Blanc chain. Mountaineers can reach the starting point of a lot of alpine paths, and the skiers from Courmayeur can ski to Chamonix through the Vallée Blanche during the springtime. At present, the French¹⁹⁵ cable car has been completely

Chamonix. The intention seems oriented towards a project of exploitation like a sort of museum of cableways in such part of the valley (interview with Michel Charlet, LE MONDE, 14 August 1997).

¹⁹⁵ Today the French side of the cableways of Mont-Blanc have a capacity of 600 people/hour after the renewal of 1991.

renovated (in 1991) while the Italian side is still the original one with a maximum capacity of 300-400 people/hour¹⁹⁶ with a functional limit of 1,600 people/day. The attendance/year have passed from 150,000 in 1990 to 70,000 in 2002. Several causes like the Pavillon avalanche in 1992, the French closure of summer skiing for security reasons in 1994, the closure of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel in 1999 have contributed to such a reduction. In 2007 the 'Funivie del Monte Bianco' (the Italian side) will have to be renewed. An Italian regulation for security reasons limits to sixty years the life of a cable car. What will the new cableway be like? For which kind of future tourism does the cable car have to be? At the moment a discussed choice is posed. Several projects to restructure their services rethinking also their re-location have been considered in recent years. The size of the new French system of the Cable car in Chamonix has an actual potential of 300,000 people/year and a functional limit of 3,000 people/day with a consequential capacity of 600 people/hour¹⁹⁷. The new projects for the Italian side are rather futuristic except for some local administrators who consider the increasing of their capacity the only possibility to survive for the cable cars. The need to renovate this infrastructure is a new occasion to enlarge the tourist offerings of services in this area. 'You cannot think that today seeing the Mont-Blanc is enough for a tourism offering, we have to think of alternatives which keep step with our time¹⁹⁸'. While the designers think that other cable cars located in the Alpine Arc propose a better service and that 'just throughout a substantial actualisation of the present installations the competition with similar realities becomes possible and thus it becomes also achievable to re-conquer a significant market portion'. A new cable car is suggested by the recent projects as composed of two sections with the complete relocation in another area¹⁹⁹ of their starting point, in close proximity to the new motorway (Courmayeur - Mont-Blanc Tunnel).²⁰⁰ New projects plan at the two arrival stations

¹⁹⁶ The regime consists of 300 people/hour in the first stretch and 400 people/hour in the highest one.

¹⁹⁷ Environmental organisations say that Courmayeur (Italy, 3,000 inhabitants) is not Chamonix (France, 16,000 inhabitants) and it will never become like that. Any running in such a direction is destined to fail and it could cause just further environmental degradation without valid economical compensations in the mid- long term. The catchment areas of Chamonix and Courmayeur are not similar either in the present situation or in future potential terms. The number of presences is and will be different (PRO-MONTBLANC, June 2003).

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Roberto Rota, administrator of cable cars of Mont-Blanc on the Italian side in February 2004.

¹⁹⁹ For the new starting point an underground car park and a link road with the new motorway are also foreseen (today the stretch Courmayeur-TMB is still being worked on) for a total of 17,400m². The disused area of La Palud will be subjected to an urban requalification which is still lacking in orientations.

²⁰⁰ In the new project the starting point is transferred from La Palud to Entreves. The project points out that La Palud is subjected to landslide movements. Entreves instead is under the risk of avalanches from the Toula Mountain marked on the new project as 'rare phenomena although possible'.

(Pavillon and Punta Helbronner)²⁰¹ the location of some attractions. Pavillon might become a potential cinema centre for 150 places to promote films on the mountains and conferences, commercial spaces, a restaurant with panoramic terrace and a museum²⁰². Punta Helbronner is rethought as a panoramic rotating car, just a reinforcement built in a concrete well (five metres wide and 80 m deep) will become necessary. Lifts leading at the *Rifugio Torino*, a restaurant on the top floor with a panoramic dome, a self-service restaurant and a meeting hall propose the services of the Mont-Blanc of 'tomorrow'. At the time of my investigation this last project is still undergoing discussion²⁰³ on the side of the EMB idea. Environmental organisations²⁰⁴ and ecological or green parties are at the present disputing the tourist attitude of this area.²⁰⁵ The cable car projects have reported the issue of the Alpine arc and its consequential economic development in terms of a wider reflection of a different policy more based on its original features. For 'greens' that means to infringe a common tourism formula "bite and run away" with a more appropriate formula able to say "stop and relish". Tourism of quality means rendering the mountain sustainable for presences, offerings and cultural integrations. Environmental organisations sustain that Punta Helbronner is part of the list of EU Interesting Community Sites (no. IT 1204010).

'The actuation of this new project runs the risk that in pursuing such an aggressive intervention in some years will leave as heritage in the valley just some sinister 'white elephant', over-dimensioned and with difficult management but maybe it will be too late to come back' (Mountain Wilderness, 2004).

This topic is very consistent with ongoing discussions about the policies promoting 'soft' tourism and with the future of 'sustainable development' within the Espace Mont-Blanc. Certainly, the cable car issue is an aspect²⁰⁶, which fully concerns both this topics. In other words the cable car is a figure for future tourism offerings, which stances the options in

²⁰¹ Pavillon is at 2,175 m of altitude and Punta Helbronner is at 3,462 m of altitude

²⁰² The total area of such a new construction is 2,200 m².

²⁰³ The project was presented in February 2003 with a financial forecast of 60 million euros which the Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta has already earmarked inserting it in the balance sheet of forecasts.

²⁰⁴ Pro-Mont-Blanc and Mountain Wilderness at first promoted new demonstrations to propose a deeper political and commercial reflex ion about the fate of these infrastructures especially in spring/summer 2004. In July 2004 a yellow tent of MW is again back on the slopes of MB mountain to this end.

²⁰⁵ In particular the Arcobaleno Party and Verdi Alternativi on the Italian side.

²⁰⁶ The Compagnie des Alpes has the management of most of the cableway on the Italian and French sides of MB. The Funivie del Monte Bianco on the Italian side constitutes one of the only ones managed by the Italian locals with the strongest participation of Regione Valle d'Aosta.

the present. 'In the meanwhile the French Company which manages the cableway of the valleys is already speaking of shifting the new ski domain up the Mountain, to guarantee the durability of the snow even while climate change²⁰⁷'.

Crossing the Bowels of the Mont-Blanc Region: The Tunnel Issue

The actual realisation of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel (TMB), just as the cable car, started in 1946²⁰⁸ through the creation of a specific Commission for the TMB²⁰⁹. In 1949 the Commission of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel was composed both from delegated representatives of the French and Italian Governments and the Swiss Canton of Geneva. The TMB realisation opened a debate on international connection across the Alps.

'It was a common aspiration between neighbouring peoples to have infrastructures like roads which have allowed direct and permanent communication across the Alps. Populations across the Alps have the same climate, the same habits and nearly the same dialects. Every tunnel first of all represents the anxiety of the population to pull down the Alps as natural barriers in order to join their intimate activities and their lives' (Guichonnet, 1967: 92).

Debates on the location of the tunnels were running at that moment²¹⁰. Several times of stasis have followed caused by the French government's instabilities.²¹¹ While Italy tackled

²⁰⁷ Barbara Ehrigauss, PROMONTBLANC's president, interview February 2004

²⁰⁸ Projects before 1946 for the Mont-Blanc Tunnel were alternated until 1814 when on the occasion to celebrate the return of the Savoia family to the provinces annexed by the Napoleonic Regime the municipalities were invited to express their aspirations. Courmayeur municipality asked for the excavation of a tunnel that could link it to Chamonix. The first plans started in 1835 and regarded a railway connection under MB. In 1907 a committee of French and Italian parliamentarians (presided by Francesco and Alfonso Farinet and Fernand David) promoted a movement for the Tunnel of the MB (railway) on a plan introduced by a French municipality and purposely created for this infrastructure's study. Between 1910 and 1912 one series of negotiations and agreements were signed between the French and Italian Governments for the Mont-Blanc Tunnel realisation. An actual agreement for its realisation was signed between the Italian and French Prime Ministers (Giolitti-Barthou). These negotiations were interrupted by the War in Libya. In 1946 with the constitution of a company for the TMB works promoted by Lora Totino (determining personage for these actions of connection between Italy and France) the plan of a one-lane tunnel was introduced. The drawing up of the plan was entrusted to Vittorio Zignoli (Polytechnic of Turin)

²⁰⁹ On 12 April the 'Sindacato Italiano' (Italian Commission) was set up and in the same year presented to the Italian Minister of Public Works (Ministero Italiano dei Lavori Pubblici) a special requirement to allow the construction of a motorway between the Aosta Valley and Chamonix with a tunnel between Entreves and Chamonix. In those times the main problem was electrical energy and such a requirement pointed out the possibility of starting an exchange of electrical energy between Italy and France.

²¹⁰ In Italy the propaganda was carried out starting from the Tunnel del San Bernardo issue that was thought convenient to cover the Piedmont Region's interests. The Valais Canton in Switzerland was divided: some Valais authorities preferred to realize the Mont-Blanc Tunnel considering the San Bernardo Tunnel as a castling of the Sempione with which it would have shared the traffic. The other part of Valais, that of Lausanne was instead favourable to the Gran San Bernardo and did not agree with the TMB realisation. The situation in Savoie was more or less the same. The Haute Savoie already had a rich economy for tourist resources but also localised in a closed valley without road connections and indeed it was very

economic efforts in exceeding problems of unemployment, in 1953²¹² the stability of the De Gasperi Government provided a decisive moment for the TMB. De Gasperi and Bidault signed the TMB Convention between Italy and France and appointed a technical committee to work on the TMB project. Despite the notable difficulties of the French and Italian governments in different ministerial situations, the unemployment problems in Italy and the French colonial ferments of Indochina and North Africa, other discourses emerged. The TMB tunnel under the top of Europe was the symbol of a desire of Europe: the aspiration of the citizens to communicate between contiguous regions, to overcome the tragedy of the war in a renewed feeling of prosperity and peace. This desire, for the administrators of this time, had to be realised creating new infrastructures of communications, permeating political, administrative and bureaucratic difficulties and nationalistic aims. At that time, Pierre Henri Teitgen (French Vice-President of the Council of Ministers) supposed that Europe was living economically and politically divided and that the divisions were the true weakness in continental agreements, just on an occasion of public discussion about the tunnel. TMB represented a vision of peace, an optimistic view of the European context. The attempt modelled by the national states to increase the infrastructures in transport systems in an international way²¹³. In 1953, the French and Italian Governments offer the management of the TMB to two companies: the ATMB (Autoroute et Tunnel du Mont-Blanc)²¹⁴ and the SITMB (Società Italiana per Azioni per il Traforo del Monte Bianco).²¹⁵ These two companies direct the tunnel together through two different guidelines for their exercise. Both of them have received attention from an intergovernmental commission

favourable to the TMB. The rest of Savoie territory already had the Frejus Tunnel and wanted to conserve a sure monopoly in connections through the Alps.

²¹¹ From the beginning of the TMB formulations until 1953 several French governments changed: Schuman, Marie, Schuman, Queuille, Moch, Mayer, Bidault, Queuille, Pleven, Faure, Mayer. In Italy there was an internal affairs ministerial problem but until 1953 De Gasperi represented the Government.

²¹² Indeed in 1953 the Italian Government changed with a new government presided by Rt Hon. Pella who took on the task of pursuing the issue of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel realisation.

²¹³ The Mont-Blanc Tunnel is one of the first generations of road transport axis through the Alps. In 1964 the Gran San Bernardo Tunnel was opened, a year later, in 1965, the TMB. In 1967 also the Tunnel of S. Bernardino was opened and in 1972 the Brenner and the Gothard ones. The last one was that of Frejus in 1980, which replaced the main traffic flows after the TMB closure in 1999. (CIPRA, 2001).

²¹⁴ The management company is quasi-state and with a mixed economy. Most of the shares belong to the State (54%) which has half of the concession for the TMB and is also the concessionary of the Autoroute Blanche (A40) between Chatillon de Michaille and Passy-Le Fayet. The High Council of Haute Savoie has 16% of the TMB shares and the Geneva municipality and Canton have 5.4% of the TMB shares. Other financial organisations are also involved for the rest of the shares.

²¹⁵ The main company is the Società Autostrade S.p.A. that has 51% of the TMB the other amounts belong to: ANAS (32.125%), Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta (10.625%), Geneva Canton (3.125%), and Geneva municipality (3.125%).

delegated by Italian and French nationals. The TMB board has been guaranteed by a common organization and by a common finance management. The Italian company controlled 5,800 metres of TMB despite the borderline, which is located at about 1/3 of the tunnel. The management was equal distributed at 50%. On 16th July 1965, the day of the TMB inauguration, the French President De Gaulle and the Italian one Saragat converged about the TMB meaning as the symbol of friendship and the opening a new era of peace between European citizens²¹⁶.

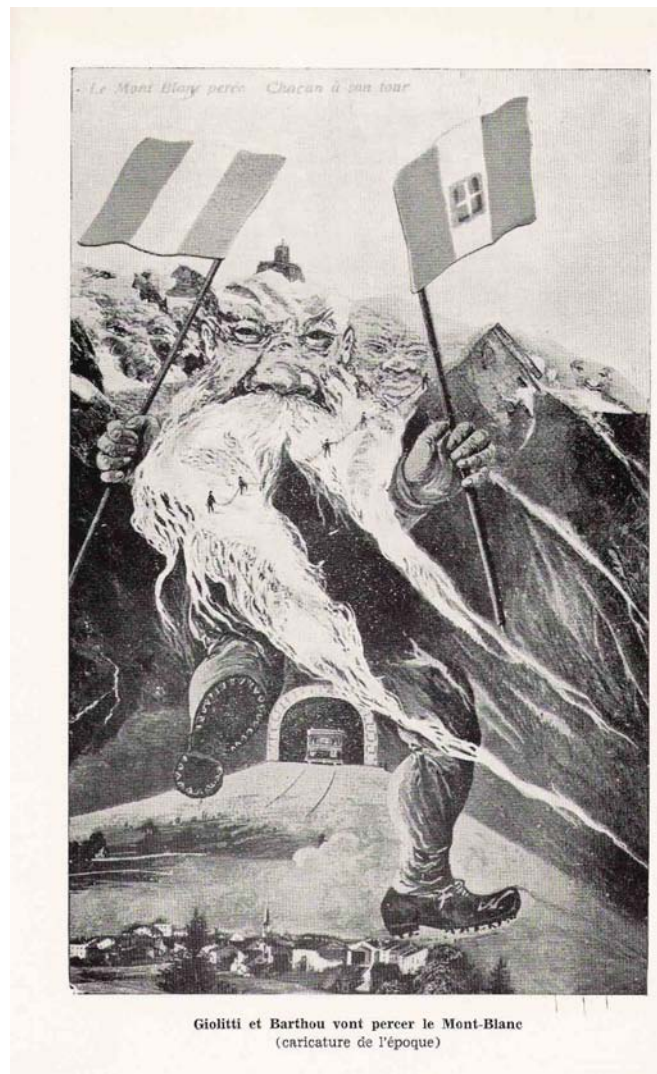


Figure 4.3. – Symbolic Images of TMB diffused in various stages of its building (Sources: Guichonnet, 1967)

²¹⁶ Thus says the memorial tablet placed on the Italian side of the TMB: 'Giuseppe Saragat Presidente della Repubblica Italiana e Charles de Gaulle Presidente della Repubblica Francese il 16 Luglio 1965 hanno inaugurato il più lungo tunnel

An ambitious emblem was indeed created in the history of the post Second World War: a European axis, a conjunction ring between two regions which were historically and economically linked: the Vallée de l'Arve and the Valle d'Aosta. The role of the TMB started with a tourist aim²¹⁷; however as in the beginning of its activity someone pointed out.²¹⁸ 'the initiative of the TMB doesn't correspond just to tourist interests - even if these are very relevant in two such areas - but to wider commercial and industrial needs'

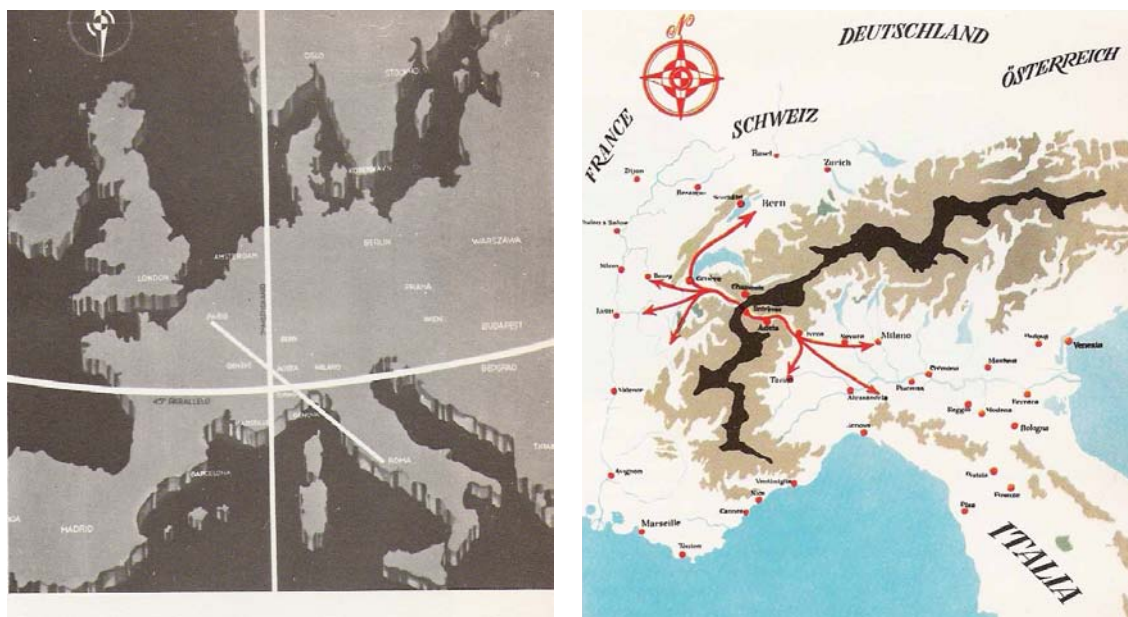


Figure 4.4. – Symbolic Images of TMB diffused in various stages of its building (Sources: Guichonnet, 1967)

Planned for a traffic capacity of 450,000 cars/year, the TMB marked a tri-national agreement to facilitate the exchange of goods and people. This was before the European market provided an ulterior input. For years the administrators of the two companies for the management of the Tunnel have publicly considered the fact that 'the relations between Savoie and Valle d'Aosta are increasing in an extraordinary way, but especially those between Italy and France, tourism through the TMB is particularly intense but also the lorries that come from Belgium, Holland, England, Naples, Brindisi...'²¹⁹ to contrast the opposers of

autostradale del mondo che sotto la più alta montagna d'Europa collega due nazioni idealmente unite'.

²¹⁷ Farinet (Presidente della Società Italiana per il Traforo del Monte Bianco) in 1951 in a sitting of the Chamber of Deputies, citing the Aucher report said that the Mont-Blanc area procured by its tourism a movement of capital that no industries at the beginning of 1900 were able to produce in the same way.

²¹⁸ As said the 'Ministro delle Partecipazioni Statali' (Ministry of State Participation) just a year after the TMB opening.

²¹⁹ Edmond Giscard D'Estaing (President of the Société Française pour le Tunnel sous le Mont-Blanc) and the Rt Hon. Paolo Farinet (Presidente della Società Italiana per il Traforo del Monte Bianco) in an opening speech referring to the first years of activity of the TMB.

the Tunnel realisation²²⁰. Towards the beginning of the 1990s the debates of the TMB management with regard to international traffic became hugely important. New participations for a better protection of the Mont-Blanc area from new actors like environmental agencies reported the necessity to upgrade the security services of the TMB. The 'Association pour the Respect du Site du Mont-Blanc' (ARSMB), a French foundation born in 1991, denounced that the number of lorries which crossed the Mount-Blanc Valleys every year amount to about 750,000. At the same time, *Espace Mont-Blanc* (EMB) as a cross-border cooperation policy was born with specific tasks in transportation²²¹ in a framework of collaboration with the actual companies for the TMB management. While the Aosta Valley Region put forward an eco-tax law proposal, the Italian Government²²² immediately considered such an option as anti-constitutional. During those decades the traffic crossing the TMB amounted to approximately 800,000 lorries every year. At the end of 1997, in order to reduce the passages the French Environmental Ministry, saw the need to severely renew French environmental policies. The local requests initiated by the Chamonix Valley on the issue of transport regulation in these areas²²³ became the background to this event. Switzerland, even if its economic interests were evidently connected to the TMB management, proposed as alternative the railway model promoted already within the country to solve the TMB difficult management. Beyond the ever-increasing heavy vehicle traffic on the slopes of MB, burning discourses were just beginning on the European framework of the Alpine transportation. The White Paper on EU transport and the Alpine Conventions as well as the appearance of the Sustainability topic as after Rio implemented such discourses around political spheres and civil society at the MB border. In 1998 the first research completed under the EMB label concerning the quality of the air on the slopes of MB confirmed the theory of the need for traffic control. It counted an average of 2,200 lorries

²²⁰ 'A pessimism was spread before the TMB opening, which was very controversial, the utility of the TMB destined to a low flow of traffic and therefore to an economical disaster destiny'. In Guichonnet, 1967 in the preface.

²²¹ The French, Swiss and Italian delegations of the EMB arena approval in 1993 a document in which they expressed the worry to regulate the TMB commercial traffic declared 'unsustainable for the local inhabitants'. They asked on such occasion the Administrative Committee for the Management of the TMB to limit the tax reductions (preference rates) existing for the big lorry companies to go through the TMB.

²²² The President of the Coordination of Valle d'Aosta, Prefect Luigi Scialò neglected to take vision of a proposal for a Regional Law which provided to 'protect the Mont-Blanc area' with the institution of an ecological tax of 50,000 liras (now 25 euros) for the transport traffic which came from foreign countries. The Prefect said that a similar regulation infringed both the Community laws and art. 120 of the Italian Constitution. Indeed a region (though autonomous) cannot arrange to impose a transit tax between and inside regional spaces. In Switzerland and Austria special regional regulations were discussed at national and Community levels.

²²³ This was also given for a political change of the French Environment Minister to Dominique Voynet.

per day²²⁴. From 1980 to 1990 the number of lorries transiting through the TMB had increased by 40%. It meant that every 40 seconds a lorry crossed the TMB threshold or came out from it. This situation persisted even if Austria – while it had entered as part of the EU members - authorized the free passage of lorries through another door across the Alps: the Brenner Tunnel. The increasing of the prices for crossing the TMB in adjustments between the Franc and Lira in anticipation of the Euro did not decrease the number of transits. The TMB counted an average per day of about 3,600 units from its opening till the end of 1996.

In March 1999 a lorry accident in the TMB caused tremendous damage and 39 victims. The TMB was closed for three years amidst favourable and contrary public opinions. Civil society and existing institutions against the return of the lorries through the TMB discovered the difficulties to achieve new terms of regulation for the traffic across the MB valleys. New environmentalist groups formed a front of coalitions on both sides of the border to say ‘no’ to the lorries’ return. Just after the catastrophe in 1999, the concessionaire companies ATMB and SITMB wished-for a programme of renovation and modernisation of the TMB infrastructure. The French and Italian governments in order to guarantee a new programme in security conditions for the TMB required the ATMB and SITMB companies to create a new unique cross-border organism for the TMB management. The GEIE-TMB (European Group of Economic Interests for the Mont-Blanc Tunnel)²²⁵ was instituted formally in 2000 as a single structure for decisions regarding the TMB. The TMB was opened to traffic in March 2002 to cars in line with alternate directions through the tunnel. In March 2003 this system of traffic was abolished. On the basis of a regulation between Italy and France signed in 2002 lorries can nowadays cross the TMB again in both directions. However, debates are still ongoing. The hypothesis of a second extension for TMB building is also still an open issue. The issues of the TMB and the Mont-Blanc cable car have been linked throughout the development of EMB and its focuses. As I shall argue in the next paragraph, after the TMB accident in 1999 and moreover in 2003 with the presentation of the new cable car projects all the latent dynamics, which in EMB were suggested, return together with the measures of urgency. The ambiguities in the forms of decision and the attitudes and the problems, which

²²⁴ LA STAMPA , 18 June 1998

²²⁵ The two companies deposited the GEIE statute on 18th May 2000 in the Aosta Municipality. The legal seat of the GEIE is in Courmayeur in Italy on the South Side of the TMB.

are pressing these territories, can no longer be ignored. Questions concerning the development and the occurrences of new forms of governance return with the force of a contemporary and pressing issue. The destiny of the MB and its 'pays' is today in/between a vertigo of sectors and levels of interest which domestic and national government, economic interests around international traffic and market lines, as well as the international routes of mass tourism and cultural interest come together with the urgency of the environmental protection for these areas. A series of cartels and wrestling arms is today still open on this cross-border territory in transition in which its stake is competed in the future. I just mentioned above some symbols related to the problems which are leading in a cross-border manner. The 'stake' is in the future political options for this area, which concern its transformation. Anticipating in a time (now) in which such decisions have to be taken, the cross-border option is a relevant issue to overlook. Beyond wondering if the areas around the border of MB have to be imagined as corridors of traffic or perhaps places where mass tourism is an actual last and irrevocable perspective the crucial topic seems another. Regional, local, national, European levels and public-private sectors are mixed on this complex of territory. Different interests and consequential difficult management are issued through economic perspectives and dominate institutions together with the appearance of new and soft procedures as the cross-border one is. As an expression of this mixture the cross-border arenas emerge in a complex interaction of power/s. The issue of the TMB re-opening for instance is a clear example of such. It is a kind of 'litmus paper' of a dynamic which revolves around EMB issues, the future of a territorial development and its governance ways which are navigating in-between new or old polity and policy inclinations. At the time of my investigation the 'hard' decisions have not yet concluded the discussions²²⁶.

²²⁶ Inhabitants and NGOS (non-governmental organisations) are still asking for a clear regulation of the TMB traffic for instance. In the meanwhile the Alpine Convention Transport Protocol is going to be signed by the Italian and French Governments, at the same time they are in discussion about the double track for the Mont-Blanc. 'The maximum level of transits established by the Valley's Council is a daily average of 1,060 passages, but in June 2004 the passages were about 32,290 lorries, which means a daily average of 1,076 lorries. On 9th June 2004 the transit of the lorries through the TMB, the Valle d'Aosta and the Valeé du Chamonix exceeded 1,500 units' (Elio Riccarand, Arcobaleno Party, Consiglio Regionale della Valle d'Aosta, ex-Vice President of EMB arena from the Italian side. Interview with ANSA in June 2004) This motion also appears in PRO-MONT-BLANC documents for the demonstrations against lorries and towards the new demonstrations for protection of the Mont-Blanc area in July 2004.

4.2 ESPACE MONT-BLANC AND ITS 'POLICY MAKING' PHASES

I will distinguish in the following the EMB policy-making phases in different temporal arcs with different temporal length. My interpretation is based on the analysis of the change in public actions, which EMB policy has introduced. The starting phase (1986-1991) is that in which some assumptions are taken on the basis of the practicability of an International Park policy. The policy related to the 'park' is the first impulse for the creation of consequential actions and requirements by different public spheres. Cross-border cooperation is during a first phase a possibility considered essentially by tri-state centric national agreements. In a second phase (1991-1994) the construction of an alternative to the park policy is introduced through the EMB project. EMB is a local shift; a reaction to the state-centric based on a park policy. This second phase is devoted to the birth of an actual cross-border political arena. This anticipatory stage of the EMB project is characterised by a decisive contrast to the current separated nation-state regulations. EMB expresses a counter-park policy but also a will to overcome the national differences suggesting local agreements in cooperation across the nation-state borders. The communality of the Mountain becomes the issue; the territorial integration based on tri-regional and municipal levels aimed at agreements between the elected members under a European label becomes the new aspiration for a new institutional path. 1994 is an important time for EMB. The three Environment Ministers at national level provide for a definitive institutional consent to the CTMB arena (Conference Transfrontaliere du Mont-Blanc) in concerning issues like the MB protection and its areas. A third temporal phase (1994-1998) includes thus a series of activities promoted by the cross-border arena during its process of composition. The EMB initiative aims at a local consensus between the inhabitants. The CTMB advances more current programmes to spread the EMB idea to the civilian local societies' expectations. The launch of the EMB through the mass media is for the CTMB an essential task concerning the strategies of new communication needs. This time arc is characterized by the creation of an exclusive icon for the EMB project. Several modest initiatives embody the 'little steps' through which EMB opens new directions of policy. EMB has not a fixed territorial shape, nor does it respond in problem solving or regulations policy on issues which the NGOs and local citizens submit to the local institutional instances. In terms of accountability EMB continuously emerges in-between courses of the expectations expressed from different sides.

In 1998 a change of the CTMB in the Italian local political direction offers an occasion to rethink the EMB in its degrees of social and political identification. New challenges for the EMB concern its own juridical statute, a better political support from central governments, an own zoning. More effective strategies of dialogue and public participation seem to be the new additional aims of the project. The fourth phase (1999-2000) regards the time of the TMB accident. Some of the latent terms for cross-border representation appear thus with much more evidence in a situation of emergency. The dynamic of the closure and re-opening of the TMB reports how the political potential space at the Border State plays on the power rules between several levels and sectors of interest in their capacity of decision moulding. This is the moment in which the EMB project is rethought on the sense making of cross-border cooperation and of cross-border regionalism as a filter; a non-clash institution. However, at the same time EMB also becomes the stage where new performances of interaction emerge in a completely different way as regards other spheres of decision. Other spheres of actors also appear to participate in the EMB project according to other actions more oriented to deliberative actions. The effects of EMB and its 'small-step' policies have produced social and political mobilisation. A wider g/local society expresses in various ways the cross-border cooperation as change at the Mont-Blanc nation-state border. The arenas of the actions in EMB have triggered new processes of institutionalisation at the Border State. Paths of experimental learning between the participants have scripted externally-internally realities on the hypothesis of a new cross-border regional identification. The conflicts in/between potentiality and needs of different policies from environment to international transport and local tourism have contributed to making a cross-border alternative board. Planning a future territorial development for these areas has become an issue, which is placed beyond the public actions prefigured within the nation-state borders. The fourth phase is also the time for a suspension of the EMB activity in favour of a reflection. The CTMB is an arena, which can be considered as a 'soft' institutional design. Although the representatives are members elected in separated regional settings, the process of construction of a cross-border board in which they participate re-makes their original roles in a new interaction play. The cross-border board in the EMB project works as a kind of suggestion on persistent hard decisions within nation-state borders. Decisional forces and jurisdictional powers within nation-state borders are legitimised to act. EMB and its arenas result as a hybrid trans-local

institutionalisation form which is still seeking legitimacy and accountability. An apparent 'laissez faire' of the central government levels in a certain time is no longer the umbrella under which cross-border cooperation policy can find new reasons.

Temporal phases	1996-1991	1991-1994	1994-1998	1999-2000	2000-2005
General discussion	Feasibility of international park of MB	Political answers to the park policies/ Alternatives INNTERREG programme	EMB project and operatives of CTMB	TMB accident	New period of EU programmes EMB as Sustainable cross-border development
'Sense making'	Impulse for political demand creation 'special policy'	Alternative to park policies: EMB name project and CTMB as cross-border political arena invention	Communicant initiatives	Re-thinking the EMB role as soft and non-clash institution CBR identification as issue	EMB as social and politicising space of/for solidarity actions in progress
Political debate	Tri-national agreements; central vs. local governments	Public Actions/agenda for CTMB arena in the focus of distances from park policies	EMB Symbol	Cross-border arena representative issues	
Social debates	Contrasts between mainly: Mountaineer organisations favourable to park policies Local societies against the park policies	shifting in central normative competences vs. agreements in trans-local Local societies as source of consensus Receptivity from mountaineer organisations' ideas	Perimeter for EMB area Juridical statute for EMB Political support from state Strategies dialogue of social parts and participations for different kinds of actors	New actors and more social mobilisation	CTMB as not-closed arena as consistency. Contents participative actions and heterogeneity mobilisation in spheres of actors

Scheme 4.1. - The policy-making phases in the EMB project

2001 opens a phase, which alights till today. Sustainable development is the key word for the cross-border policies launched from the EMB project in the future. The perspectives concerning innovative cross-border actions able to promote a new space for solidarity are involved in this trend of sustainability. The dialogue with the instances of different levels and sectors beyond or in-between the horizons of ‘fixed’ powers within the nation-state borders are the actual possibility, which EMB has launched. This seems to me the contemporary sense making of this space in its process of politicising.

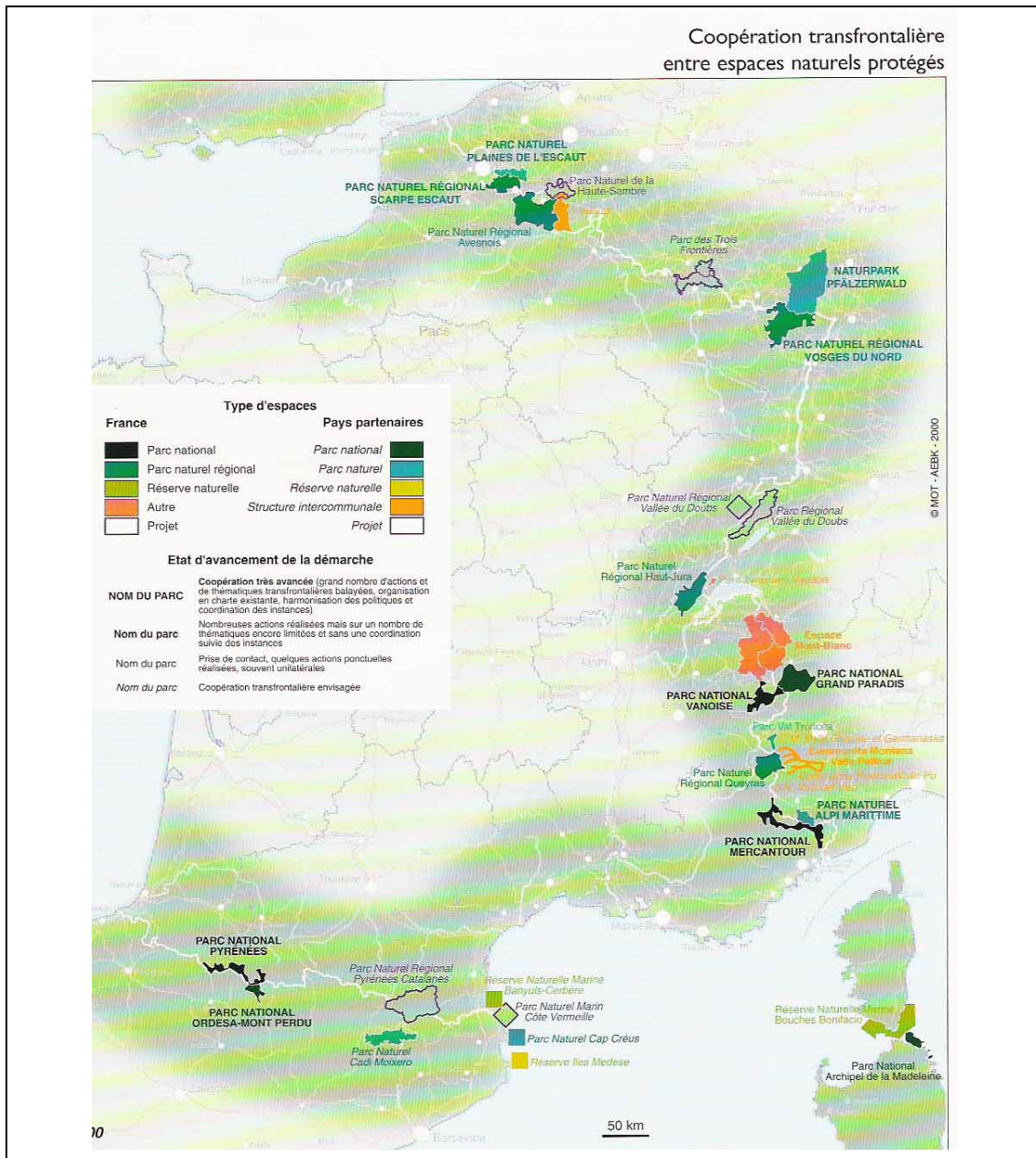


Figure 4.5. – The EMB project conceptualised between other cross-border policies and regions. (Source: 'Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière' MOT – DATAR France, 2002).

4.2.1 The Previous Phase (1986-1991): EMB as Perspective of a Park or Not-Park Decision Making

Two months before the first climbing bicentenary of the Mont-Blanc Mountain the 'Mountaineers for Mont-Blanc' start as an idea among a narrow group of Massif²²⁷ lovers in Rome. In honour of Horace-Benedict De Sussure in 1786, the launch of a new organisation in favour of the mountain, Mountain Wilderness (MW²²⁸), seems to be the right starting point. Mont-Blanc is immediately its symbol. In 1986 Courmayeur and Chamonix municipalities celebrate the first climbing of the Mont-Blanc summit and this event is the right occasion to promote new proposals²²⁹.

'Demonstrations can be dangerous if they contribute to divulge images of the Mont-Blanc Mountain as de-cultural and banal... we can place between the focuses a Park for the Mont-Blanc' (Pinelli, 1991).

The signatures of the most famous mountaineers sustained the first initiatives for the 'International Park du Mont-Blanc'²³⁰. At the top of this list the name of Reinhold Messner and main promoters the Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) and the Environmental Committee of the CAI and some intellectuals.²³¹

'Primogenitures and exclusives are ridiculous to demand. The idea of the Mont-Blanc protection was already in Valle d'Aosta, in Chamonix, among the opponents of the Heli-skiing and among the discussions against the new motorway across the valleys. It was also implicit in the works of Rebuffat, Bonatti, Samivel, and Buzzati...'

The International Park of MB starts as a hypothesis between the mountaineers and the mountain intellectuals. However, they are the 'others'²³², even if they contribute to an explicit requirement launched from the 'roof of Europe'. Its resonance as the first international park in Europe is reported a year later, in Tholon on Lake Geneva, during a trans-national meeting organised on occasion of the European Year for the Environment.

²²⁷ The promoters of the Mountain Wilderness Association from their telling story: Stefano Ardito and Carlo Alberto Pinelli.

²²⁸ MW is an international environmental movement born in Biella (Italy) in 1987.

²²⁹ Carlo Alberto Pinelli in a press conference

²³⁰ Walter Bonatti 'Magia del Monte Bianco' (1988) Appiano Gentile. Baldini

²³¹ From the articles that appeared in the ALP review between 1993 and 1994 dedicated to the lovers of the Mont-Blanc Mountain.

²³² "...les 200 ans de la premiere ascension du Mont-Blanc, les autres (les echologistes) réclament la protection du Massif (A vous de jouer, Le Dauphine' Libere', 3 Octobre 1994)

The MB issue appears already as a topic to examine by current political settings²³³. In the meanwhile, the programmatic manifesto of the MW Association sustains that the mountains are still part of the wild places of the Earth; posing insights towards an ‘environmental cosmopolitanion’. The MB park becomes the first focus of this association which maintains that the mountains are first of all part of the cultural heritage of all human beings not just pertaining to their inhabitants. In 1987, the green and ecological progressive French politician Brice Lalonde²³⁴ proposes in particular the building of a cross-border assembly engaged to think of the creation of a system of protected areas between the nation-state border areas of France, Switzerland and Italy on the slopes of MB. His intention is to realise trans-national agreements and consequential suggestions to promote in national agendas topics pertaining to environmental protection. This was indeed the first actual political motion towards a transformation, which would be the foundation of a cross-border policy. Groups of ecologist mountaineers manifest on the top of the MB Mountain. Their symbolic action like the occupation of the ‘Liaison’ cableway²³⁵ by the most famous climbers in the world immediately advances great interest in general public opinion. The photos of these protests and their writing on the snow ‘Pour le Park’ on MB’s Giant Glacier appear in the most popular international

²³³ Usually the Environmental Ministers of Italy, France and Switzerland meet every year to discuss environmental problems in cross-border areas. These meetings were between the current participation which was open only to national government Ministers, rarely or just for specific issues open also to local and regional participation. In 1987 there was the MB protection issue as a point on the day’s planned discussion for the first time. For a Helvetica law the Swiss Environment Minister had to be joined by a canton representative and at that time Rene’ Schwery was named as supporter of the Valais Canton. This was a very crucial fate for the start of EMB because Schwery became a key actor in the progress of the cross-border focuses and agreements; he will also raise all the issues of the local essential participation in the decision-making between the central state levels on the issues of the MB Park.

²³⁴ Brice Lalonde (Generation écologie party) in 1988 is nominated as Environment Minister as delegate for Environmental, Natural and Technological Risks. In 1989 he becomes Secretary of the Prime Minister Michel Rocard engaged for environment issues. Brice Lalonde is Environmental Minister in 1991-1992 and he is the first in 1991 to get a ministerial portfolio for the Environment during Edith Cresson’s government. Lalonde is a progressive politician in the French context. In June 1989 he notifies the Haute Savoie’s Prefect of a project to realise a series of national protected areas together with the Swiss Confederation and Italy as previous work for the International Mont-Blanc Park policy.

²³⁵ The cableways as I’ve already explained above are a symbol of the MB space. Indeed they are a cross-border linkage between France and Italy actually started in the 1950s. A strong debate has been moved on the environmental organisations’ side to sustain the removal of the last stretch on the top - Aiguilles du Midi – which has become a sort of flag of contestation. This stretch is the linkage between the French and Italian side although it is actually inside the French part of the borderline. Work on the first stretch of this cableway, as explained above, was already in progress in 1927 but was actually completed only in 1950. The existing line is now dismissed because of the dangerous possible interference with the international air-lines on the Plan de l’Aiguilles. In an interview given by Michel Chalet (mayor of Chamonix, responsible for the concessionary company of the Chamonix cableways and vice-president of Espace Mont-Blanc arena from the French side) to the newspaper LE MONDE on 14 August 1997 about the fate of this symbolic cableway he said that this infrastructure belongs to the historical heritage of the Chamonix valley and it represents a symbol of the heroic deeds of historical mechanical and technological evolution. On this idea a discussion is in progress on the possibility to plan a sort of museum of cableways built over time in the valley. <http://www.aiguillesdumidi.fr>

mountaineers' reviews. In 1988 the project for the creation of a series of protected areas around the MB Mountain is again sustained by Lalonde during a tri-lateral meeting in Locarno. Again the Environment Ministers of Italy, Giorgio Ruffolo, France and Switzerland with Flavio Cotti discuss future optimistic perspectives for environmental policies²³⁶.

'It was a favourable time for environmental policies, the enthusiasm on the topic and the need for mutual understanding and agreements between the three ministers was on the slopes of MB.' (Minuzzo, 2004)

The park idea seems taken into serious consideration and a first group born. The idea of a trans-national cooperation between Italy, France and Switzerland is also promoted. The park of the MB project seems immediately to be associated with the Haute Savoie Council and thus sustained by the French central government. Some days before the European election on 18th June 1989 the French Council of Ministers launches a study for the creation of a national park around the MB mountain 'à vocation internationale'. From the French side of the nation-state border, a law from 1951 already protects the MB Mountain. However, the French project which appears at the end of the 1980s, foresees integrating this protection in a wider space²³⁷ within and beyond the nation-state borders: French domestic level at the border of the MB reacts to the idea of the intentional national park of Mont-Blanc in contrast. Considering it as a central French government decision, this arrangement clashes immediately with negative response from the local society and their representatives. The mayor of Chamonix, Michel Charlet²³⁸ takes a firm position in this regard. The park initiative is criticised as too centralised by the local French governments. Ten municipalities of the Haute Savoie Department create a Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc²³⁹ (SIENMB) with the aim of evaluating

²³⁶ Interview given to an ANSA journalist Piero Minuzzo who followed the event at that time. Interview of February 2004. In this phase a preparatory document was already being discussed which was the Alpine Convention between the Ministers of some Alpine countries on the Alps. Around the table protection of the Alpine eco-system was being discussed. Such a meeting was organised the first time in Berchtesgaden from 9th October 1989. to 11th October 1989; they agreed to stipulate the 'Convenzione per la protezione delle Alpi' signed on 7th November 1991.

²³⁷ For example : La chaîne des Aravis (Haute Savoie), le Beaufortain (Savoie), les rives du Lac Léman (Haute Savoie).

²³⁸ Michel Charlet, mayor of Chamonix municipality and vice-president of the French part of the cross-border arena (CTMB). Charlet is a key actor of the EMB project dynamic. He was involved in the cross-border area from the French side from the beginning of the EMB project discussion around the end of the 1980s.

²³⁹ The Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc is a structure for the inter-municipal cooperation to which the local entities concerned agree voluntarily. At present such an institution is presided by the mayor of Chamonix Michel Charlet and it groups together 12 municipalities involved within the territories of Savoie and Haute Savoie. Such a syndicat was created specially for the development and the management of the EMB project on the French side.

locally the park initiative. Following a heated exchange between Charlet²⁴⁰ and Lalonde, at the end the French Environment Minister provides this 'syndacat' with the drawing of a management plan for the natural heritage of the MB area at the French side. Charlet proposes an alternative to the park policy, thinking of an initiative more pertinent to domestic needs and definitely shifted from a '*protection passive sans aucun project social*'. An environmental organisation also born at the same time between the borderland French side: the 'Association pour le Respect du Site du Mont-Blanc' (ARSMB) which denounces that 750,000 lorries cross the MB valleys every year. On the Italian side of the MB border, the issue of the MB Park policy is inserted into national agenda. A list of the areas to regulate at central government level with specific competence in the 'Legge Quadro sui Parchi'²⁴¹ includes the issue of the MB park. Such a concern opens a legal action between national government and the regional level pertaining to the MB area: the Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta²⁴² (RAVA). This suggests the removal of the MB Park from such a list. The Valle d'Aosta also constitutes a special commission composed of the domestic representatives with the aim of studying the park proposal within a cross-border domain hypothesis. Some basic studies ongoing for the Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Paesistico (PTCP) have taken in consideration the borderland aspect of this area²⁴³.

'The topic of the borderland was linked to the PTCP as an important aspect of characterization of the Aosta Valley. As planning in future situations we had the pressure to seek the foundation aptitudes of the Aosta Valley' (Nicco, 2004).

²⁴⁰ Michel Charlet, from that moment until today vice-president of the CTMB for the French side and mayor of Chamonix. 'I didn't appreciate the Lalonde initiative for the hypothesis of starting a project based on centralised management which was not at all founded on a social project for the 'pays du Mont Blanc'. I decided to neglect that table and I preferred to join my colleagues of Valais and Valle d'Aosta in seeking an alternative'. Interview February 2004.

²⁴¹ This Italian national law was finally approved in December 1991 (L. 1991N.394) after a path started already in the 1970s, which has crossed several government settings about the environment policy in a more general national framework. Several lists of national parks to institute were drawn up during the time in which sometimes Mont-Blanc also appeared. With this law the national government can institute new national parks and regional park institutions are also possible to create. Regions have a legislative power inadequate for national law. With this law the Piano del Parco (Park Plan) is a supra-ordered plan with regard to other planning instruments and by consequence the economic and social initiatives have to obtain the approval of the park management council. This law also institutes the 'Ente Parco' (Park Agency) that has management of the park domain.

²⁴² The Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta has participated since the beginning in the EMB project making mainly through the Assessorato all'Ambiente, Territorio e Trasporti of the Regional Administration. This body has actually taken on coordination of such an initiative also with regard to other local entities for the Italian side like the Comunità Montana Valdigne which groups five municipalities of the Alta Valle d'Aosta where Courmayeur municipality has a particularly important role. The Aosta Valley Region is a bilingual region (French and Italian). It is one of the five Italian regions with a special statute. Since 1948 it has had special autonomy and the power to legislate on some subjects.

²⁴³ Roberto Nicco, Assessore all'Ambiente (Councillor responsible for the Environment) of Regione Valle d'Aosta at that time. (Interview led by the author in February 2004).

The experience just finished concerned a regulation of complete protection for the Gran Paradiso²⁴⁴ Park and its troubled process of institutionalisation, which the inhabitants lived as almost a total hampering development. The fear of living a similar process also for the MB procures caused a negative reaction also from the Italian local instances and inhabitants. The issue of the regional autonomy of the RVDA with regard to the nation-state decisions also emerge with certain conceit. The Helvetica Confederation provides a tentative directive to the Federal Environment Office of the Valais Canton²⁴⁵. The subject of this motion is the study of a proposal for the environmental protection of the MB borderland side in harmony with the local communities²⁴⁶.

'This work in Switzerland started by giving the CEAT (Communate' d'Etude Amanagement du Territoire) a series of questionnaires for the inhabitants. The focus was to have a first exploration on the local consensus as regards the park policy. The reaction from the inhabitants of the area has shown total opposition to an eventual park policy' (Schwery, 2004).

Demonstrations by mountaineer organisations promoted in particular by the MW organisation continue. Writings hung on the pillars of the MB cable cars '*non à la telecabine*' (August 1988) sustain the urgency of a park policy. Forms of coalition between the mountaineer alliances on the Italian, French and Swiss sides build a first example of international cooperation beyond the MB nation-state border. The common discursive strategy supports the MB Park and also provides for the construction of an ensemble of mountaineering and environmental agencies converging into a working group. The Comité International pour la Protection du Mont-Blanc (CIAMP)²⁴⁷ is born with this aim triggering the interest of various partnerships such as the UICIN (Alliance Mondial Pour

²⁴⁴ At that time we were thinking actually of the vocations of our territory and the PTCP was not just an instrument but a kind of philosophy to develop our territory. Some buildings to answer mass tourism have already been built in some beautiful landscapes of our region such as Pila and Cervinia which still witness this kind of regime today. These buildings had an impact, which did not agree with the original setting of our valley developed traditionally through a network of small villages along the valley. But the land owners were of course very impressed by the immediate economical realisation they can get selling their proprieties to large building companies. I remember that at that time many designs of second homes and large constructions were presented to the public administration. There were buildings that proposed a model of a city in a mountain region... (Roberto Nicco interview February 2004).

²⁴⁵ Following this process also the Valais Canton is involved. This canton is the third by size in Switzerland. It includes about 163 municipalities, 13 of them take part in the EMB project. The Valais is one of 23 states of the Helvetica Confederation. Since 1963 it has been a mixed democracy where the inhabitants vote for a parliament (Grand Conseil) but it conserves the power to propose, to approve or to deny laws in virtue of asserting rights by referendum initiatives. The Valais rules a constitution and it arranges for legislative, executive and judicial powers.

²⁴⁶ Interview with Rene' Schwery by the author in March 2004.

²⁴⁷ The CIAMP will become the more recent PRO-MONT BLANC organisation conserving the same intents and internal organisation of the previous CIAMP.

la Nature) and the international groups of the WWF (formerly the World Wildlife Foundation and now World Wide Fund for Nature)²⁴⁸. The MB park hypothesis appears before public opinion as a special project. Collaborating on the diffusion of the discourses around the MB parks both the contrary reactions of the local societies at the MB border and the favourable suggestions of the environmental organisations even located so far from the MB border. The common issue mentions a ‘bottom-up’ process, in which a plurality of ‘actors’ more or less traditional to current processes of ‘policy-making’ can participate. The MB border is a question of protection of a ‘public good for everybody’²⁴⁹. The Mountain represents a precious resource for people and inhabitants where the characters of exclusion are no longer the nation-state borders. The need for other channels of reference enters a process of policy and defines the creation of a new space.

At the beginning of the 1990s, in Annecy the three Environment Ministers of Italy, France and Switzerland delegate to the ‘regional level’ the proposals for a preliminary study concerning the MB International Park. This news appears as a success on the pages of the main newspapers. However the process, which assumed such a decision, behind the scenes is less obvious²⁵⁰. The mountaineers’ défilé at altitude reported on the pages of international reviews with the images of the wild and natural places still present on the top of MB. Between the *Vallée Blanche* and its crevasses²⁵¹ appear again the writings ‘Pour le Parc’ (August 1989).

²⁴⁸ All the environmental organisations also those which demonstrate against the TMB traffic after the accident of 1999 will group around the MB protection in an ever more actual way.

²⁴⁹ ALP August 1998

²⁵⁰ In the Annecy meeting Schwery was the only local representative with the three environment ministers because for the Swiss law there was the necessity to have a Canton actor to join the Swiss Environment Minister. ‘At that table the participants were speaking about the future of the MB and its areas without the directly interested local actors. I asked to stop the works because I thought it was essential to have the contribution of the Aosta Valley and Haute Savoie agents. The meeting stopped and continued the day after with all the local representatives. We couldn’t agree with the motion of the park. Lalonde invited us to present our proposal for the year after which could be an agreement between the three-local agents’ (Interview with René Schwery February 2004).

²⁵¹ Protests also for the mattresses which some mountaineers claim they have found at the bottom of the crevasses of the *Vallée Blanche* to make more certain of the safety of less experienced skiers and to have indeed a mountain for everybody, an amusement park.

4.2.2 The First Phase (1991-1994): Espace Mont-Blanc as a Challenge Between Enchantments and Disenchantments

In autumn 1991 the cultural and political dynamics at the end of the 1980s on the issues of protection policies fall into something different. The actual creation of a space for/of policies for the Mont-Blanc Mountain and its areas appear in September 1991, before a tri-national official meeting between the three environment ministers in Champéry. A local conference is organised by the president of the Valle d'Aosta Region²⁵² with the participation of French and Swiss representatives. The local dimension of the MB Park²⁵³ is again the starting point of this discussion while the focus is an alternative solution. In this meeting the premise of a cross-border arena composed of the regional agencies across the MB is created. This arena assumes the hypothesis of being the filter between domestic expectations and needs for regulation manifested from many parts. The urgency of this local working group is thus to advise an actual reaction to the MB issue for years already 'in attendance' in other realms. Under a *cross-border idea* an agenda is drafted of domestic instances and intentions similar to an initial trace of a 'social model'. Cross-border cooperation at the MB border aims at a common domain drawn together as a unique space. Borderland communities can find in this new idea an expression for a territorial management able to step beyond the topic of (just) protection. Nevertheless, the immediate starting point seems a reaction to the park national policies; other main factors influence the cross-border cooperation alternative. New topics concerning the European label sustain this idea. For the domestic arenas the new discourses of a Europe in progress

²⁵² In 1988 with the X Legislation of Regione Valle d'Aosta majority of the political party was represented by the *Union Valdotaïn*, *Democrazia Cristiana* and *Autonomisti Democratici della Sinistra*, from *Partito Socialista Italiano* and the *Partito Repubblicano Italiano*, in addition also an independent consul was included. Following a motion of distrust in June 1990 the XVIII regional committee was composed in extraordinary sitting of the regional council from which the nomination of the executive was Gianni Bondaz (Christian Democratic Party) elected in June 1990. On 25 June 1991 a restructuring of the councillors responsible of the Regione Valle d'Aosta with the new institution of the councillor responsible for the Environment, Territory and Transports, the first councillor responsible to be called is Augusto Fosson (Christian Democratic Party). In May 1992 the president Gianni Bondaz is discharged and that implied the reassignment of the executive body. The following XIX Regional Committee elected in 1992 is again formed by the party nowadays still engaged that is the Union Valdotaïn.

²⁵³ The perimeter that we found in front of us was based on the zoning on geological characteristic; also the Valais was included. In the Aosta meeting with Italian and French local agents we decided that the perimeter was absurd, it was in 1991. We decided together that a new map as frame where all the areas for an EMB hypothesis could be included was not the prior thing to create. We should start from the meaning of this space 'inside' the social and our ideas and needs that we lived in our administrations and as citizens. A new map based on a new perimeter based on a geological setting was something to realise during the growth of the project. Our intention was more that to respond to the local and social needs of these places as in the expectations of the inhabitants. At that moment, however we had in our hands a geological map and the idea of the park an extreme synthesis which did not consider the social aspects of our territories. (Interview by the author with Renè Schwery February 2004).

based on a trans-national integration become an experimental new point of reference beyond the nation-state. However, the environmental protection policies in such national and regional contexts are still uncertain at that moment. 'Protection' is lived in the mind of most people as a brake on development. Certainly also in this South-West European sector some influences from the Euroregional experiences that had occurred in other European contexts had arrived. Cross-border cooperation practices²⁵⁴ are at that moment still something extremely innovative on themes and problems traditionally directed by nation-state regulations and settings. The financial possibilities offered by the first period of the INTERREG programme²⁵⁵ can be considered in/between other factors in contribution for active cross-border policies on the slopes of the MB mountain. Common cross-border characteristics of identification, such as a common economy (rather rich) based on the same resources and a common language (French) are not features to ignore. MB in cross-border cooperation includes moreover a Swiss²⁵⁶ Canton. Here the cross-border policy perspectives have also a claim to coexist together with the Member States.

²⁵⁴ As I explained in the first chapter Euroregional experiences were already activated especially in North Europe before the introduction of a coordinated EU programme like INTERREG. Experiences had, for instance, in the Oresund region, the Benelux states and on the border between the Netherlands and Germany and in the Saar-Lor-Lux (Saarbrücken-Luxemburg-Metz). They have been favourable examples, which have allowed elaboration of operational cross-border schemes on communality.

²⁵⁵ As well known, the cross-border cooperation was financed by the INTERREG Community Initiative from 1990 with the focus to institute organisms, structures and common networks between borderlands. The first period of the INTERREG programme was the arc 1990-1993, and the EU programme aimed at sustaining the regions on the border states internal and external to the EU macro-region and it was especially oriented to the objective 1 areas (regions behind in development) which have obtained the most financing. The INTERREG initiative was foreseen also for objective 2 (regions in industrial decline) and objective 5b areas (agro-rural regions). The focus of the programme was especially oriented towards the construction of the single market of EU. The first period of the INTERREG programme was thus specifically oriented to the economic development of these areas. Even if substantially the 'territorial contents' were not the main expecting domain, a wider perspective of Economic and Monetary Union INTERREG I have seen its application. A particularly interesting aspect was the common assertion of the principle of partnership. Three issues promoted within such a framework: 1) the relations between existing public structures, 2) the associations with private participation between borderlands and 3) the creation of common institutions (a brief scheme of the programme in its temporal development is in the attachment to this thesis).

²⁵⁶ Switzerland has actually participated in cross-border cooperation policy since 1990 with the INTERREG programme which has been between the means of balance between its research to be part of the exchange with Member States and in a wider framework of political bargaining between Switzerland and Europe. One of the Swiss difficulties was to be isolated by its customs barriers especially regarding Germany which was its main commercial partner (in part the problem was solved with the signature of The European Agreement for the Free Market in 1972 (AELS/EFTA) between Switzerland and the European Community. After the conclusion of the European Unique Act, the fall of the Berlin wall and of the Soviet Union, the new perspectives for the role of the European States have given new impetus to Swiss interests. Most parts of the AELS countries (Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland) have presented therefore the request to adhere to the European Union. Switzerland has instead seen its request failed after the SEE refusal in 1992 from the Cantons' inhabitants. From that moment the starting of negotiation acts have been aimed at sectoral agreements in the relationships between Switzerland and the EU. In 1999 the large majority of Swiss inhabitants approved many agreements especially after a Swiss referendum in May 2000. A specific task referred to the second INTERREG time (1994-1999) has also been dedicated to the 'integration policies with the neighbouring member states'.

During the meeting in Champéry a document composed by a provisional cross-border arena is therefore presented. Receiving as a new and interesting signal from the national levels, a first agreement concerning a coordination of actions for the MB areas is extended. In this same autumn 1991 an article appears in the Swiss press entitled ‘a small step towards the Mont-Blanc, a super-region organised around the roof of Europe²⁵⁷’. It reports that the three Environmental Ministers, Brice Lalonde (F), Giorgio Ruffolo²⁵⁸ (I) and Flavio Cotti²⁵⁹ (CH) have approved during the Champéry meeting a statement realised at ‘the regional level’ pertaining to a cross-border common intent between Haute Savoie, Valle d’Aosta and Valais. This proposal is an integrated management between environment and territory. The existing regions at the MB nation-state border mention the possibility of favouring protection and development together according to a solution able to unite natural resources with regional development. These are the needs of the domestic levels and of citizens living and working within the MB areas. Socio-economical activities have to coexist in a compatible way with the Mont-Blanc label. A proposal of such practicability involves 13 municipalities of the Valais Canton, 12 municipalities in Haute Savoie and some others in the Valle d’Aosta Region. Two topics emerge from this proposal: 1) the need to draw a ‘space’ able to extend the jurisdictional borders through the re-drawing of a cross-border configuration; 2) the need to define competences and rules for a cross-border institutional arena as a guide for a complex process of integration. The second point appears more urgent than the first. Indeed the cross-border working group asks to be institutionalised in its own form. After a difficult exchange of consultations about local and national participation²⁶⁰ within such an arena constitute the overture for the Conference Transfrontaliere du Mont Blanc (CTMB). Such an agency

²⁵⁷ NOUVELLISTE VALAIS, 27 October 1991 ‘A petits pas vers le Mont-Blanc. Une superrégion organisée autour du toit de l’Europe. L’idée fait son chemin’

²⁵⁸ Giorgio Ruffolo, socialist party from 1944. During the time between 1987-1992 he was Italian Environment Minister, from the first Goria government till the VII Andreotti government. In 1994 he was elected to the European Parliament as independent Deputy in the PDS party and since 1999 in the DS party.

²⁵⁹ Flavio Cotti, Christian Democratic Party, was the Head of Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. He was elected as agent of the Tessin Canton in 1986.

²⁶⁰ ‘We did not agree about how much of the arena had to be for the regional and local agents and how much for the national agent levels. I tried to convince the French part to give more space to the local but at the end of a long exchange we decided on this division: 5 members for each state, 2 of them for the national level and 3 for local and regional level. Flavio Cotti did not agree. He wanted to have 4 local members. Brice Lalonde agreed on the 3 locals. I proposed to the two ministers a solution: to indicate that in the arena had to be placed ‘at least’ 3 local representatives. This was the agreement so France could place 3 local representatives and Switzerland 4 local representatives. (Interview with René Schwery March 2004).

includes both domestic instances and ministerial representatives. The CTMB is composed of five members for each country; at least three in the local communities.



Figure 4.6. – One of the first articles that appeared in the press on the EMB project (October 1991)

The initial proposal was that the cross-border arena could be presided in turnover by one of the national Environment Ministers; however, the French president was actually named at its head. This motion is established in the EMB statute. A meeting group is thus foreseen once a year. The CTMB assume the role of guide to lead the practicability of a *cross-border model* aimed at programming actions both concerning protection and social-economical development. While the local communities create the CTMB and constitute its force in presences and orientations, other actors²⁶¹ contest this massive local participation as the real weak-points²⁶² of the CTMB.

'It misses completely the role of the environmental associations' [and] 'the ministerial presence is residual'
(Pinelli, January 2000)

While some external voices express some criticisms forwarded; its internal voices sustain that the CTMB institutionalisation process is based on a '*nouveau concept de gestion*'.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Carlo Alberto Pinelli president of Mountain Wilderness and Barbara Ehrigauss president of the Swiss Mountain Wilderness

²⁶² Federica Thommaset who led the work for the milieux sensibles for the Regione Valle d'Aosta

²⁶³ René Schwery is in charge of the Valais Canton Development and today high ranking and vice-president of CTMB for the Swiss part.

The Swiss elaborate a study titled ‘Vers un Espace Mont-Blanc?’²⁶⁴, the French the hypothesis ‘Espace Mont-Blanc’²⁶⁵ and the Italians propose a direct reference with a planning instrument - the Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Paesistico²⁶⁶ (PTCP) - foreseen by national level as regional competence. These tri-lateral domains suggest a cross-border cooperation hypothesis based on topics such as: 1) environment and landscape protection; 2) promotion of socio-economical durable activities; 3) participation of the actors in both such actions. These intentions are included in an agenda named Espace Mont-Blanc²⁶⁷ (EMB). The park antagonist, the local dimension of the expectations and the alternative to an exclusively (inter)national dimension on binaries as protection and development has got to the point. The three national environmental ministers sign the Alpine Convention²⁶⁸ in Salzburg just some weeks before the EMB meeting. The idea of the alternative to the park policy seems at first to capture the consensus of the national settings. The originality of the EMB intentions and its European dimension are sufficient to convince the national level to give their patronage. Yet if to think cross-border actions on crucial topics concerning territorial management seem challenging for the central government competencies, the EMB perspective is refreshing and at first sight even well sustained. In 1991 the dominant theme is to provide diffusion of the inspiration that EMB expresses. A different ‘name’ states an actual alternative to the park policy and the invention of a special model, which includes actions-agreement for a cross-border management. The Swiss opposition to the park issues and the difficulties to make use of this word in local domains is the impetus for the EMB claim. In this first

²⁶⁴ The Swiss alternative proposal to the park seemed an important step for the EMB project, which has been sustained by a key actor who from the end of 1980s till today has followed the entire initiative making: René Schwery.

²⁶⁵ Michel Charlet, from the beginning till today vice-president of CTMB for the French side and mayor of Chamonix.

²⁶⁶ The issue of the Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Paesistico for the Valle d’Aosta arrived at actual proposals during 1993 but only in 1999 were they actuated.

²⁶⁷ Key Actors of such a process were: Augusto Fosson (Assessorato Ambiente, Territorio, Trasporti Regione Valle d’Aosta Italy), René Schwery (Swiss Valais Canton), Syndicat Intercommunal “Espace Nature Mont-Blanc” with its president Michel Charlet. Flavio Cotti (Swiss Environment Minister), Brice Lalonde (French Environment Minister), Giorgio Ruffolo (Italian Environment Minister)

²⁶⁸ The Alpine Convention was indeed signed with the initial intentions of protection of the Alps on 7th November 1991 on the basis of a first meeting agreement that occurred on 11th October 1989. Today Germany, Austria, France, Monaco, Italy, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Slovenia and the European Union participate in this project for the Alps’ protection. The Frame Convention was signed by most of them in autumn 1991 with the exclusion of Slovenia (which signed in 1993) and Monaco (which signed in 1994). Even if the Alpine Convention frame was signed mostly contemporarily in 1991 it was ratified for each country at a different time: for Austria, Germany, Lichtenstein in 1994 and adopted in the same year in a published document. Slovenia and France ratified the AC in 1995 and the EU published the AC in the Official Paper of the European Community in 1996. Switzerland ratified the AC in 1998 with a published document in 1999. In 1999 the AC was ratified by Italy and Monaco.

phase EMB is a solution which satisfies the existing institutions around the MB border; the initial principles and the intentions advanced by the cross-border arena also appear encouraging. The CTMB participate on the EU INTERREG I Community Programme with the EMB project. EU concedes to the French and Italian sides the financing for the EMB initiative although if these areas are actually outside the objective areas foreseen at this time. This deed reinforces once again the European dimension and the symbolic meaning of the EMB. Even if EMB becomes at a certain point commonly seen as the European park of the Alps, synonymous with the expression of their aesthetic consecration of the mountaineers' cradles in its more romantic vision. However, this European dimension is not idyllic but disputed between 'domestic' institutions and inhabitants, which are in anxiety for the eventual occurring of new 'top-down' regulations. EMB actually poses a high stake on territorial transformation, for a project that, since the beginning, has represented a series of 'multi-level' wishes. Which kind of assumptions is it possible to perceive from these first signals? EMB overlaps a reality lived on different borderland sides involving contemporary different discussions. Problems in policies were already sited within those spaces before the hypothetical EMB domain. EMB is a refreshing management in this significance, which intersects a very complex ensemble of realities and ongoing territorial regional policies and dynamics. EMB is also caused by such dynamics. The domestic participation is also an issue intensely promoted as part of the CTMB arena. Tourist flows to deal with a natural territory is the problematical background in potential such as Chamonix, La Thuile, La Rosiere, Courmayeur, Martigny, Sion. International traffic roads such as the TMB (Courmayeur-Chamonix) and the Gran S. Bernardo (Aosta-Martigny) are no longer symbolic infrastructures of connections; synonymous with an achieved peaceful relationship. The 'park policy' could break dreams of new investments in tourist infrastructures especially planned on the Swiss side. On the other side the French and Italian regional settings at the MB borderlands were already involved in the debate on the last extension of the motorway on both sides of the TMB. Planning park instruments in different countries express also 'other' languages in reference to protection, the subjects of the protection and the competencies concerned. At the time of the early 1990s and at the nation-state border of the MB space, the CTMB and the EMB creations are signs of an achieved success. Various are the reasons both national and local linked to the constitution of a peaceful arena at MB cross-border. EMB finds references as a European project to apply on territorial transformations already active at

domestic levels. The assumptions for the EMB are thus in tension. Peaceful relations across the nation-state border come together with neo-liberal competitions and subjections to distant bureaucracy. The debates on the topic of a tangible fulfilment regard the different options, which converge in the EMB open the summer of 1992. The CTMB and the local administrations describe the details of the EMB as an idea detached from the park policy²⁶⁹. The first intention seems to reassure the inhabitants and the other local agencies and entities that EMB exists as a spectrum of policy completely diverse from the park. This strategy directs to popular consensus shifts immediately in the environmental organisations ferments. In fact, the bicentenary of MB climbing is for these organisations the occasion to sustain the park policy. They suggest the need for a serious regulation to protect the MB in its environmental aspects. Manifestations urge against existing mass tourism and traffic, asking for normative regulations for the MB area without other compromises. This is the position of the ‘outsiders’ the domestic instances²⁷⁰.

‘Its areas are public goods and the local inhabitants are not the only owners of a space which is instead internationally recognised’. (CIAPM, 1994)

In that same autumn, the CIAPM (Collective Associations for MB’s protection) accuses in a public assembly and through the media that EMB is just an ‘alibi’. For them EMB is a sort of shortest way to postpone the important decisions concerning the protection of the MB area. The critics are arguing that EMB results thus as an international non-decision aimed at another additional label for the MB. EMB is suspected of being a new strategy for increasing tourist flows towards a ‘Mont-Blanc product’. However, the CTMB seems to overlook these voices in the background. EMB is a project already working on the three sides of the nation-state MB border. Indeed in the autumn of 1992 the French company Transversal²⁷¹ presents a summary commissioned by the CTMB. This report concerns the international comparison of the legal frameworks and institutional functioning at the national, regional, departmental and cantonal levels in each country involved in the EMB

²⁶⁹ The creation of this project was indeed seen by the inhabitants as a policy that was just different in name but in essence that pursued the same aims of the park’s regulations. ‘The fear was to limit the land-use for new buildings and also hunting, when I was Assessore alla Cultura in the Courmayeur Municipality and I started to speak about EMB all the assembly were disappointed. They didn’t understand what it was and neither did they want to listen. The beginning process was really very difficult’ (Crespi, ex Assessore alla Cultura Courmayeur Municipality, interview February 2004).

²⁷⁰ This main principle is sustained from the beginning in the CIAPM actions till today. (Barbara Ehrigaus, interview of February 2004).

²⁷¹ The French Company Transversal is a private interdisciplinary group for territorial studies.

mission. The comparative schemes commence from the national laws existing in the French, Italian and Swiss settings. This description evolves then suggesting three main domains of study pertaining to the EMB as a possibility for a mutual integration: environment, management or planning and tourism. Trans-local meetings are also organised by the CTMB according to a specific 'cahier de charge' composed by the Swiss group CEAT. As regards an organisational structure it is invented as a guide based on: landscape and tourism, natural heritage and transport, culture and economy.

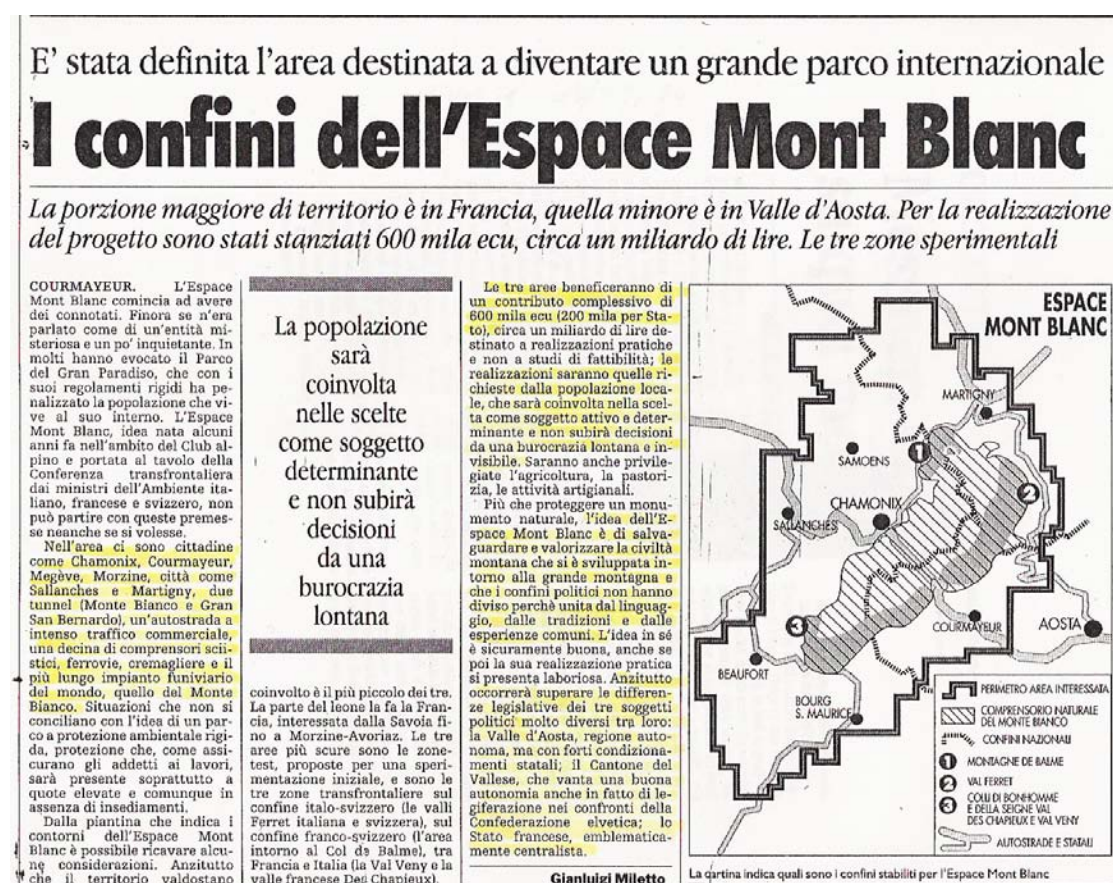


Figure 4.7. – The three perimeters of the EMB in the first maps published on LA STAMPA Regione Valle d'Aosta (1992)

A meticulous study is also advanced by the Regione Valle d'Aosta about the perimeters and the zoning of the EMB. This work defines three maps: 1) a narrow one which contains the massif and the glaciers named 'le monument naturel d'interet mondial' where the actions to outline aim to reduce the factors of disturbance; 2) a wider area which includes the first and concerns areas already regulated by laws of protection (those already inserted in national parks like the *Parco del Gran Paradiso* or the *Vanoise*) in the three countries named 'le coeur d'un domain ecologique d'importance europeenne' to manage within a unique framework of cross-border policy; 3) a large perimeter which includes the other two and

which is formed by a triangle of territory between the Aosta (Italy), Martigny (Switzerland) and Sallanches (France) centres. This last is named '*le système transfrontalier des centres et ressources*' in which to promote prompt activities of integration and cooperation activities between societies across-the border. The Ministers of France and Italy change; and Segonele Royal (F) and Carlo Ripa di Meana (I)²⁷² are engaged in environmental meetings. In autumn 1992 new cross-border studies for the EMB are launched. These first studies, here officially presented, show in explicit ways the (im) possibility of harmonising in the park policy in the three countries at the MB border. Yet, it is possible to work on an organic organisation through working groups and on the hypothesis of a perimeter for the EMB. This discussion about the practicability of the MB Park shifts in the EMB policy proposals. The ministers who are attending to the EMB details are also involved in other important decisions at the same moments. Decisions which also concerned the themes just seen above for the EMB project. The decisions consist of the Alpine Convention approval for the protocols²⁷³. The ones relative to transportation²⁷⁴ are in very current discussions on the new motorway construction between the Aosta-Chamonix valleys, two of the three main municipalities of the EMB. The TMB is also in issue on the eventuality of its possible double extension. In the meanwhile the Green Alternative Party²⁷⁵ together with some citizens of Aosta and Chamonix valleys and the CIAPM manifest to the three environmental ministers the requirement for the MB Park.

²⁷² Flavio Cotti, the Swiss Environment Minister is still in charge for Switzerland.

²⁷³ The protocols have been created on the basis of the Alpine Convention Framework. The protocols have had a long iter in agreements between countries only unblocked in the course of 2000, indeed all the protocols were signed starting from the 31st October 2000 and today not yet ratified for all the countries. The protocols concern: 1) nature and landscape protection; 2) Mountain agriculture; 3) Planning and sustainable development; 4) a supplementary protocol for Monaco; 5) Mountain forests; 6) Tourism; 7) Energy; 8) land protection; 9) Transport; 10) Compositions of Controversies. All these topics very much concern the EMB project that was on several occasions invited with the CTMB to present the works advanced for the Mont-Blanc Region. Indeed it is rather a strange story because France, Switzerland and Italy have not yet ratified any protocol concerning the nature and landscape protection, planning and sustainable development, Tourism and Transport which are the main topics focused in EMB. Indeed in the opinion of the trans-locals Valle d'Aosta, Valais, Haute Savoie the Alpine Convention it was born as an instrument of the states and with little participation by the regions. For Italy things changed with the D'Alema government in which the Rt Hon. Caveri proposed a table state/regions with the focus to approach the Alpine Convention with the localities. For this reason the CTMB today presents some asymmetries of opinions within the CTMB for what concerns EMB's management related to the Alpine Convention.

²⁷⁴ All the Alpine Convention countries signed the transport protocol on 30th October 2000. For Switzerland, Italy and France it is a huge problem to activate its ratification and adoption. In the meanwhile the double tracks of tunnels such as Mont-Blanc and Gothard are still in discussion even today, July 2004.

²⁷⁵ The Verdi Alternativi Party has been present in Valle d'Aosta (I) since 1989. Its derivation is very left oriented for this also very contested by the 'pure' environmentalist.

Explicitly they do not agree with the EMB policy. Their expectations concern the regulation of the heavy traffic across the TMB and the adjacent valleys; no new motorway nor a double extension of the TMB are right policies for the sensitive areas of the MB. Such a radical accusation against the EMB makes the three ministers and the CTMB, in the same autumn 1992, return to the EMB policy as synonymous with the park policy. Although conserving the EMB attitudes of trans-national intentions and cross-border positions²⁷⁶. As regards the role of the CTMB, the mandate of the ministers also appears more explicit on some fundamental themes. Delegating micro and macro projects (with local and international considerations), a series of works are assigned from the Ministers to the CTMB. These consist of a programme of actions, which have to correspond: 1) in compatibility between transport and environment; 2) in promotion of soft-tourism; 3) in utilisation of *alpages* and mountain agriculture; 4) in definition of cross-border actions for the protection of the sensitive areas. The national representatives assume that the EMB project has also to be based on the suggestions of the environmental organisations as observer actors²⁷⁷. This assertion was without any doubt strongly tense in providing a reply for the green and environmentalists concerned.

'If EMB is not a park, it will be a large ecological space in the heart of Europe, a pilot project based on the combination of environmental protection and economic development' (Source: L'UNITA', 2nd November 1992: Il Monte Bianco diventerà un Parco Internazionale).

The positions of the three ministers seem at this point clear and oriented to an optimistic environmental protection. EMB has to invent not just 'words' but political strategies and

²⁷⁶ Carlo Ripa di Meana (Italian Environment Minister), Segonele Royal (French Environment Minister), Flavio Cotti (Swiss Environment Minister) say explicitly that such an area, named Espace Mont-Blanc will be an international park where nature protection and landscape exploitation will be the priorities. The three ministers agree also about the NO to the idea of a possible double road under the Mont-Blanc Tunnel. The three ministers want to build a great ecological space in the heart of Europe in which environmental protection and economic development can go on together. For that the intense traffic, which crosses the Alps, has to be routed from the road to the railways (those responsible both in Rome and Paris have also signed a document in which they affirm that the double road of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel is not a solution to the increase of the traffic across the Alps). Espace Mont-Blanc is a pilot project to launch a common cross-border strategy. The building of the motorway between Aosta-Courmayeur will bring more lorry traffic through the Mont-Blanc tunnel. An alternative aired in the Valle d'Aosta and Valais is to propose a railway between Aosta and Martigny but this is something that is not taken into consideration in the Italian National Transport Plan. (Source: L'UNITA', 2nd November 1992: Il Monte Bianco diventerà un Parco Internazionale).

²⁷⁷ 'In 1987 the governments of Italy, France and Switzerland insisted that the environmental organisations were included as the observer actors on the MB park before and then for the EMB making. Our rules for the ministers were to make such processes more transparent. We had a very difficult moment about three years ago, the CTMB did not want us sitting at the same table anymore. Especially with the Swiss side it was always difficult and we waited for 6 months to regulate our position with the CTMB again. For them we haven't any rights and they ignored the Avus' Convention and all the rights of environmental organisations linked to information. The CTMB then decided to include us again in the area, and with us, also the socio-economic associations on both sides of the EMB'. (Interview Barbara Ehrigaus, February 2004).

practices usable at trans-national level. The discourses of the three ministers also suggest rethinking the transport issue for a more effective traffic distribution in a future combination road-railway. Their strong trilateral agreement emerges also in opposition as regards the double extension of TMB. Other propositions lead to a rather optimistic environmentalist vision for the EMB and the Alps in general, as a context of discourses from the three ministers. The evaluation of the environmental impacts, for instance is required as an essential condition that the public administrations and public agency have to expect for all the new infrastructures planned in the MB areas. However, just while the three ministers reinforce discourses and strategies in agreement with the EMB policy and its arenas, mountaineers and ecological ideas are grumbling about it. 'The MB Park is declassified to an Espace' becomes their new slogan in consequential manifestations for the summer of 1993. The name itself of the EMB project is contested between environmental organisations and inhabitants. Accused of ambiguity, EMB as a name promises popular debates on its contents in terms of policy. Despite the difficulty in understanding of its focuses, no one can say that the MB protection is not the order of the day. Both domestic discourses or cosmopolitan environmentalisation and governmental agendas at the beginning of 1993 dedicate to this MB topic some attentions even if in different forms. While peaceful occupations of one of the Massif's ridges occur again. In 1993, very important enactments evolve for the EMB project. The CTMB diffuse the EMB meaning. The EMB appears as an idea for a courageous project able to conciliate environmental fragility with the particulars of development through the activation of a European cross-border policy. At the moment, to believe in this is essentially an arena formed mainly of local actors, the CTMB. This arena is ambitious and aspires to gain a certain image. It focuses on showing certain ability in agreements across the local domains and beyond the nation-state border. The aim in trans-local peaceful relations across the MB nation-state border is the occasion for this arena to promote all the features of communality on the domestic slopes of Mont-Blanc. As such, the territories around the MB result as a sort of unit. Unit is an expressive icon in respect to national representatives. In the autumn of 1993 the CTMB discusses together with national and local representatives the EMB project in terms of programme. The practicability of the EMB actions shifts in the meaning inherent to this 'space' as the main subject of debates. The European framework convenes in various circumstances of such discussions on the wave of other crucial

problems being complained of in this area²⁷⁸. The Environment Ministers Valdo Spini (I), Michel Barnier (F) and Ruth Dreifuss (CH) attend a new calendar of CTMB initiatives. Now, the territorial EMB domain seems to consist of about 350,000 hectares including about 54 municipalities. 165,000 inhabitants are part of the EMB hypothesis and a registered capacity of around 220,000 bed/places. EMB has 'general lines' and a just idealised perimeter.

'What EMB is aimed to become is not a 'shape' based on external bounding but a 'heart' of ecological and economical interests in which to experiment cross-border cooperation initiatives' (CTMB, 1993).

The shape, the perimeter, the physical configuration of the EMB does not occur as a direct 'solution' within the CTMB. Each local domain on the different sides of the MB border imagines the cross-border map as an open manner towards future options and possibilities of management for various policies. The shape of a cross-border regional configuration is not considered in the idea an invention for a new territorial setting bounding with new borders. The sense of the EMB 're-bordering' seems in the permeability of the existing nation-state borders. Sustainability has relevance as social actions or in other words, the functional integration is displacing national 'territory' as a governance principle. This is placed in sustainable management of the MB border before its physical development. Sustainable development takes in first place the crucial problem of transportation²⁷⁹ in this area. The intentions expressed during the starting phase of the EMB policy also include

²⁷⁸ Contemporary discussions are burning on the Italian and French side. One is the PTCP plan (the planning instrument which the Regione Valle d'Aosta took in the first steps of EMB project as reference to receive the principles of the CTMB decisions), the other topic is instead the new motorway across the Aosta Valley which links the town of Aosta and the other national road network with the TMB. In January 2003 the Piano Paesistico (Rural Plan) of Valle d'Aosta project was sent to the municipalities and local agencies so they could express their opinions about it. The main topic sustained in this document is that the Valle d'Aosta is not identified anymore as a region to cross where there is just an intense traffic with infrastructures very dominant on the environment and the tourism concentrates just in some dominant centres. The Piano Paesistico also foresees not building the last stretch of motorway between Morgex and Courmayeur. One of the stakes on the plan is also a general reference to the Valle d'Aosta identity. The key actor of such a process was Roberto Nicco (Councillor responsible for the Environment of Regione Valle d'Aosta) (Source: ANSA, 25th January 1993: Ambiente: VDA, Piano Territoriale Paesistico, interview Roberto Nicco February 2004) The discussion about the last stretch (Entreves - Mont-Blanc tunnel) has been moved between the three Environment Ministers also speaking about Espace Mont-Blanc as a common philosophy and engagement for the development of this trilateral cross-border area. The mayor of Chamonix, Michel Charlet, has also spoken about the needs to improve the controls of the speed and the lorries' cargo and the eventual prohibition of transit not just on Sunday but also on Saturday and the eventual introduction of differentiated tolls in the Tunnel. Spini introduced the discussion about the behaviour of the French minister who does not agree with ratifying the Alpine Convention and which instead for the Italian Government is an irrevocable focus. Sources: ANSA, 13th August 1993: Ambiente: Spini su Parchi ed Autostrada del Monte Bianco, ANSA, 6th October 1993: Ambiente: Conferenza Transfrontaliera Espace Mont-Blanc, RAVAUS, 6th October 1993: Reunion a Aoste de la Conference Transfrontaliere du Espace Mont-Blanc)

²⁷⁹ At that time about 2,326 vehicles per day on average were going through the TMB, and some days even 3,000 passages were counted with an annual increasing of 2.5%.

the theme of transportation in the strategies of the project. As such, the linkage between transportation and sustainability are topics strictly linked to the future of this area. The CTMB suggests this track advocating an agreement-proposal to be approved by the three national environment ministers. It concerns intensifying the forms of dialogue between the local public administrations involved in the EMB project and the Administration Committee of the Tunnel du Mont-Blanc (ACTMB). In this regard the CTMB proposes the abolition of the low-price tariffs, which the ACTMB regularly offer to the big transportation companies to traverse the TMB²⁸⁰. For sustainability of transport, the CTMB advances also a particular preparatory study on the 'quality of the air' in the MB areas. This should help to take decisions on a scientific base for the different levels of governmental competences concerned in the EMB project. In 1993, some working groups of the CTMB start to analyse protection of the MB sensitive areas as well as to study strategies and initiatives for soft tourism promotion. These working groups work on some fundamental documents, which can concern both the main problems and the possible suggestions in operative proposals. Three test areas are also defined as priority experimental domains for the EMB policy: 1) the 'Montagne de Balme' on the French-Swiss border; 2) the 'Val Ferret' on the Swiss-Italian border; 3) the 'Col du Bonhomme' and 'de la Seigne' between Italy and France. For these three options different opinions come from the scientific and political arenas involved in the CTMB. Criticisms are between the people who are working in some ways on the EMB project for the activation of the three projects. The fact that each test area involves from time to time just two countries of the three actually involved causes a debate about the risk of a lack of a complete tri-dimensional space. On one hand there is a general common preoccupation that a tri-lateral participation should be visualised as an assumption to plan actually public actions across the MB border. On the other hand the anxiety is strong that the ambiguous 'development' logic promoted by the EMB project will prevail over the need for concrete 'protection' of the sensitive areas. The pilot project planned for the EMB concerning the 're-qualification' of the 'Balme Mountain' is a good example to report. This case describes a model of a contestation within the EMB project on the creation of new actual tourist infrastructures. The project is based on a new perspective for cross-border relations at the nation-state border. However, this project suggests themes very centred on development

²⁸⁰ This dialogue's forms were never advanced in forms of exchange. The reduction of the tariff for large companies was a TMB policy active till the TMB accident in 1999.

more than on protection. For this reason this project becomes for some the motive to whisper that actually EMB is promoting 'hard' tourist centres with a new ski-domain creation. In reality this project has already been in the minds of some local administrators for years; waiting for a 'good occasion' to be encouraged²⁸¹. In the autumn of 1993 the issue of the MB Park comes again into the Chamber of Deputies in Italy. The Italian Government declares that in the national framework for park policy law (*Legge Quadro sui Parchi*) under examination, the MB is inserted in the list of national natural areas. The debate is immediately again launched. Local Italian political positions are immediately in opposition to this last governmental proposal, because it is considered too centralised as regards the Aosta Valley regional autonomy²⁸². In the Aosta Valley Region, at local level, not everybody agrees with such a position. Disputes are affecting different parts between those who sustain that the Italian Minister Giorgio Ruffolo has prevailed over the local autonomies and those who say that 'the discontent is just a determination of the local political representatives. They are looking for elements of illegitimacy or low democracy in Ruffolo's work'²⁸³ as a motive for debate'. If some opinions consider the MB national park as a defect in autonomy for the Aosta Valley, for others the MB park institution is instead finally an international recognition of the importance of this territory. The scientific and landscape aspects can be finally well appreciated through the institution of the MB park. On the French side, any debate makes this echo. At the time, Brice Lalonde had already arranged in the Paris Parliament the signature for the actual institution of a future MB park as financing part of the environment sector. The Swiss part meet in the environmental organisation the most important contestations in the context of the MB Park ferment. The voices of environmentalists, mountaineers and green-ecological parties sustain as in the past, the park policy for the MB areas. As a formal engagement, the park is for them the only institutional design able to give an actual establishment to the need for 'regulation'. This is an urgent necessity to protect the more sensitive areas menaced by new initiatives

²⁸¹ 'The mayor of Finhaut was confident that through the EMB project his project for a new cableway was possible to realise. He hoped that EMB could be the co-ordination table to overcome the difficulty of the project's actuation. In the project, the cableways were all in Swiss territory but they used a French ski-domain because on the Swiss side the place is absolutely inaccessible..' (Stefania Muti interviews February 2004).

²⁸² A system of protected areas, which involve in cross-border the Valle d'Aosta, Savoie, Valais is much more a policy to pursue for the MB. The national law for park policy foresees a discriminatory system for local autonomy and the ones who benefit from this policy are just the 'park entity' composed of national agencies and environmental parties designated in Rome. (Speech offered in a press conference by Rt Hon. Caveri and Sen. Dujani in November 1993). (Source: LA STAMPA, 12th November 1993 : Ma il Governo vuole il Parco. Il dibattito del Monte Bianco alla Camera).

²⁸³ From the speech offered in a press conference by the deputy-mayor of Courmayeur municipality in November 1993.

for tourism infrastructure renewal such as the situation of the Glacier Cable car²⁸⁴. Despite the intense CTMB work, the conflict around the new *Espace Mont-Blanc* policy exists. Also between those who coordinate the working groups, so called '*group de reflexion specifique*' the polemics are very dwelled on. The first doubt among some of them concerns the ambiguity created by a local dominance of the presences in the CTMB setting.²⁸⁵

'The fundamental ambiguity has led to the elimination of the park word. The preference to force a 'bottom-up' process which risks to unload all the tensions and the local conflicts. This conflict was quite important at the beginning of the EMB project. Another doubt is about removing the necessity to have indispensable technical-scientific study led in depth of the various themes which EMB has to approach.' (Thommaset, 1993)

For some of these actors, the Espace Mont-Blanc is an international problem. It has not been devoted to only the local level²⁸⁶.

'It's not possible to shift to the local actors' demagogy to the future of a system unique in the world which is responding mainly to a requirement of the Swiss side. The position of the Scientific Institute of Mont-Blanc created in Saint Gervais by the University of Lausanne and Grenoble is above all centred on the international engagement for the '*milieux sensible*' EMB study but all the aspects considered in EMB deserve the same treatment' (Gambino, 1993).

1993 closes with this scepticism to observe the beginning aims of the protection shift into a different situation as the EMB project is. The CTMB launches the EMB project as policies and focuses in the popular debates. For many, inside and outside the CTMB domains the aim of the social participation promoted by the EMB project is an invention to cover certain political willing oriented to not advancing an actual policy of protection.²⁸⁷ More people give more relevance to a vocabulary based on the park policy, which has essentially suggested the Espace creation. Just few people confer great relevance to the expressions as '*transfrontalier et participatif, innovateur et par consequent delicat*' which come from

²⁸⁴ At that time the new cableway on the French side was built with a capacity 3 times higher than the previous one.

²⁸⁵ Interview given by Federica Thommaset in December 1993 (private study commissioned by the Regione Valle d'Aosta and the CTMB for the perimeter area of the Espace Mont-Blanc project)

²⁸⁶ 'This behaviour of giving great relevance to the local actors is sustained especially by the Swiss side but then, actually, the CEAT covers in a substantial manner the local actors who do not have technical and scientific knowledge to tackle the difficulties of the project'. Interview issued by Prof. Roberto Gambino (Chair of planning at polytechnic of Turin, responsible for the PTCP plan for the Valle d'Aosta and member of the 'sensitive areas' working group for the CTMB) in December 1993.

²⁸⁷ Half of the financing budget is destined to divulge the EMB initiatives like for instance the realisation of a specific publication, but the financing for research on planning of the EMB area is almost nothing. Interview issued by Prof. Roberto Gambino (Chair of planning at the Politecnico di Torino, responsible for the PTCP plan for the Valle d'Aosta and member of the 'sensitive areas' working group for the CTMB) in December 1993.

the aims of the CTMB actors. However, in the course of 1993 the CTMB obtained from the three ministers an important assumption.²⁸⁸

'Every activity having an important environmental effect within the EMB has to be evaluated in a preventive and coordinated manner between the three countries'. (Source: LA STAMPA, November 1993)

In 1994, the CTMB actually work on the three test areas²⁸⁹ according to four generic focuses²⁹⁰. An initiative aimed at the consensus of the inhabitants is launched by the CTMB to lead the future of the EMB project. The focus is to make people understand that the EMB project consists mainly of a new method of work. This consists of active support to popular will. 'The EMB's idea has to grow up with the people²⁹¹' is a slogan launched by the project. The three vice-presidents of the CTMB²⁹² organise three meetings²⁹³ named '*conference tournante*' in Martigny, Aosta and Chamonix. On such occasions an informative brochure named '*l'Enjeux*²⁹⁴' is presented. *Enjeux* means stakes or in CTMB's stakeholders' words means the challenge²⁹⁵, which EMB contains: '*ce que l'on peut gagner ou perdre dans une compétition, une entreprise*²⁹⁶'. The contents²⁹⁷ of the brochure

²⁸⁸ Meeting between the three environment ministers and the CTMB in autumn 1993 in a press conference of November 1993. (Sources: ANSA, 19 November 1993: Ambiente: incontro tra i Ministri di Francia, Italia, Svizzera sulle Alpi a Chamonix, ANSA, 20 Novembre 1993: Ambiente: parchi, primi interventi per Espace Mont-Blanc, ANSA, 21 Novembre 1993: Ambiente: incontro tra i Ministri di Francia, Italia, Svizzera sulle Alpi a Chamonix, ANSA, 22 Novembre 1993: Ambiente: Espace Mont-Blanc. I progetti pilota)

²⁸⁹ Currently three work groups are studying a programme of localised interventions in the following areas: Valle Ferret, Montagne de Balme, Col du Bohomme de la Seigne. These areas are the first intervention of the "Espace Mont-Blanc" project.

²⁹⁰ 1) Conservation of the spaces dedicated to mountain agriculture, 2) development of common strategies to protect nature and landscape, 3) soft tourism initiatives are those where there is compatible tourism with the protection of the natural environment, 4) reduction of transport infrastructures' impact in the interests of local inhabitants and environment.

²⁹¹ This was the 'slogan' promoted by the CTMB at such meetings in May 1994.

²⁹² Michel Charlet (Mayor of Chamonix and vice-president of CTMB French side for Savoie and Haute Savoie) Elio Riccarand (Councillor responsible for the Environment Regione Valle d'Aosta), René Schwery (Head of Department of Development and Territory Valais Canton).

²⁹³ Some French newspapers express their disappointment with regard to the press conference: "Cette "conférence de presse" était plutôt une réunion classique de présentation puisqu'il y avait bien élus et autres personnes intéressés que le représentants de nos profession...Au terme de la réunion on a pu se demander si cette assemblée n'avait plutôt au débat électoral, trois des principaux intervenants était directement implique' dans la vie politique locale et son avenir" (Alain Roux, La Dephine 3 October 1994).

²⁹⁴ A review of 24 pages printed 53,000 copies for each country for distribution to families, institutions, local administrators, associations for nature protection, cultural centres, professional associations, trade associations, libraries and the mass-media.

²⁹⁵ The brochure's idea is to show the challenge that EMB wants to take as the stake, the focus is protection of the natural environment with the requirements of economical development for the 'pays du Mont-Blanc'.

²⁹⁶ It means what it is possible to win or to lose in a competition.

report a brief history of the EMB project starting from the wish manifested among groups of people for the institution of a trans-national park for MB. The motivation has led to a different option, which considers the cross-border nature of these areas around the Mountain; in a sort of new space making.

'Around the Massif some areas have high inhabited density and therefore are strongly urbanised; the function of the park could not work'. (Source: LE CURSIF, May 1994)

This emerges in the publication of the brochure on '*l'enjeux*'. *Espace* is a space of intentions, which aims to suggest the building of policy centred on protection ignored in the past, however its focus is responding to the expectations of the actual domestic needs. While EMB promotes policies concerning protection it does not overlook the need to support the territorial development of these zones. For the CTMB the initiatives for soft tourism, through the invention of a tourism respectful of the MB landscape and non-destructive actions, are some prior necessities manifested as expectations in local domains.

The brochure invites the inhabitants to participate directly in the EMB project. It offers a module where people can express ideas, proposals, and initiatives in the EMB making. A specific questionnaire²⁹⁸ is also contained in this publication. Topics of protection and development are proposed in a new vision of a cross-border way.

However, the social atmosphere around the EMB project is not completely optimistic. Ferments concern the planning for the test areas. For example, the *Montagne du Balme* (France/Switzerland border) is already a ground of contestation between who wants the realisation of a new system of cable cars and those who disagree with it. Many people sustain that these projects for new infrastructures that the EMB also sustains clash with its principle based on soft tourism. At the Italian/French border other discussions are active on the topic of the EMB strategies. The tourist traffic in the *Ferret* and *Vény* valleys, and the international commercial traffic across the TMB are realities not compatible with protection policies and soft tourism promotion. The presentation of the brochure triggers

²⁹⁷ Sources : RAVAUS, 17 May 1994 : Espace Mont-Blanc. Conference de Presse de presentation de la brochure 'L'Enjeux', LE CURSIF, 23 May 1994 : Presentation de la brochure 'L'Enjeux', L'INFORMAZIONE, 24 May 1994 : Espace Mont-Blanc, ANSA, 25 May 1994: Ambiente: Espace Mont-Blanc, dalle idee ai progetti.

²⁹⁸ The questionnaires or 'fiches du project' are delivered through this publication in May 1994 and the deadline to send them back with the proposals is September 1994. After that the CTMB, the experts of the working groups and the local administrators proceed to examine them for the composition of an EMB agenda.

some ‘asymmetries’ in the tri-borderlands opinions at local instances²⁹⁹. The EMB promotional material is received as a message, nevertheless this message falls into different domains and assumes many interpretations on the different sides of the MB border. On the Italian side the ‘Valdigne Mountain Community’ (*Comunita’ Montana Valdigne*) and the Courmayeur inhabitants propose their contribution suggesting a list of priority topics which EMB should answer: agriculture, environmental protection, soft tourism and reduction of transport impact.

N° 11/94

 NOUVELLES DE LA REGION AUTONOME DE LA VALLEE D'AOSTE

 VALLEE D'AOSTA

Présentée par l'assesseur à l'Environnement Elio Riccarand

"L'enjeu": une revue pour l'Espace Mont-Blanc

"L'enjeu": voilà le titre d'une revue que la Conférence transfrontalière Mont-Blanc a réalisé en vue de lancer une campagne d'information et de sensibilisation destinée aux communautés de Savoie, Haute-Savoie, Valais et Vallée d'Aoste, directement concernées par le projet de l'Espace Mont-Blanc.

Présenté à Chamonix, Martigny et Aoste par les trois vice-présidents de la Conférence transfrontalière - Michel Charlet, maire de Chamonix, René Schwery, responsable des politiques environnementales du Valais et Elio Riccarand, assesseur à l'Environnement de notre Région - cet opuscule élégant, rédigé en français, est imprimé à plus de 50.000 exemplaires, dont huit mille destinés à la Vallée d'Aoste.

Il esquisse l'évolution du projet d'institution du parc international autour du Mont-Blanc et fournit une série de renseignements sur les programmes, les objectifs et la méthode de travail adoptée pendant ces années. L'opuscule entend solliciter la participation directe de la population, en invitant chacun à remplir une fiche de projet avec des idées, des propositions d'action, des initiatives concernant l'Espace Mont-Blanc.



La présentation de la revue "L'enjeu": de gauche à droite MM. Michel Charlet, Elio Riccarand et René Schwery.

Chaque fiche, qui devra être déposée avant le 15 septembre prochain, sera ensuite examinée par les élus locaux et les experts de la Conférence transfrontalière.

Les huit mille exemplaires de "L'enjeu" destinés à la Vallée d'Aoste seront distribués aux foyers de la communauté de montagne Valdigne-Mont-Blanc, aux collectivités locales, aux associations de protection de la nature, aux centres culturels, aux associations professionnelles et catégorielles, aux bibliothèques et aux moyens d'information.

"La Conférence transfrontalière Mont-Blanc - souligne l'assesseur Riccarand - assume la fonction de guide à l'effet de solliciter la mobilisation des communautés locales, en harmonie avec l'esprit participatif qui est essentiel à la réalisation de toute initiative."

A l'Assessorat de l'Environnement, des exemplaires supplémentaires de l'opuscule "L'enjeu" seront mis à la disposition des Valdôtains qui ne résident pas au Valdigne et qui souhaitent toutefois apporter leur contribution au projet de l'Espace Mont-Blanc.

Figure 4.8. – An article on the 'conférence tournante' enacted by the CTMB members.

The 'Brochure de Project' presented on such an occasion contains the questionnaire for the inhabitants and the institutional setting existing on the Mont-Blanc slopes.

²⁹⁹ 'Si les suisses et les italiens ont accueilli cette plaquette sans émotion particulier, les chamoniards, une fois encore, ont joué les rebelles de la dernière heure' reports the French Messagere newspaper speaking about the itinerant conference for the brochure's presentation.

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Apart from the ‘happy islands’ of expectations, the discussions are burning on the sectors concerning existing institutional settings at the MB border, which the EMB project involves. Different reactions depend on the political debates already active in each sphere. In particular on the French side several discussions subsist between the inhabitants and the environmental organisations. Their suspicion is that EMB is another means used by some political actors for personal climbing. Some parties in opposition to the mayor of Chamonix have serious doubts about the efficacy of the EMB as an actual initiative. Many political attacks focus directly on one of the main figures of the EMB policy: Michel Charlet and his political ‘interpretation’ of the policies for the future MB *pays*. With his reference to the sentence of Michel Barnier ‘*de la contrainte au contrat*³⁰⁰’ the discourse around the EMB promotion find a fair occasion for social contestation. The French mass media comments that while the ‘*contrainte*’ is the menace of the MB Park, EMB is the ‘*contract*’, which can also open more ‘kindly’ contractual forms³⁰¹. Challenges are displaced into eventual strategies, which the CTMB arena may be truly hiding under a just apparent explicit posturing within popular belief. Simply, for a wide public opinion on the Swiss, and French sides the themes of protection and development cannot walk together. During the presentation of the EMB brochure in Chamonix, a debate is also developed as regards the French-Swiss project for border management in the *Tete de Balme*³⁰² locality. This becomes a symbolic event of contestation, which well synthesises the doubts of many. The project for the *Tete du Balme* consists of the realisation of new mass tourist infrastructures at the MB French and Swiss border which the CTMB arena also sustains. A burning polemic about what the EMB truly means between evident and substantial ‘dichotomies’ is spanning while the principles of the EMB promotes actions for ‘soft tourism’. The CTMB arena maintains that ‘*la guerre entre protection et promotion est totalement depasse*³⁰³’. EMB

³⁰⁰ ‘Contrainte’ is translated into English as ‘Constraint’, ‘Contrat’ as ‘Contract’ (Dictionnaire Anglais-Français et Français-Anglais par J. Vincent éditions Garnier Frère)

³⁰¹ RAVAUS, 17 May 1994 : Espace Mont-Blanc. Conference de Presse de presentation de la brochure ‘L’Enjeux’, LE CURSIF, 23 May 1994 : Presentation de la brochure ‘L’Enjeux’, L’INFORMAZIONE, 24 May 1994 : Espace Mont-Blanc, ANSA, 25 May 1994: Ambiente: Espace Mont-Blanc, dalle idee ai progetti.

³⁰² A lively exchange between the vice-presidents of the CTMB’s French and Swiss sides, Charlet and Schwery brought to the Chamonix meeting about the existing Swiss and French laws to realize a new ski-domain at Tete du Balme. A Swiss law envisages a large perimeter of security around any cableway construction which can be a real difficulty to realize the new project. ‘Cette loi suisse n’a rien a’ voir avec l’Espace Mont-Blanc. Le projet d’extension des remontée mécanique de la Tete du Balme étant transfrontalier, on ne peut outrepasser les lois en vigueur dans chacun des pays concernes. La conférence transfrontalière (CTMB) n’a pas aucun pouvoir législatif. Profitons au contraire de cette force de concentration que represente l’EMB pour tenter d’obtenir du government suisse une dérogation concernant le ski hors-piste dans ce secteur’ (Source : LE MESSAGER, 3 June 1994).

³⁰³ Schwery in various press conferences during spring-summer 1994.

just agrees the nation-state regulation at the MB border through a new system of governance; however the difficulties in policies are not dissolved for the future of these territories. A series of favourable assumptions leads one to think that at the moment almost everything is possible under the EMB label. The idea to be ‘another’, alternative possibility for a bargaining and coordinating board between national and local levels is then confirmed by the reality. The definitive delegation, which the CTMB obtains from the central governments, is a sign that marks this path. Under these conditions also the *Tete de Balme* project no longer appears an unrealistic realisation. The requirements of maintenance of local activities in EMB territories have to provide new infrastructures for winter tourism³⁰⁴, nevertheless respecting the nation-state policy regulations. The first sign of a real opportunity opened to the EMB policy is offered by the management of the Helvetica law on the environment sector, which directly involves the case study for the *Tete de Balme* actuation. A very thoughtful strategy appears in the aim of the CTMB arena: to obtain first the approval of the French government and then to promote a public inquiry on the Swiss side³⁰⁵. Michel Barnier gives his favourable assent to the CTMB arena in the summer 1994 for the *Tete du Balme* project. This event really is lived as a success by the local instances involved, who for years had been waiting for the right circumstance to find some favours for the launch of this initiative³⁰⁶. The *Tete de Balme* approval is considered the most important event for the EMB potentiality towards the idea of ‘new local projects’³⁰⁷ across the nation-state MB border. For the Swiss-French local administrators involved in the CTMB this means keeping the hope for other projects under the EMB condition: the new *Martigny-Chatelard* railway and the new cable car in *La Cresaz* are a few of these other examples³⁰⁸.

³⁰⁴ From a discourse issued by the Mayor of Valloncine Georges Bidault

³⁰⁵ The idea was conceived by René Schwery

³⁰⁶ Starting from the mayor of Finhaut, Maxime Gay-des-Combes and the president of Trient who have actively supported the initiative ‘We are awaiting with impatience the favourable verdicts on this decision; if it is favourable, we are very happy’. Thanks to the EMB project our dream can become reality’.

³⁰⁷ After the presentation of the first dossier, in 1982 the project of Tete de Balme was refused. The municipalities of Finhaut and Trient have not stopped fighting to defend the idea of a new ski-domain in this area. The project was re-dimensioned the first time in 1987 and has suffered severe slowing up because the Federal Office of the Forest has asked for more modifications to the project which was approved by the French side.

³⁰⁸ From enthusiastic discourses by the administrators of Trient and Finhaut municipalities in summer 1994 issued to a press conference.

'This situation unlocked the pre-existing situation of the EMB areas. EMB is finally a realistic project in a compromised logic between ecology and economy, between local expectations and national regulations at the nation-state borders'. (Source: *Nouvelliste*, 1994)

The vice-president of the CTMB for the Swiss side, René Schwery, also points out in a public forum in Martigny how the EMB project can change the Valais reality 'from a policy of acceptance to a policy of reaction'. 'EMB is an experimental laboratory towards a Europe of the Regions'; these are his words reported from this conference. On the French side EMB is contested as a form of lack in 'geographical (cross-border) unit'³⁰⁹. EMB does not propose its own clear map; the 're-bordering' setting is not reported anywhere in an exact way. Even the principle according to EMB of a participative and cross-border project is not completely persuasive for everybody. Every event, which involves the EMB project, in some way is thus also lived with a certain alarmism³¹⁰. The lack of clear intentions is cause of anxiety for inhabitants and existing institutions. Changes for the MB and its *pays* can even occur from one moment to another according to various series of modifications in political life. In effect, relevant 'asymmetries' exist at different sides of the MB border such as government level participation. For instance, the presence of the Italian minister is no longer constant in the sphere of the CTMB. Very often this minister delegates 'external experts'³¹¹ for EMB meetings. The CTMB membership confirms its need for 'popular sustainment'³¹² as a fundamental stake for advancing the EMB process. The essential innovation of the project is in being a participative initiative³¹³ that marks the 'difference' between the others³¹⁴ initiatives until this moment promoted for the 'roof of

³⁰⁹ 290,000 hectares, 49 municipalities and 98,000 inhabitants are included in such an area.

³¹⁰ The alarmism of this time is, for instance, the change of the Italian Environment Minister. The French press immediately speaks of the Italian 'neo-fascism' risk regime because of the introduction of Altero Matteoli as the new Italian Environment Minister. This debate arrives directly at the heart of the CTMB arena. The vice-presidents of the CTMB, the Swiss René Schwery and the Italian Elio Riccarand reassure the French side: 'the structure of the EMB project and our statute allows us to guarantee the continuity of our works under every change of 'head' (Schwery), 'the statute of the Valle d'Aosta Autonomous Region will allow us to go on with the EMB project without passing through Rome' (Riccarand). (Source: Interviews issued by the two presidents for the newspaper 'TRIBUNE DE GENEVE on 26th March 1994).

³¹¹ The more constant ministerial representatives of this time are Carlo Alberto Pinelli (Mountain Wilderness president) and Paolo Jaccard (for the local communities) during the year 1994.

³¹² Sources : 'TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 26 May 1994: L'Espace Mont-Blanc cherche un appui populaire, CONFEDERE, 27 May, 1994: Espace Mont-Blanc an appui populaire, NOUVEAU QUOTIDIEN, 26 May 1994: L'Espace Mont-Blanc revivifié'.

³¹³ CONFEDERE, 27 May 1994

³¹⁴ The CTMB's intention is to spread its 'good proposals' aimed at not repeating the mistakes of the Alpine Convention which is a very top-down state policy in the opinion of the CTMB arena.

Europe'. These motions are under constant attack. EMB is perhaps the construction of another means used by local political representatives to gain political consensus for their personal political climbing. The doubt that their intentions are those of not being much founded on the real needs of the EMB area.³¹⁵ The CTMB arena tries to arrange in some way to relieve these common doubts. Public meetings are organised on both sides of the MB border to spread the idea of the EMB project. During the summer of 1994 in Courmayeur a curious meeting is organised to this aim titled '*Espace Mont-Blanc. Idea per pochi o sfida per tutti?*'³¹⁶. The curious title immediately triggers a reaction from Italian journalists. Some of them propose to rewrite this title to report the reality of what happened during the meeting: '*Espace Mont-Blanc: idea for few which clashes with everybody*'. The mass media report frequently the difficulties in accountability, which EMB assumes. The EMB project includes 'development'; this depends on the preference of the inhabitants and their active participation. The inhabitants demonstrate reactions of anxiety to the EMB policy. The project aims at strict 'protection' activated already for the *Gran Paradiso* park³¹⁷. Protection and development, in the minds of the inhabitants, also on this front of the MB border, cannot walk together. In summer 1994 CTMB arena guides its initiatives in a parallel way with the ever-present debates promoted by the mountaineers in opposition to the EMB project. Their thesis is that the cultural value of the MB areas does not find a solution with the EMB creation. For the mountaineer organisations, the park policy is still the only possible real solution to perform for MB's protection. A policy without 'hybridism' is the only possibility to break the empire of tourism, the cause of the inhabitants, the congestion and the consumption of the wild places still present in the MB borderlands.³¹⁸ Their echo always turns back to the Mont-Blanc protection issue at this

³¹⁵ Sources: LA STAMPA, 29 May 1994: Iniziativa Espace Mon-Blanc. Idee cercansi per il Parco. , LA TSAPLETTA, May 1994: Dell'Espace Mont-Blanc, LE DAUPHINE, 3 June 1994: A vous de Jouer, LE MESSAGER, 3 June 1994: Cham'allo, LE MESSAGER, 3 June 1994: L'Enjeux de l'Espace Mont-Blanc , LE MONITEUR, 3 June 1994: Le Chemin de la Confiance 1986-1993, NOUVELLISTE VALAIS, 14 June 1994: Les Voies de l'Espace

³¹⁶ EMB: an idea of a few people or a challenge for everybody? (LA STAMPA, 29 May 1994: Iniziativa Espace Mon-Blanc. Idee cercansi per il Parco)

³¹⁷ Faced with the local administrators (Municipalities and Mountain Community Agencies) the Councillors of the Regione Valle d'Aosta try to give explanations about the structure of a new space in which to apply a gradual regulation. A sceptical public clash with the vague concepts promoted by the EMB project. The aspirations, the expectations and the waiting regarding the interests involved in such a project are too many and too different. Very often the interests are antagonists such as those of protection and development'. (LA STAMPA, 29 May 1994: Iniziativa Espace Mont-Blanc. Idee cercansi per il Parco)

³¹⁸ A reference is the monographic numbers dedicated to the MB areas published in 1993 and 1994.

time³¹⁹ as aesthetical and cultural value but also as management of a public asset. The reality of MB neighbourhoods is not just connected to an aesthetic value but also to the requirements in facing its problems. Market logic is moving between the international traffic of the TMB with its 2,000 cars/day and the motorway Aosta-TMB to ultimate. Mass tourism counts hundreds of thousands of presences. Within these strong dynamics EMB is seen as a 'courageous project' among the other fragmentary policies proposed over the years³²⁰ inside the cross-border territories. EMB is also understood as an umbrella policy for various initiatives in the aims of the CTMB. However, its own forms of legitimisation are not obvious for a cross-border territory composed of very contrasting economical resources³²¹ and settings of regulation forms³²².

'The reality is that the MB area cannot survive with the current use of its resources'. (Source: Tribune de Geneve, May 1994)

As further news within this debate, at the end of August 1994, a car of the MB cable way³²³ falls down drawing general public attention to the incessant masses of tourists and on the security of these infrastructures. If the provocation arrives in a very restless way from the mass media, the ecologists and the environmental organisations, the mountaineer organisations, on the other hand also the CTMB promptly gives its answers. New meetings are organised to launch new slogans about the future of the EMB³²⁴.

'La protection pure et dure ne passe plus'; '...a reservation for our zone?...we are not Indians' 'State decisions are shifted in regional participation and initiatives' (Source: CHABLAIS, 22 August 1994).

³¹⁹ The initiative promoted by Rome's mayor to join the Fori Romani monument with the Dolomites to offer a label 'Dolomites: monument of the world' offers another occasion to propose a debate of the MB area's protection. Someone proposes to join the Gioconda (Mona Lisa) with the MB as social value, both of them are not private collections, but public assets. This is a joking and provocative tone of the MB debate. The MB's problems are really rooted in tourist and traffic empires which cannot be solved with the introduction of new labels. (Source: IL SECOLO XIX: 24 August 1994: Monte Bianco da salvare)

³²⁰ As the press communicates, in these areas opinion polls are proposed like: "would you like, as a tourist, to give up using your car or not? But is it through the public pools that the world is governed?" If the world decides that it might be better to sell the Gioconda (Mona Lisa) and build just football fields? The journalist of LA STAMPA is very humorous. (Source: IL SECOLO XIX: 24 August 1994: Monte Bianco da salvare)

³²¹ Very high tourist index in some localities, others with an economy based on agriculture and sheep-farming.

³²² 2,000 hectares are already protected by Swiss and French laws while the Italian side is still waiting. Proposals have been presented on the wave of the Legge Quadro sui Parchi, but the Regione Valle d'Aosta proposes the PTCP plan to replace a state intervention which is still in phase of discussion.

³²³ On the Italian side of Courmayeur 'Funivie del Monte Bianco'

³²⁴ These sentences in the following were expressed on various occasions by the three presidents of the CTMB who are still René Schwery (CH), Michel Charlet (F) and Elio Riccarand (I). I have reported especially some sentences pronounced by René Schwery in Orisier in August 1994 and those printed by the local press such as CHABLAIS, 22 August 1994.

The brochure and the questionnaire for the EMB project diffusion involve the inhabitants as a 'means to demonstrate that every voice can put a stone to making the project'. 'EMB is a space of actions'. More or less formal occasions also through several initiatives of promotion. Trekking and ecological meetings become for the CTMB the occasion to sustain EMB as a means which does not share any similarity with traditional instruments of regulation.

'The inhabitants are involved in the EMB actions as active and determinant subjects, not as objects. Inhabitants will not suffer the decisions of a remote and invisible bureaucracy'. 'EMB is a policy which focuses on the developing of the mountain as social account. Mountains do not respond to the political divisions in nation-state borders; they connect people by language, traditions, and common experiences'. (Source: *Nouvelliste*, August 1994).

Apart from slogans and words in promotion of the EMB as independent policy, the CTMB arena is also working at actual documents and research. The first publications of EMB maps have been produced and published³²⁵ even despite the legislative differences between the three public territorial regional subjects involved. The CTMB points to the 'meso level' communalities at the nation-state border, which coupled with the autonomy of the *Italian Regione Valle d'Aosta* with the centralised regime of the *French Haute Savoie Department* together with the autonomous legislative form of the *Swiss Canton Valais*. A working group commissioned within the EMB project named as '*group de reflexion*' on '*milieux sensibles*'³²⁶ communicates the results of an interesting study of existing environmental vulnerability. This shows that the EMB space contains physically sensitive areas where measures of protection are urgent. However, these 'physical aspects' of vulnerability are not just concerned with the importance of natural resources. The factors of pressure, which interfere in social accounts, according to subjective features of inhabitants and tourists in their social perception of the MB environment have been considered in this analysis. At the beginning of November 1994³²⁷ the projects to bring out for the three test areas³²⁸ are also spread by the CTMB. They concern: 1) the creation of

³²⁵ LA STAMPA, 11 September 1994, IL POTERE LOCALE, September/October 1994.

³²⁶ On the basis of the indications posed in a document in 1993 and further studied in depth with regard to the technical and scientific aspects of evaluations extended for the entire EMB territory.

³²⁷ LA STAMPA, 1 November 1994

³²⁸ On the Italian-French border (Val Ferret), on the French-Swiss border (Col de Balme), on the Italian-Swiss border (Val Venis and Des Champieux), these studies obtained from the State organism financing for a total of 600,000 ECUs (200,000 from each State) to lead studies of feasibility and practical realisations.

points of reception and contact for information about the EMB's project; 2) the organisation of periodic meetings aimed from time to time at different topics like the '*rencontres des alpagistes*' aimed at exchanges between mountain agriculture on the slopes of Mont-Blanc. A special project is also planned for the *Val Ferret* within the EMB focus. The proposal is the creation of a specific reserve on the natural cultural and architectonic heritage (waters, flora, fauna), which will be inserted in an IT system. Local institutions and agencies will be part of the *info points* and *accommodation points* for the renewal of the famous 'Tour du Mont-Blanc'. An additional and more general argument also emerges at the time: the need to give the EMB and its arena a juridical personality. This idea has however to respond to an innovative formula because, actually, Switzerland is not part of the EU. This intention is also mentioned in a new meeting between the Italian, French and Swiss Environmental Ministers³²⁹ and the CTMB. The Ministers in the meanwhile have once again changed: Altero Matteoli³³⁰ for Italy, Michel Barnier³³¹ for France, and Ruth Dreifuss³³² for Switzerland take on this occasion information about the work done until this moment by the CTMB arena. The first results obtained from the EMB brochure and the answers received from the diffusion of the questionnaire to municipalities and local agencies are also presented in such a meeting. Two themes emerge as more crucial for the EMB account: local authorities and inhabitants express the urgency that EMB should contain orientation on policies concerning the *milieu sensible* and *transport*. The CTMB arena also proposes its agenda of commitments for 1995: 1) to define a perimeter of the EMB; 2) the improvement its organisation; 3) its own juridical structure predisposition. The CTMB illustrates once again the various initiatives nation-state representatives face aimed at receiving a new mandate from them. Indeed, this will be the last meeting between the government leaders on the Mont-Blanc issues. A common position seems reached as the term of this first phase of the EMB policy making. This consists of a real abolition of the park policy/ies towards the consolidation of a different dynamical of governance based on

³²⁹ Geneva, November 1994, presided by the local and CTMB representative of the Swiss part René Schwery

³³⁰ National Alliance Party and member of National Secretariat of MSI-DN in XIII legislature was Environmental Minister in the Second Berlusconi Government then, after the experience of government was member of the Permanent Commission for Transport, Mail and Communications and in the Inquiry Commission for the illegal activities of waste disposal recycling.

³³¹ Michel Barnier was French Environment Minister during the time span 1993-1995 before becoming, in the years 1995-1997 Minister of State for European Affairs and later Senator of Savoie (1997-1999). As known, since September 1999 he has been a member of the European Commission on Regional Policy.

³³² Ruth Dreifuss was elected in 1997 vice-president of the Helvetica Confederation and president in 1998. From 1993 she was in the Federal Department for Home Affairs for Switzerland.

the participation of local collectivities across the nation-state borders and their terms of regulation. While the CTMB is looking to communicate this new perspective, the ‘park’ word is still used somewhere. The Italian media use the ‘park’³³³ to mention a new agenda for the EMB policy; the French and Swiss seem to be going beyond it. Nevertheless the topics reported to describe the new EMB ideas are very similar in articulating their vocabulary. The media write about the innovation proposed by EMB and its arena in sustaining actions and principles to not transfer to a national level. Local inhabitants are part of a process which aims at a consultative and coordinated board and consequential actions based on ‘*une démarche transfrontalière et participative*’ as within a ‘*périmètre encore flou*’. At this moment public opinion is just aware that a heavy gear has started working. EMB is a device, which appears beyond the punctual and sometimes contrasted experiences. On the test zone foreseen for EMB realisation, many experiences have not yet been accomplished. But for the CTMB, which obtains EU financing for 375,000 ECU of sponsoring, new challenges are just being drawn. A new cross-border dimension of governance has just been born within the hypothesis of the creation of its own juridical structure, 73 projects have been suggested as potential realisations under the label EMB, the urgency of ‘protection’ and ‘transportation’ as requirements of immediate policies. New scopes also concern the crucial problems of international traffic regulations³³⁴ and the social mobilisation caused by ‘observers’³³⁵. Puzzles for a new cross-border policy are just behind the door.

4.2.3 The Second Phase (1994-1998): EMB and the Policies of ‘Little Steps’

‘Beyond the political and institutional schemes today new cross-border regional spaces are emerging for experimenting different ways to see, to think and to create. They are going to be realised within the European

³³³ IL POTERE LOCALE (September-October 1994) reports the title “Nuovo parco per valorizzare l’ambiente”, at the same time in the newspaper L’ECHO DES ALPAGES another article is titled as ‘Espace Mont-Blanc: reve ou realite’ but both of them contain the same topics to spread the EMB ideas.

³³⁴ In October 1994 the Italian-French Committee for TMB management has a meeting to decide the new toll tariffs to implement in 1995. The CTMB has asked to consider the elimination of the reduced tariffs for the large international lorry companies pointing out that the Environment Ministers in 1993 had already raised the problem solicited by the inhabitants of some of Valle d’Aosta’s and Haute Savoie’s municipalities but still without any reply. In view of the elimination of the customs offices and the closure of the auto-ports of Cluses and Pollein, the CTMB proposes to consider the issue again.

³³⁵ The interest of the environment organisation is still for the park policy. The symbolic man of the mountaineer organisations’ actions to ask for the park, Rheinold Messner, issues an interview at the end of 1994 where he says that although difficult for the inhabitants to accept, the only road to follow is to eliminate the exploitation of the mountain which every year wants a new natural part devoted to mass tourism. Mont-Blanc as a European park has a symbolic value because mountains don’t divide people but join them. (L’Unità 3 September 1994)

construction's background according to new coefficients of freedom'. (Revue de Presse Espace Mont-Blanc July 1995)

In July 1995 *'le démarche transfrontalière prometteuse de l'Espace Mont-Blanc'* proposes, in a public way, the label of sustainable development. In doing that it faces a very open debate: the drawing of its project of 're-bordering' of its own 'borders'. Although a geographical perimeter for EMB has few possibilities to be realised. Every hypothesis until this moment proposed has often posed very persistent contestations³³⁶. The CTMB idea is therefore shifted to this theme.

'What is important is to go ahead with the EMB project rather than to draw a geographical entity. This means to create a new practice; that is more important than to shape a geographical entity in a forced way' (Revue de Presse Espace Mont-Blanc, July 1995).

The 're-bordering' of the EMB will be determined in function of the local collective engaged in such a process of building. It means that the creation of the EMB as political agenda is the main focus of the Cross-Border Region Espace Mont-Blanc. Various projects are part of this agenda: 1) the studies and projects already started for the test zones in the arrangement of paths around the MB Mountain; 2) the renewal of some existing shelters located along these paths; 3) the analysis of natural, cultural and architectonic heritage existing in these territories; 4) the initiatives to promote public transportation as an alternative to private traffic in the more popular valleys. New meetings between the mayors of municipalities, regional and national deputies are also part of an active EMB agenda. The real *innovation* at the start of this new phase is the aim of the 'identité visuelle' for the EMB cross-border region. The need to identify a region not by borders but by symbols creating an evocative icon, which can mark the meaning of participative and cross-border actions. A public competition is launched by the arena and won³³⁷ by an artist who explains that the EMB has to consist of an essence.

'We are bombarded by strong and heavy symbols which express the image of a certain kind of reality. The EMB logo should be light and new, interpretive of the EMB project in its own essence'. (Balan, 1995)

The EMB's logo represents three individuals joined around the Mountain.

³³⁶ Revue de Presse Espace Mont-Blanc, 3 July, 1995

³³⁷ The logo was chosen at the end of a public competition launched by the CTMB in Haute Savoie, Valais and Valle d'Aosta. 12 professional graphic artists participated and it was won by an Italian Franco Balan. (Source : LA STAMPA, 13 September 1995: Espace Mont-Blanc. Scelto il simbolo)

The ‘conférence tournante’ in Aosta, Chamonix, and Martigny is again organised by the CTMB and its vice-presidents. At this time, the aim is to present the new logo of the EMB. The presentation of the logo is also the very occasion to propose the new agenda of intentions; for the first time really unbounded by the park policy, towards the construction of common and shared aims³³⁸ across the nation-state MB border.



Figure 4.9. - 'L'identité visuelle' of the cross-border region Espace Mont-Blanc in the logo launched by the CTMB in September 1995

For Michel Charlet, the French CTMB vice-president the EMB responds to another complete necessity rather than that of the park policy³³⁹.

'EMB is an initiative desired by the local inhabitants. It is not something lowered from the levels of the leaders. There is no longer central level that lays down the rules as for the parks'. EMB is not a park but a project continuously in progress, which aims to reach a cross-border territory where environmental protection and socio-economic development can walk together' (Source: NOUVELLISTE, September 1995).

Elio Riccarand, the Italian CTMB vice-president agrees with his French partner Michel Charlet³⁴⁰.

³³⁸ On occasion of the symbol presentation a project to propose skiing in all seasons was also presented (even in summertime) by the municipalities of Courmayeur (Italy) and Chamonix (France). Such a project foresees building new fixed common infrastructures on the top of Colle del Gigante (3,500 m). The focus of this project is to create a common ski area between Valle d'Aosta, Valais Canton and Haute Savoie which can even compete to have the Olympic games. (Source: ANSA, 13 September 1995: Turismo: progetto sciare tutto l'anno a Courmayeur)

³³⁹ Interview issued in Press' Conference RAVAUS, 5 September 1995: Presentation du logo de l'Espace Mont-Blanc ; NOUVELLISTE, 7 September 1995 : Le sens de l'Equilibre

'EMB is a work aimed at a cross-border common culture for a better balance in trans-local realities. EMB is the prospective for a future in which the decisions will be not imposed but as outcome of a cultural evolution'.
(Source: LA STAMPA, August 1995)

The logo's presentation immediately triggers reactions from the environmental organisations³⁴¹.

'Under the EMB as its 'green' label is hidden just a spectacular act to attract new tourism masses'. (Pinelli, Mountain Wilderness, 1995)

The main representative of these groups sustains once again that the park policy for MB areas has to be realised³⁴² and that EMB is just a policy to not solve the persistent problems of the MB and its *pays*.

'Five years ago the EMB project was invented as a practice to perimeter an area and to establish a modality of actuation of the park policy. Nowadays a label for tourist development has distorted such an intention and the CTMB works concern just useless actions'. (Source: ANSA, September 1995)

A letter from the environmental organisations – clustered together from the three countries on the slopes of MB Mountain - appears once again at the three environment ministries of Italy, France and Switzerland. The requirement is the urgency to control the activities of the CTMB and to scale down their intentions. And once again during the launch of the EMB in new initiatives such as the opening of paths across the border, or on occasion of new arrangements on the existing paths in a renewal exploitation policy³⁴³, the CTMB reply to such contestations³⁴⁴.

'Certain big mouths accuse us of caring just about tourism promotion, but our intention is promoting a living region. We are for an active development of our heritage'. (Schwery, September 1995)

³⁴⁰ LA STAMPA, 27 August 1995: Espace Mont-Blanc una sfida oltre il confine, IL CORSIVO, 20 September 1995: Espace Mont-Blanc: non un parco ma un progetto transfrontaliero in evoluzione; LE MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE, Novembre 1995: Le project d'Espace Mont-Blanc

³⁴¹ Mountain Wilderness

³⁴² ANSA, 8 September 1995: Ambiente: SOS Monte Bianco, un Parco che non si vuole fare

³⁴³ In particular at this time a new path named 'bisse' introduced in September 1995 in the Trient municipality gives René Schwery, CTMB's vice president of the Swiss part, the opportunity to answer the new environment organisations' provocations.

³⁴⁴ René Schwery, in a Press Conference on 7th September 1995 takes the opportunity to say that the environment organisations are hindering every CTMB action. Also those to realise the ski-domain in the Tete du Balme locality on the border between Switzerland and France.

In the meanwhile, the top of the MB Mountain becomes once again the ideal place to let public opinion discuss the defence of the environment and to launch motions of debate. As international symbol of the environmental discussions, Greenpeace³⁴⁵ chooses this place to lead a protest against the nuclear experiments determined by Jacques Chirac for the Mururoa island in the Pacific Ocean. The voice of the Mont-Blanc symbol re-echoes once more everywhere the space that still waits to be protected. More discussions are moreover still open on the motorway completion on the Italian side of the MB border from Aosta to the TMB.³⁴⁶ However, the CTMB as trans-local arena is shifting in policies starting from the MB protection to a cross-border regional identification not-yet unambiguous. The 'small steps' on this draw of identification for the EMB provide some results in 1996. The actions to spread the EMB ideas are proposed by the media and in the newspapers³⁴⁷, in the traditional festivals such as those of *Foire du Valais*³⁴⁸, in new tourist offerings and brochures related to the significance of environment interests. The installation of panels along the footpaths³⁴⁹ promoted by the EMB aims at the creation of didactic paths that is

³⁴⁵ 'From the bottom to the top of France' sustain the militants of Greenpeace during August 1995. The banners of contestation reach the top of MB but the mayor of Chamonix and CTMB's vice president of the French part define them polluters. In those days a collection of signatures for the protection of natural patrimonies is disseminated by Greenpeace in Chamonix and it becomes another means to speak about MB's protection as a symbolic place. The French police confiscate the banners and compel the Greenpeace militants to stop the demonstrations. (Sources: LA STAMPA, 20 August 1995: Greenpeace cacciata dal tetto d'Europa, CORRIERE DELLA SERA, 21 August 1995: Greenpeace conquista il Monte Bianco)

³⁴⁶ Gianfranco Dell'Alba (Pannella-Rifondatori party) proposes, for instance, a referendum to complete the motorway Morgex-Mont-Blanc Tunnel aimed at verifying the compatibility of the last stretch with the EU directives and with the Espace Mont-Blanc project. In a meeting it was pointed out that there is a lack of an actual agreement between Regions and the European Parliament and the intense activities of the regions on the borders to propose favourable co-operation through the INTERREG programme. (Source: ANSA, 21 December 1995: Parlamento Europeo: Deputato Dell'Alba in Valle d'Aosta)

³⁴⁷ Articles written by the CTMB's vice-presidents are disseminated for example in the newspapers such as NOUVELLISTE, 17 April 1996: La Montagne, ca nous gagnel, LA GAZZETTE, 18 April 1996: Espace Mont-Blanc: du concret, IL SOLE 24 ORE, 30 May 1996: Monte Bianco: un unico Espace per tre nazioni. In which some of them define EMB as the laboratory of the Alpine Convention.

³⁴⁸ The Foire du Valais is a fair organised every year at the end of September in Martigny and this year a space is dedicated to Espace Mont-Blanc. This fair is quite important because it represents an appointment for the socio-economic activities of Gran San Bernardo Valleys with 650 stands and about 130,000 visitors. Several cultural exhibitions are also presented. Three days are dedicated to Espace Mont-Blanc and in particular to some topics included in such initiative: cross-border co-operation, environment and nature protection, promotion of social and economic activities aimed at the durable development of this area. Present on such occasion are the French Environment Minister, Corinne Lepage and the Swiss one, Ruth Dreifuss (Sources: ANSA, 19 September 1996: Fiere: L'Espace Mont-Blanc ospite della Foire du Valais, JOURNAL DE MARTIGNY, 28 November 1996: Martigny, point de depart d'un Parc Naturel Regional?)

³⁴⁹ The Aosta Valley on the Italian side and the locality of Seigne-Bonhomme on the French one both included in the Espace Mont-Blanc project propose a new tourist offer linked to the environment during the summer 1996. This offer regards three paths where there are panels installed with geographical notes, geological information, fauna, historical features of the path and its area. This project is part of a programme to enhance the itineraries within the Espace Mont-Blanc and follows a strategy bent on development of soft tourism. The financing of this initiative is obtained from the European Union under the application of the Life programme decided by the Cross-Border Conference (CTMB). The

the explaining to tourists the particular features of the landscape within a framework of *soft tourism* promotion; especially experimented on the Italian side of the *Val Ferret*. Even the first version for the urban plan of Courmayeur municipality is presented streaming the very principles sustained in the EMB project. This is indeed one of the first examples³⁵⁰ for planning areas not built or with the attitude not to be built. The removal of some II World War surpluses is also an initiative included among the pilot actions of *Espace Mont-Blanc* according to an agreement with the *Courmayeur* municipality; it pertains to the pasturelands especially in *Val Veny*³⁵¹. All of them are means that are punctually emphasised within the EMB framework in cross-border cooperation ability and experimentation. Other symbolic initiatives are also activated by the CTMB for its active participation: ‘the roof of the old continent’ conference³⁵² where a new monument in honour of the Mont-Blanc mountain is an inaugural event in Martigny square. Ruth Dreifuss has at the moment the occasion to discuss within the EMB issues about the sustainable development promoted in Rio, marking in it the issue through which the EMB policy making should shift. A new launch in the framework of the cross-border common actions is for the local administrators of the CTMB arena another symbolic manifestation to practise the EMB policy, defending its own focuses³⁵³. At the time, debates are reserved to the CTMB arena and to the EMB project in various meetings. The promotion of soft tourism initiatives such as the regeneration and utilisation of footpaths are new occasions to speak about the new strategies for integration both intensive and extensive tourism development. As such the resources in the EMB as cross-border initiatives can enlarge the domains and involve the interests of other actors³⁵⁴. If symbolic actions agreed with the EMB policy, this space and

project will be realised through the technical experience of the Guide Alpine di Courmayeur and by some French and Swiss associations working to promote soft tourism.

³⁵⁰ The Courmayeur urban plan followed a very articulated procedure from 1964. For what concerns the introduction of a regulation for the non-building areas, which is the new aspect of the new plan, there is no possibility of building new hotels but a potential to enlarge the sport-tourist domains is foreseen and considered extremely important to the economic development of this area. (Source: LA STAMPA, 5 April 1996: Stop ad alberghi e campeggi nelle Valli Veny e Ferret)

³⁵¹ August 1996 initiative, an agreement with the Military School of Aosta allows realisation of this action. In the area of Col de la Seigne there are still some historical testimonies of the last war.

³⁵² Martigny, October 1996

³⁵³ René Schwery, the president of Valle d’Aosta Region, Francois Stevenin, the mayor of Chamonix, Michel Charlet and that of Martigny, Pierre Crittin all agree on the beneficial weight of these demonstrations. (NOUVELLISTE, 4 October 1996: La Carte de l’Espace NOUVELLISTE, 7 October 1996: Le poids des symbols)

³⁵⁴ In a meeting organised in October 1996, for instance, a field of socio-economic interest is involved by the CTMB debating the tourism vocation of this area. Taking his turn, for instance, Jean-Paul Amoudry, president of Société Economie Alpestre Haute Savoie points out that ‘the ski offer cannot be the only tourist offer that we can propose in our

at this time is also rich in discussions. In July 1996 while the soft tourism initiatives are being launched by the CTMB, Mountain Wilderness returns to let public opinion discuss the failure of the MB International Park 10 years after the beginning of its debates. The new demonstration aims to promote in local public opinion a manifestation, which consists of a march entitled 'to save Mont-Blanc'. The main accusation is against the EMB policy and especially against the CTMB arena³⁵⁵.

'The CTMB is a body just imprisoned by locality logic able to produce results like new summer ski-domains or the new motorway. For MW this is the moment to re-launch the park initiative to all the levels through a wide involvement of local inhabitants and all the people who love the MB. The need is to shake the indifference of public powers' (Source: La Stampa, 24 July 1996).

While the Mountain Wilderness organisation and some people are climbing the MB as a sign of protest, the President of the Coordinated Committee of Valle d' Aosta, the Prefect Luigi Scialò declines the proposal for a regional law. This foresees of 'saving the MB area' through the institution of an ecological tariff³⁵⁶ directed at transport through the Mont-Blanc Tunnel. 'This kind of law has to be tackled at national and community levels' comments the Prefect contesting a regional need to maintain the Mont-Blanc region as a landscape heritage. At the moment, it is crossed every year by 800,000 lorries. Mountain Wilderness and the CIAMP (Comité International pour la Protection du Mont-Blanc) point out once more to the Environment Ministers on both sides of the MB border the CTMB actions. No perimeters or zoning have been proposed in ten years of activities, no environmental planning instruments have been established, just slogans and symbols. CTMB is just a body aimed at coordinating with some modest returns soft tourism initiatives. Their motion is that the CTMB has to be reinforced by the more convincing participation of the central nation-state and environmental representatives because they are holders of more general interests. The NGO also proposes a detailed 'plan of action': 1)

valleys, it's important to give new forms which can answer the new needs of city tourists used to coming to our valleys and for that we have to go on with cross-border synergies'. Michel Matthey, head of the Section of the Office Federal du Management du Territoire (OFAT) pointed out that neither is 'just' soft tourism an alternative, André Lugon-Moulin president of the AVRP, Jean-Henry Papillourd president of the Société d'Histoire du Valais and Giorgio Foglione, head of the Tourist Service of Regione Valle d'Aosta spoke about the importance of the maintenance and renewal of cross-border paths. (NOUVELLISTE, 8 October 1996: Tourisme doux qui dure...)

³⁵⁵ Explicit reference to the 'Tete de Balme' project.

³⁵⁶ The eco-tariff consisted of 50,000 liras (about 25 euros nowadays) for transport companies both headed for or coming from foreign countries which cross the TMB. The prefect refused the proposal without taking it into consideration because a similar provision is a transgression with regard to the community laws and the Italian Constitution in art. 120. A region cannot issue regulations about international interests.

the removal of the obsolete infrastructures still present somewhere on the EMB territory; 2) the renouncing of new infrastructures for summer ski-domains; 3) the closure of private traffic in *Val Ferret* and *Val Veny*; 4) the stop of the works for the motorway of the Mont-Blanc; 5) new regulations for heavy traffic in the TMB. The NGO also proposes to split up the CTMB for its inefficiency. Without a new policy, the NGO maintains that the region of MB risks becoming the Disneyland of mountaineers aimed at immediate profits. The NGO³⁵⁷ also proposes the enrolment of the Mont-Blanc Mountain in the UNESCO list of human heritages. Forms of protection on the Italian MB are also totally lacking. The three Ministers respond promising to verify the results obtained until now by the CTMB taking the NGO's suggestions into serious consideration. From the Italian Environment Minister Edo Ronchi also a direct response to them is even diffused through the media³⁵⁸.

'Our will is to build the Espace Mont-Blanc. Italian, French and Swiss ministers will start again to meet with new aims' (Source: Oasis, December 1996).

Some take the park discussion further. A new hypothesis of a true Euroregion for the Mont-Blanc and its pays³⁵⁹ is proposed in the 'sense-making' of the EMB project.

'Valle d'Aosta, Haute Savoie and Valais can actually become three alpine hinges which can find their own regional form stepping out from their marginality with regard to the State and narrow national framework. Looking at their regional function as a bridge between the wider European areas in a good economic position'. (Source: La Table Ronde, September 1996).

This position is also sustained by the Italian front of Valle d'Aosta Region in which the popular party of the *Union Valdotaïn* promotes the re-structuring of Regional Councillor sectors³⁶⁰. This party maintains the idea to advance the hypothesis of the Mont-Blanc

³⁵⁷ CIAMP (Comité Internazionale pour la Protection du Mont-Blanc) and Mountain Wilderness are the first NGOs from which this demonstration starts but also other environment organisations join their actions especially for the construction of the new ski-domain in Tete-de-Balme (sustained by the CTMB) which propose other demonstrations to defend nature (Sources: IL SOLE 24 ORE, 30 May 1996: Monte Bianco: un unico Espace per tre nazioni; LA REPUBBLICA, 19 July 1996: In Marcia sul Monte Bianco per salvarlo; IL MANIFESTO, 23 July 1996: Per il Parco del Monte Bianco; LA STAMPA, 24 July 1996: Trekking per salvare il Bianco; TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 3 August 1996: L'Europe doit sauver son toit sous peine de severe tuile ecologique; IL MANIFESTO, 7 August 1996: Caro Ministro, ti scrivo).

³⁵⁸ Press Conference in December 1996 published in OASIS (OASIS, December 1996: Bianco senza frontiere)

³⁵⁹ Enrico Martial in a discussion proposed in 'La Table Ronde' in September 1996.

³⁶⁰ This discussion moves on the wave of Europe as a federal system but also on the Italian demonstration of Lega Nord which especially through its representative, Luciano Caveri who points out that 'Bossi has had the merit of putting with force the problem of reforming the State, but the Valle d'Aosta inhabitants, with their culture and history, cannot be part of Padania'. This debate was held also to sustain the French speaking programmes in the Aosta Valley region. (Source:

Euroregion within a modern federal Europe context. As part of this framework, the Aosta Valley is inserted in a natural collocation. The same language, culture and history across the nation-state border of Italy, France and Switzerland clusters the regions and the landscapes on the slopes of MB Mountain. This is a discourse criticized as just idealistic in the eyes of the NGOs. For them, the EMB task is to promote actions of protection for MB, first of all. After all, EMB policy was born as a reply to the requirement of an NGO motion for the park policy. NGOs also present to the municipal Council of Geneva an international petition³⁶¹ centred on the topic of mass tourism and excessive traffic, which affect the MB Massif. Some ecological manifestations are launched again as regards the Association pour le Respect du Site du Mont-Blanc (ARSMB), the Swiss Comité de l'Initiative des Alpes and the Syndicat des Cheminot (SEV) across the cross-border triangle between Switzerland (in particular for the Gothard tunnel) and Italy-France (for the TMB). The demonstrations pro-Mont-Blanc protection run in the Pyrenees localities, in Tyrol and Baviera where local societies ask for the same issue more control on heavy traffic and the introduction of new taxes on trailer transportation. Motions of solidarity on the issue of traffic are placed in all the Alpine territories³⁶². The requirement is for alternative solutions and transfer to the railways of part of the traffic. A specific dossier³⁶³ against the *Tete de Balme* ski domain project is again sustained by the NGO as the CIAPMB³⁶⁴. Debates that also become louder when, in January 1997, the Mont-Blanc shows its wild soul with the falling of two parts of its glaciers on its Italian face³⁶⁵. Public opinion points its finger once again at the ignored requirement to provide instruments to

ANSA, 13 September 1996: Per l'Union Valdotaïn l'attuale maggioranza regionale è l'unica possibile, ANSA, 15 September 1996: Fermo degli attivisti di Francite).

³⁶¹ The Collective International pour la protection du Mont-Blanc (CIAPM) and its reprehensive Dominique Rambaud sustain at a meeting in December 1996 in Geneva that 'in ten years nothing will have been provided yet for Mont-Blanc's protection' and that 'if perhaps Geneva adheres to such an initiative, it might be possible to have more force in the debate around the sustainable development in cross-border and in a wider context of Alpine regions around Mont-Blanc' (debate also sustained by the Swiss green party's representative, Robert Cramer).

³⁶² TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 3 October 1996: Gothard et Mont-Blanc: Manifs prévues samedi

³⁶³ This dossier is published by the Swiss WWF against the realisation of the tourist centre in the Tete du Balme locality on the border between Switzerland and France and sustained by the municipalities of Finhaut and Trient and the Regional Association of Martigny. The WWF points out that such a project proposes a model à l'ancienne which was developed in this area in the 1960s with a strong exploitation of the mountain, aimed at immediate economic outcomes. The WWF proposes instead a new model based on an alpine centre creation with low environmental impact. (the dossier is also presented in December 1996).

³⁶⁴ NOUVELLISTE, 3 December 1996: Protéger le Mont-Blanc

³⁶⁵ It's part of the Jorasses glacier (its consistence was estimated at around 10,000 cubic meters like a 10-storey building) and the other is the landslide of Brenva (the press speaks about 1 million cubic meters). (Source: IL SOLE 24 ORE, 2 February 1997: Monte Bianco. Il ghiacciaio ha la sua vita, rispettiandola).

protect the MB and its *pays*. The EMB project in particular is a form of experimentation; but it is urgent to come up with problem solving in practices. The CTMB continues with its initiatives, leaving without resolutions on its agenda the issues of *transport management* and the creation of its own *juridical statute*. Even if these are themes particularly debated between the CTMB and its actors. In the test zones the renewal of paths, the installation of info-panels, the survey of natural heritage, a guide to the existing paths within the EMB, a meteorological service³⁶⁶ are projects in progress³⁶⁷. A new INTERREG programme is also ongoing on the management of cross-border paths; and the study on the *quality of the air in EMB* will be published soon, as the CTMB promises. The new French Environment Minister Dominique Voynet launches the challenge to reduce lorry traffic in the Alpine arc through the TMB. He manifests his intention to work on a general setting for a new political framework for the environmental sector in France³⁶⁸. For now, MW and Greenpeace promote peaceful demonstrations as forms of excursions and demonstrative climbs ‘where eagles and extremist tourists dare the Disneyland of 4000’ to protest against the MB no-park creation³⁶⁹. At the moment fifteen environmental organisations sustain this same urgency³⁷⁰.

‘We need to put into practice a structure of protection even without speaking necessarily of ‘park’ but promoting new active and sustainable concepts of protection’. (LA REPUBBLICA, July 1997)

³⁶⁶ In May 1997 the CTMB presents the realisation, with the cableway societies of a meteorological service ‘info-meteo’ offered in collaboration with Meteo-France. A new system able to give detailed weather information throughout the Espace Mont-Blanc area. (ANSA, 26 March 1997: Turismo: la funivia sull’ottava meraviglia del mondo)

³⁶⁷ In March 1997 its projects are published by the CTMB and even the sum spent for their realisation over time. Also using EU’s LIFE programme funds. (LA STAMPA, 9 March 1997: Sei i progetti per l’Espace).

³⁶⁸ The vice-president of the CTMB’s Italian part, Elio Riccarand meets the French Environment Minister, Dominique Voynet in September 1997 to discuss the MB topic and in particular actions for the reduction of traffic in the TMB. Also the closure of the nuclear power station of Superphenix is a subject of discussion. The nuclear power station in Creys-Malville, near Lyon is also close to the Italian border. (RAVAUS, 5 September 1997: L’Assesseur Riccarand a rencontre le Ministre Francais de l’environnement Voynet, LA STAMPA, 6 September 1997: Rassicurazioni da Parigi sulle politiche ambientali, LE NOUVELLISTE, 15 September 1997: Tous autour du Mont-Blanc)

³⁶⁹ ‘We demonstrate to demand that Espace Mont-Blanc be a protected area, as we have asked the governments many, many times. We hoped for more from the Green Italian Minister Ronchi but our fight can go on also with demonstrative climbings where the party counts less than the idea’ (Sources: ANSA, 23 July 1997: Ambiente: senatori sul Monte Bianco, week-end trasversale, L’UNITA’, 23 July 1997: Onorevoli in cordata per il Parco del Monte Bianco, LA REPUBBLICA, 27 July 1997: E la bufera fermo’ l’On. Piccozza)

³⁷⁰ In August 1997 Alain Pialat, the general director of the Environment Sector in the Savoie Department says that MB’s protection has arrived at ‘un empassé’. The French government was not able to adopt the Espace Mont-Blanc projects as regards protection and the focuses have changed. But the Savoie collectivities have obtained financial support from the Rhone-Alpes Region and he hopes that a new phase can really open for the project (Source: LE MONDE, 5 August 1997: Le Mont-Blanc a la recherche d’une protection qui soit a sa hauteur)

The accusation is directed at the CTMB which is a '*cellule de concertation*' indifferent to a project of protection as promoted at its beginning. CTMB replies across media and conferences³⁷¹:

'EMB is an attempt between three realities across the border joined by a common policy of exploitation, a step towards a Europe of Regions'. (Source: *Nouvelliste*, September 1997)

After four years of silence, the three Environment Ministers return to meet the CTMB in a conference organised in Paris, in January 1998. The solicitations pushed by the environmental and ecological actions have finally obtained a reaction: the central ministers evaluate the CTMB activities. An actual agenda for planning a long-term work on the management of the EMB project is also decided. The Ministers³⁷² give a new mandate to the CTMB: to draw up a new operative document, a sort of planning instrument³⁷³. This work should be based on the study on the 'milieu sensible' already started in 1993 by the CTMB. The composition of a group of expertise to guide the work on the task of the sustainable development in EMB territories is also a manifested requirement by the three ministers. The Ministers agree also to candidate the MB as Human Heritage in the UNESCO list. Subsequent to this tri-national meeting, a local encounter is organised in Chamonix by the CTMB arena.³⁷⁴ The issues about the will demonstrated by the Ministers to 'follow the project closely' and the new document to be drawn up in one-year's time on sustainable development is discussed. Two roads are now open to the CTMB. A first option consists of returning to norms and rules, the harmonisation of existing planning instruments in the three borderlands with their different institutional frameworks. The second alternative is to assume a complete and innovative task for the EMB: to

³⁷¹ Some examples are: an editorial collaboration between the OASIS magazine, a naturalistic review of the Italian local editor MUSUMECL. The project is shown in such circumstance as an actual reality in progress between Italy, France and Switzerland for the exploitation and protection of the territory. In September 1997 a congress in Finhaut on the occasion of a wide meeting of Euromontana also sees a special task for the EMB project. Euromontana is an association, which groups regional and national representatives and agencies of the mountain populations. 35 organisations adhered and came from central and Eastern Europe such as Albania, Macedonia, the Czech Republic and Poland. Switzerland is also part of Euromontana through an intermediary agency, the SAB (Groupment Suisse pour le Region du Montagne). The focus of the Euromontana organisation is to think up strategies to maintain the economic activities in the mountain regions in a wide perspective of sustainable development, to reinforce exchanges between them elaborating an international mountain policy.

³⁷² To represent the Italian Environment Minister there is Giuseppe Cammareri, general director of the Services for Nature Conservation during the activity of Edo Ronchi as Environment Minister, Cammareri emphasized the role of education and communication as part of the policy for the protected areas.

³⁷³ Stefania Muti in an interview issued for ALP no.160 in 1998

³⁷⁴ In February 1998

experiment the possibility of becoming a board of coordination between different ambitions in management. In this second suggestion the risk is moving in-between ambiguous spheres. However, the second preference looks like the more realistic for the CTMB: in such way the EMB can remain a charge apart and parallel as regards other existing instruments. In other words, the second option consent to the EMB to cover a role of not-yet existing in cross-border coordination focused on the promotion of socialising actions across the MB border. EMB can thus become a board, which does not directly interfere with the regalement in land-use, always claimed in competences within nation-state borders. The picture of the EMB project is a frame of 'bottom-up' processes. From the local communities' aspirations, EMB can report the MB as a 'Border State' where territories across the nation-state can find common identities and heritages. Despite the fact that these 'positions' almost converge in agreements within the CTMB arena, a new central government assessment breaks these images. The CTMB arena and their local consensus are menaced by new environmental attacks. The new tourist centre on the Swiss-French border, *Tete de Balme* project is shattered during summer 1998. The Swiss Environment Minister Ruth Dreifuss decides to sustain the petitions of the ecological organisations against the felling of the forest at the *Tete de Balme*. This would let the new infrastructure be built. The realisation of the new ski domains is thus failed. While the presidents³⁷⁵ of the municipalities of Finhaut and Trient defend the project against this decision, Dreifuss retorts defending the environment issue against the new speculative constructions. He reminds even that the EMB project promotes at local level actions to favour soft tourism. However, the EMB has shown³⁷⁶ this project in the framework of its actions.

³⁷⁵ Finhaut's president is Maxime Gay-des-Combes and his counterpart in Trient is Victor Gay-Crosier. Dreifuss replies to them: the stake is the principle according to the tourist development and has to be adapted to the condition of the natural landscape and not the contrary. Moreover, the data proves that the Valais State and in particular the municipalities of Trient and Finhaut have a very stable and balanced financial situation. The dossier presented is, moreover, not complete because there is not enough information regarding the forest to destroy to put into practice restaurants, hotels, and access to the new installations. In this area, moreover, there are already existing actions for soft tourism. Just beyond the local the project does not seem sustainable. For Richard Petthey, of the Swiss Foundation for the protection and management of the territory (FSPAP), the new *Tete de Balme* project might create new employment at the beginning and in the short-term, but in the long-term a well preserved landscape is to be considered the main resource for the two tourist resorts. (Source: LE TEMPS, 2 May 1998: La Colere de la Valee du Trient veut trouver un echo a Berne).

³⁷⁶ The study is published in June 1998 in a conference tournante in Aosta, Martigny, and Chamonix . (DAUPHINE LIBERE, 21 May 1998: Polleurs, payeurs et petites fleurs, ANSA, 16 June 1998: Ambiente: Aria poco inquinata nella zona del Monte Bianco, NOUVELLISTE, 17 June 1998: L'air sous haute surveillance , TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 17 June 1998: L'Espace Mont-Blanc reste vigilant sur la qualite' de son air).

The CTMB reacts to this in different ways within itself. This project of Tete de Balme had been seen by the CTMB actors in its meaning of cross-border cooperation as domain of practices. As such the main character of experimentation had just shifted in a second instance the contents in environmental modification. However, polemics also suggest the tendency of the CTMB to focus on the local accountability rather than on the protection of the MB landscape. The CTMB is a cross-border arena, which reports the environment as first theme. The presentation of a specific task for the EMB project in the study of the quality of the air³⁷⁷ in relation to transportation arrives promptly in this regard. The CTMB aims with this specific mission at a common scientific platform as a scientific basis for policy actions. A group of experts³⁷⁸ for the first time has been engaged by a cross-border coordination with this focus³⁷⁹ in a network between Savoie, Haute Savoie, Valais and Valle d'Aosta. The results are referred during the period June 1997³⁸⁰-April 1998. This research makes use of a network of control which allows one to lead the research in several zones³⁸¹ within EMB. The results of the inquiry are published in a report diffused among administrations and associations. A new 'conférence tournante' in Aosta, Martigny and Chamonix reports once again some results accomplished by the CTMB vice-presidents. The message arrives clearly to everybody: the air quality problem in EMB is linked to international traffic transportation (every 40 seconds a lorry enters or exits the TMB)³⁸². The nitrogen dioxide levels are similar to cities, exceeding the limits established by the EU for the protection of vegetation and even present at altitude. The CTMB shows its position: a drastic reduction of the lorries is the only solution. The passages through the

³⁷⁷ LA STAMPA, 18 June 1998; INFORMAZIONE AMBIENTE at the end of June 1998 and the ANSA news of 16 June 1988.

³⁷⁸ The survey started in 1995 by the CTMB which gave the work to an international group of experts to realise a complete study of transport for the EMB area. This to get a basic study then to propose possible actions.

³⁷⁹ To realise the survey a network of control stations was engaged throughout the territory with 8 points of measuring to cover three kinds of zones: 1) rural and mountain (Les Giettes, La Thuile); 2) in proximity of main road traffic (Martigny, Courmayeur, Les Houches); 3) urban centres (Sion, Aosta, Chamonix).

³⁸⁰ Starting from 1997 the measures were carried out for a year in series of 6 or 7 days consecutively. The survey produced the outcome that pollution is mainly concentrated in proximity of the main road traffic (LE MESSAGER, 25 June 1998: Vigilance pour nous poumons, NRAVA, June 1998: L'Aria intorno al Monte Bianco: Aosta-Martigny-Chamonix, MONTAGNE EXPANSION, 9 July 1998: Pollution: Maurienne et Mont-Blanc en alerte).

³⁸¹ In Valais Canton a network for air control had already existed for about 10 years with 9 fixed stations and 2 mobile laboratories. The Valle d'Aosta's air control laboratory had existed since the 1990s and in 1998 had a mobile laboratory and 13 fixed stations managed until 1997 by the ARPA Environmental Regional Agency. In France just in 1997 a centre was built for air control through a joint initiative between the Savoie and Haute Savoie Departments named 'L'air des deux Savoie'.

³⁸² NOUVELLISTE, 17 June 1998: L'air sous haute surveillance, TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 17 June 1998: L'Espace Mont-Blanc reste vigilant sur la qualite' de son air

tunnel have to be reduced through policies, which plan the combination of road and railways. The promotion of public transportation for tourist movements inside the EMB has also to be the most urgent to endorse. The technical-scientific staffs propose a permanent control of the air quality in this area.

In the meanwhile, new initiatives are contextually advanced by the CTMB concerning soft tourism and the regeneration of the cross-border paths in the EMB³⁸³ 'space'. New demonstrations of MW³⁸⁴ and eco-climbing manifestations reaffirm once again the urgency of 'true' policies based on regulatory settings as the institution of the MB Park. The central governments are also once again called into the fray. Quarrels between the CTMB and the environmental organisations result as in the previous seven years, through the newspapers. MW attacks³⁸⁵:

'The CTMB has lost its fundamental reasons which justify its activity. Acting through a useless 'small step' policy, it responds to a pure façade. The CTMB results as the fruit of locality and ambiguous logic. There is no perimeter for this Espace'. (LA STAMPA, August 1998)

The CTMB does not break down its defences and implement constantly its discourses with new ideas.

'The CTMB was born with other focuses compared to MW. Our focus was not in the past and it is not now the creation of a park. EMB is the creation of a space. Our local is composed of areas where actions for a (suitable) development are required. Of course other areas (Chamonix and Courmayeur) need regulations but not in fragmentary forms. The CTMB has chosen the policy of 'small steps' because the cross-border territory embodies different realities with very different laws and institutions which need though to be in a unique framework'. (ALP, August 1998)

History repeats itself, while other motions are in progress between the Italian Environment Minister, Edo Ronchi and the local Italian instances involved in the CTMB. The Italian minister requires the CTMB to verify institutionally if the Mont-Blanc can

³⁸³ In June 1998 the first didactic path, created to extend the concept of soft tourism, is presented and the municipality of Finhaut has obtained the first of these projects. On the path, some info-panels have been installed through collaboration with a geography scholar of the University of Lausanne. (LE NOUVELLISTE, 22 June 1998: Sentier didactique cree)

³⁸⁴ In July 1998 a new demonstration of Mountain Wilderness involved Swiss, French and Italian parliamentarians to sustain the park policy actuation for the MB area, promote an eco-climbing named 'Mont-Blanc 2000'. MW proposed an agenda: to institutionalise a universally recognised, international, protected space, to insert it in the UNESCO World Heritage list, not to allow the opening of other ski-domains, the Heli-skiing, to dismantle the Midi's cableway (but the Italian Environment Minister, despite the stretch being on French territory, informs that it is of historical value). (LA STAMPA, 31 July 1998: Dovete salvare il Monte Bianco; ANSA, 8 August 1998: Ambiente: Ecoscalata del Bianco di parlamentari europei; LA STAMPA, 9 August 1998: Espace Mont-Blanc da rifare; LA REPUBBLICA, 9 August 1998: Onorevoli in missione sul tetto d'Europa; ALP, August 1998: Monte Bianco: il progetto infinito)

³⁸⁵ LA STAMPA, 9 August 1998: Espace Mont-Blanc da rifare

become an international heritage. A cycle of conferences to debate the Italian park policies³⁸⁶ in general are also organised in Valle d'Aosta. Local and central assessments, tourism development and protected areas are problems discussed in such meetings in the shadow of the MB Mountain. Ronchi states on such occasions that the park policy has a central national interest as sphere of accountability.

'The parks are national assets and they need to be maintained under the State's control because they are a great resource for the Italian economy but that has to be made in the interests of local communities' (ANSA, August 1998)

In August 1998 a series of reviews dedicated to the mountaineers³⁸⁷ are published on the new polemics about the relations between the EMB project and MB protection. Questions are once again posed³⁸⁸ to the CTMB³⁸⁹ arenas.

'What has this organism produced until now as positive?' (Pinelli, Mountain Wilderness interview August 1998)

'Certainly an action to awaken the local inhabitants about the need and the idea of protection' [but] 'with the risk that the EMB project and its development work just as tourist promotion'. (Thommaset, consultant for Regione Valle d'Aosta, interview August 1998)

Most popular and common comments at the end of the second phase are the background noise for the EMB project. There is the general awareness that the EMB project exists and works: there is a symbol for the EMB, the common labels are visible along the cross-border paths, and new info-points for the visitors are placed in strategical positions. Lots of initiatives are on the agenda of the CTMB and in local regional and municipal institutions involved. However, there is also the everyday alertness that the unique project able to 'fly high' as EMB aspires to become is a still remote hypothesis. Governmental ministerial participation has also been limited in these last years leaving open the EMB stakes. The political heart is under discussion on the slopes of the MB Mountain.

³⁸⁶ In August 1988 a national conference is organised in Cogne in the Valle d'Aosta Region to speak about the local-central symmetries in the park policy of Italian actuation. The Italian Minister, Edo Rochi has involved the tourist sector in particular and the Councillor responsible for Tourism of the Region ANSA, 8 August 1998: Parchi: Ronchi, rispettate gli interessi delle popolazioni locali.

³⁸⁷ ALP N. 160/August 1998 titled an article dedicated to the Mont-Blanc 'il progetto infinito' (the never-ending project); while the RIVISTA DELLA MONTAGNA publishes in the meanwhile the dossier 'Mont-Blanc: pour le Parc'.

³⁸⁸ Alberto Pinelli, Mountain Wilderness president (interview August 1998)

³⁸⁹ Federica Thommaset, consultant for Regione Valle d'Aosta (interview August 1998)

CTMB is criticised by MW as being overly 'local' in its agenda - because tri-national – largely shaped by neo-liberal market-driven interests. Now, moving toward more State-led involvement, positions itself as representing the 'general will'. These positionings go to the heart of the politics in which actors compete to define the true meaning of the 'public' intended as 'public interest', 'social project' and 'public sphere' in a trans-national and European context. The stake at issue is therefore open to the form of governance, which at the Border State of the MB is configuring in the play of the interaction between the 'public' involved. Europe provides in part a framework for the CTMB initiatives which increasingly and even through the 'little steps' move 'beyond' nation-state territoriality. The tensions between CTMB and MW would seem to indicate this is by no means an uncontested process leading to 'perpetual peace'. However, on the contrary a project driven with conflicts and tensions over the very terms (and scales) of properly 'political' participation. The nuances of these tensions proceed within the EMB.

4.2.4 The Third Phase (1998-2000): has the EMB its own 'Sense-Making'?

In October 1998 the vice-president of the CTMB Italian side, Elio Riccarand of the green party is replaced by a member of the Valle d'Aosta Regional Council, Alberto Cerise of the Union Valdostain party. This last is the independent popular party of Valle d'Aosta³⁹⁰. For the CTMB, composed at that time of the three vice-presidents designated by the regional and local authorities³⁹¹ and three local administrative coordinators, a new more pragmatic phase seems to start. Three subprojects appear to accomplish in proceeding with the EMB agenda: 1) the promotion of the paths; 2) coordinated control of the air quality in EMB; 3) the creation of an informative system with environmental data and common cross-border cartography³⁹². All the same, such topics appear in a different light as regards the 'small steps' just seen in the previous phases. The main suggestion, which leads my interpretation of this third phase, is the CTMB tension towards the constitution of its own general agenda.

³⁹⁰ The Valle d'Aosta has parties independent from the Italian central government. The Union Valdostain is equivalent to a central-left party but with a strong value of autonomous and independent identity of the Aosta Valley.

³⁹¹ Michel Charlet and René Schwery go on to become the vice-presidents respectively for the French and Swiss parts of the CTMB.

³⁹² The project foresees an investment of 1 billion 300 million liras which could be financed by INTERREG II (RAVAUS, 2 October 1998: La Commission Permanente organo esecutivo della Conferenza Transfrontaliera del Monte Bianco; ANSA, 21 October 1998: Ambiente: Uno statuto per la Conferenza Transfrontaliera di Espace Mont-Blanc; LA STAMPA, 26 October 1998: Bianco, Aria sotto esame)

From the discourses of first intentions expressed by various parts of the CTMB arena, all issues and themes labelled in a EMB cross-border policy should be framed within a unique juridical statute. This chart is the CTMB aim to re-design the EMB as a stable and recognised structure. In other words, this act would work according to the CTMB intention as an institutional legitimacy of the EMB actions. A recognising in terms of institutional 'dignity' is sustained as an indispensable evolution for a board which flows in-between three nations and various kinds of local settings. The new Italian vice-president particularly asserts this motion.

'A juridical statute is for us the only way for a constitutional act. It means to have a recognising, which can be received by the French, Swiss and Italian governments. This is not an easy issue to achieve. The risks of failure are high and include the stake of disturbing the autonomy of the Mont-Blanc regions existing at the moment. However the institutional features of the CTMB have to be established as a political and social pre-condition to work seriously on the sustainable development of these areas'. (Source: ANSA, October 1998)

The intention is to build a general sense for the EMB policy. Without doubt EMB shifts out from the 'park' procedure. Espace Mont-Blanc affirms itself as an event to step further into the Europeanisation process; it follows a strategy that launches the border areas into new trans-national scenery. The border change is a symbol of time for other possible geographical re-composition. United entities fragmented by the construction of modern states³⁹³ are remembered at the MB border. EMB begs mention in the name of Europe. The environment in the framework of peaceful grounds of cooperation and construction across the nation-state borders have thus to become new terms of reference for the EMB proceeding. EMB finds in this way the space for re-composing territorial identities through other behaviours so far from the nationalistic ones. With this new agenda of intentions the CTMB opens new games in the governance at the border. Hence, the CTMB aims at new participation at international meetings, new openings towards the NGO ideas active both in environmental protection and in socio-economical domains. A more decisive suggestion is the CTMB participation in a meeting organised by the International Council

³⁹³ As well known, the reference is to the Vienna Congress in 1814-1815, which was the first summit in European history to give great relevance to the nation-state borders in the maintenance of peace re-structuring Europe after the Napoleonic wars.

of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS),³⁹⁴ an organisation promoted by UNESCO. CTMB here launches the EMB within an explicit discussion its own 'sense-making'³⁹⁵.

'The actual realisation of the EMB project has its 'raison d'être' just if there is interest from an international organisation. MB is a world heritage not just for the beauty of the landscapes but for its human and traditional values' (Source: Ansa, March 1999)

In this circumstance³⁹⁶, the discussion is not just the missed themes of the EMB failing to tackle the environmental organisations' requirements. A different argument is pointed to defend the Mont-Blanc in a framework of cross-border actions. The realisation of a new railway connection between France and Italy as alternative to the heavy traffic through the Mont-Blanc tunnel is also a theme recommended in such terms. The general claim in common to NGOs and CTMB is that every project launched in a frame of sustainable development is completely subordinate to the efficacy of policies concerning traffic regulation through the Mont-Blanc tunnel. While new demonstrations move by the WWF accuse the Swiss part of the CTMB³⁹⁷ of obstruction of the Alpine Convention, the French side of the CTMB joins a demonstration of the Chamonix inhabitants against the lorries which cross the TMB³⁹⁸, almost announcing its tragedy. On 24 March 1999 a lorry coming from Brussels catches fire inside the TMB setting on fire two other lorries on the French side of the tunnel and a line of lorries on the Italian one. The tragedy is not perceived immediately in its real dimensions³⁹⁹. The cost of the accident starts to be defined with the

³⁹⁴ The ICONOS meeting is in March 1999.

³⁹⁵ Since 1989 the CTMB had been speaking about inserting the 'heart' of Mont-Blanc in the list of the UNESCO heritage. The hypothetical area is about 78,000 hectares and characterised by the principal pinnacles of the Massif such as the Aiguille Vert, Aiguille de Bionassay, Dente del Gigante, the glaciers such as the Mer de Glace, Ghiacciaio del Brenva, Miage and Nossion, and the Veny and Ferret Valleys, la Vallée du Chamonix, la Vallée du Trient and la Valle di Chapieux.

³⁹⁶ The presentation is led by the new CTMB vice-president of the Italian side Alberto Cerise (ANSA, 17 Marzo 1999. Ambiente: Cerise, Internazionalizzare il Monte Bianco.)

³⁹⁷ The Swiss WWF's dossiers on the Alpine Convention and EMB were published at the end of 1988. The problem linked to the Alpine Convention for the WWF is reflected in practice in the EMB project. The Valais government in this sphere is moved by the head of the service for territorial management and by the group of mountain regions. The CIAPMB (Comité International des Associations de Protection du Mont-Blanc) and the other environmental organisations are not taken into consideration just as the economic aspect. (WWF DOSSIER, December 1998: Convention Alpine et Espace Mont-Blanc. Le Reel Dialogue se meurt)

³⁹⁸ 22 November 1998 is the French day without cars, the local inhabitants of Chamonix and the mayor and vice-president of the CTMB, Michel Charlet block the lorry traffic through the TMB. In that same November common actions of protest take place in Chamonix, Brenner and Gothard.

³⁹⁹ The first news in the newspapers about the accident speaks about 4 victims, 27 injured and 1 missing person. (Corriere della Sera del 25 March 1999: 'Monte Bianco, inferno nel Tunnel: 4 morti'). But as the first witnesses state also in the regional offices of Valle d'Aosta and Savoie the news of the accident in the TMB came with not clear details. And just an interruption of some hours is foreseen for the TMB traffic. 'The entity of the event was at first certainly underestimated and just during the course of the day assumed its real dimension showing all the gravity of the situation especially by the

arrival of the first assistance. However, no details are given publicly. Some hours later, people start to presume that the TMB will be closed for some hours, then some days. Several months are instead necessary to identify clearly the causes⁴⁰⁰ of the accident and the entity of the damage: 39 victims and serious structural damage in the tunnel. Like an 'oil patch' this event immediately involves a debate at the regional, national and European level about both the responsibilities and the future re-opening of the TMB. The TMB accident also has a great mobilisation effect both for the inhabitants and the NGOs. They no longer require the protection of the Mont-Blanc Mountain but a new policy for international transport in the Mont-Blanc valleys. The TMB will be closed for three years. A new CTMB⁴⁰¹ meeting⁴⁰² is organised some days after the TMB accident. On the agenda the new urgency to diffuse common discourses between the CTMB actors with regard to the tunnel accident event. However, in the domain of the EMB project, and during the CTMB activity the problem of international traffic has never been ignored. An example has been the study on the air quality in the MB zones, which suggested also a policy of inter-change between road-and-railways to offset the traffic across this Alpine neighbourhood. Receiving the mandate from the Environment Ministers for the scheme for sustainable development work, even the EMB is actually inserted in the dynamics of decision-making. The urgency about *how* to re-open the TMB gives an additional pressing to the CTMB arena to actually enter as part of this process. Indeed the CTMB for the first time officially enlarges its board to the environmental organisations and to other local social-economic agencies operating within the EMB domain. There is the general feeling that a common 'rope' has to be built between all the 'actors' around the Mountain. The CTMB, the NGOs and the agencies at the MB border have in common a discursive power; but no regulation settings or law for 'themselves'. The interaction between these actors is moving without a given 'script' of the dynamics, which they should correspond. Contrasts and oppositions even 'inside' the common stage of the CTMB occur once again.

continuous increasing of the victims that just after some days appeared definitive: 39 dead caused by an unrestrainable blaze' (ARPA, Relazione sugli impatti ambientali del traffico transfrontaliero attraverso il Traforo available online <http://www.arpa.vda.it/>).

⁴⁰⁰ The accident of the TMB which happened on 22nd March 1999, as the legal reports ascertained, was caused by a fire in the engine of a refrigerated trailer provoked by the leak of petrol and overheating of the lorry's engine. The first lorry to catch fire was transporting about 9 tonnes of margarine which was melted and burned like fuel oil.

⁴⁰¹ I remind you that the current vice-presidents are: Alberto Cerise for the Italian side (Regione Valle d'Aosta), Michel Charlet for the French one (Syndacat Intercommunal du pays du Mont-Blanc) and René Schwery for the Swiss side (Valais Canton).

⁴⁰² The meeting took place in Leyton in Switzerland on 30th March 1999.

The French part of the CTMB shows a concrete opposition against the return of lorries through the TMB. This does not find the same line with the Swiss part of the same arena. Indeed the Swiss propose the way out saying that 'Switzerland shows the way: the railway is the solution'. The Italian side intercedes articulating that 'drastic solutions just create other difficulties. It is necessary to consider the alternatives before taking a serious position'. Although with a certain internal divergence, the CTMB shows a common initial position to the central governments: to re-think a new transport policy system across the Alps also providing a new railway alternative. In so doing the CTMB is disregarding the NGOs' proposals to stop the lorry traffic through the TMB forever.

The day after the TMB accident, national central governments promise a 'new policy for transport in the Alpine arc'. Some months later, the silence procures a series of protests: the reinforcement of the NGOs⁴⁰³ in manifestations against the return of lorries and the birth of other organisations⁴⁰⁴ with the same aim. New meetings follow one another inside and around the CTMB⁴⁰⁵ 'positions'; the central topic is its own common action as regards the tunnel re-opening. The CTMB also publishes a document to submit to the central governments of the three states through the press organisms. In this document the CTMB solicits to take on political engagements from part of the national governments in favour of the railway traffic⁴⁰⁶. The positions of the three vice-presidents are rather different from each other but, however, they find an agreement of some assumptions: Michel Charlet (F) is oriented to promote a complete closure of the TMB to lorry traffic, Alberto Cerise (I) and Rene' Schwery (CH) opt instead for its strict regulation of their passages. The elimination of the traffic completely through the TMB is almost an impossible requirement because 'it can just lead to making heavier other traffic axes in the Alpine arc'.

⁴⁰³ The ARSMB organisation launches a petition against the return of the lorries in the TMB. The ARSMB links its movement to those of Maurienne place, where, after the accident of the TMB, about 7,000 lorries/day pass through.

⁴⁰⁴ In summer 1999 in Valle d'Aosta the 'Stop ai TIR' association is born, which in some months also through the help of the Verdi and Rifondazione-Comunista parties, COOP, Lo Pan Ner, Legambiente, manages to pick up around 20,000 signatures against the return of the lorries.

⁴⁰⁵ In June 1999 in a meeting in Valloncine, France, a new CTMB meeting seems to take a true 'position' regarding the TMB re-opening.

⁴⁰⁶ Official press communications issued by the CTMB arena on 8th June 1999 RAVAUS, 7 June 1999: Comunicato Stampa della riunione della CTMB a Vallorcine (FR); RAVAUS, 8 June 1999: 'Comunique' de la CTMB de la reunion du Vallocine; LA VALEE, 11 June 1999: Espace Mont-Blanc mobilita i governi: le merci su rotaia ma i TIR resteranno; LA VALLEE, 19 June 1999: Risoluzione inviata ai ministri)



Figure 4.10. – The provocative image of a ‘productive’ Europe which crosses the TMB diffused during the contestations of the post TMB accident about the interests around transportation across the Mont-Blanc areas.

CTMB openly asks the central governments⁴⁰⁷ to track two lines of action to favour the local instance at the MB border: to provide an official engagement for a policy which can combine road-and-railway traffic along the North/South axis; the updating of studies for Alpine tunnels according to a ‘regional’ scale.

⁴⁰⁷ For example the articles appeared in Vallee Notizie of 11th and 19th June 1999.

In the clamour for the TMB, CTMB put forward the EMB project. The inauguration of a naturalist oasis⁴⁰⁸, the presentation of some results by the creation of a cross-border geographic information system which contains numerous data about the EMB territory⁴⁰⁹, a campaign to promote tourist spots respecting nature. Policies to reduce private transport⁴¹⁰ are launched during new meetings to favour the EMB ideas⁴¹¹. Other agreements between private and semi-public companies guide new studies about the air quality in the domain of the EMB. Even editorial collaborations⁴¹² are for the CTMB the opportunity to reiterate the principles and the actions within the Espace Mont-Blanc. In depth studies are also advanced on the scheme for sustainable development adopting European directives⁴¹³. New⁴¹⁴ slogans⁴¹⁵ are also invented to sustain it.

⁴⁰⁸ In July 1999 the naturalistic oasis of the Pavillon of the Mont Frety is inaugurated, which is extended for about 500 hectares on the South side of MB mountain. 'This area shows a typical mountain landscape at 2,000-3,000 meters of altitude and it is also the most visible one of the EMB area representing one of the most important and qualified tourist offers in the area which includes Valle d'Aosta, Haute Savoie and Valais according to a cultural tourism not just aimed at commercial results as the EMB project promotes. In the oasis 3 paths have been arranged along which the Alpine Guides of Courmayeur and the naturalistic guides are engaged to lead the visitors through'. (Source: LA STAMPA, 1st July 1999).

⁴⁰⁹ In July 1999 the geographical informative system of the EMB is presented realised with the focus to trace, conserve and to diffuse between institutions and agencies operating within the EMB data concerning a territory of about 3,500 square kilometres. This project is also financed by INTERREG IIA within the EMB framework. The technical realisation is taken care of by three private companies which work on the different sides of the border between Switzerland, France and Italy. DATA-VISION (Aosta); RGD 74 (Annecy); GESTEL-SITTEL (Sion). The system works on three levels 1) harmonisation of the information already existing such as technical cartography, 2) new geographical information realised by the EMB workgroups referring to digital cartography, 3) a centre for territorial information which uses detailed data like that about natural risks, hydro systems, road communications, urban centres, air quality. (LA STAMPA, 15 July 1999)

⁴¹⁰ A series of interviews was actuated before starting an initiative focused on limiting the traffic in Val Veny and Ferret, the most popular tourist resorts. 90% of the tourists expressed a favourable opinion to have regulation of private traffic along the valleys. This project is posited within the EMB's initiatives towards sustainable development. The campaign is named 'Meno auto: precedenza alla natura' (Fewer cars: precedence to nature) and is activated by the CTMB setting up a partnership between the Courmayeur municipality, APT (local transport agency), the Assessorato Regionale al Territorio, Ambiente ed Opere Pubbliche della Regione Valle d'Aosta. This initiative immediately attracted the interest of the ICONOS organisation. Panels with variable messages inform about the car spaces available and collaboration is also foreseen with the Forest Agents.

⁴¹¹ For example on occasion of the 'Salone del libro' (book show) in Passy in August 1999 a specific conference is organised for a discussion about EMB titled: 'Quel Espace pour l'Espace Mont-Blanc?' The conference had the focus of spreading the realisations put forward by the EMB project and to discuss its future. At this conference the vice-presidents of the CTMB arena and the coordinators, environmental-ecological and socio-economic organisation representatives and the editorial secretariat of ALP Magazine all participate.

⁴¹² For example during winter 1999-2000 an editorial collaboration is born between the CTMB and a very well-produced local magazine with images and photos: MONT-BLANC & DINTORNI.

⁴¹³ In the European framework the text that the CTMB thinks to take as reference is Decision no. 2179 adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council on 24th September 1998 relative to the re-examination of the community programme for actions oriented to the Environment and to Sustainable Development. Another reference document is the Alpine Convention.

⁴¹⁴ Mont-Blanc & Dintorni, Anno 8/N.16 winter 1999/2000

⁴¹⁵ Interview issued by the work group on 'milieux sensibles' and zoning of EMB in particular from a speech by Federica Thommaset.

'A great collective programme where the CTMB plays a role of co-ordination between actors potentially attracted to a 'démarche transfrontalière participative'. 'The scheme will propose a new centrality of the territory. Rather than administrative and legislative borders, the co-presence of plural subjects able to agree are the main returns for instruments, means and applications based on measures of evaluation and mutual options. The 'sustainable development' scheme will be for the CTMB the right occasion to consolidate its role of contract between various alternatives. CTMB's aim is to bargain and encourage the flexibility in different local situations. Territorial dynamics will be involved'. (Source: Mont-Blanc & Dintorni, Winter 1999/2000).

The scheme aims to express visions and scenarios in conditions of experimentation able to reinforce the actions of local communities and to promote directly behaviour aimed at sustainable development. An EMB map is also part of the CTMB agenda on 'sustainable development'. However, it will be not aimed at drawing 'new borders'. Any re-bordering will present the clear definition of other territories bounds. The aim to have a scheme for the EMB in a common, further progressed framework can perhaps also be developed by other competencies in local planning instruments. In the meanwhile, new demonstrations against the return of the lorries across the valleys⁴¹⁶ are organised. The Regione Valle d'Aosta also adopts its planning instrument for the environment appointed as the PTCP⁴¹⁷. Enclosed in this is a liberal space for the 'EMB' project. The new period of the INTERREG III programme envisages new applications for the participation of the CTMB⁴¹⁸. Innovative initiatives to promote soft tourism relative to the management of cross-border paths⁴¹⁹ are also ongoing at the time of more evident contrasts for the TMB re-opening. The NGOs shoot other provocative questions about: 'what is the CTMB doing to break the aggressions to the Mountain?'⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ In autumn 1999 the mayors of Chamonix, French, Swiss and Italian associations raise a symbolic wall against the return of the lorries. The ARSMB association picks up about 100,000 signatures for the closure of the TMB to lorry passages.

⁴¹⁷ For the Regione Valle d'Aosta it is a decisional year on the side of environmental planning. The Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Paesistico is finally completed after a long period started in 1993 with the Regional Law No. 1/1993. The PTCP regards both the urban and territorial aspects linked both to development and protection. Its work started already in 1987 and in 1991 was to compile a report about the main strategic lines to follow. A proposal was sent out to the municipalities and agencies in 1992 and was completed in 1994-1995. The PTCP project was adopted in 1996.

⁴¹⁸ In March 2000 the Regione Valle d'Aosta proposes a day of study on the INTERREG III programme 2000-2006 as an instrument which can offer new opportunities and strategies.

⁴¹⁹ A new programme of excursions is foreseen in June-July 2000 according to soft tourism promotion. The programme is named: 'Passion Montagne' with the agreement of naturalistic guides.

⁴²⁰ In July 2000 a new campaign to ask for MB's protection is organised by MW and other environmental and mountaineer organisations. The protests also denounce the works in progress promoted by the CTMB, for them again for potential mass tourism. For example, the Diamant project between Mégève and St. Gervais Les Contamines, where new ski-domains are foreseen; Colle du Balme and the cableway Colonne-Chécrouit (as regards this project in a specific meeting the Italian side of the CTMB expressed the opinion that such a project has to respond to the requirement of the Italian, French and Swiss Environment Ministers which indeed have the competence for the great projects activated inside the EMB), the Monteners sur la Mer de Glace. For the NGOs such projects had already been pending for years in some administrations' drawers waiting for the right occasion. If the EMB is this, the CIAPMB sustains, any protection is an

In all this vertigo of policies and new necessities, the absolute silence from central government levels leaves a certain impression. At the end of the year 2000 some voices scream that EMB is a failed project caused from instability⁴²¹.

'The Euroregion of MB should be a natural evolution for the EMB project. However, especially on the Italian side there is no interest to give voice to the draft of the EMB statute. The Italian government has not signed the mandate for the CTMB to work on the Scheme for Sustainable Development. This has further compelled the rest of the CTMB to freeze all our issues'. (Source: *Il Corsivo*, 25 September 2000)

'The scheme⁴²² was also the earliest document to be composed for enlisting the MB among the other UNESCO world heritage⁴²³. Some people also observe that to obstruct the work of the CTMB arena in the EMB process has led to understand the cross-border intentions under the shadows of inertia. A planned drawing of will and reasons outside the CTMB has worked perhaps to cause this⁴²⁴. However, the CTMB lack of an official 'institutional dignity'; any real jurisdictional statute has been yet established and confirmed

action for Mont-Blanc and its areas. For MW the CTMB represents a dangerous local will. The philosophy promoted by such demonstrations led by MW had a great impact on public opinion because some popular person was always involved in these demonstrations. (*INFORMAZIONE*, July 2000: Mont Blanc 2000: per la protezione internazionale del Monte Bianco)

⁴²¹ The role of the Italian Environment Minister has been progressively reduced to that of 'observer' in the EMB project, this is the main accusation started by the Italian side of the CTMB. This deed, according to them, has highlighted the asymmetries between the three local parts involved and especially with regard to the Valais Canton and the French Syndicat Intercommunale and the Italian side. Indeed the Italian side has not benefited from any state financing and the Regione Valle d'Aosta has financed all the initiatives concerning EMB. In 1988 the French part solicited a meeting with the three ministers to get a mandate for the drafting of the EMB's Sustainable Development Scheme. The Italian Environment Ministry through a notice drawn up by its general director in 1989 expressed positive opinion on the mandate for the setting up of a pilot committee manifesting the possibility of financing the Scheme. But in 2000 the ministerial director interrupted his participation at the preparatory meetings, several attempts were made from that moment to have him return. (*LE DAUPHINE LIBERE*, 30 September 2000: Espace Mont-Blanc: la Vallée d'Aoste traient les pieds, *LA STAMPA*, 1 October 2000: Espace Mont-Blanc "Italia assenteista")

⁴²² The EMB's Sustainable Development Scheme has the aim of being a common instrument to programme and to plan the activities on the EMB territory and it has to indicate the details of the common focuses to promote the protection of the environment. The scheme also has the focus to be a necessary preamble to enrolling the Mont-Blanc in the UNESCO list for World Heritage. The CTMB has set up a pilot committee with the Ministerial and the regional representatives' participation, starting to work on the modalities and the contents of the Scheme. The EMB's Sustainable Development Scheme is part of the candidate initiatives to present under the framework of the INTERREG programme which, however, as the Italian CTMB side points out, will benefit from the Regione Valle d'Aosta's support independently of the Italian Environment Minister's intentions.

⁴²³ Interview given by the CTMB's Italian vice-president Alberto Cerise for the newspaper *Le Dauphine Libere'* on 30 September 2000. This thesis is also sustained by the Euro-deputy Luciano Caveri who denounces in a letter to the Italian Environment Minister Bordon the silence both on the issue of the Scheme of sustainable development and on the issue of the juridical statute of the CTMB. (*LA STAMPA*, 1 October 2000, *Le Peuple Valdotaïn*, 5 October 2000)

⁴²⁴ As the CTMB's Italian side reports in such circumstances, the intention to institute the Parc of Mont-Blanc, rather than to give thrust to the EMB project, seems still in the intentions of the Italian Government. Actually, the MB park is still inserted in art.34 of the Italian law (N. 394/6 November 1991) that is in the *Legge Quadro sulle Aree Protette* where the MB is mentioned among the 'aree di reperimento' (retrieval areas) for national parks.

by the governmental levels to favour a line of continuity to the cross-border arena and to its participants.

'The inertia of the EMB with regard to its decision-making reinforces the thesis that CTMB is an institution that, between national and local government, cannot be an active part in a sphere of MB protection. In any way, this means that the only solution does not actually foresee any 'alternative' but just a direct return to the 'old' park policy'. (Source: LA STAMPA, October 2000)

Some suspect that the EMB path has been blocked by the misunderstandings of the environmental organisations. At the end of this phase, the CTMB arena decides even to exclude the NGOs from the discussions during the EMB meetings. This decision lets the NGOs cover only the role of 'observer' in the CTMB arena if the CTMB does not call them to have the chance to speak.

4.2.4 The Fourth Phase (2001-2004): EMB as Open Space Towards the Future

The phase starts with some good news for the CTMB. After some months of irritable accusations, the Italian Environment Minister finally signs the mandate to work on the sustainable development scheme at the Mont-Blanc border⁴²⁵. In recent times the lack of this official agreement has procured an uncertain moment on the operative of the CTMB arena and for the general proceeding of the EMB project. A new moment of peace seems finally reached also regarding the relationships between the CTMB and the environmental organisations⁴²⁶. They are again fully included in the EMB meetings. There is in the air the feeling that a new start has been restored for the CTMB arena. The media and the actions of communication⁴²⁷ 'solicit a sentiment in the local collectivities of a 'sense of belonging'⁴²⁸. Discourses are also ongoing in the CTMB arena in a renewed hope of perspectives for the

⁴²⁵ This news is announced in a meeting of the CTMB in Martigny in February 2001. It is also at this meeting that the works for the website creation are started. (Sources: TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 3 February 2001: De l'Utilite' de l'Espace, ANSA, 24 February 2001: Ambiente: Ministero firma lo Schema di Sviluppo Sostenibile del Monte Bianco).

⁴²⁶ This debate was opened starting from an interview given during 2001 in a press conference by the Swiss vice-president of the CTMB René Schwery who sustained that 'nous avons un reglement interne en vertu duquel ces ONG n'ont qu'un statut d'observateur' and this procures an intense exchange between the rights of the NGOs' participation during the CTMB's meeting (from an interview in February 2004 to the CIAPM president Barbara Ehringhaus and the Swiss René Schwery. At that time the issue was treated by LE DAUPHINE LIBERE, 26 October 2000: Conference Transfrontaliere. Le associations s'indignent).

⁴²⁷ RAVAUS, 22 May 2001: Espace Mont-Blanc 2001, l'annee de la communication

⁴²⁸ May 2001: CTMB at the Fondation Gianadda in Martigny, the CTMB is represented by Alberto Cerise of the Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta, Michel Charlet, mayor of Chamonix and president du Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc, René Schwery, Valais' Canton.

juridical statute, perhaps in a framework of the Mont-Blanc Euroregion⁴²⁹. Some measures are affianced with several projects launched under the umbrella of the EMB policy. Communicative means as the topo-guide creation is oriented to cluster the soft tourism initiatives accounted during the EMB years; the 50 cross-border excursions⁴³⁰ can be taken on the paths of this new initiative, for instance⁴³¹.



Figure 4.11. – The home page of the website of Espace Mont-Blanc published online in 2001

⁴²⁹ ANSA, 28 January 2001: Italia-Francia: l'Euroregione alpina vuole essere l'interlocutore; ANSA, 29 January 2001: Italia-Francia: consegnato a Chirac il documento per l'Euroregione

⁴³⁰ In May 2001 the guide titled '50 sentiers à theme' is presented in Martigny; this has the aim of encouraging soft tourism and the concept of sustainable development. 'This guide has the main focus to launch a communication policy destined to the inhabitants and tourists about a territory of great interest'. In June 2001 the recurrence of the first climbing of the MB mountain gives the occasion to the CTMB to present the guide as the fruit of a cross-border team's work. The guide was financed by the INTERREG II programme. For each path the guide proposes a complete description with the itinerary, maps and detailed information. The work was edited by two centres, a French one (Glenat in Grenoble) and an Italian one (Centro Documentazione Alpina in Torino). A cross-border group was engaged by the CTMB with photographers, writers and experts. The guide is immediately publicised in various reviews and newspapers on tourism and free time whether French, Swiss or Italian. In the itinerant press conference the CTMB speaks about the main role of this guide: the exploitation of Espace Mont-Blanc. 'An entity still in progress for what concerns its juridical and political structure but yet a territory to protect and to know towards a cross-border common patrimony which exceeds the political borders of these valleys' (Sources: LIVRES HEBDO, 1 June 2001: 50 Sentiers a themes dans l'Espace Mont-Blanc, NOUVELLISTE, 14 June 2001: Martigny, nouveaux sentiers pedestre, HEBDO DES SAVOIE, 15 June 2001: 50 Sentiers a themes dans l'Espace Mont-Blanc, ENVIRONNEMENT, 15 June 2001: Monte Bianco: 50 itinerari escursionistici nell'Espace Mont-Blanc, L'ESSENTIEL DE L'ECONOMIE TOURISTIQUE, July 2001: Un guide pour l'Espace Mont-Blanc).

⁴³¹ Source: LE COURRIER, 7 June 2001

Also the launch of the INTERNET website has the very aim to re-animate the the EMB project after ten years of activity.

We are the promoters of variable geometry, a concerted organisation and an alpine laboratory for the application of sustainable development. But we are also a structure without a juridical statute defined and without power to take decisions'. (Source: LE COURRIER, June 2001)

Discourses in terms of 'peace' around the construction of the EMB as common 'ground' of cooperation across the nation-state border are also at this time rich in contestations. This is both within and outside the CTMB arena. First of all the debate is very open on the TMB re-opening issues. Even if the re-opening of the tunnel itself is not apparently one of the issues accounted for in the EMB agenda. However, the issue of transport concerns the project of a sustainable future which instead fully concerns the EMB project. On one hand the TMB is the highlighter of the high cost of the development over the protection issues. On the other hand the TMB reopening reports the issue of sustainability in terms of the mutual adjusting between trans-national decisions and local instances. From this a process emerges, which is highly participative in the sense of social mobilisation. The TMB reopening suggests a different course in social space-making as the TMB and its valleys become. The diverse game of the interaction between instances of various nature; more or less local, more or less political is the stage of the TMB reopening. As such this decision-making path is without any doubt a system based on multi-level governance; it works beyond the motions just to favour the nation-state or market economies. The TMB reopening is a sign of a change of the regimes of governance at the nation-nation-state border. I am not speaking about just the result of this policy concerning the TMB reopening but about its path. Perhaps the same actors, which lead the nation-state or the market, have had their result with this opening. However, the TMB reopening was based on networks of power relations at the border. A new re-structuration of governance across the nation-state borders and beyond the nation-state borders report the decision making to the institutional force not just to a level of government or to a market sector. For this the *TMB reopening* and the *CTMB* are policies joined together in a mutual sharing in their existence. Their 'sens' is the implication of *cross-border governance* both devoted to the *institutional invention* or to the *territorial transformation* concerned at the MB border.

More than new actors are being formed⁴³² between the MB pays. Hundreds of people demonstrate in Paris against the return of the lorries along the valleys at one year's distance from the TMB tragedy. A common position between the CTMB⁴³³ and its actors is also difficult to maintain in the balance. Within the EMB policies, a new study for the control of air quality⁴³⁴ in the MB zones is established. A specific policy for the tourist traffic limitation within the more popular areas of the EMB is also settled⁴³⁵. The clamour of the MB inhabitants and the polemics diffused by the environmental organisations are more vivid in requiring a true position for the CTMB in the context of an even diffused governance. NGOs' accusations report new interests for the general attention to the work of the CTMB arena⁴³⁶.

'CTMB has not the political courage to apply the good intentions in an actual perimeter. The schemes for sustainable development and air quality studies are weak policies because they do not have an effective character. There are no perimeters where certain measures can actually be applied in practice. We are not speaking about borders, which can represent the will of the environmental organisations or mediate the will of the nation-state. We are speaking about the true representation of the inhabitants' interests'. (Montagne Magazine, July 2001)

⁴³² On the Valle d'Aosta side the opposition to the return of the lorries through the tunnel is led by the Aosta Social Forum organisation, Sinistra Alternativa party, the French Comité pour la Sauvegarde du Pays du Mont-Blanc which builds special coordination with the other associations. During the second anniversary of the TMB accident on 23rd March 2001 Chamonix's 'Compagnie du Guide' and hundreds of people demonstrate in Paris against the return of the lorries across MB's valleys. The petition reaches 150,000 signatures. In June 2001 a delegation of Swiss institutions, headed by the Geneva city (besides the 'owners' of the TMB) and the vice-president of the Swiss Parliament who has expressed in Chamonix support for closure of the TMB to lorries with another 120 national and international organisations. On such an occasion a manifesto of solidarity is also signed by 200,000 people.

⁴³³ A firm position is for instance expressed by the CTMB's French vice-president (and mayor of Chamonix) 'Malgré les sommes gigantesque investies pour le securite' il serait dangereux d'y remettre les camions car ce tunnel n'a pas ete concu pour cela'. In the meanwhile, the CTMB's Italian vice-president (and regional council member of Valle d'Aosta) says, 'bisogna concepire mezzi alternativi al traffico pesante e tener conto di certe realtà che non possono essere eliminate prima di proporre manovre politiche'.

⁴³⁴ A cross-border group composed of 20 technicians is engaged in the campaign for the measurement of air quality in the EMB region. To lead this work a special network has been composed between three organisms: 'l'air des deux Savoie' in France, il Resival (Reseau de Surveillance des Immissions) in Switzerland, l'Agenzia Regionale per la Protezione dell'Ambiente in Italy. The three organisms have pooled their resources such as fixed stations and mobile units and various technical equipment. The aim is to study in depth pollution in the EMB territory and the specific mechanism to which this area is subjected. Such a study will be available for the local collectivities and administrations in the three regions to give a scientific contribution for public decision making through the possibility of foreseeing different solutions by simulations. A specific campaign to inform the different institutions existing in the territory, the CTMB will be provided with a series of meetings and conferences starting from June 2001 and during February 2002 the final results will be published.

⁴³⁵ In July 2001 the initiative for traffic limitation in Valle Ferret and Veny is proposed by an agreement between the Italian part of the CTMB, Courmayeur municipality and the Agency for the Tourist Promotion (API). Tourists can reach the valleys using public transportation (buses).

⁴³⁶ Montagne Magazine, July 2001

At the time the NGOs take further their complaints about the CTMB inefficacy in the protection policy. The NGOs accuse the CTMB of a '*silence coupable*' 'paralysed by sovereignty games'⁴³⁷ which does not fully enter the debate on the TMB tunnel in a decisive way, maintaining its alternatives. The reaction of the CTMB arrives⁴³⁸.

'We have taken on several initiatives during these years but more than looking at the past, we have to look to the future. In particular for the transport issue we are attending to a general lack of lucidity in the actions of the French and Italian governments. With difficulties we believe that their proposals for the TMB reopening are in line with the EU White Paper on Transport until 2010. However, if the solutions are going to be found, the force is the solidarity between the States otherwise there are no perspectives'. EMB is still a weak institution that is at a crossing point: if it does not obtain delegates of its own competencies, we will have to recognise it as concluded. This doesn't mean we have accomplished our focus. In this latter case, EMB is however a precious baggage of experience'. (Source: Mont-Blanc & Dintorni winter 2001/2002)

During the summer 2001 the inhabitants of Chamonix, some Haute Savoie municipalities and Courmayeur promote a self-referendum against the return of the lorries across their territories⁴³⁹. Even always following its 'small steps' EMB still breathes. At the start of 2002 its study on air quality titled 'l'air Espace Mont-Blanc' is financed by the INTERREG II programme in the framework of the sustainable development scheme. However, elsewhere the 'hard' decisions are already taken.

⁴³⁷ Barbara Ehringhaus, the president and Jean-Pierre Courtin, the vice president, accuse the CTMB of being paralysed by sovereignty games in which there is a lack of juridical means of action, and therefore also the principles of the Alpine Convention cannot be applied. All the environmental and ecological associations denounce the CTMB of a 'silence coupable' (a guilty silence). For the NGOs grouped under the umbrella organisation Pro-Mont-Blanc, the problems in this area are all urgent and many-sided. The TMB's reopening to heavy traffic is the first because the return of the lorries and the international transportation is for them a true environmental catastrophe for a region so sensitive and a contrast with the sustainable development promoted in this area. The NGOs require the three countries to take the necessary measures so that the degradation is stopped. For promotion of such a position, Pro-Mont-Blanc has composed a document titled 'le versant noir du Mont-Blanc' (the black side of Mont-Blanc) where a series of issues both linked to the non-protection and the exploitation of this territory are presented. Such a document has the aim of re-launching the issue of Mont-Blanc's protection during '2002 year of the Mountains' where Pro-Mont-Blanc asks for UNESCO's collaboration to insert it in the list of world heritage.

⁴³⁸ Mont-Blanc & Dintorni anno 11, No. 20 winter 2001/2002. Article written by Alberto Cerise Vice-President of CTMB for the Italian side.

⁴³⁹ In August 2001, to sustain the official positions expressed by institutions and local associations, in some MB localities such as Servoz, Les Houches and Chamonix, the inhabitants disobey the orders of state authorities and participate in a referendum against the return of the lorries. The voters are 97% of the population, a similar number to in municipal elections. A lot of debates and market research (who loses with the closure the TMB?) report issues about the international economic affairs such as the revenues for Chamonix's casino, the inter-port affairs between Mediterranean ports and that of Rotterdam, internal debates at French government levels, the Alpine Convention statute which should establish an international regulation for international traffic in the Alpine arc. (LA STAMPA, 22 August 2001). In September 2001 the inhabitants of Courmayeur municipality are also called to express an opinion as regards the TMB lorry issue through a non-official referendum. A large number of voters express the will for a serious regulation for heavy traffic through the TMB. The same stance is also taken by Aosta's inhabitants called to express their opinion in a survey promoted by the Valle d'Aosta coordination organisation against the lorries.

In January 2002 in Paris an Italian-French inter-governmental commission passes a *reglement* for the TMB reopening which authorises 240 lorries per hour⁴⁴⁰. Through an exchange between the Italian-French Transport Ministers this is approved and published officially. Regional, local institutions and inhabitants start a true social ‘revolution’. The Valle d’Aosta Region expresses officially its negative judgement on such a provision, in Savoie Department a motion based on passive resistance is planned among the inhabitants with mobilisation against the return of the lorries, new informal associations are organised⁴⁴¹ with this scope at every corner of the MB border. The studies of the CTMB for air quality are presented in an unofficial way⁴⁴². Comparing the situation before and after the TMB closure a factor of pollution reduction up to 88% without lorries is shown. The Chamonix municipality demands new controls for the security of the TMB, Courmayeur and Morgex require a reduction of 50% of the traffic as regards the situation just before the closure of the TMB. A Lunardi-Gayssot⁴⁴³ meeting decides the reopening of the TMB. Two passages are planned in March 2002: the first opening let the cars through the tunnel; in two weeks lorries can cross the tunnel in a regime of alternate traffic. Before the TMB reopening, the CTMB promises the diffusion of the air quality study. All the operations for the encouragement of sustainable development will vanish faced with a lack of a specific traffic policy to protect the EMB territory. On 9th March 2002 the TMB opens⁴⁴⁴ to the car traffic. An official ceremony⁴⁴⁵ is organised where political speeches⁴⁴⁶ flow about the TMB’s meaning.

⁴⁴⁰ It means 5,764 lorries per day, about 2,000 lorries more than at the time of the accident in March 1999.

⁴⁴¹ The composition of a specific ‘Comite’ de liaison’ which groups the elective representatives of economic categories and environmental associations present in the Aosta and Chamonix valleys, Geneva city and Canton, is created to coordinate the initiatives against the return of the lorries through the TMB. In this way the ‘Associazione per la Difesa del Monte Bianco’ (Association for the defence of Mont-Blanc) (ADMB), already informally active, is set up in a Congress (Congres du Pays du Mont-Blanc) organised in Courmayeur in February 2002 (TTE newsletter of February/March 2002 and Informazione Valle d’Aosta n.4/2002)

⁴⁴² A crowded press conference organised by the (ADMB) and the l’Agenzia di Protezione dell’Ambiente (Agency for Environmental Protection) (ARPA) publishes the data on pollution in the EMB area with a comparison between the two situations before and after the TMB closure. The reduction of the polluting factors is measured as up to 88% without lorries.

⁴⁴³ The two Transport Ministers respectively in France and Italy, as known.

⁴⁴⁴ The modality for the TMB’s reopening were decided by the Italian-French intergovernmental commission presided by Luigi Guidobono Cavalchini and Jacques Berniere. The control committee for security was presided by Pasquale Cialdini and Michel Marec.

⁴⁴⁵ Present were the Italian Minister of Internal Affairs, Claudio Scajola, the President of Regional Committee for Affairs and Tourism of the European Parliament Rt Hon. Luciano Caveri, the President of the Council of State-Regions Rt Hon. Enzo Ghigo, the Senator Augusto Rollandin and the Regione Valle d’Aosta president, Dino Vierin.

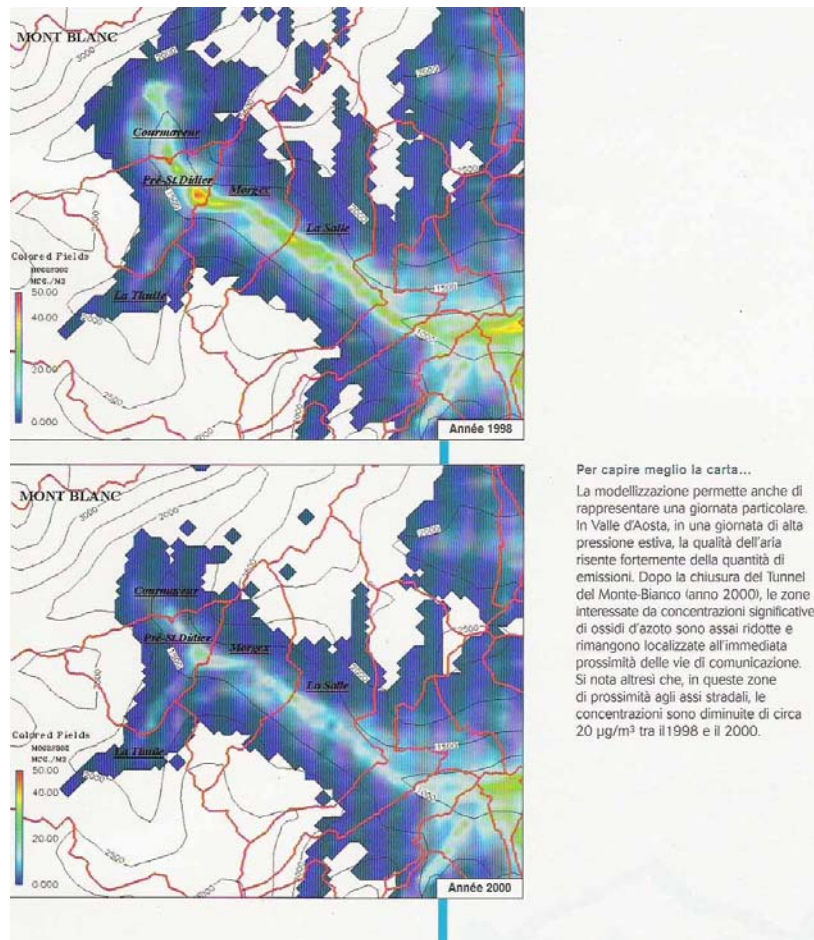


Figure 4.12. – The publication on the air quality study in the EMB areas in-between the contestations against the reopening of the TMB

'To open again the TMB means to open again the linkage between the Aosta valley and the Savoie. This is what we all want even if there is still the problem of the lorry traffic to solve. Stopping lorries is not possible in our framework which is based on Community accounts. However, the passage of lorries can only be 240 per hour...'
 (Caveri, March 2002)

Popular demonstrations follow each other without rest⁴⁴⁷. Awaiting April 2002, when the French Minister of Transport, Gayssot announces to the press and media that after a long *arm wrestling* session with the Italian Ministers, the TMB will be opened to lorries.

⁴⁴⁶ Here below is reported the speech published in *Portale della Montagna Italiana* www.Montagna.org by Rt Hon. Luciano Caveri

⁴⁴⁷ In March 2002 the 'Coordinamento Valdostano contro i TIR' (Valle d'Aosta's coordination group against lorries) is created, which groups eight associations and movements operating in the Aosta valley, that promotes the satisfaction for the TMB's reopening for cars because it allows easier linkages between the Aosta and Chamonix Valleys but it asks for the opening of a table of bargaining between Ministers and Governments and institutional, economic and associative representatives of the pays of Mont-Blanc. The new association includes the Associazione Difesa del Monte Bianco-Courmayeur, il Comité valdôtain pour la sauvegarde du Pays du Mont-Blanc, Aosta Social Forum, Legambiente Valle d'Aosta, WWF Valle d'Aosta, Cooperativa Lo Pan Nër, Sinistra Alternativa della Valle d'Aosta, Movimento Verde Alternativo della Valle d'Aosta. It proposes an action of passive resistance against the lorries without a tough Regulation

In May 2002 the CTMB finally publishes the data and the study of air quality in the MB zones. Several strategic meetings are organised by the CTMB to diffuse this study on simulations and about future activities, which could depart from this. A future sustainable development for the MB policies also includes the ICOMOS representatives among the observers of the CTMB arena representative. In June 2002 the TMB is again opened to lorries. Despite studies and demonstrations against a massive return of lorries through the TMB, a summit between the Ministers Lunardi and de Robien decides that at least 35% of the lorry traffic in the western Alps has to cross the TMB. The re-establishing of a balance with the Frejus Tunnel is necessary in this Alpine arc. On 1st March 2003 the alternate regime of circulation in the TMB is at last abolished for lorries and vehicles through the tunnel without limits in both directions. Although the table of the 'hard' decisions work, also the 'soft' project of the EMB continues to work in July 2004. The 'Air Espace Mont-Blanc' project continues to function in a network of laboratories across the border between Italy, France and Switzerland monitoring the situation. The 'Scheme for Sustainable Development' is also approved within the new INTERREG III A programme, specific study groups are ongoing. Perhaps producing other small steps. Not yet does EMB have a juridical statute for the CTMB cross-border arena. Any perimeter has been composed for the EMB region. Any border is bounded by the political space. In a process constantly under '*politicisation*' the nature of the borders is in change. No longer is border drawing a condition necessary to be marked in a domain of new governance. EMB has a symbol to practise actions and yet EMB produces a social mobilisation among local producers, soft and hard tourism activities, environmental organisations, new studies and agencies are created to better recognise a cross-border territory. And yet, for this regional institution there is still a name, a latent yet present cross-border regional identification on the slopes of the MB Mountain, however this works through a plural identity. In July 2004 the scheme for sustainable development is in progress. The CTMB arena aims to assume a voice - plural and heterogeneous - in the future development of the territories on the slopes of the Mont-Blanc Mountain. EMB is the backstage for further, more responsive

for circulation through the TMB. For them 'Any imposition is undemocratic and seriously authoritative even more unacceptable in an Autonomous Region such as the Regione Valle d'Aosta'.

evolutions. Another questionnaire concerning the quality of life has been divulged among the inhabitants, agencies, and institutions within the Espace Mont-Blanc project and outside it also via the INTERNET.

4.3 EMB: TOWARDS A CROSS-BORDER REGIONAL IDENTIFICATION

The EMB project and the CTMB political arena are the terms of a change in current public actions at the nation-state border. The 'policy making' phases pose the question about the kind of 'change', which EMB introduces. Banally EMB is a policy, which is debated in terms of contents of 'policy'. Cross-border activities through diverse policies compose a series of actions, which are actually developing as a variation at the nation-state border in terms of governance. The activation of cross-border actions introduce by 'themselves' a deviation as regards the policy-making in other regimes of governance. Two strands can be captured from this analysis of the 'policy-making' phases. The first consists thus in the new path of governance, which the EMB and its arenas have the tendency to describe. Governance is here based on the network between actors and their interaction. New governance settings change over time. EMB is a space in progress where the development of different stages in politicising cross-border actions occurs. EMB follows a strand of governance, which is not already given. The actors, who come from existing institutional settings at the nation-state borders, play in interaction according to a not already given system of rules and expectations. Their rules and expectations are being made during the process of cross-bordering itself. This process creates and modifies their original expectations and behaviour. The second strand is towards a cross-border identity question, which is sometimes very explicit in the policy-making analysis. There are different subjects who compose a complexity as such: there are identity factors which concern the EMB as 'Border State'; there is the reference to the natural context of the Mountain; there is the need for a local recognising aspiration in accomplishment in cross-border settings, trans-national references to the Euroregionality, the European umbrella as over-the-national reference; contextual and contemporary policies to the EMB which walk together in its policy contents in a mixture of actions and reactions. All this pertains to an identity question; a path of institutionalisation of the EMB through its policies. EMB as policy discourse is implemented by a series of policy problem consistency not aimed at obtaining problem solving on punctual policies. The issues which concern the environmental problem protection, the tunnel management and tourism management are shifting on-side the EMB process. According to my conceptual framework in cognitive

geographical scope a functional/regional cross-border identity question is posed. EMB in the 'phases of policy-making' responds to a social abstraction of 'public actions' which emerges in the pressure for a cross-border regional identification in the MB and its pays. The creating of a 'space recognised' or 'recognisable' is the partial transformation of the dimensions of the 'public actions' in cross-border 'policy making'. I maintain that in a context of governance the specific sphere of a cross-border regional identification consists. This can be analysed considering the EMB as cause of coexistence in fragmentary actions within a 'consequential public'.

Summary Chapter 4

In this chapter I have presented the analysis of the case study of a project named Espace Mont-Blanc through an interpretative dimension of its policy-making phases. The aim of this writing is oriented both to problems and practices, which involve the key actors and the cross-border actions according within a cross-border attitude. A process of regionalism in cross-border is here accomplished as a form of institutional design in discursive accounts. However, this is also an institutional change at the nation-state between the existing institutional settings of the Swiss Valais Canton, the Italian Regione Valle d'Aosta and the Savoie Department. The cross border project of the MB is suggested at the beginning as an alternative to the centralised Park policies hypothesized for this area. The introduction of this cross-border arena as a 'local' suggestion corresponds to an innovation for the existing policy domains at the nation-state border in separate settings. The innovation shifts the terms of a demand creation for the local society at the border and in public mobilisation, to which the EMB refers. EMB changes the framework of the current public action at the border in cross-border interaction between existing and new actors and policies around the Mountain. EMB is a device, which involves more and more over time the complexity in managing a territory at cross-border. Moments of reserve and difficulties have been reported in this chapter for the construction of an arena born without a pre-defined design and without a map drawn bounding new borders in which to mould the actions. Yet, an institutional process of politicising space is arranged between burning topics on the management and territorial transformations, which occur in a framework of cross-border governance actions. In the next chapter I will propose to re-elaborate the analysis of the policy-making phase on the basis of this perspective, which I have just sketched in the

conclusion. Cross-border governance and the interaction between the typology of actors and actions will be the main topic as regards the politicising of the space in cross-border. EMB will be examined according to a reading where multiple spaces occur in arenas, situations and actions. Starting from my interpretation of the policy-making phases I will focus at first on the actors according to their role of activators, observers, spectators and representatives of the civil society interests. In a second instance I will analyse the social space as derived from the chart of the EMB project. On this basis I will examine the EMB as a social space in a hypothesis of a tendency towards kinds of existence of a new 'centrality'. A critique will be then oriented to the diffuse governances looking at the actors, who have communicated an EMB visual account through the INTERNET.

A specific task will consider the dimension of the EMB according to a regional institutional design following an analysis centred on the actors. In this I will consider EMB as policy discourse and I will conclude giving relevance to the theme of the re-structuration of actors and actions within a hypothesis of cross-border governance domain.

CROSS-BORDER GOVERNANCE ON THE ESPACE MONT-BLANC: AN ANALYSIS CENTRED ON THE ACTORS AND THEIR NETWORK OF INTERACTION

EMB appears in the present chapter as a social space in the politicising path. A not already given script forms the course of the actions in the making of the project, which the actors correspond. My hypothesis is that the interaction between the actors on the stage of the EMB policy-making responds to a particular mode of governance in cross-border. While the previous chapter considered the course of the actions which progress over time, the current chapter focuses on the actors for their kinds of behaviours during the development of the project. A first typology of actors is thus framed starting from the previous 'reading' of the 'policy-making' phases. The first system defines actors and rules in the process of institutionalisation that takes place at the MB border. Here, the actors follow typologies as 'activators', 'observers' and 'spectators' in relation to their explicit actions, their institutional levels or sectors, which they cope with and their expectations during the progress of the EMB project. However, the roles of the actors during the EMB progress do not completely cover either the expectations or the rules, which are currently already defined within territorial existing institutional settings within the nation-state borders. The nature of the actions, which EMB governance introduces, does not consist just of critical concerns. Although some issues seem evidently to return to questions such as the legitimacy 'within' un-decidable boundary situations, or the irreconcilable expectations placed on different focuses in existing current institutional setting agendas at the different facets of the border. EMB is not just exclusively object of states of indecipherability or inconsistency. In this chapter, I shall say that no room is left to define the terms of success or unsuccess of this cross-border policy application. EMB represents in my idea an innovation in expressions of governance. Innovation which resides in the sense making of a process in which the actors play their rules in a new way, responding to strategies in becoming during the course of the 'cross-border' inter-actions. EMB is thus a domain open to the occurrence of new actors but also to new 'games'. With this, I include the intelligence of the games, which Europeanisation offers to current ordinary actors. EMB is thus a 'niche' or a laboratory of experimentation in such instances. Hence, the 'local' institutions at the MB Border State are evidence for the challenge to chase different paths of interaction rather than those, which directly correspond, to normative regulations in current nation-state possibility. The European label provides for the local and regional demands to assume the 'institutional heart' of the EMB as a cross-border governance process. So that, EMB is a practice that appears criticised as a sequence of 'little steps', which do not solve in short temporal terms the urgency for explicit policies for needs and wishes. Nevertheless, EMB leaves visions of an emancipation space in politicising the social civil sphere as part of the reality of the MB Border State. Rethinking space maybe means here of passing the territorial transformations with nested categories of 'scale'. Finally, I conclude that the sense of not-concluded arenas takes part of continuous processes of mobilisation in relational forms of governance network. They assume the 'territorial' decision-making in another way.

'Social spaces are arenas, or recurrent situations, wherein actors orient their actions to one another repeatedly.... We call a social space institutionalised when there exists a widely shared system of rules and procedures to define who actors are, how they make sense of each others' action, and what type of actions are possible' (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, Fligstein, 2001).

EMB project can be analysed, as a *social space*. In this chapter an inquiry meets the theme of the *politicising* in EMB space. This issue is very concerned with the composition of the *arenas* and the specific role of the actors involved. In the previous 'policy making' phases a

sequence of events has shown the relation between the EMB institutional features of the cross-border project in partial results over time. Consequential linkages between *problems-solutions-choices* emerge around the EMB project continually ‘along side’ new issues⁴⁴⁸. EMB does not correspond to a change in terms of a fixed scheme of policy; or to a better flowing path of policy aimed at a more coherent resolution in policies. EMB is an attempt to step further with certain rules and procedures. In other words, EMB frames practices, which are not framed in ‘already given’ systems of rules and procedures. It aims at a process of new institutionalisation in design across the borders. For this reason, the analysis of the policy-making does not concern *rules and procedures* as prior subjects of analysis. EMB focuses in an ongoing institutional cross-border regional discourse construction. In this ‘policy discourse’ in making, the actors, the actions and their interaction react in highly influenced contexts. With this, I mean that the coexistence of the actors and of the actions in the EMB project follow a not a priori already given ‘script’. Different types of actions *inside* and *outside* the EMB institutional cross-border creativity let the actors ‘become’ such in force of an institutional design. I will conclude the present chapter with the hypothesis that the cross-border actions in the EMB project emerge in ‘interaction’ between actors according to a particular mode of governance. Cross-border governance means thus a different substantial way of interacting in the quality of the actions, which move the actors. Cross-border actors become themselves creating a different pattern of action as regards those who move the their behaviours framed in a different domain of governance. The actors in the EMB project come from other different social spaces and other types of governance – inside or beyond the state. At first the social spaces can be called ‘public’. The issue about the kind of regionalism in cross-border implies the identification of types of actors who intervene in a kind of interaction. The attempt that I propose in the present chapter is the hypothesis that EMB is a ‘whole’ of social spaces, which generate a process of cross-border regional institutionalisation. I used a reference to a concept of ‘the public’ borrowing from Dewey’s theory. The reasons for this interest related to this theory in my hypothesis are mainly related to my idea of considering the CBR as collective actions. This is perceived as *consequences* in a public mobilisation, as the base of a social space creation.

⁴⁴⁸ Examples of the ‘along side’ policies are the international park, the TMB management and the TMB re-opening, the scheme for the sustainable development. However, also all the decisions concerning mass tourism and mass tourism in single zones at the MB borders or in competitive settings and all the initiatives to favour activities for soft tourism are quite important public options ‘along side’ the EMB policies.

'Sometimes the consequences are confined to those who directly share in transaction which produces them. In other cases they extend far beyond those immediately engaged in producing them. Thus two kinds of interests and of measures of regulation of acts in view of consequences are generated. In the first, interest and control are limited to those directly engaged; in the second, they extend to those who do not directly share in the performance of acts. If then, the interest constituted by their being affected by actions in question is to have any practical influence, control over the actions, which produce them, must occur by some indirect means. (Dewey, 1927: 35).

The idea of 'public' I suggest⁴⁴⁹ lets me think of a conceptual continuity between social spaces which re-produce other social spaces in forms of 'public'. From the analysis I have proposed in the earlier 'policy making' concerning the EMB project some airs can come out from this sentence.

'This public is organised and made effective by means of representatives who as guardians of custom, as legislators, as executives, judges, etc., care for its special interests by methods intended to regulate the conjoint actions of individuals and groups. Then and in so far, association adds to itself political organisation, and something, which may be government, comes into being: the public is a political state'. (ibid.)

The idea of 'public' I mean is oriented to social spaces. Both the linkage between the actors and their actions directly engaged in the EMB process are together with those who re-produce other social spaces. According to this conceptual linkage, the identification of three fundamental social spaces appears in the EMB cross-border regionalisation process. Several kinds of social spaces can interact within the EMB; however, they do not respond 'per se' to a different form of governance. For instance, governances 'diffused' or 'beyond the state' can even correspond within the features of the cross-border governance. However, in the EMB project and because of the EMB project, the actors-actions in their re-production are the 'expression' of a cross-border 'mode' of 'governance'. It means that a 're-composition' occurs into the domain of 'interaction' of actors/actions. In the EMB case study a different consistency of actions is clear. Such consistency is defined by: 1) the social space as composed by the course of actors-actions during a temporal general EMB development; 2) the social space pertains to the actors-roles that appear as official charts as part of the EMB project; 3) the social space which is considered by who 'speak' about EMB; here also an example of the virtual actors is proposed. INTERNET, for instance, was part of the actions used during the policy making by different typology of actors for the EMB mobilisation. My further attempt is then to join these three social spaces in a

⁴⁴⁹ The 'public' in the Dewey's theory is not divided between public and its counter. Dewey did not divide the public from other different domains communally the public is the counterpart of the private or the counter part of the individual. For Dewey public is a whole of consequences.

reflection on the kind of cross-border interaction, which from the social spaces are developed in the EMB politicising process.

5.1 EMB IN A 'READING' OF MULTIPLE SOCIAL SPACES: ARENAS, SITUATIONS AND ACTIONS

5.1.1 Social Spaces in the 'Policy Making' Phases: Typology of Actors-Actions

Different categories of actors appear from the analysis of the 'policy making' in the former chapter. At first we can recognise those who have a political decisional power. Their role is unambiguous in existing settings within the current institutions within nation-state borders. From the beginning of the EMB project thus their 'function' is to steer this policy process according to their current behaviour. They guide the idea of the MB protection towards a domain of procedures for the MB areas. In other words, the MB protection is referred to instruments of governing and planning. I mention at first these kinds of actors because they have the current benefit of the *comfort* in legitimacy actions within the nation-states for current institutional settings. They label themselves in force of their 'state' in legitimacy and legacy as a channel for the EMB process. The initial intentions of the policy, i.e. concerning the environmental protection, afterwards enter another sphere of policy. The cross-border policy hypothesis is the new realm, which changes the current character of the conventions that this kind of actor corresponds. The cross-border cooperation policy assumes other possible incomes at the predictable hierarchical competencies within the nation-state borders. The framework of European actions provides for the local and regional actors to instil new courses of actions and options in which they can participate further than their habitual institutional hierarchical competences. I attempt to define such a type of actors-actions as *steer decisional public actions*. In the EMB project this typology is firstly referred to the national level representatives, the three Environmental Ministers. From them the EMB project actually started according to the MB international park hypothesis. It is also by the initiative of this kind of actor that the EMB project passed from the central level of government to the local level. In a first instance and with reference to the first phase of the policy making, the national functionaries were the 'stakeholders' of decisions concerning the park policy in separate

tri-national territorial settings⁴⁵⁰. At first, these actors - nation-state existing institutional actors - had their own competencies whose objectives were not related to a cross-border cooperation or to a cross-border political arena composition. A trans-national prior partly appears because it directly involved the initial issue of the inter-national Park Policy. Relative to the EMB project in particular, during the first phase of the development of the project the role of these initial actors is transformed; it was increasingly conceived with the Europeanization effects. To this 'event' I will return soon speaking about the issue of the political recognition of the EMB as cross-border regional identification. A second kind of actor is represented by the civil societies in the making of EMB process (through *active public actions*). They consist of the regional-local institutions existing in separate borderlands, which have transformed the trans-national impulses in a 'trans-local' cross-border manner. This is mainly the level where competencies, regulations and autonomy come from 'regional' boards and from more local-institutional levels of consensus. A third kind of actor are the observers able to influence the EMB process (through *active public participation*). They are e.g. the environmental organisations which contributed to instilling their own way to EMB policy-making, in generated conflicts between the previous actors. From them, the ideas of the protection of MB (and its areas) are launched. The demands linked to the policy's needs in protection for the natural domains have boosted the current problems of transportation and tourist infrastructures on flow regulation. Included in this group of actors can be positioned also the experts and the professionals involved in working groups for specific evaluations linked to the EMB project⁴⁵¹. Both the environmental organisations and the professionals are kinds of actors who are not essentially linked to specific 'territorial' levels. They have developed domestic or international networks. In other words, the ONG⁴⁵² and the private organisations engaged in the EMB project both belong and do not belong to the local scale. To their actions of participation are linked socio-political mobilisation in attempts to balance the decisional process also taking other interests into account. Their role was also formally provided from governmental levels to the environmental organisations as an undertaking of transparency, which the EMB had to observe with regard to the civil society.

⁴⁵⁰ This is for instance the example of the 'TMB lorries' reopening despite the existence of a cross-border active arena.

⁴⁵¹ These groups are relative to studies concerning the milieux sensibles, transport and air quality.

⁴⁵² The environmental organisations were immediately involved from the beginning in the Park's policy hypothesis with a specific role of observers. In the intentions of the national environment ministers this role was formally given as to consent to the process to appear socially more transparent.

A fourth kind of actor can be circumscribed to the ‘spectators’ of the EMB policy-making process. With this term I mean those actors who are involved in the broad sphere around the EMB project through socio-political mobilisation (through *indirect public actions*). They are both the representatives of the economic agents or mass media, private or semi-public agencies not directly involved in the EMB arenas. They are the first receivers or users of the EMB policy outcomes and those who are actually using in various ways the symbolic values of the project. Collectivises or private bodies located at local scales are also included in such a typology of actors which are part of the consensus resources for the formal actors who have instead an active part in the project in the folders of their social representation. The ‘spectators’ can be located also in a more wider ‘glocal’ arena, which gives a social recognition to the EMB cross-border regional identity. From the analysis centred on the EMB decision-making phases (Chapter 4) it emerges that the actors-actions can be categorised into *activators*, those who *represent the civil society*, the *observers*, and the *spectators* or users. However, an analysis centred on these kinds of actors has to consider that the EMB project is an on going process of institutionalisation and not yet settled. EMB is a policy path, which is still looking for the actualisation of its actions in not-concluded realms. From this perspective the outcome of the actors-actions as state-of-the-art appears less central in the policy-making analysis. In other words, the ‘actors’ can thus appear not just as ‘instrumental’ to reach an ultimate system of coherent finalities. In the EMB study it appears more pressing to take into account both the actors and the contexts in which they propose the series of their ‘actions’. This is because both the actors and the actions are part of the problem in the EMB project. As the previous analysis of the policy making process underlines as tendency, the cross-border region EMB doesn’t make it clear about all the series of ‘stakes’ and the eventual ‘stakeholders’ that are involved. The kind of territorial transformation and the kind of regionalisation emerge in latent terms. As just seen above, the phases of policy-making have framed a story in which the forms of interactions developed between the actors constitute a network of relationships. We can think that such a network is the EMB social *space*. Although the actors are not fixed and defined within a territorial setting, nevertheless the EMB institutional configuration meets the ‘subjects’ who emerge as ‘actors’ in becoming. In other words, the subjects in the EMB practice ‘acting’ in relations with the other subjects become actors of the process. As such, the actors can be hypothesised as forms and ‘outcomes’ of a particular mode of

‘interactive’ governance, which directly involves the way in which the cross-border cooperation activities are proceeding.

Current Levels/Sectors in existing institutional settings	Current Levels/Sectors in EMB policy-making process		
	Role	Public Actions	Focuses
Nation-state and central levels in policy sectors	Impulse, activators	Steer Decisional	Trans-national agreements to insert in national regulative policy
Regional, Cantonal, Departmental	Representation of civil society	Active	Cross-Border cooperation as new ‘trans-local’ domain of public representation
Collective, ONGs Public or private	Observers in agreement or conflict	Active Participation	Representation of consequential interests in a domain of network and public actions of social mobilisation, becoming actors starting from actions
	Spectators in agreements or conflict	Indirect linked to consequential mobilisation of ‘public’	

Scheme 5.1. – Typology of actors in my ‘reading’ of the Social Space in Public Actions expressed in the EMB project

The weak institutionalisation of the EMB project consists of such a game of interactions in which the rules are not drawn ‘a priori’ between the actors involved. The nation-state border conditions are thus missed. Hence, the meaning of interaction is better referred to as *transaction*. This is because the EMB is a case of ‘territorial transformation’ which concerns the relations of mutuality and reciprocity, which make the ‘actors’ as such in the progress of the cross-border policy. Such a perspective opens other issues. In the description of the actors just sketched above it is possible to convene that the cross-border arena is composed of actors who come from existing territorial levels and actors who don’t belong directly to the territorial levels. Both of them have as regards the EMB project a different ‘game’ to play. As such, the nature of the EMB project concerns not just a ‘decisional’ competence. This is a part of the cross-border cooperation ‘shift’ in policy-making. EMB is a project where many features are still fluid mainly for this reason and therefore where the channel of policy is just partially included in direct regulative⁴⁵³ scenery. The parts of actors who do not belong directly to territorial levels and those who have an eventual role as observers or spectators produce actions, which are relevant in terms of public action. Such ‘subjects’ (territorial, not-territorial) enter a game of ‘transaction’. EMB is a *niche* of experimental institution in public actions. Crossing the

⁴⁵³ On the aspect of regulation I will return later speaking about ‘new regulation’.

nation-state borders the institutionalisation of the EMB misses elements, which traditionally are part of the regional significance linked to a 'territorial' meaning. The lacking of a fixed 'shape' for instance, as well as the relative decisional powers in legitimate course of actions, appear in EMB according to a dramatically different path, with regard to the current institutionalisation of the regions. Institutional representatives fall into a separate setting at the nation-state border and they cannot be expressed similarly in a board of cross-border cooperation. As the conceptual framework of this thesis has discussed previously, the regional identity and regional identification in cross-border regionalisation represents conceptual problematical aspects. Such a theoretical gap is more evident explaining the EMB 'practices'; the regional term in cross-border regionalism is 'other' essentially. EMB expresses a 'regional' facet in terms of representation, which that is both internally (the actors who steer and assume active roles in the EMB project) or externally perceived (the actors who enter the process of mobilising in other 'public'). The cross-border arenas in general express a different statement of actions, which can be included in the nature of regionalisation. In the EMB project I have just described that the institutional centrality, which is involved, has not a fixed position in time and space but resides much more in the gear of the policy-making process. This can be in multiple spaces and times. The regionalisation can here assume a meaning of a 'becoming' in which the political strategies of the actors involved are not determinate in a given mode of institutional fix. The relevance of the actions in cross-border cooperation according to an institutional design is much more rooted in the hypothesis, which the subjects who are involved in the process have some creativity to express. The actors as subjectivities assume the role of takers of 'problems' and 'discourses' on the cross-border institutional board in making. The 'meaning' of 'becoming' is arranged according to a collaborative political nature of 'actions', which are constitutive parts of the EMB project. The actors who belong the institutional fix in existing separated institutional arrangements at the nation-state border are players of a *double level game*. This is a concept already seen linked to the Europeanisation theories. But not just. Indeed if this is perhaps the case of the actors who are involved in the EMB policy-making according to their decisional powers. In this circumstance, EMB is for them the occasion to conserve the role which they currently have in policy-making processes concerning territorial settings in some ways. Nevertheless, for them EMB is even more: it is another way to consolidate their role during the development of new plural contexts where the institutional *habitus* are no longer covered

completely by the routines which they are accustomed to assuming in part of their role. In other words, EMB can be intended for the actors who have already an assumed ability to manage legitimate actions according to the democratic modes of the nation-state in steering decisions. EMB thus triggers new learning processes of 'interaction' between the homologous actors who work on the other sides of the nation-state borders. However, also other actors and factors appear to show the existence of other potential, further than those offered by the Europeanisation account. EMB presents the features of an open process where plural voices can be represented. Several kinds of interests more or less evident or more or less explicit can be embodied during the EMB policy-making. This is manifest at domestic level, where some agencies collaborate to let the EMB project look like the context where ideas and expectations can develop towards a new channel of representation.⁴⁵⁴ The role of the NGOs⁴⁵⁵ then appears particularly incisive in the progress of the EMB project as a new context of representation. Many of the promoters in defence of the MB, as a unique environmental context have certainly been crucial for the development both of the domestic and the general public interest in the EMB project. The EMB has become a symbol of this contestation between the existing policies concerning the protection and development of these areas at the edge with the advance of new policies such as cross-border cooperation. For domestic services and economic activities, after the first contrast to the EMB as synonymous with the park policy, the diffusion of the EMB has corresponded to the requirement of a particular regional, local and cross-border identification. For international or trans-national organisations involved in the EMB, the project has assumed over time the meaning of a 'laboratory' where opportune policies can become achievable. References to wider frameworks fall under the pertinence of this zone on the slopes of the Mont-Blanc Mountain: the EU INTERREG programme for the development of cross-border cooperation experiences for instance or the Alpine Convention for the policies linked to the Alpine places, collaborate to implement the suggestions and potentiality of a new domestic project which has at its heart a European

⁴⁵⁴ As explained in the different phases of the policy-making analysis in Chapter 4, this is the example of some municipalities or aggregations of municipalities, which find in EMB the context where expectations and initiatives of territorial transformation could be realised or some aspects of territorial relevance under the environmental profile could be emphasised. However, all the agencies which at domestic levels are involved in particular studies or for particular activities during the development of the EMB project have their own relevance.

⁴⁵⁵ For instance Mountain Wilderness was born on the wave of the MB protection policy and across all the following contestations linked to the EMB lack in accountability in policy action has also gained a certain degree of public audience. Another example concerns the series of contestations moved by Greenpeace organisation using the MB as symbol of the environmental 'voices'.

character. The returns are the entrance of symbolic supports, which open the framework of the interests concerned with EMB policy-making. The ICONOS-UNESCO organisation to favour the protection of human heritages is part of these actors who are mixed up in some way between the voices collaborating on the process of the EMB policy. For some private or semi-public local arenas EMB is even a space of social inclusion in a reflexive legitimacy. With this I mean, as first instance that the evocation of 'principles' and 'orientations' defined and re-defined more times during the progress of the EMB project has constituted *itself* to the revival of new and distinct interests as an integral part of EMB policy-making. This is for example the case of the issues and the actors like the MB cable car⁴⁵⁶ or the GEIE-MBT⁴⁵⁷. Some projects⁴⁵⁸ engaged by domestic agencies or municipalities have been diffused towards the public audience evoking the EMB as a special space under construction where new initiatives could step further beyond the reticence and the constraints in favour of a new air. Following this line of discussion the fragmentary nature of the EMB process –between *issues* and *actors* and between *interests* and *policies* - emerges. In my idea, an analysis focused on the actors can better clarify how these series of assumptions still in conflict between them can configure a network of social spaces for EMB transactions. In other words, EMB can become a space 'in use' by interactions-and-relationships. Actors and ideas can coexist within the EMB both as reality and imagination; both as actions and intentions. This seems to me the aspect especially relevant at the base of the institutional process of the EMB. It is across the composition of EMB as a social space that is the subject where both the regional cross-border identification and the EMB sense-making as trans-local policy might meet.

5.1.2 SOCIAL SPACE IN THE 'OFFICIAL CHART': TYPOLOGY OF ACTORS-ROLES

Certainly a scheme of the EMB cross-border institutional arena already exists: the '*Conference Transfrontaliere du Mont-Blanc*' (CTMB). This organisation appears in the most

⁴⁵⁶ In the third chapter I spoke about the new project of the cable railway within the EMB (on the Italian side), which recalls the principles of soft tourism and sustainable development. The administrators of the 'Funivie del Monte Bianco' have used for some years the EMB as a slogan to promote a personal project aimed at re-drawing the morphology of the 'places' running by the cable cars.

⁴⁵⁷ The GEIE-tunnel Mont-Blanc was recently involved in the EMB studies for the air quality control.

⁴⁵⁸ As I described in the policy-making phases for instance the project for the Tete du Balme and the improving and the development of other ski-domains as an idea of local administrators has been fully inserted by the CTMB arena as focus of the EMB project following a strategy of consensus building.

recent chart and documents⁴⁵⁹, which pertain to the project. This arena is formally composed of a president, the French governmental Minister⁴⁶⁰ for the Ecology and the Sustainable Development. Three vice-presidents⁴⁶¹ belong then to the ‘meso’ (regional, departmental, cantonal level) alongside.⁴⁶² A series of other members⁴⁶³ that vary both for number and for their institutional origin⁴⁶⁴ for each country is also part of this *organigramme*. A permanent commission is entirely composed at the ‘meso’ and ‘micro’ levels: the three vice-presidents of the CTMB and three co-ordinators⁴⁶⁵ who belong to the ‘regional’⁴⁶⁶ or

⁴⁵⁹ For instance in the last document published in a recent brochure (December 2003) such a scheme is presented as in my following description. In the first documents published on the EMB project for example such a scheme contained just the ‘partnership’, which the EMB represented. In the ‘brochure’ published in April 1994 for instance just the ‘meso’ levels were presented: the *Syndicat Intercommunale Espace Nature Mont-Blanc* (SIENMB) for the French side, the *Regione Autonoma Valle d’Aosta* (RVDA) for Italy, the *Republique et Canton du Valais* for the Swiss (RCV). The *Syndicat Intercommunale Espace Nature Mont-Blanc* is described as a light structure of cooperation between municipalities, which are involved according to a voluntary act signed between several territorial collectives. This organism is presided by Michel Charlet (mayor of Chamonix municipality). It groups together about 12 municipalities between Savoie and Haute Savoie. The French side created the SIENMB with the specific aim of collaborating through an appositive organism to the EMB project. The *Regione Autonoma Valle d’Aosta* has about 115,000 inhabitants: this is the smallest of the 20 Italian Regions and one of the 5, which have a special statute. The RVDA has benefitted from a particular autonomy since 1948 and it has a legislative power for certain matters like the organisation of local collectives, agriculture and forests, tourism and management of the territory. Such an Italian region has officially two languages: Italian and French. The *Republique et Canton du Valais* is one of the 23 *Helvetica Confederation* states and the third by extension with 163 municipalities. Such a Swiss ‘meso’ level is a mixed democracy until 1613. Its inhabitants elect a Parliament – the *Grand Consul* –, which has the power to propose, to accept or neglect the laws in virtue of the initiatives right and referendum. The RCV is provided with its own constitution and with executive, legislative and juridical power.

⁴⁶⁰ I remember that the French presidency was voted during a meeting at the beginning of the project in 1991 where Brice Lalonde particularly sustained the issue of the MB protection. This story is reported in chapter 4 on the relative phases of the ‘policy-making’.

⁴⁶¹ The vice-presidents in July 2004 are actually: Rene’ Schwery (Head of the Territorial and Planning Service of Valais Canton); Michel Charlet (Mayor of Chamonix and President of *Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc*); Alberto Cerise (Regional Assessor of Valle d’Aosta for Territory, Environment and Public Works Service). This part of the arena was composed as such until 1998 when the Italian representative was changed.

⁴⁶² By meso level I mean the *Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc* (organism which includes part of the municipalities of Savoie and Haute Savoie French Departments), the Valais Canton on the Swiss side and the *Regione Autonoma Valle d’Aosta*.

⁴⁶³ The ‘members’ are an effective part of the local participation drawn discussed especially at the beginning of the project. Each nation involved can avail itself of a local arena composed of at least three members. Actually the Swiss and French side have arranged to have four local members, while the Italian one has three members.

⁴⁶⁴ It belongs to the Swiss members of the CTMB three municipality presidents (respectively of the municipalities of Finhaut, Orsiere and Champéry) and the director of the Federal Office for the Territorial Development. The French members’ participation also have some municipalities (the deputy-mayors of Saint-Gervais and Bourg-Saint-Maurice are active members) but in such a French group are also included the Prefect of Haute Savoie (who represents also a central power) and the Regional Direction of Environment of Rhone-Alps Region. Italian members belong the representatives of the *Comunità Montana Valdigne*, a municipality representative (the deputy-mayors of Courmayeur) and a member of the *International Service for the Environment* (Environment Minister).

⁴⁶⁵ For the Swiss side of the CTMB arena the role of coordinator is given to a member of the Spatial Planning Service of the Valais Canton, the coordinator of the French side belongs to the Spatial Planning and Mountain Service in the Chamonix municipality, the Italian coordinator the Environment Direction of the *Regione Autonoma Valle d’Aosta*.

⁴⁶⁶ I include in the ‘regional’ term both the Italian side, la *Regione Autonoma Valle d’Aosta* (RVDA) and the Valais Canton with their respective current representatives: Alberto Cerise (Assessore Territorio, Ambiente ed Opere Pubbliche Regione

‘inter-municipal’ separate territorial setting on the different sides of the nation-states border. The ‘meso’ level seems to be the real ‘heart’ of the CTMB in its formal features of arena. The EMB organisational chart is provided with a general secretary⁴⁶⁷, a pilot committee with the function to steer the study on sustainable development⁴⁶⁹ and an apposite commission for the matters related to the sources and the means of communication⁴⁷⁰. Between the meso levels involved in the EMB chart, some differences between the various institutional settings at the different facets of the MB border are also appreciable. The common denominator is that all their representatives (regional, cantonal, inter-municipal) are elected. For the Swiss part, the Vice-President represents directly the Valais Canton (existing institutional setting at the Swiss meso level). The specific service involved in the EMB project is the sector of ‘planning’. A similar situation is for the Italian side, the Vice-President is the agent of the already existing Councillor of the Regione Valle d’Aosta. The sector invested in by the EMB project regards the regional agency of ‘territory, environment and public works’. On the French side the counterpart institution, which should find the same institutional-functional competence also in Switzerland and in Italy (this according to a logic of homology) is instead completely invented. This institution, which has been specially created to participate on the EMB project, is based on the aggregation of various municipalities and its expression is the mayor of Chamonix. This organisation is called ‘Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc’, the President is however also an elected representative and it was created for local participation on the EMB as a cross-border cooperation project. The working groups are arenas, which concern the main topics⁴⁷¹ of the EMB project. The members of the local⁴⁷²

Valle D’Aosta) and Rene’ Schwery (Head of the Service Department de l’Economie, des institutions et de la Sécurité Service du Amangement du Territoire Canton du Valais).

⁴⁶⁷ The secretary has its office in Chedde (F) at Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc with four apposite professionals who don’t cover roles in other institutions.

⁴⁶⁸ To this committee are parts the three local coordinators, the Swiss vice-president of the CTMB, a member of the Environmental Service in Rhone-Alps Region, a member of the International Service for the Environment of the Italian Environmental Minister, a member of the Sustainable Development and Alpine Convention of the Federal Office for the territorial development.

⁴⁶⁹ To this committee are parts the three local coordinators, the Swiss vice-president of the CTMB, a member of the Environmental Service in Rhone-Alps Region, a member of the International Service for the Environment of the Italian Environmental Minister, a member of the Sustainable Development and Alpine Convention of the Federal Office for the territorial development.

⁴⁷⁰ A specific commission dedicated to communication actions was created in 2001. Parts of this commission are especially some members of the municipalities of Chamonix, Courmayeur, Orsières and Champéry.

⁴⁷¹ The working groups concerning the milieu sensible, the paths, the Geographic Information System, Transport and Agriculture.

and meso levels formally compose them even if some sectors involved pertain to the central governments. Also specific private or semi-public expertise or local agencies, professionals and environmental associations are parts of these working groups.

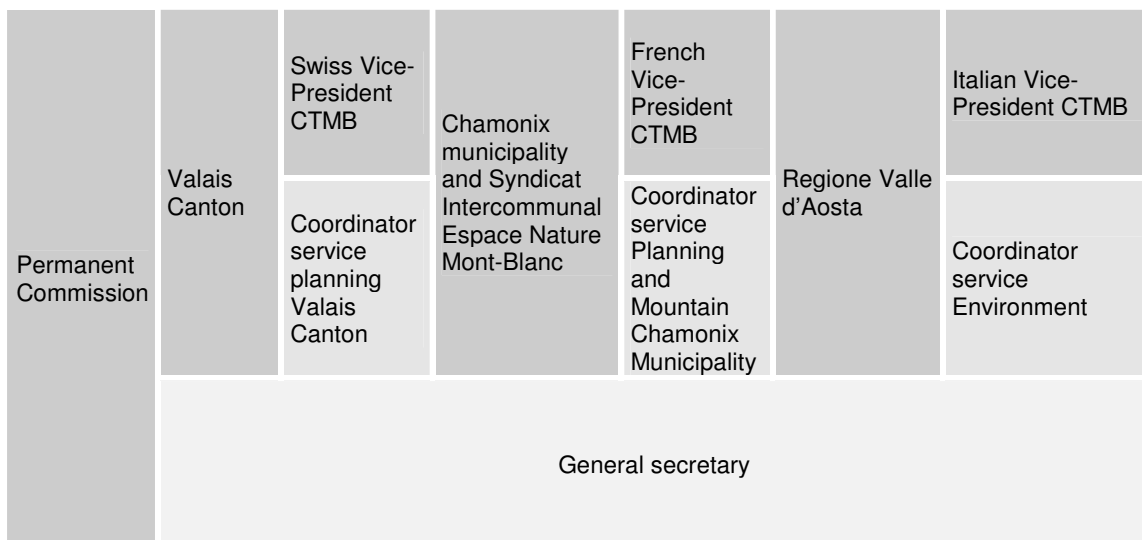
State level	President French Minister of Ecology and Sustainable Development		
Meso level	Swiss Vice-President Head Valais Canton Service: Planning	French Vice-President President Syndicat Intercommunal Espace Nature Mont-Blanc	Italian Vice-President Assessor Regione Valle d'Aosta Service: Territory, Environment and Public Works
Local, domestic Representatives	Swiss members	French members	Italian members
	Presidents of 3 municipalities (Finhaut, Orsières, Champéry)	Deputy-mayors of 2 municipalities (Saint-Gervais, Bourg- Saint-Maurice)	Deputy-mayor of 1 municipality (Courmayeur)
	Federal Office for territorial development	Haute Savoie Perfect	Comunità Montana Valdigne
		Regional Director Environment Rhone-Alpes	Environment Minister Service International Protection

Scheme 5.2. – An elaboration of the official Charts of the EMB project in the composition of the ‘Conférence Transfrontalière du Mont-Blanc’ (CTMB).

Both this résumé around the formal setting composition of the actors for levels and sectors and the previous analysis of the policy-making phases lead towards a first question about the existence of an institutional centrality that in EMB might find expression. In other words, taking into account the existing institutional settings, which emerge to guide

⁴⁷² A wider group of members is foreseen for each working group which are studying each topic foreseen for the EMB project. For the two main working groups, ‘milieu sensible’ and ‘transport’, participate directly both the vice-presidents of the CTMB and the local co-ordinators but such arenas are particularly complex for what concerns the actors involved. In general such working groups are composed of associations, municipalities, external private professions, Departmental, Regional and Canton representatives, other agencies with specific tasks. In the milieu sensible group, for example, are involved the Environmental organisations (PRO-MONT-BLANC, Mountain Wilderness, Collettivo delle Associazioni per la natura della Valle d’Aosta); a representative of AIAT Monte Bianco, some municipality representatives (Saint-Gervais, Bourg Saint Maurice, Courmayeur, Orsieres); the Direction for the Environment of Rhone Alpes Region, a representative of the Italian Environment Minister, a representative of Federal Office for the Territorial Development of the Alpine Convention, the Service for Forests and Landscape of Valais Canton. A specific task is also dedicated to technical and scientific private and semi-public experts (member of the ASTERS group - for the conservation of natural spaces in Haute Savoie - and two professional architects and ecologists).

the EMB process, the meso levels seem to fully cover this role. The EMB policy-making proposes the direct advantage of being an instrument and a device for an innovative regional policy, which can find extensions in cross-border ‘institutional’ cooperation. However, EMB seems at the same time to introduce a novel source for new regional relevancies on the channels of communication between the institutions’ existing border on the different sides of the nation-state border. Indeed also taking a look to the description of the EMB permanent commission, which composes formally the project the meso level covers a special role in the project. The regional, cantonal, and inter-municipal levels are actors who cover a special behaviour as part of the EMB making and in terms of expectations and returns of the governance process at the cross-border. In the following I shall consider the series of the actions expressed by the EMB project considering the CTMB arena at first. In particular my attempt is to maintain how the actions for different actors enter the EMB policy-making together. With this I mean in the form of problems and expectations related to the project. In my analysis I will consider the suggestion that the emerging of a hypothetical institutional centrality between the existing institutional settings involved in the EMB project is possible. I will consider this aspect especially persuasive as further development of the cross-border governance concept starting from the EMB study.



Scheme 5.3. – An elaboration of the Official Chart of ‘Conférence Transfrontalière du Mont-Blanc’ (CTMB) for the Permanent Commission

5.2 EMB: SOCIAL SPACES WITHIN A CENTRAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

5.2.1 Initial Decisional Actions

Initial Decisional Actions concern initially the sphere of the governmental nation-state representatives - i.e. through the Environment Ministers -. They are part of the EMB project promoters and the actual activators of the process who initially encompass a restricted competence to convey. To them is linked the first phase of the EMB project mainly debated on the MB Park policy possibility. Consequential environment policies were evaluated at this stage according to a tri trans-national context of competencies. Through a 'mandate' to the 'regional' institutions, the central governmental institutions required the existing on the different sides of the MB border to steer the initial studies on 'feasibility' of protection policies. Local-regional settings assumed thus this rule of directive concerning mainly two orders of evidence to develop in part of the central governments. Their first function was aimed at the actualisation of environmental policies towards common accomplishment agreements pertaining to both rules and competencies across the domains of different institutional settings across the nation-state borders. Their second aim concerned the 'practicability' of these policies not just in terms of design but also much more in terms of reaction in local consensus in the perspective of applying a policy of protection on the slopes of the MB Mountain. This initial mechanism involves the central governmental competences as activators of policies by their willingness to delegate the sub-national institutions for a preventive project. The early stage of the project triggers a new device based on bargaining positions. Central governmental actors delegate the sub-national actors on the basis of their nested related competencies in planning instruments and normative accomplishments. In this circumstance, the park policy is most of all a determination of territorial strategy. The park project was an impulse for the local powers having room for agreements between institutional national regulations without precluding any existing or progressing regulation within each governmental institution involved. Sub-national local institutions act in nested hierarchical intentions in state regulations. The confirmation of a 'stake' is in this instance to bargain in a future trans-national domain without substantial institutional change. According to this consideration, any place of political or cultural legitimacy appears challenged by central governmental institutions as dominant actors. In first order, the national level towards the

local levels manifest the tendency of a sort coalition building within traditional hierarchical powers in making public policy related to an ordinary territorial transformation. The future development of the MB areas is played in-between fixed rules and competencies in planning regulation according to the park policy. This portrayal corresponds to an already given prescription of nation-state logic and know-how. The launch of the EMB policy occurs also by the local contrast to this kind of governmental mechanism i.e. the park policy. Furthermore, no local consensus for the actualisation of such a policy transpires from the inhabitants or economic activities. The issue of protection provokes an immediate resistance to the national planning technocratic bureaucracy. The appearance of the EMB option is placed in-between a circumstance of necessity both experienced by governmental actors and local civil society. It is immediately the alternative to the park policy able to agree several requirements in a same figure. The EMB project occurs as a channel of participation for a set of actors; the 'decisions' to manage the park issue appear from time to time replaced by other issues. For the central governmental actors EMB supposed other shadows in which their position could be stable as 'promoter' to refer to. Although the invention of the EMB project was for the central national sectors a kind of shifting towards a system of delegates on the local pertinence, consolidated system of nested scale hierarchies still subsist. This pertains to the decisions that could at any time return (and therefore to be taken) by far to the national leaders. Seen from this profile, the EMB project appears at first as an act of determination in response to the needs of 'contents' expressed by the local civil society and local agencies on various occasions. Just in a second backstage the orientation to its new 'constraints' appears in the folders of regulatory systems. Even from the early stage of the project the supposition of the EMB policy-making is immediately and strictly related to the shaping of an new institution as emancipation device (CTMB⁴⁷³). This is appreciable in the intentions both from the central governmental actors in starting a system of delegations and from the sub-national regional settings in the accomplishment of this cross-border arena (CTMB) creation. This is the context through which the CTMB arena is sustained by the spheres of central governmental intelligence. A new institutional board is thus designed through 'agreements' between existing sub-national settings beyond and across the nation-state borders. This means moreover that the stake of the central governmental delegations was not focused on the last result of the decision-making. The CTMB emerges as a device, which gives a

⁴⁷³ The Conference Transfrontaliere du Mont-Blanc.

certain additional comfort to the central national levels of decision. It produces an effect as an additional structure able to assume the roles that other institutions at the nation-state border are not able to assume. In other words, the CTMB can both orient some instances or postpone decisions. It can accept or neglect various series of assumptions from various actors 'along side' other existing institutions at the MB border. The CTMB can act in line with a traditional role in legitimacy embodied through the presence of governmental or sub-national actors, which work in agreements on various issues. Finally, even if this aspect seems just partially relevant to the eyes of most, CTMB is an institution, which poses the ability to manage cross-border cooperation. The CTMB is not simply an institution, which aims to dismiss nation-state borders. The trans-local arena covers a symbolic willingness of the nation-state's central government and policy sectors to collaborate in a joint decision-making, planning the future of the MB areas. This symbolism is also sustained by the label of the INTERREG EU programme as an important reference of the EMB project as a mention of working in partnership across the nation-state borders for the actualisation of the European domain. In this respect, the environment protection policy is no longer the great urgency to assume for the national actors. The important matter seemed to open a process with an opportunity to meet the issues present in national agendas of the protection of the MB. The highest priority for the national levels became a kind of 'moral' investment to promote a policy creation in local cross-border setting. Already from the beginning of the project there was a certain 'asymmetry'. The French government with Lalonde as Environmental Minister provided a financial account to realise the national park and then to finance part of the cross-border cooperation policy for the EMB project joined with INTERREG programmes. The same approach was also taken by the Swiss who participated on the EMB project and on the INTERREG programmes with their own investments in an attempt to open new international relationships with the EU member states in the border areas. The financial issue did not directly interest the Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta in pertinence of the Italian government; it was much more focused on regional assessment. In at last instance, I would say that in general the central governmental actors had their own idea of what the EMB project should be in part of the environmental policies. A series of peaceful agreements were placed in a general and necessary background to achieve related to this topic. As emerged during the phases of the policy making , the variation on the meaning of the EMB project in relation to the park policy also depended on changes of ministerial

personality at central governmental levels and to the parties to which they belong. The continuous adjustments, which the 'local' institutional arenas claimed from time to time in delegate functions, have also seriously depended on this issue.

5.2.2 Active Public Actions

The actors who have influenced the shaping of the EMB process play this role of leader. They consist mainly of the sub-national administrators of regional, canton, and departmental levels - i.e. the three vice-presidents of the CTMB. Their behaviour as 'managers' of the EMB issue concerns the 'beyond' their current rules and actions which are explicated in nested competencies within their territorial institutional setting. These fixed functions are challenged during the course of the EMB project. The developments of cross-border cooperation actions, which have progressed in the EMB project, indeed pertain to another complex of 'functions'. Active public actions emerge through the power of 'filter' for the 'meso level' institutions involved in the project. As just seen above, central governmental inputs have constituted an important matter of influence towards the sub-national agencies concerned in the EMB. There are at least three observations to point out. First of all, the 'meso level' is the direct descendant as scale of competency related to the policies associated to the regulatory system of the nation-state central government. Secondly, in the EMB project, the 'meso level' has benefited from a delegate power as scale of local preference representative⁴⁷⁴ of the administrative levels of central governmental. Thirdly, the 'meso level' has anticipated *itself* to cover a position of 'filter' in EMB progress. This third issue opens a new realm for the study of the relationships between the EMB project and the 'meso level' account. This role that the meso level assumes, which I named 'filter' is defined in relation to the other institutional or less institutional actors which are more or less directly linked to decisional sources. These actions seem more to pertain to the 'orientations' or the expectations, which other institutional sources retained for the 'meso level'. For instance, the EU INTERREG promotion gives the 'meso' level the formal occasion to participate in part to the EU trans-national policy. This fully enters as a special 'local' realm as are the cross-border cooperation policies. At the meso level, cross-border cooperation processes offer a necessary accomplishment in various focuses. Municipalities and local economic agencies

⁴⁷⁴ At least, until a certain point of this situation.

refer to the 'meso level' in response to their expectations as part of the nested hierarchical setting of the nation-state. Finally, as regards the nation-state governmental level the meso-level is 'appreciated' for the creativity in policy contents, which in EMB in particular emerge. This gives 'legitimacy' to their actions in the framework of trans-nationalism. This latter aspect requires further specifications. Indeed, until a certain time the 'place' of the EMB legitimacy actions persists being at nation-state level, related to normative and regulatory policies concerning the dynamics of the park and protection. From a certain time the 'act' of the legitimacy allocated from national to local level pertaining to the park policy or its seeking for 'alternatives' EMB consists of a series of little steps which seem to meet a cross-border regional identification. The 'meso-level' actors take part as 'administrators' of an existing local political class of partisan policy. In the EMB policy-making their personal impact is in some way proved through their own 'entrepreneurial' ability. EMB becomes for them another political sphere on which they can set their personal political activity in local consensus. Both municipality administrators and economic activities are sources of these strategic perspectives. At last, EMB gives the 'meso level' actors the possibility of playing in a double board, at the same time as policy entrepreneur and policy activist. EMB lets the meso-level actors 'stake' aspects concerning territorial transformations already in the minds of municipality administrations for years. As such, the EMB project assumes the meaning of a 'local' event within a tri-national legitimacy framework⁴⁷⁵. The EMB project also lets new institutional members restore their local representatives⁴⁷⁶. The EMB project is also a source of deliberation as a new framework for those fragmented practises through which 'planning instruments' can find for the future development of these borderlands solutions in adjustment and compensation⁴⁷⁷.

⁴⁷⁵ It's the case for instance of the Tete de Balme's project for a new ski domain sustained by Schwery, the Swiss vice-president according to the municipal administration of Trient and Finhaut.

⁴⁷⁶ This is for instance the case of Charlet who sustained the creation of an inter-municipal institution which can involve both the municipality of Savoie and Haute Savoie. This is a special body which is directly involved in the EMB cross-border partnership. Today he is also the official secretary of the EMB cross-border project.

⁴⁷⁷ This is the case of Regione Valle d'Aosta (and the first CTMB vice-president Elio Riccarand) who placed within the EMB project the issue of the Piano Territoriale Paesistico (PTP). A planning instrument that absolved the function of the re-construction of the identity in territorial developments for the future after the mass 're-qualification' occurred in 1970s with the creation of mass tourist services.

5.2.3 Participants in Public Actions

Participants in public actions are above all the collective actors who are shifting the relations concerning decisional processes to seek new orientations. These actors represent the observers and the spectators of the EMB process. I shall include among them those who promote 'active' participation on the EMB project, and those who consist in a further passive form of participation by their own interests. Environmental organisations enter more or less formally the CTMB arena as 'observers' and have already this assigned role as participant from the beginning of the EMB practice. For them the MB protection becomes the symbolic thread to involve and to promote their own capacity of aggregation and in the expression of their creative means of representativity. The birth of these associations is sequential to the EMB project dawn. The environmental organisations do not enter a process of policy-making already started; but they are the actors who formulate the crucial requirements for the protection policies in the MB areas. They have an audacious influence in mobilisation in local and international spheres both on public powers and public opinions. In the early stages of the EMB project the environmental organisations reported the need for a policy to protect the MB Mountain, which does not pertain to the exclusive domain of the 'local' but a more general 'human being' value. This picture aims to persuade potential and cultural interests on the EMB protection domain. EMB does not consist of a necessary policy to this prior focus on the protection. This debate creates a divergence, which enlarged the realm of the actors who speaks about EMB beyond those who have a direct power. Both at national and regional level, the issues form a sort of continuous political reaction, which extend the traditional domain of the policy-making into a network of interaction. Environment and mountaineer organisations had a great power to make the media and several agencies that do not have a direct interest involved in the MB policy arenas or its inhabitants discuss. As an immediate result, this social and political mobilisation in the EMB project has the benefit of a certain legitimacy since a formal act from the three central governmental ministers has assumed their access to the EMB meetings. This particular given role to bring together some more cultural and social interests within the EMB arena respond to specific needs for the symbolic value of the project. EMB appears as a process under construction firmly sustained by 'bottom up' will. In other words, various social parts are included in its creation as takers of collective actions. The local inhabitants are not the only civil part called in this ongoing governance

process. Environmental organisations modernize the balances on the management of the future for the MB and its pays. This is a management which is negotiated. This means that it does not concern exclusively whether local territorial institutional settings or central governmental manoeuvre. Diffused interests out from the nested governmental hierarchies seem to promote a collective image for the EMB project based on networks which have the opportunity to be more or less in line with certain political coalitions or oppositions. The ‘narratives’ of multiple expressions appear as novel features of governance for EMB policy-making. Several concerns relating to economic and territorial planning in these regions contribute in different ways to give voice to such polyarchies. The closing of the MB tunnel after the fire accident in 1999 and all the dynamics of its re-opening, but also the new plan for renovation of the MB cable cars on the Italian side, and the inserting of the MB in the UNESCO lists of humanity heritage, are some examples of these expressions running ‘along side’ the EMB policy-making. The huge participation in acts of accusing expressed by the environment organisations point a finger at the efficacy in problem-solving which the formal EMB arena (i.e. the CTMB) should assume in part to a wide sphere of contemporary events and interests in terms of competence and decisional ability. As such, environmental organisations have assumed also a position embracing the destiny of the local inhabitants’ interests. This is a function, which appears completely new with respect to the beginning and during the progress of the EMB project. Indeed, while in the first instance the inhabitants distinguished the environmental organisations as the ‘others’, subsequently the people living the *Espace Mont-Blanc* discovered them as part of their same face as civil society. This face pertains to the divergent ‘top-down’ political decision. Participants in public actions are also the experts called to study particular aspects concerning the EMB project by the CTMB. They encompass the function of orientation in suggesting solutions to the formal actors of the EMB arena. Beyond this assigned function, they cross the local policy-making arenas reporting ideas and suggestions to other spheres of the society through the media. The expert communities have on several occasions expressed their criticism or their discontent concerning the general strategies practised by the CTMB. For instance, they have reported in some occurrences the need for an integral policy able to involve the central government levels and policies in a more collaborative way. Their voices accuse the EMB policy-making process of appearing ‘forced’ on the resolute subject of the ‘bottom-up’ will. According to the opinions of the technical experts, very important issues such as the definition of a

perimeter for the EMB area appear particularly difficult to define under these ‘sine qua non’ conditions. Participants in public actions are also the actor-spectators as the everyday groups in local interests like tourist agencies and clusters of services and economic activities. For many of them the deed of being publicised in relation to their geographical position in these areas is related to a need for commercialisation and identification, which in EMB aim at a reflection of their new label. This is the situation of the alpine guides, hotels, various sports activities, and traditional food and wine producers.

5.3 THE LIMITS OF INSTITUTIONAL CENTRALITY

In the previous paragraph I have analysed the kinds of public actions through the study of the actors who intervene. We have seen above their function as social spaces in the EMB policy-making. I suggest the existence of an institutional ‘heart’, which defined in a more explicit manner, the kinds of actions contained within the EMB governance features. In my idea this is a fundamental account of the politicising of the space. EMB can be even intended as an arena composed by institutional actors who benefit from a certain political autonomy in separate, existing original setting within the nation-state borders. The meso level – i.e. regional, cantonal, inter-municipal governmental level - has gained, during the policy-making phases, an exclusive role as arena. However, the role of the meso-level is not completely formalised within a stable cross-border co-operation arena in terms of roles in actions and decisions. Missing a juridical recognition for the EMB project and thus for its cross-border arena, the hypothesis connected to the actual existence of its ‘heart’ appears more in the direction of orientations in actions with limited decisional ability. At the early stage of the EMB policy-making, the claim for political decisions has not the focus of shaping other borders around the pertinence of series of cross-border actions. Existing institutional agendas are involved also by expectations with regard to the EMB project. Yet, the construction of a specific cross-border agenda as well as the composition of the EMB arena includes a plurality of intentions. No previous policy agreements constituted the assumptions to establish the pattern of these cross-border orientations. Interferences and vicissitudes are the actual pieces of this new course of action. Local expectations are overlapped on cultural debates about the EU construction and the environmental organisations attract new international attention on the slopes of MB Mountains. Besides, at the level of central governmental arenas concerns are expressed on the actual need for a new channel of ‘co-ordination’ while ‘one’ decision could be

previously assumed. That does not include a specific board for the MB's borderlands. At first, France and Italy agreed on the MB park policy promotion concerning the initiative of the Environmental Ministers. The Swiss declined this option as a restrictive policy. The reason seemed to inhabit in the idea that on the Swiss part, local instances required new territorial transformations. Two alternatives emerged from this early stage: 1) the introduction of 'regulative' policies on different sides of the MB nation-state border; 2) the experimentation of other more creative 'alternatives'. The shared aims presented by the local-regional administrators for the construction of a new cross-border arena embodied this second option. Hence, the reaction from the central governments seemed to preclude an optimistic orientation of exploring European polity-making occasions. The possibility to obtain further EU financing seems a factor subordinated to a more important segment, which just started with the cross-border cooperation realm: a novel device of recognition for the borderland areas. The park policy leaves place to a process 'other' than institutionalisation. The meso-levels become thus the actual keepers of this new and ambitious project. Citizens and local parties legitimate their actions through their votes. However, because the EMB project does not have its own political structure it can become particularly vulnerable according to the change of the conditions and the occurrence of contingent and urgent problems. For the 'meso' levels involved from the early stage of the EMB project, the advantage of appearing as the decisive arena comes together with a deficit in political legitimacy for cross-border actions. The regulative form of direct democracy and legitimacy seemed challenged by the construction of this cross-border board. It assumes 'naturally' a 'meaning' 'other' in which just little steps are possible. This shows the way to arrive at a still easy conclusion: EMB although a useful project is not indispensable for the public and private actors who currently participate in the transformation of the territorial policy-making. Naturally this is just a very partial sight. The other more interesting conclusion is perhaps the alternatives, which EMB opens in terms of unbounded politicising of spaces. The EMB stage admits different directions in receiving part of actors and agendas coming from other tables of decisions and dialogue. However, in promoting cross-border actions the order of actors and actions are less 'directly' returned to decisional spheres. Consequently, EMB exercises a kind of power on the local preference, which refers to an alternative management. The EMB practice launches actually two new domains of space: 1) the space for a management where 'meso levels' in the separate nation-states (Region, Canton, Department) involved directly in a

kind of policy-making through a permanent group aimed at co-ordinated actions. This is formally CTMB space; 2) the space for a management where all the arenas can progressively emerge 'inside' and 'outside' the formal one (CTMB). This is the space where overlapping and interlaced places of the local, regional, national and international spheres meet. The institutional arena (CTMB) is defined through bargaining of the nested hierarchical governmental levels. This is the first source of public political support for the EMB project. The deliberate breaking occurred during the progress of the EMB policy-making and the subsequent *opportunities* accessible through the small-step policies are linked to the indispensable passages in which the project had to respond in some ways to the dependence on the governmental levels. These episodes have been the signs of a nation-state adjustment in relation to the occurrence of new policy possibilities. From the starting phase until 1994, which is the date of the last meeting of the three environmental ministers to discuss the EMB subject, their support appeared as indispensable linkage to 'supply' the project. The issue of the balance between central governmental institutions and the regional ones emerged as a rapid definition on the essential definition of the EMB focuses. It was also crucially concerned with the kind of representation through which EMB should become a 'reality'. After 1994 and with the definitive mandate by the central governmental levels to the regional ones, the meso levels become a more complex and decisive arena. It achieves through the game of cross-border cooperation an institutional collocation between a wider political system. At first sight, the primary result offered by the actualisation of cross-border cooperation policies is to render more explicit the role of the meso levels existing settings in Europeanised policies. This seems to be becoming the main locus for innovative competencies of new configurations in territorial management. However, this is not the main point because the EMB policy-making was not born in an attempt of direct correlation to a nested scale of governmental decision-making. There are mainly two evident causes to support my thinking. First of all, the subject immediately related to the MB on the policies concern the protection needed for an international account of representation. This, as also the environmental organisations underlined, could not be assumed both from the central government and the meso levels *per se*'. A second concern is international transportation, which is evidently a matter that does not pertain to a sole detailed scale in terms of competencies and interests. Environment and transportation policies have a direct effect on the local territories; nevertheless, these are far from being the only levels where the 'policy-making' occurs. In the EMB process,

despite all these considerations, the meso-levels bring substantially two emblematic contributions to the complexity of the policy-making. Firstly, the intuitive willingness of the regional actors - also in relation to their own political personality – seems to fill an empty ‘Espace’ with adaptive policies. This aspect is evident in their perspicacious intentions to re-define and to re-legitimate from time to time the front of the interests in the EMB domain. Secondly, their behaviour is expressed as in/between the *super-parties* and the *inter-parties* in which they seem to reaffirm also through the cross-border institutional design their persistent institutional function. This is a sort of challenge to their ‘autonomy’ as regards the central governmental levels. The meso level actors advance a substantial debate on the MB protection policy proposing a design hypothesis and the use of symbolic themes to contend the EMB meaning. However, the meso levels have managed to gain an exclusive in the EMB policy-making in co-ordination very innovative dynamics such as the cross-border ones. This role is exclusive but is not substitutive to the existence of other policies and government roles. Indeed the central governmental actors actually still conserve and we can see through all the phases of the policy-making, the more decisive outcomes on the urgent decisions to take. If we pose the issue on the institutional centrality related to the EMB project i.e. which territorial settings are much more invested in the EMB project we have not just one answer. Interpreting the centrality as the locus where several interests intervene, the EMB space appears to be another level separated by the current political hierarchical systems. EMB constitutes a device institution, which provides in novel resources such as mobilisation and participative actions. In terms of politicising, EMB is a social space, which opens a socio-political mobilisation in possible interpretations of the ‘Espace’ in the essence of the political expectation. Although EMB is a hybrid institutionalisation, its terms are consistently ‘communicative’ and aimed at new forms of contemporary territorial dynamics. The institutionalisation of Europe proposes the cross-border space in our modernity. Specific emphasis have been the media in the EMB project as regards the mobilisation and the participation in the shaping of the cross-border space. Effects particularly important in the construction of the social arenas have achieved the lack of fixed and well-established means of expression in the cross-border institutionalisation path. In terms of communication and ‘regulation’ the transformations of a territory is in this circumstance challenged on the sense of not-concluded arenas.

5.3.1 Social Spaces from the 'INTERNET': Who Speaks About EMB in a Typology of Virtual-Actions?⁴⁷⁸

In the previous two sections I have just dealt with the existence of double arenas, interlacing the EMB policy-making as an institutional design. The first arena involved existing (and territorial) settings at the nation-state border. This first arena has an important part in the EMB project because its role is played in an effect of Europeanisation. In other words, the EU cross-border cooperation gives them the chance to participate within 'another' institutional board, as EMB can be understood. As such, EMB is an institutional alternative *to the existing* current policies related to direct forms of consensus building. Cross-border cooperation policy-making suggests a kind of interaction between the actors. The single intentions, which compose the different parts, playing within an interactive policy-making, lead to a diverse whole of deliberation. This aspect seems to me particularly crucial in understanding the features of cross-border governance, which pertains to the EMB. In other words, social actions are not challenged in an alternative cross-border governance account by the 'opening' of an arena, which actors more or less governmental can access. The essential part of the cross-border governance is not within the qualification of the actors. I maintain that the essential part of cross-border governance account resides in the means, which the actors *reflex* in the interaction between them.

'The Internet is the obvious example of a de-spatialised means of societal inclusion that has been made possible by technological advance. It also provides an excellent example of the double character of sovereignty and dependency that characterises the reflexive subject. The subject comes with a constellation that simultaneously constitutes it and provides it with a field of play'. (Beck, 2003: 25)

The relevance of the mass media in communication actions constitutes a relevant part of these reflexive processes. They identify the series of expectations and problems, which pertain to the interaction between actors and actions in EMB policy-making. The lack of a pre-given agenda based on fix trends of practices in leading the cross-border cooperation actions and behaviours of the arenas around the MB Mountain has provided for the CTMB to facilitate the use of public audiences and turn-conferences to spread intentions and specific focus marked from time to time by the EMB project. For this reason, the

⁴⁷⁸ This study of EMB through the INTERNET was published in 'Cross-Border Governance in the European Union' ed. by Kramsch, O.T. and Hooper, B. (2004) - Routledge.

mass media has become an integral part of the policy-making and in its forms of discursivity. The series of aims, policies, and signs invented by this cross-border experimentation result extremely influenced by the sources of the discourses diffused and received by the actors and the civil society. Responding to various solicitations for instance triggered by the environment organisations, the CTMB has very often ‘communicated’ its actions and future objectives through the media. Public audiences, publications of brochures, press conferences have very often advanced the actions related to the EMB policy-making. A contemporary analysis of the EMB policy-making appears thus significant in an analysis centred on the ‘actors’ and their interaction according to a means of public diffusion as the INTERNET. This resource has been fully inserted within the cross-border governance framework of the EMB project. In 2001 the CTMB formal arena launched the ‘*Year of Communication*’, a policy agenda concerning the divulgation of the EMB ideas. The construction of the EMB website was one initiative created with this aim. The other actors involved in the different aspects have also followed this idea. Especially more confused arenas of observers and spectators of the EMB policy-making. My interpretation of the INTERNET as a heterotopy of social space is like a reflection of the EMB arenas. Various criticisms concern the analysis centred on the INTERNET as a domain indifferent to the ‘hierarchies of power’ related to the effective real actions, which the ‘actors’ effectively perform during EMB policy-making. Beside the limits of this analysis, the virtual domain of the INTERNET accentuates the networks of the public, which appear through the EMB as a ‘problematical’ domain. While a current analysis centred on the policy-making, the ‘actors’ and the ‘actions’ emerge through the consequential stages of the events concerning the problems and their solutions; an analysis centred on the INTERNET reports two further aspects to consider in contemporary space making.

- 1) The actors through their screens, their ‘masks’ speak about EMB within the same contingency in *time*. Those who express different or similar opinions give a particular edge about how the *problem* is perceived within a public sphere;
- 2) The *virtual reality* is part of an *effective reality*. In other words, the INTERNET reproduces mirrors of realities and mirrors of actions, which ‘are’ actually included within some spheres of the EMB policy-making.

EMB is a *heterotopy* of social space without mapping; a form of discourse in itself. Because virtually figurate according to ‘a variable geometry’⁴⁷⁹. The INTERNET seems particularly suggestive as regards. Starting from the use of a language particularly evocative from its same name - Espace Mont-Blanc – its narratives assume a structurally essential importance for the policy-making in cross-border cooperation domain. In the following section, a cross reading of the ‘other’ social spaces is proposed through the INTERNET. This is an integral inquiry to the analysis centred on the actors. Indeed the results of inquiries into EMB on the World Wide Web are not far removed from the futuristic forecasts proposed by Mitchell:

Technological development will interact with social and political interests, economic strategies, and cultural values in a complex and sometimes surprising way to produce a rich diversity of places and neighbourhoods.
(Mitchell 2002: 72)

Espace Mont-Blanc can also be interpreted according to a range of different categories of actors according to different domains: the institutional spheres on the different sides of the nation-state borders, the research realms, the tourism services, the environmental organisations. EMB ‘actors’ originate in different and global ‘real’ places

Technology is thus only one factor in a complex set of social causes’ (Nye and Kamarck 2002: 10);

To the query ‘Who speaks of/for Espace Mont Blanc?’ on the Internet, hundreds of websites suggest a reaction. As is revealed in what follows, however, the level of authentic experimentation provided by this medium is circumscribed to a limited number of cases. All of the web-based interventions to be examined become opportunely involved within a sense making of regional identification. In the EMB policy making this includes a particular heterotopy in the expression of its E-space. My ‘reading’ recommends a set of ‘windows’ through which the respective screens communicate. The model proposed by Nye as hypothesis of ‘diffusion of governance’ in the twenty-first century can be re-loaded to my screens’ analysis in an expression of governance.

‘We may find not centralisation or decentralisation but rather a diffusion of governance activities in several directions at the same time’.

⁴⁷⁹ I remember here the first phase of the policy making (Chapter 4). The CTMB local actors sustained from the beginning of the project that EMB has to be shaped by its ‘heart’ i.e. by the contents and consensus of the institutions involved and not from a ‘perimeter’. (Interview Rene’ Schwery, February 2004)

This model seems to me indeed particularly indicative in a matrix of synthesis, which can lead the EMB case study within the INTERNET as an instant of time.

'...map of the possible dimensions of the locus of collective activities in a predominance of centripetal forces' (Nye, 2002: 4).

According to such an interpretative heteropy of space-time, the virtual actors of the EMB space respond to this governance map, opening a question of regional identification beyond a local governance issue.

	Private sectors	Public sector	Third sector
Supranational level	Transnational corporation	Intergovernmental organisation	Nongovernmental organisation
National level	National corporation	Twentieth-century Model	National non-profits
Sub-national level	Local business	State and Local government	Local groups

Scheme 5.4. – The Diffusion of Governance in the Twenty-First Century by Nye (2002: 4)

The Third Sectors: EMB as Space for a Metaphorical Expression

A current label used by mountaineers and environmental organisations concerning the protection of the Mont Blanc and its 'pays' claims:

'Both the Alps and the territory of Mont Blanc are one of the most interesting natural and social regions, rich but sensitive'.

Agreements and conflicts at the very base of the EMB policy-making have been at the source of many narratives relative to environmental policies. The MB park policy has located the EMB's origins; it is not fortuitous that this topic is addressed by a large number of websites. Since the initiatives of the Mountain Wilderness International (MWI), which was established as one of the first associations dedicated to the environmental protection of Mont Blanc, to more recent actions by groups such as ICONOS, the trajectory of EMB has been split between those who are favourable to and those resistant

to oppose the particular mix of NGO actors and political parties involved in the site's preservation. Reflecting the latter position, the environmental NGO CIPRA introduces this message on its website.

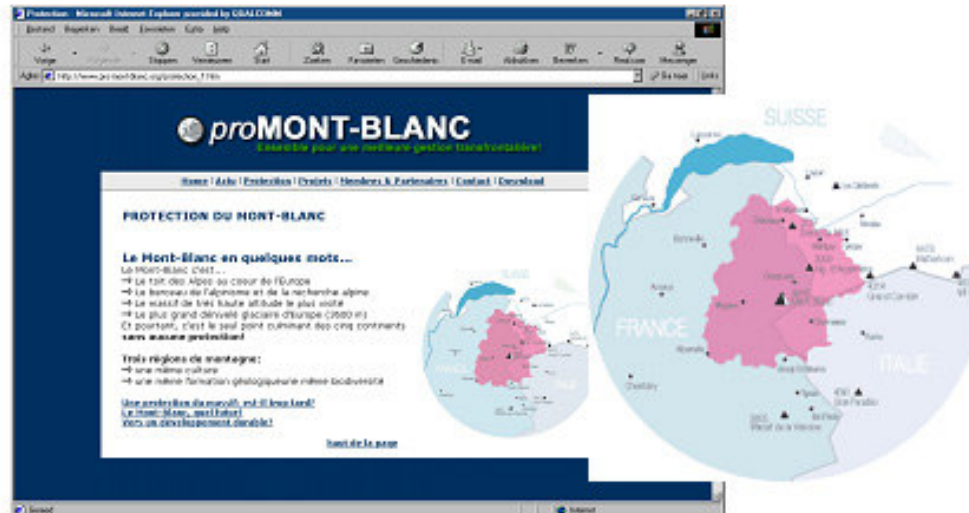


Figure 5.1. - Espace Mont-Blanc, as represented on the screens of an example of Non-Governmental Organisations (January 2003)

'L'espace around the MB is today in a transformation phase... L'Espace Mont Blanc, an alibi?'

Environmental groups have been crucial as actors in the EMB project start-up and follow-up. The requirements for the environmental protection of Mont Blanc are interlaced with instantiations of the EMB image within an arena of consensus that extends beyond the local. Up to a certain point, environmental associations play a parallel role primarily by staging protests, but they also strive to gain a role as observers and influential actors within the EMB policy making. Common aspects of their websites concern images of demonstrations, which have succeeded through large-scale mobilisations. Many sites provide a forum for fund-raising and issue discussion. In some instances the E-Space of the Mont Blanc region is metaphorically depicted as the summit of the world.

Around the debates on the EMB policy-making efficacy, the environmental actions become particularly intense following the Mont Blanc Tunnel accident. The tunnel is indeed another durable symbol for the EMB cross-border region. This is a symbol of union across the nation-state borders and beyond the shared physical caused by the Mountain; the same entity, which clusters inhabitants according with a same source and

physically, divides them. In the aftermath of the accident, the Mont-Blanc Tunnel acquires a double meaning. It embodies both the symbol of local interests and the visible trends of a globalising power. A frequent website behaviour on the matter is quick to point out that in 1991 more than 750,000 lorries passed through the Valley. Recent debates on the re-opening of the MBT have once again ignited a controversial discussion regarding its area protection. The Association pour le Respect du Site du Mont-Blanc (ARSMB) website is even equipped with a forum for the exchange of information between the users. Other websites offer a means to propose a popular vote in order to have a quick order of consensus against the re-opening the MB Tunnel to the lorry traffic. Websites come somewhere; international actors like the World Wildlife Fund or Greenpeace, or others geared towards the national or local levels meet here. They too provide images contrasting beautiful landscapes and smiling people-in-action against lorries and crowded entrances to the MB tunnel. For them the EMB is best represented by the metaphorical image of a fragile leaf. Their screens are brimming with news of varied and unfolding protest actions.

The Sub-National Public Sector: EMB as Space for Interpretation

The INTERNET also offers space for interpretation in websites of local and regional administrative organisations. Some of them interpret the EMB policy-making as an agenda of contents. Some of them propose even their own mapping. Playing a role in the latter category is the example of the institutional website of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region and the official website of the state of Geneva. At first glance the behaviour of these public sector institutions are inclined to justify the EMB project in terms of local efforts. The requirement to place collective actions linked to transport and the environment on the public agenda. Their websites feature curiously personalised screens.

The Aosta Valley Autonomous Region, for instance, dedicates a high number of pages to the description of the EMB mission. Through their site it is possible to visit or retrieve official documentation or dossiers describing some parts of the EMB chart. The site differentiates itself through its symbols and in the way it produces a representational map of the *E-space*. Here the official symbol of EMB found in three multi-coloured dancing sprites (red, blue and white) cavorting about the Mont Blanc against a white and green background. The map clearly distinguishes regional and national borders.

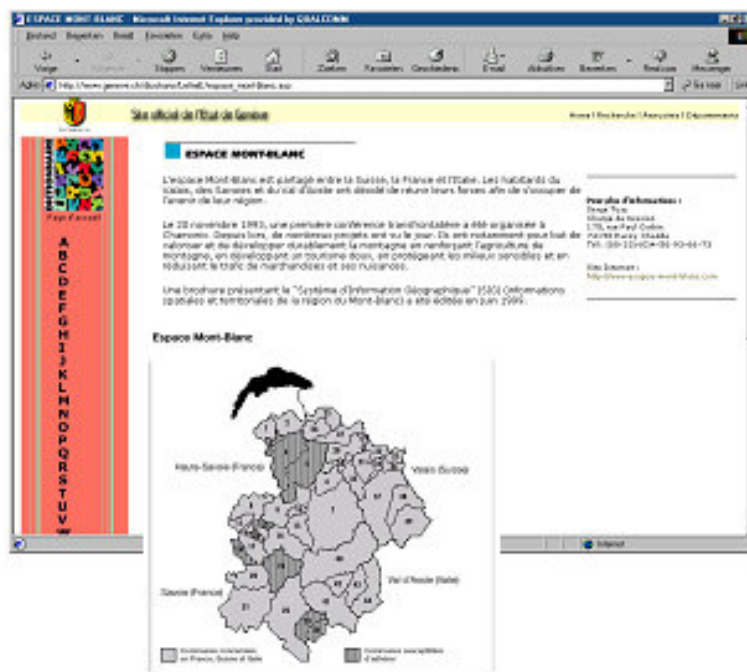
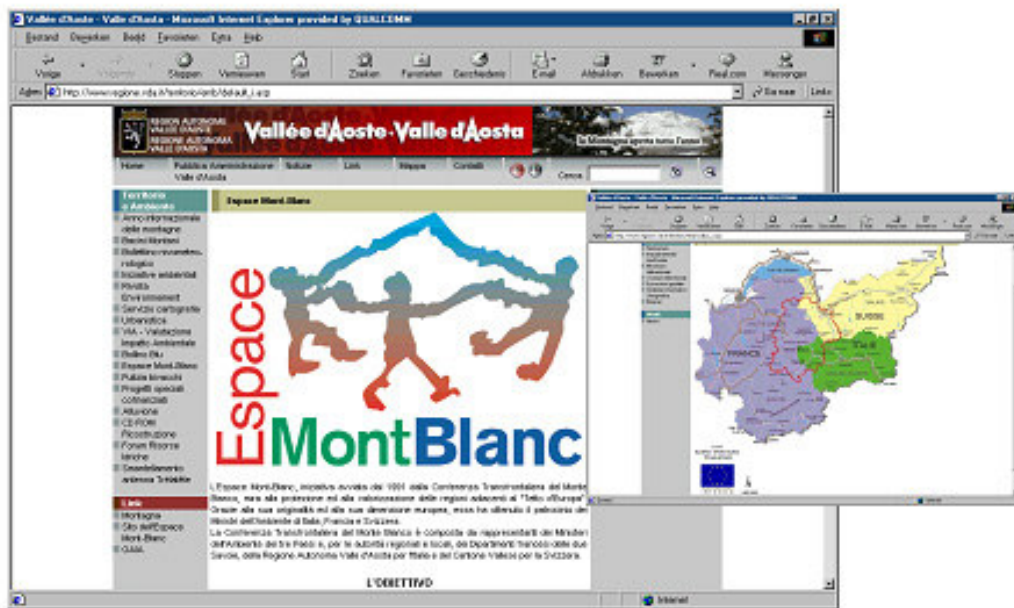


Figure 5.2.- Espace Mont Blanc, as viewed through the websites of sub-national public administrative bodies (January 2003).

A new slogan appears: ‘The stake in EMB is the territory.’ The State of Geneva features only one page dedicated to EMB, which briefly explains the partnership involved between Switzerland (Vallaise), France (Savoie) and Italy (Aosta Valley Autonomous Region). The accompanying map is not contextualised, and it describes neither regional nor national borders. No refrain is associated with the project.

The Local Level of Private Sector Actors: EMB as Space of special Identification

The symbolic appeal of the EMB discourse is also tied to commercial information by private-sector practice. Numerous websites advertise locally or regionally-based on food production. Featuring maps of EMB as the cross-borderland of prestigious wine and */fontina* cheese produced via 'local' and 'original' means: 'Nous sommes des explorateurs des territoires qui entourent le Mont-Blanc'. Other screens derive from local tourist services. Myriad sites crowd this theme, all offering the image EMB as a space of leisure-time idyll in the mountain air, featuring images ranging from rafting to skiing, hot-air ballooning to ski schools, including technical matters pertaining to high-mountaineering. The INTERNET also makes available numerous meteorological web-cams informing about the weather on the MB Mountain summit, enticing visitors from all over the globe. Almost all of the tourist-related websites showcase the small villages or *pays* of the EMB as exclusive and protected tourist spaces.

The Conference Transfrontaliere du Mont Blanc: EMB as Space for incremental institutionalisation

Any common search engine reaches the EMB website rather easily. The address, *www.Espace-mont-blanc.com*, does not denote any nationally defined paternity, or European reference. It is just this institution: Espace Mont Blanc. In its slogan, the term 'Espace' is conjoined to the term 'region':

'The Espace Mont Blanc exemplifies cross-border co-operation for the harmonious development of a Europe of Regions'.

Its home page does not contain any national flags nor any particular European iconography, just one newly invented symbol: three sprites playing ring-a-ring-o'-roses around the mountain. The sprites are coloured blue, red, and white, and play against a blue background showcasing the Mont Blanc Massif.

An accompanying list indicates other links to the physical form of the territory, a short history of the project, as well as the institutional structure of the EMB project. The website is edited in Italian and French, each revealing slight differences. The site's home page contains instructions to access a photograph gallery, available documentation, including other website links and contacts. A news update is also provided. All symbols and writing are visible in the shadow of a metaphorical golden eagle.

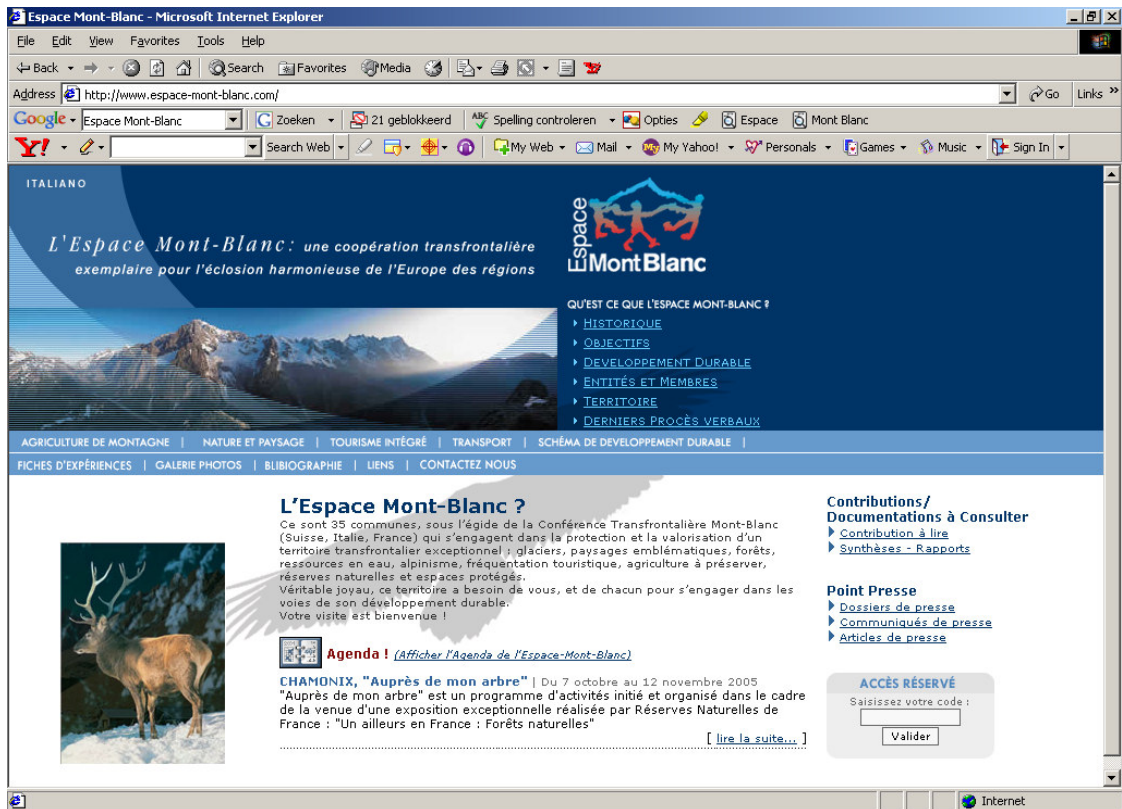


Figure 5.3 - Espace Mont Blanc from the official home page of the CTMB website as appears today (Visit of the website on October 2005).

At the moment of my analysis the temporal reference is tied to news regarding conference meetings and the publication of an air-quality study conducted by the CTMB. A main goal of the website appears to be to present ‘what the EMB is’ as a project of local cooperation. No database exists, with the exception of a territorial reference map indicating the territorial units and total surface area located around the entire Mont Blanc. Such a map is removed from any other territorial context and contains a drawing of road infrastructures. Just two maps of the EMB territory stand out on the website of CTMB. One, physical and static, is named ‘territory’; the other is ‘political’ and active. The latter is labelled as ‘municipalities map’ (Carte des Communes, figure 5.4), indicating where the relevant administrative borders of municipalities are located. No reference is marked to national or regional borders. Through this site it is thus possible to obtain information for each municipality, at least if the municipality is a member of EMB or is likely to become a part in the future.

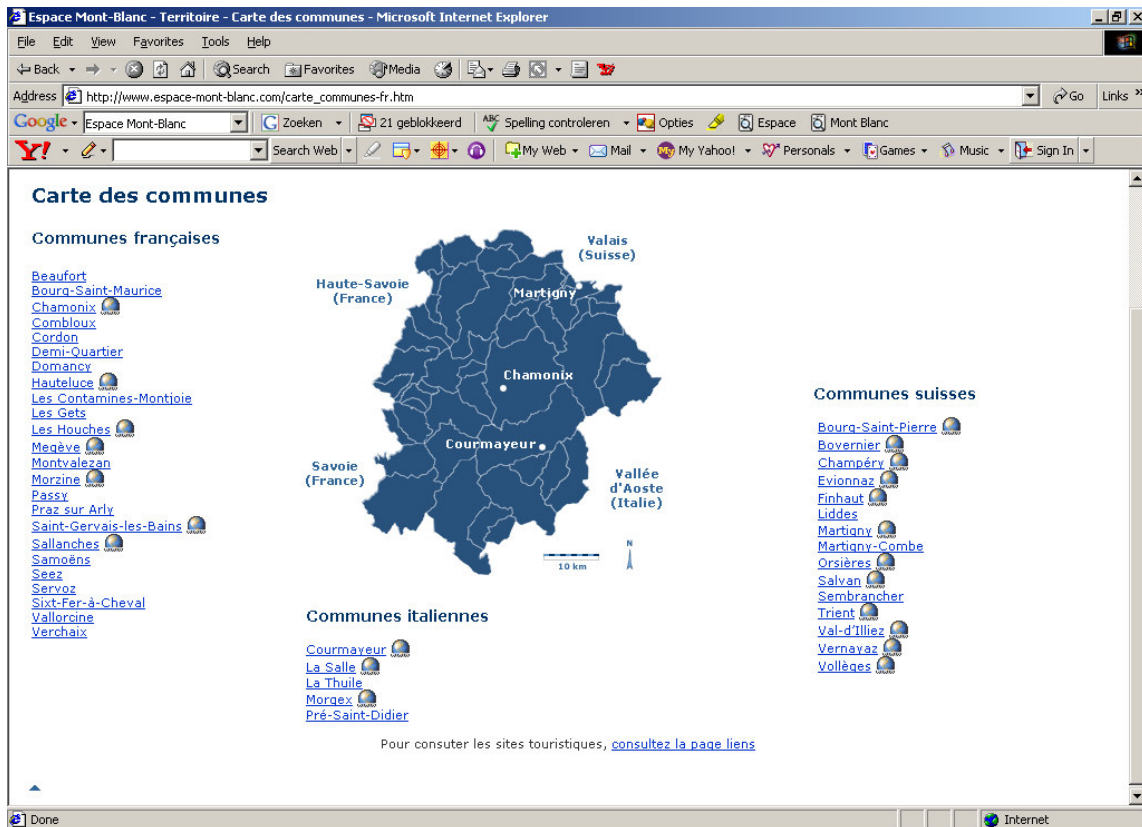


Figure 5.4 - Map of the EMB cross-border region shape. The only borders are marked in-between the municipalities involved (Visit of the website on October 2005).

Such an image, illuminating the future embedded in the present of the EMB, might appear a bit odd at first sight. However, it represents an attempt to spatially visualise an evolving and conflict-laden process of negotiation in which the relevant stakes are defined by the acceptance or rejection of some municipalities to belong to the EMB. I suggest this map forms the basis of an ideal and institutional utopia⁴⁸⁰ for the Espace Mont Blanc policy-making. No distinction is made between the number of municipalities participating in the EMB project and those that could become so in the near future. The map is thus the product as well as medium for the multiple interpretative contexts, which give the meaning of a not-concluded *Espace*.

⁴⁸⁰ The use of the concept of utopia is in my work assumed according to its different facets. In other words, I assume 'utopia' for its ambiguous meaning. 'Utopia varies in content, in form and in function' (Visser, 2001). In general I use the contemporary use of utopia in the sense of scenario or a mirror of present-day society. It is here considered as an always 'not yet' societal critical sign.

Through its specific representational cartography, ‘Espace’ becomes an untranslated word hovering in a virtual world. It is significant that the word ‘border’ does not appear on any page of the EMB website.

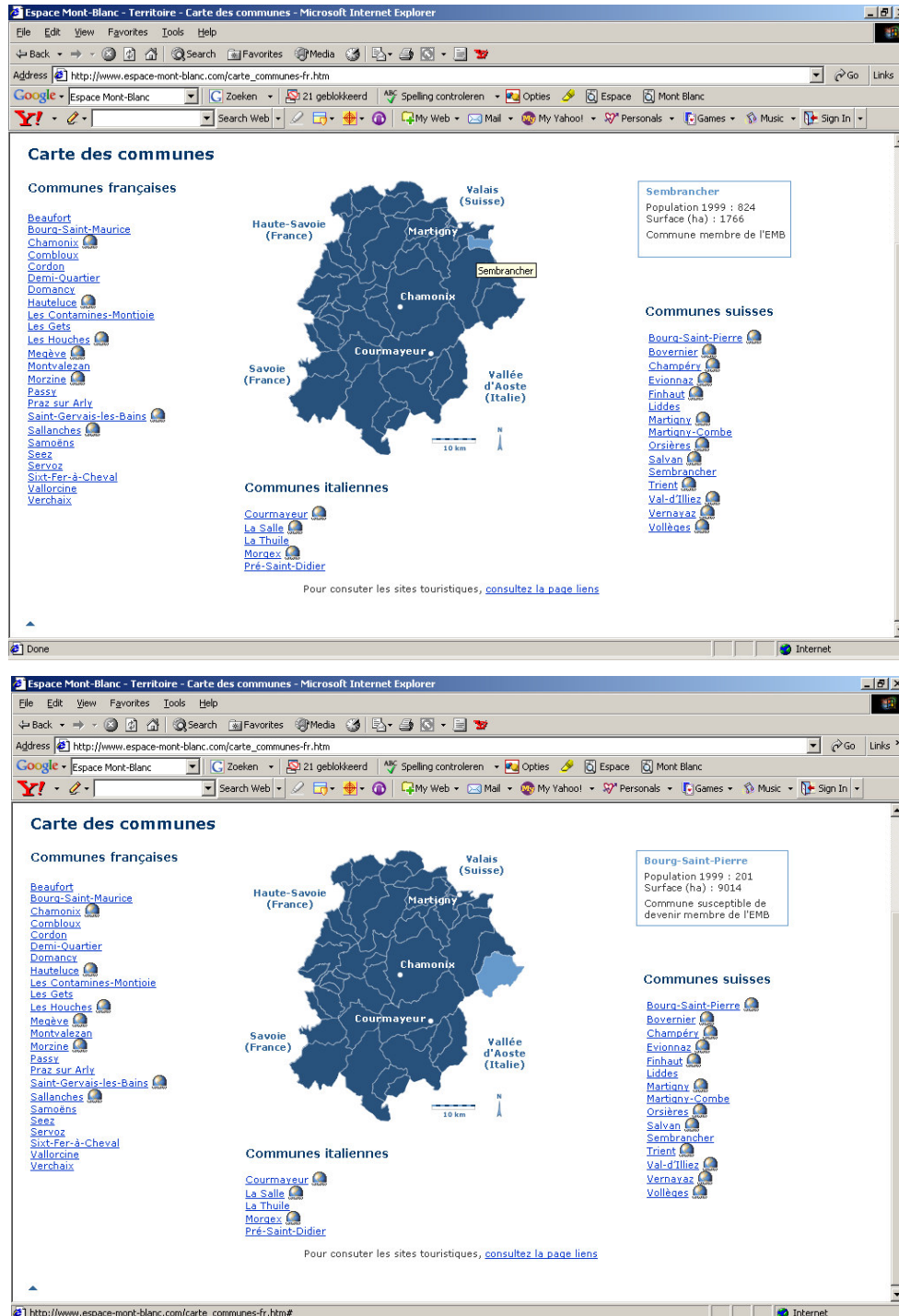


Figure 5.5 - Map of the EMB cross-border region shape with the municipalities actively involved and those susceptible to be involved within a 'not yet'. (Visit of the website on October 2005).

The cross-border cooperation account only is defined vaguely in association with various forms of 'activity'. Here, (figure 5.5) the national border is banished from the 'municipalities map', and represented on the 'physical map' of the Mont Blanc summit as a mere line of contact drawn in red. It is a declared general focus of the website to build a common (trans-border) policy for the active exploitation of the mountain, as well as to create a pilot space of experimentation for sustainable development. In addition to such label other themes are also presented. For years the space of such a website has lack of any forum for the exchange of ideas or news between users⁴⁸¹. In this respect it has functioned much like a uni-directional shop-window⁴⁸². The list of links to other websites are mixed together and not grouped by nationality. With just a few clicks, it is possible to return to the website home page of the EMB's respective member states. In a general way, French links pertain to institutional bodies; Italian links are oriented towards environmental and tourist-related issues; and the Swiss site refers above all to territorial management and economic development.

5.4 EMB IN A DIMENSION OF CROSS-BORDER REGIONAL INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN: CREATIVITY IN/BETWEEN 'INSIDERS' AND 'OUTSIDERS'

In the conceptual framework of my initial premise on the dimensions of the change of the 'public action' at the nation-border state according to a question of CBR institutional design three general trends have been indicated. They have been concerned with my personal interpretation for an analysis centred on cross-border cooperation policy-making. According to this interpretation:

- 1) The geographical scope which could be explained as a *functional regional cross-border identity-identification question*;
- 2) The types of actors in *social strategies* of 'public' in *multiple social space*;

⁴⁸¹ I would recommend comparing the home pages reported in figures 4.10 (published in 2001) and figure 5.3 (published in 2005) to notice the difference in the use of this channel of communication.

⁴⁸² To my publication of this early version of web site review (2004) and observation I lead a direct talk with some actors of the CTMB. Currently (starting from spring 2005) the web pages of the EMB have changed this interactive role entering fully in the EMB policy-making also with the inserting of various questionnaires and the possibility to fill online by the INTERNET community.

3) The mode of governance as *attitude* to lead *territorializing* through *interaction* within a possible framework of *collective governance*.

I shall argue in the following, that the EMB experimentalism, opening the social strategies of 'public' towards a various typology of actors move all of them towards a cross-border 'institutional design'. These strategies, rendered through the previous three examples of 'arenas', tackle the EMB in relation to a series of contexts-actions-actors. They are developing in a kind of continuous or not-ended social space in progress. The aim of the previous instances was in my account, that of opening up a critical analysis for the EMB 'policy-making' keen on cross-border governance perspectives. The governance problem for the EMB policy-making pertains to both who *participates*⁴⁸³ and according to which kind of consistency of actions or strategies of interaction they introduce⁴⁸⁴. The investigation just proposed above has pointed out the analysis of three different aspects of EMB 'policy-making':

- _ A chronological sequence based on phases,
- _ The organisation of the EMB official charts in the CTMB formal arena
- _ The widespread communication on the INTERNET

All these aspects constitute a framework through which the EMB arena's composition occurs. All these facets also frame an ongoing process of social mobilisation in which both actors and actions are a constituent part of a hypothesis of institutional design. In the following I propose a synthesis of the actors and the actions that have emerged in the previous analysis. Interpreting Nye's scheme on the 'diffusion of governance in the twenty-first century' (2002) as a wider design where the actions and the actors witness the EMB policy-making. In this scheme I want to point out (Scheme 5.5):

- _ The origin of the actors who intervene as contexts of definition and re-definitions of EMB policy-idea;
- _ How the cross-border institutions constitute the change in public action at the nation-state border;

⁴⁸³ With this I want to underline that there is a substantial difference between the willing participation in policy-making processes from various typologies of actors and the constitution of a part of a policy-network account in governance.

⁴⁸⁴ Obviously the theory developed by Joseph Nye (2002) is here not a casual reference. I sustain that cross-border governance is an example of a more complex geography of powers (Keohane and Nye, 2000: 12).

- The whereabouts of the actors as ‘part’ of becoming in a process of mobilisation in cross-border actions.

Cross-border cooperation actions result dependent on various origin arenas and on different consistency of actions. Different parts, organisations and agencies find in the EMB a common intention of cross-border actions. A cross-border cooperation ‘policy’ assumes the actors are seeking a new institutional design.

This assumption denotes two other considerations:

- 1) The first pertains to who represents the cross-border as a technocratic arena. This means *what* the *activators* of EMB in cross-border cooperation assume as stake of ‘contractualisation’ in cross-border space.
- 2) The second refers instead to ‘who speaks about EMB’ as incremental systems of relations, which can be established between the multitudes of ‘actors’. They can intervene in a quality of ‘actions’.

Topics 1) and 2) come together in a mix between sorts of internality and externality within the EMB institutional design hypothesis. The actions-actors linkage integrates an interactive construction of ‘public’ actions in a framework of change. The general scheme (Scheme 3.1) concerning the three main dimensions in a cross-border institutional design hypothesis appears in the EMB case study to resist the ‘practices’ in change at the nation-state border. In other words, the EMB policy-making includes a ‘transformation’ of public action as accordance with the embodiment of two main types, which the institutional design is appreciable:

- 1) The actors produce in cross-border governance – as previously shown – systems can be thought as *policy discourses* instead of as *rules-policies*;
- 2) The *re-structuration* in a domain of ‘governance’ in cross-border cooperation account, can be intended as a particular *cross-border governance pattern*.

Furthermore, 1) and 2) pertain to the EMB policy-making within a passage between ‘institutional design’ and ‘institutional building’ in cross-border regionalism through its discursive forms.

EMB framework Interpretation Institutional design <i>Origin of the actors</i> <i>Consistency of the actions</i>		Private sectors	Public sector	Third sector
Supranational level	International channel influence on environmental interests		EU - INTERREG programme as channel of financing and possibility of actions UNESCO interest in participation as 'observer' in CTMB arena	Mountaineer organisations and environmental interest in social mobilisations and contesting the protection topic
Trans-national actions		National corporations on the three sides of the border	Other examples of Alpine Convention EMB as 'laboratory' ICONOS-UNESCO in MB as patrimony	National non-profit ONGs and mountaineer organisations in social mobilisations contesting the protection topic
Cross-border actions			CTMB arena coordination table for cross-border actions in EMB	GEIE-TMB
		Other INTERREG actions across the border state – in working also with semi-public and private participation		
Sub-national levels		Local business infrastructures management of 'domain skiabes' Tourist services and activities	State, Regional and Local governments at the border state (33 municipalities)	Local groups in action for protection of MB areas Local corporations against the lorries

Scheme 5.5. – An interpretation of the EMB policy-making starting from the diffused governance concept (Nye: 2002)

General dimensions in CBR institutional design experimentalism	EMB as institutional design: 'public actions' changes at the nation-state border
Functional/Regional cross-border identity question (course of actions)	EMB as process of cultural social cross-border regional identity in course of cross-border actions EMB as Cross-Border regional identification question in a process of cultural EU transnational integration
Political/mobilisation of social strategies and 'public' in multiple social spaces (mobilisation of actors)	EMB as means for diffusion of actors and actions beyond the border state and beyond the consistency of the <i>decisions</i> in public domains
Territorial/ modes of governance as <i>attitude</i> in politicisation cross-border space through interaction (course of actors and actions)	EMB is a path of social 'interaction' towards a cross-border governance question

Scheme 5.6. – An interpretative analysis of EMB 'dimensions' as institutional design according to the general scheme proposed as scheme 3.2 in Chapter 3.

5.5 EMB AS POLICY DISCOURSE

EMB identifies a course of the 'transformation' in 'public actions' at the nation-state border through 'discursive practices'. Recalling Foucault (1971:245) I suggest that the EMB policy-making appears as a project 'in becoming' during the course of actions which have progressed within its 'discursive practice'. Not just the specificity of the 'multiple' domains 'as typology of actors' opens thus the sense making of EMB towards an institutional path. Notably new actors⁴⁸⁵ meet cross-border 'practices' in the EMB policy making as a new process of accessibility in social mobilisation. This feature introduces an enlargement of social expectations towards contemporary institutional designs.

'the process of institutionalisation is the only process able to control modernisation and social mobilisation and it is also the only way to produce stability in a political system' (Morlino, 2000: 1097)

⁴⁸⁵ Various typologies of NGOs, the UNESCO and the GEIE for instance.

However, EMB corresponds, as other CBRs to the European Union political system. This is appreciable considering the EMB project as an experience, which meets different fragments in its function of discourse. As such, the social mobilisation triggered is an integral part of this cross-border policy application. In other words, EMB as ‘discursive practice’ operates a ‘transformation’ at the nation-state border not just as regards the ‘results’ descended from a material and specific problem solving. Its ‘effects’ are the keystone of an understanding of EMB as policy discourse. Such a discourse function epistemically, adjusting the Border State as re-organising principles of social actions within the process of European integration. As such, EMB is a policy discourse which embodies ‘a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed to give meaning to physical and social relations’ (Hajer, 1995: 44).

Assumed that ‘discourse analysis in politics begins with the recognition that discourses are distributed across institutions. In addition to the dominant discourses, competing discourses struggle to gain recognition of power. A key task for the analyst is to account for the viewpoints and positions from which actors speak and the institutions and processes that distribute and preserve what they say. (Fisher, 2003: 76)

Besides the bureaucratic communication, which pertains to the EMB charts, the analysis, which I have previously reported aimed at understanding how various forms of discourse in use within different ‘social spaces’, need to be recognised (Fraser, 1989: 165) within a form of relational power. Moving towards this focus, EMB can be interpretive as an alternative resource of deliberation for different social problems and issues. Foucault maintained that the ‘discursive practices’ sustain a game of prescriptions, exclusions and choices⁴⁸⁶. To re-join all the ‘social spaces’ within a system of determination in ‘discursive practices’ leads the EMB ‘policy discourse’ to an adjustment between arguments and resistances. I construe three main domains according to an interpretative domain of ‘structuration’⁴⁸⁷ to this regard.

- 1) *Prescriptions* can be referred to the production of strategies in social relationships existing in/for political institutions. I refer to this domain as discursive ‘*outside*’ or ‘*out-there*’.

⁴⁸⁶ La Volonté de Savoir, Annuaire du Collège de France, 71e année, Histoire de Système de la Pensée, année 1970-1971; 1971: 254-249

⁴⁸⁷ I refer in a way to a concept of structuration framed by Giddens, 1979.

- 2) *Exclusion* can concern the determination of objects and its techniques of alteration in sophistication of concepts also through communicative means. I figure this domain as discursive '*inside*' or '*in-here*'.
- 3) *Choices* imply the options, which emerge from other discursive practices⁴⁸⁸. I mention this domain as discursive '*along side*'.

The 'ensemble' of social spaces related to the EMB project concerns the establishment of various actions of cooperation across the nation-state border. It also pertains to the reactions advanced by various parts of the public opinion consequence to such. Ideas, images, languages, narratives and slogans have been developed between several features and actors during the progressing of the EMB *policy discourse*. This concerns at first the domain of *change* in 'public actions' at the nation-state border. The EMB project emerges as such as a process of institutionalisation in cross-border regionalism. In the EMB project the double passage to *discourse structuration*⁴⁸⁹ and *discourse institutionalisation* seems particularly interesting and problematical at the same time. *Discourse structuration* in EMB corresponds to a path of *institutional design* because it refers to the transformation of the ideas in which the actors draw a particular ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations. The 'cross-border policy' introduces the option according to which EMB becomes a realm able in reproduction of social spaces. A more crucial passage concerning the EMB as *institutional building* pertains to the hypothesis of EMB as *site of/for discourse institutionalisation*. The *policy discourses structuration* pertains to cross-border policy as cross-border regional institutional design. The *structuration of discourses* corresponds to an institutional governance building, which in EMB policy-making appears as a process still on going and in some way not concluded. In this sense the EMB discourse structuration is not yet limited to *a whole* as ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorisations, which can be translated into a '*structured way*' of institutional arrangement. Taking these two passages from the Hajer (1995) for example on the environmental discourses he reports about ecological modernisation:

`discourse structuration ... for instance if actors credibly... depends on the usage of the terms of ecological modernisation in the domain of environmental politics' `discourse institutionalisation ... if the theoretical concepts of ecological modernisation are translated into concrete policies (i.e. shifting investment on mobility from road to

⁴⁸⁸ All the dynamics of the park policies and the TMB accident policies are linked for instance to this domain of EMB discursive practices.

⁴⁸⁹ Hajer (1995) considers essentially two passages, which pertain to the classification. In the first passage (discourse structuration) the actors are increasingly forced to draw on a particular ensemble of ideas, concepts and in order to define a plausible problem situation. While, in the second passage, called discourse institutionalisation, a particular ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations are translated into institutional arrangements.

rail) and institutional arrangements (i.e. introduction of multi-value auditing, or the restructuring of old departmental decisions' (Hajer, 1995:61)

According to Hajer, this double passage - *discourse structuration* and *discourse institutionalisation* – also follows opportune continuation in a sequence of time. However, there is not a net separation between discourse institutionalisation and processes of structuration.

'the *discourse institutionalisation* reinforces both itself and the *process of structuration*. When existing policy is based on a particular discourse, policy proposal based on similar ideas are more easily translated into official policy because they underpin rather than undermine existing institutional arrangements'. (ibid.)

EMB as 'policy discourse' in cross-border regionalism frames a series of actors who are various in origin and sectors. They run across existing national and local arenas, trans-local regional agencies and between other actors. This forms a favourable path of 'discourse structuration' and therefore reinforces its institutional design. In my interpretation of Hajer's words, there is a path of *structuration* in policy discourses which follows a channel of *institutional design*; the discursive *institutionalisation* results in the direction of the *institutional building*. Thinking about the EMB project, the 'discursive policy' has been related at first to the diffusion of an alternative idea in existing policy managing. Just consequentially, starting from the environment problems in cross-border manner, the EMB has turned up the issue on a question of regional identification. This latter passage is like an effect of the EMB discursive practices. It represents the linkage between policy discourses and regional institutional design. The creation of new discursive practices can emerge in a general way, producing general inputs in institutional design. In the case of EMB, the institutional design implies an important horizon in creation of a demand for institutional building. The discursive practices linked to the *exclusion* raise the issue of attitude of/for democratic governance. The 're-composition' of a 'discourse structuration' (that is the 'institutional design') implies the reference to cross-border governance 'mode' (that is in the 'institutional building'). In other words, the 're-composition' implies that the actors and the actions devise and defend a common strategy in a 'structured way'.

5.6 EMB IN A QUESTION OF RE-STRUCTURATION IN PATTERN OF GOVERNANCE

Socio-political mobilisation refers to various expressions of problems and conflicts, which are at the origin of a 'structuration of discourses' and thus in a direction of 'institutional

design'. *Various, mischievous forms* of governance 'beyond the state'⁴⁹⁰ can identify, describe or analyse such processes⁴⁹¹. Nevertheless, the cross-border governance 'mode' is not in my assumption a 'dispersed' type of essentially 'type II' of multi-level governance⁴⁹². It is instead central to the topic of the *re-composition* of social 'interaction' in which actors-actions maintain an *attitude* of/for democratic governance.

'Governance-beyond the state systems are presumably horizontal, networked, and based on interactive relations between independent and interdependent actors that *share a high degree of thrust*, despite internal conflicts and oppositional agendas, within inclusive participatory institutional or organisational associations' (Swyngedouw, 2004:10).

Is such a description sufficient to reflect also 'governance' in which the EMB process can be found? The issue of the 'high degree of thrust' proposed by Swyngedouw has a sense as social 'interactions' between actors and the actions in the EMB cross-border governance. My former attempt to look at EMB as discursive practices, which include and assume a passage to an institutionalisation path, distinguishes the institutional design from the institutional building. It implies that the discourse institutionalisation contents in EMB construction is based on a *common discursive strategy* to devise and to defend by the actors involved. This is a matter of cross-border governance account. Eising, Koller-Koch (1999: 5) with their definition of 'network governance' point out a meaning of governance which foresees the *structuration of ways* in which the actors' preferences, although divergent can be translated into '*policy choices*' to allocate values. This definition is based on the issue of a 'plurality of the interests' transformed into 'coordinated actions'. I find this an opportune foundation to elaborate for a cross-border governance form understanding. Network governance interprets a concept of 'governing' as 'active action', which is in my purpose very close to the idea of functioning in the essence of 'relational governance'. The Foucauldian *governmentalization* seems to emerge in this shift allowing different patterns of governance to co-exist in a hypothesis of network in *coordination in cross-border actions*. In this

⁴⁹⁰ Swyngedouw distinguishes the modes of 'governance beyond the state' from the state-based arrangements, which are hierarchical and top-down forms of setting rules, and exercising power, mobilising technologies of government market by policing, bio-political knowledge, and bureaucratic rules.

⁴⁹¹ A course of literature starts from the assumption that the dispersion of governance across multiple jurisdictions is both more efficient than, and normatively superior to, central state monopoly (Marks and Hooghe, 2000). 'They claim that governance must operate at multiple scales in order to capture variations in the territorial reach of policy externalities. Because externalities arising from the provision of public goods vary immensely – from planet-wide in case of global warming to local in the case of most city services – so should be the scale of governance' (Marks, Hooghe, 2004: 16).

⁴⁹² As I assumed in Chapters 2 and 3 the cross-border governance shift in cross-border regionalism can be explained as a type II of multi-level governance (Hooghe, Marks, 2001; 2003).

light, the meaning of governance, as ‘coordination between multi-players in a complex setting of mutual dependence’ is in my interpretation a reference to seek for governance features across the nation-state borders as a special kind of ‘interaction’ such as ‘site’. My conceptual framework has also approached a path of cross-border governance according to not eliminating the role of the State or the role of the borders as institutional sources of cross-border governance mode. I just noticed that in my idea, State and Borders enter a more complex geography. As such, I mentioned the Border State as a ‘place’ which emerges as a sort of ‘contractualisation’ in cross-border space proper of this complex geography. This is also an opportune linkage with the construction of a cross-border discursive strategy. The ‘Border State’ appears particularly in evidence in the discourse structuration of EMB as institutional design. The structuration of EMB as a *common strategy* in cross-border activity is a possibility for the introduction of a ‘special policy’ expressed both⁴⁹³ as a new agenda for existing institutions or as a completely new possibility for a device focused on coordination in cross-border⁴⁹⁴. In this phase of ‘contractualisation’ the existing institutions of the nation-state are fully invested in the institutional design. The creation of a new name and new symbols are signs of these kinds of ‘contractualisation’ between and beyond the existing institutions of the State. The *common discursive strategy* of EMB, in this sense, operates in a continuous ‘along side’ the orders’ hierarchical existing institutions acting within current forms of state regulation. The ‘along side’ of EMB’s features corresponds to an active social tension in current political-systems, which is based on government democratic legitimacy. The political nation-state system is very influential on Europeanisation dynamics and its domestic expectations. Social mobilisation is intended as an incremental system of social relations between a multitude of stakeholders and dominant actors, which pertains to EMB policy-making. The EMB process can be synthesised briefly into a matrix where different factors of construction and structuration of the EMB features interact:

- The discourse structuration towards ‘externalities’ that is cluster of practices and languages which are developed also through forms of individual agents in a domain of ‘diffused governance’;

⁴⁹³ Structures are considered by Giddens, as something, which enter the construction of agent and from here into the practices that this agent produces (Giddens, 1979: 5). With the notion of ‘duality of structure’, structures are both medium and outcome of the reproduction of practices.

⁴⁹⁴ This is foreseen for example also using the European target of EU INTERREG application which implements its discursive forms.

<p>EMB as institutional design - Discourse structuration - (Ensemble of ideas, concepts, definition of EMB in discursive practices)</p>	<p>EMB as institutional building - Discourse institutionalisation - (Ensemble of ideas, concepts, definitions of EMB translated into institutional arrangement)</p>
<p>EMB as means for <u>diffusion</u> of actors and actions in cross-border cooperation beyond the consistency of the <i>decisions</i> in public domains (mobilisation of social spaces in a diffused governance, participation on a discursive strategy)</p>	<p>EMB in a 're-composition' of social 'interaction' towards an <i>attitude</i> of a democratic governance in a cross-border governance question</p> <p>EMB as problematical dimension of '<u>internal</u>' governance (internal integration: capacity to integrate organisations, actors, social groups, and different interests in order <u>to devise a common discursive strategy</u>) CTMB</p> <p>EMB as problematical dimension of '<u>external</u>' governance (external integration: political capacity to represent outside and <u>to defend a discursive strategy</u>, unified collective representation and to extract resources) (Recognising of EMB as political space in a diffused governance)</p>

Scheme 5.7. – Interpretation of EMB as institutional design and institutional building problems through discursive institutionalisation problems and local governance (references to Hajer, 1995 and Le Gales, 1998).

The discourse institutionalisation as process of EMB recognising in feed back though externalities, that is the manifested way generally acknowledged as the effect of reproduction and diffusion of practices for EMB cross-border regionalism. The EMB as a pattern of interaction implies the reference to a system of governance in cross-border. This is a concept, which implies, with reference to the previous scheme, a double form of interaction between the features of governance (Le Gales, 1998). The interactions between actors in cross-border space occur according to different agents with other position and practices. Cross-border governance can emerge in-between:

- 'Internal' arenas through which agents and actions are integrated according to an organisational arrangement;
- 'External' arenas through which agents and actions devise a common discursive strategy 'outside'.

Such interaction between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ define a range of reciprocity or mutuality in which cross-border institutional governance building occurs. In other words, it expresses a kind of ‘site’ where a particular politicising activity is on going:

‘Political spaces are social spaces wherein actors meet to make, apply, interpret and enforce rules; they are thus sites of collective governance. They are distinguishable from other kinds of social spaces in that their purpose is to enable actors to produce rules-policies-governing subsequent interactions involving people connected to the political space, either by virtue of citizenship - which can be functional in the sense that it implies belonging to a particular collectivity or engagement in a particular activity - or by presence in a geographical territory’. (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, Fligstein, 2001)

Indeed if the consideration of the actors and their consistence which expresses also their repetitive (and virtual) actions already find an explanation in the typology of actors-actions analysis, the questions remain about the systems of relation of interaction which in cross-border governance occur. In my Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 conceptual framework, I mentioned the sorts of pattern which intervene in cross-border governance as a *re-composition of cross-border institution in partnership*. The EMB example seems expressive of different horizons of significance and context of relevance which I try in the fellow scheme to synthesise.

Which kinds of heterarchic coordinations are taken on in cross-border institutional arrangement on a ‘regional’ meaning? In which manner does the cross-border agency function in mediating active in-between multiple institutional settings? EMB has changed the ‘public action’ at the nation-state border with an alternative ‘discourse structuration’ which pertains to the ‘Border State’ ‘institutional design’. Towards the ‘institutional governance building’ hypothesis, the politicising of the space and the interrelation with the ‘territorial’ relations is essentially the way to refer to this event as an alternative form. So far from assertions concerning ‘regulations’, the EMB ‘cross-border governance’ process can be supposed within patterns of democratic governance as deliberative interaction. As such, the creative institutionalisation of the Border State appears involved in a continuous dynamical process of ‘discourse structuration’ and ‘discourse institutionalisation’.

EU Political Frontier Regime and Network governance	Cross-border governance features	EMB cross-border governance
Role of the State and State Borders Hierarchies	'contractualisation' in cross-border space	Institutional design in construction of a common discursive strategy (<u>along side</u>)
Dominant Actors Anarchies	System of relationships between multitude of stakeholders	Discourse structuration in diffused governance (<u>external</u>) Discourse institutionalisation in defending a discursive strategy (<u>external</u>)
Patterns of interaction Heterarchies	Re-composition of institutions in 'partnership'	Construction of a common discursive strategy in discursive institutionalisation (<u>internal</u>) Discourse institutionalisation in devising a discursive strategy (<u>external</u>)

Scheme 5.8. – Interpretative Scheme for the cross-border governance in EMB cross-border region

Summary Chapter 5

This Chapter has considered the behaviour of the actors involved in the EMB policy-making process as social spaces. In the first part, the phases of the policy-making described in the previous chapter have been reddening again in the light of the appearance and their actions relevant for the cross-border policy-making in the EMB. Represented in a traditional sequence between levels and sectors of belonging, and their roles in the EMB project appears unclear. In-between: 1) a trans-national agreement in regulative policy, 2) a new trans-local arrangement in public representation and 3) a general network of public action, the sphere of actions in EMB seems in need of new frameworks of analytical inquiries. A second reading aimed at the EMB process, focuses on the official chart of the project where the domain of actors and actions seem more definite in a script. The hypothesis of an

institutional emerging centrality comes out of the local and regional representatives, for which a further in depth study is dedicated. Starting in particular from a framework of actions (initial and pertaining to decision-making; participative and concerning policy-making; participative and linked to the unclear domain of actors-spectators) the analysis seeks for the limits of this fixed role in which the actors seem not to completely correspond. An additional suggestion navigating the INTERNET virtual space frames in a more decisive manner the way in which a series of actors 'stepping out' of the territorial limit of democratic governance' in a novel diffusion. The second part of this chapter concerns the dimension of cross-border regional institutional design. Defining a line of continuity between the institutional design and the structuration of discourses and the institutional building and the discourses institutionalisation, the 'Border State' appears in EMB within the construction of a common discursive strategy in-between the systems of relationship that lead the multitude of stakeholders and the contractualisation of the cross-border space in existing State Border hierarchies. The chapter concludes that the EMB as institutional building, which can correspond to discourse institutionalisation, is still an ongoing process within a domain of cross-border governance. This assumes what is the interaction between actors and actions in a mix between hierarchies and anarchies to assume a diverse pattern of governance in an institutional re-composition.

In the next chapter I will start from the question of the 're-composition' of a realm of governance, which is in cross-border domain. Cross-border governance assumes a diverse language in territoriality. This is a language, which exceeds the nation-state borders challenging the discourses as a limit in territoriality and in territorial policies. I will use a theatre metaphor to induce the reader to think of the re-composition of the institutions as a not concluded process in interaction, where the actors change their strategies and involve consequential public actions. They produce a way of acknowledging which has the effects of truth. This is the effect of the interaction, which is developed between the actors and at the same time limits the territorial action. This does not consider as exclusive 'limit' in territoriality the patterns of nation-state border. Relational forms of governance and other geographies of power are still licit as 'territorial governance'. With this perspective, I shall announce my general conclusions.

CROSS-BORDER REGIONALISM AS A SPATIAL STRATEGY

The EMB example concerns the issue of the 're-composition' in practices of cross-border governance. It assumes a diverse vocabulary in terms of territoriality. This is a vocabulary, which exceeds the nation-state borders as limits of territoriality and in territorial policy-making. The previous chapter has introduced the theme of the structuration and institutionalisation of 'discursive practice' inspired from the Foucauldian stance. This idea does not concern just types of representations. In this chapter the cross-border governance hypothesis is included as a relational form of territorial governance. My interpretation of EMB policy-making thus results based on processes of interaction between the actors in their building of a cross-border common discursive strategy of policy. This chapter attempts this interpretation of the issue of the actors and their dismissing in their rules in fixed territorial competencies. This is the possible interpretation of the cross-border governance mechanism, which re-organises the framework of meaning in the conduct of the social agents across the nation-state border territoriality. Their social relations through discursive positionalities take effect as deconstruction and reconstruction of interrelation, which take place in a novel cross-border space. This is the space where the play between the actors implies a specific technique, which organises a particular kind of interaction. A Pirandellian acting analogy is used here to understand that causality and expected results in discursive practices that can be included in a process of subjectification through inter-relations. These interrelations are the essential part of the strategies in consequential 'public actions' between the actors involved in a cross-border governance process. The social relations can work in features of network governance into a relational conception of space; de-nationalising territorial policy-making. This is also an account of identification of cross-border spatial features, which include the cross-border region between vocabularies of relational geographical conception. Are contemporary limits in territorial policy-making bounded by nation-state border patterns of governance? Although EMB and the cross-border regions are 'partial and local' episodes, perhaps they can give us some momentum of reflection about the space making in our present.

Discursive practices do not just pertain to styles of representation:

'They take shape in technical ensembles, in institutions, in behaviour schemes, in types of transmission and dissemination, in pedagogical forms that both impose and maintain themselves' (Foucault, 1997: 12)

The 're-composition' in 'discursive practices' is a conceptual crucial passage between the EMB as 'institutional design' - suggested by 'discourse structuration' - and the 'institutional building' supposed by 'discourse institutionalisation'. With the term 're-composition' I refer in this case to a way of governance, which is based on the

construction of a ‘common discursive strategy’. A ‘common discursive strategy’ constitutes a sort of ‘joint action’ in cross-border cooperation activity, the foundation through which a ‘partnership’ takes place. The ‘re-composition’ in a partnership is a ‘material’ possibility for the cross-border institutional governance building. Naturally one can say that a ‘discursive strategy’ is a ‘thing’ and not a ‘body’. A body has a ‘materiality’ of ‘structure’. I shall argue here below that in my hypothesis the difference between the flows of the social relations in which the discourses are structuring in the force of their interactions and the possibility in-or-for a common spatial strategy which is instead directly led to the institutional building - produced or re-produced through new different subjects and their technology - shows that the difference between the ‘thing’ and ‘the body’ is not so great. The process of ‘structuring’ and the fairly small steps in which a temporal ‘structure’ can be defined as such. This is also the crucial passage between the institutional design and the institutional building in spatial account. Hence, an approach essentially oriented to the study of dynamics of ‘politicising’ of space⁴⁹⁵.

‘...there is no separation between the structures and the processes of the part of the body that entertains the ideas and the part that performs acts. Brain and muscles work together, and the brains of men are much more important data for social science than are their muscular system and their sense organs’. (Dewey, 1927: 8)

A ‘change’ of the relationships between ‘state’ and territoriality in ‘public actions’ at the nation-state borders appears as a form of other - relational⁴⁹⁶ - spatiality. This pertains to ‘institutional forms’ which the cross-border regions report as Border State. Elisabeth Grosz proposes a broad sentence, which inspires me in seeking the sense making of the EMB according to a diverse course of ‘institutionalisation’. Her reference to a general reflection ‘on the reality’ helps to me in shifting the nuances of the ‘change’ in part of the ‘territorial practices’ of our present.

Reality is mobile. There do not exist things made, but only things in the making, not *states* that remain fixed, but only states in a process of change. Rest is never anything but apparent, or rather, relative... *All reality is, therefore, tendency, if we agree to call tendency a nascent change of direction.* (Grosz, 2001: 173)

⁴⁹⁵ I find particularly interesting this continuous analogy between ‘space’ and ‘region as institutional space’ and ‘territoriality’ within social constructs. For instance: ‘Europe is experiencing a dramatic change in its institutionalisation: territorial shapes are being sought, symbols are under construction, and institutions are in the making at all spatial scales’ (Paasi, 2001: 25). For ‘politicising’ of space and territory I refer to all these aspects as interactive domains for the construction and legitimating of policies.

⁴⁹⁶ Healey (2004: 47) calls that an ‘alternative conception of space’. ‘An alternative relational conception sees space as an inherent spatiality in all the relations. In these ‘places of the mind’ are as significant as physical objects and flows, which is a continuous co-production of things and meanings’.

Can *patterns of interactions* have a different form as regards an ‘internal dimension of governance’⁴⁹⁷, through which a cross-border cooperation arena is expressed and ‘re-composed’? Can ‘embodiment’ mean a multiplicity of bodies, which are not to be re-composed in nested hierarchical utopian ideals⁴⁹⁸? Can an eventual *re-composition in partnership* find *space* in *heterarchic coordination* where the *substance* is expressed through flows of social relationships and interactions? Can a political space *be* hypothesised in-between ‘discourse structuration’ and ‘discourse institutionalisation’? Can therefore the ‘embodiment’ *be* a trend of ‘endless questioning’?

The limit, the frontier, the boundary, tiny-series of boundaries, or ditches, the void, or difference, they all are modifications of the line, the form of topo-logical thinking. Can we escape this thinking in terms of spatial metaphor? Must thinking be visual thinking? (Reichert, 1992: 13)

The re-composition ‘in partnership’ of a cross-border institutional building because based on discursive practices formed on the ‘outside’, ‘inside’ or ‘onside’⁴⁹⁹ responds to relational forms. Of course, also the idea of a network can be ‘geometrically’⁵⁰⁰ figured as metaphorical space. A metaphorically unbounded space...

Does not the space of the void only open up if one recognizes and respects the form and the limits of the body of its surrounding traditions? Does not the space of the void only open up for someone whose position is solid enough to reach out, hold together what stubbornly insists on its difference and keep apart what then wants to reconcile in reason’s alleged harmony? (Ibid.)

Social relations are also a product of a mobile set of interactions, which are not permanently fixed forms. As Rose argues (Rose, 1998: 10) an adequate account of subjectification is not available in a mechanism formed by identity structured in relations of *difference* but rather, by

⁴⁹⁷ As ‘internal governance’ I refer in this circumstance to an institutional derivation to processes of integration. As elsewhere I reported (Chapter 3) the concept of ‘internal integration dimension of governance’ is based on the capacity to integrate organizations, actors and social groups in a common strategy (Le Gales, 1998: 495). Around the topics as the ‘capacity to integrate’ and those of ‘common strategy’ I would like to elaborate an interpretative hypothesis which was born from the consideration of the ‘actors’ in their interactions towards a relational geography of interrelations.

⁴⁹⁸ This means ‘escaping’ the concept itself of ‘utopia’ as ‘embodiment’ of hierarchical utopian ideals. For Elisabeth Grosz, as for me, the embodiment is the condition of a possible utopia inclusive of the other forms, also based on the ‘virtual’ and that thus remains in the folders of the *knowable* within a conception of ‘space’.

⁴⁹⁹ The reference to the concept of ‘inside’, ‘outside’ and ‘onside’ is referred to the ‘discursive practices’ of Foucault as already reported in the previous chapter. Just to remember also here, the concepts of ‘outside’ a discursive practice in the forms of production, social relationships and political institutions; with ‘inside’ in the techniques of determination of objects and in the adjustment or refinement of concepts also through information; ‘onside’ in other discursive practices. (Foucault, 1971: 245)

⁵⁰⁰ Thanks to Henk van Houtum for his provocative suggestion in topo-logic traditions and ideological function of maps in solidifying social conventions and *difference* in identity.

specific techniques in shaping particular configurations of the social. The creation of a ‘common discursive strategy’ between different parts in interaction can be an attitude through which a cross-border institutional form assumes its spatial-temporal dimension.

‘Would our trust allow us to be waves, rising and falling, rolling up the sand and seeping back, leaving moments of patterns...’ (Reichert, 1992: 17)

‘What has disappeared is the monopoly of the state in defining territory and its meaning, and the new dispensation presents a more complex mosaic, in which multiple territorial identities and systems of action coexist. This has provided a new context for stateless nations and cultural communities and for the interplay between identity and territory’. (Keating, 2001: 16)

The nation-state based society contains current ‘modes’ of regulation as construction of ‘interests’ within borders, ‘powers’, and ‘constraints’ in trends of institutionalisation. According to this society model, the EMB hypothesis can be mainly about the ‘institutional design’⁵⁰¹ of a ‘project of territory’⁵⁰².

‘In practice, matters are a lot more complicated than this. The connections among function, representation, and institutions have been transformed, but rather than destroying territory, this has favoured the emergence of new or rediscovered territorial spaces above, below and beyond the state’. (Keating, 2001: 16)

The ‘institutional building’ in application to ‘discursive models’ suggests a path of ‘structuration’ which perhaps pertains to forms of common institutional experimentation led by the EU cross-border regions. EMB policy-making is a path ‘discursive institutionalisation’ model because it responds to adaptive processes of experimental learning in *alternative*⁵⁰³ institutional forms. In other words, EMB is a process, which

⁵⁰¹ I have already reported somewhere the definition of ‘institutional design’ to which I refer (Olsen, 1997: 205). Reviewing the processes of ‘regionalization’ as experimentation of new spaces of governance, intended as emergent territorial policy domains, also Gualini (2004) speaks about ‘institutional innovation’ in terms of interplay between ‘institutional design – as an expression of institutional intentionality – and institutional building – as an expression of interactive processes of interpretative and negotiated policy definition, enacted within scale-specific arenas’. (Gualini, 2004: 332).

⁵⁰² This is a sentence introduced in Italian (here my try of translating in English) by a relational geography by Dematteis, 1998.

⁵⁰³ The reference is to chapter 2 of this thesis and in particular to the Scheme 2.5. on the hypothesis of ‘alternative’ institutional forms. According to this hypothesis: a) the ‘interests’ are formed in ‘not exclusive institutional forms’ as regards where the decisions and the solutions take place and also where certain forms of interests can be represented in other forms of represent-ness. b) the powers are diffused and depending on their different origin of the actors in the forms of voluntarism, working according to horizontal or vertical coupling in an institutional form in which actors and institutions work in the form of mediator or intermediary agent; 3) the ‘constraints’ and rule building are built during the process and few elements are given a priori but consider the vertical loose coupling as forms of legitimacy or the possibility of becoming potential or consultative tables.

changes the way of current interactions between the actors or potential ones in transaction. According to such an institutional feature, cross-border regionalism adjusts the framework of meaning of the institutional 'site' by convergence. This means that a *common discursivity* is 'sharing' through 'practices' and special techniques of 'transactions' and negotiation, the introduction of new needs of mediating and connectivity.

'If actors are able to re-combine the interpretative codes which are for them available together with the situation in which they experiment interacting and if they are able to invent new meanings of personal validity (that is in sharing with others), then the forms of coordination activated during the action consent the re-definition of the form or the rules of the interaction during the progress of the action in itself' (Crosta, 1998: 46)

In this sense, EMB as an example of cross-border governance expresses a kind of institutional arrangement according to 'structuring ways'⁵⁰⁴ in which new governance interactions are standing. These can be included in processes of territorial governance as relational forms. This is like saying that they can express a kind of ability of 'embodiment'. 'On side' the returns at the competence within existing jurisdictions, EMB shows how new layers of political space included in the politics of the Europeanization at the nation-state border can assume a condition of Border State. This cultural turn⁵⁰⁵ is a form of politicising space, extending the spatial strategies towards possible *knowledgeable*⁵⁰⁶ projections of regional space.

6.1 STRUCTURING WAYS IN CONTINUOUS PROCESSES OF INTERACTIONS

As the EMB policy-making phases suggest on the topic of change and public action at the nation-state border, there is not just he 'who' enters *in part* of the discursive structuration in the cross-border regionalism process. 'An actor' is not such just because inherently included in 'the 'internality' of *one* cross-border arena. As institutional processes based on the discursive practices and concerning kinds of governance beyond the state, the cross-border institutional path is a process of relationships as 'pattern of governance'. This constitutes the 'change' at the nation-state border arrangement in current governance

⁵⁰⁴ Paraphrasing Koller-Koch and Eising (1999: 5) – which is the idea of governance where I started speaking about the 'essence of governance' as 'the structured ways and means in which the divergent preferences of interdependent actors are translated into 'policy choices'. I propose that the governance patterns are also ways of structuring in which different preferences of interdependent actors are called to play in interaction.

⁵⁰⁵ 'Culture is nothing but the sum of the different classificatory systems and discursive formations, on which language draws in order to give meaning to things' (Hall, 1997: 222)

⁵⁰⁶ As reference, Claval 2004 proposes the concept of *knowledgeable* space.

forms. In other words, from these features emerges which *is not* and *not especially* who participates in covering a certain given role to characterize the cross-border governance attributes. It is the governance process 'itself'⁵⁰⁷ that establishes change of the 'rules' to play within traditional or less traditional actors in the cross-border border interaction. Certainly the EMB process also includes 'new actors' in participative actions.

The involving of new actors in policy making is not the main or essential characteristic of the EMB cross-border governance arrangement. In fact, the mobilisation of new actors can occur in various other 'governance' processes linked to non-traditional policies or non-governmental actors. This is for instance the example of environmental or transportation policies. EMB transforms the process of territorial policy-making in the ways in which the subjects become part of the actors: the influencing of some parts of the process, the sharing of a common discursive strategy, the structuring of discourse towards an institutionalisation process. As such, the subjects in cross-border governance features establish a sort of *stage* as a structure *in 'interaction'* between them. This is my main suggestion for cross-border democratic governance. The cross-border institutional design in EMB constitutes evidence in considering the topic of the 'institutional design' as 'discourse structuration'. The hypothesis that a *re-composition* between the actors in 'partnership' is the foundation through which 'institutional building' is formed by 'discourse institutionalisation' also includes the fact that all the phases of the policy-making in which the *problem* emerges are in tension towards the creation of a 'discursive common strategy'. This passage can also be a continuous process or a 'way of structuring'. My hypothesis is that such a 'discursive common strategy' can work in-between 'partnership' and 'interaction' relations. Which kind of 'interaction' becomes the 'subject' therefore?

` There is the type of interactivity in which people come to a process and play their roles. Then there are other types in which people arrive and subsequently figure out what the problem is and what needs to be said about it or can be said about it. The suite of possibilities is illustrated with reference to three plays by Pirandello: his "Six Characters in Search of an Author", "Each to His Own" and "Tonight We Improvise". His theatrical illustration reminds us that if the play is already written, the interaction is one of playing roles and can be described as 'weak' interactivity. Little is learned. The 'strong' form occurs if people come together to create the play or find 'the author'. Their work together is the work of relating to one another in real time and space. I wondered as I

⁵⁰⁷ I would suggest the use of this term 'self' in the ways as Wenger uses speaking about 'imagination'. Wenger specifies in this regard that 'my use of the term emphasizes the creative process of producing new 'images' and of generating new relations through time and space that become constitutive of the self. Calling this process imagination is, therefore, not to suggest that it produces aspects of our identity that are less 'real' or 'significant' than those based on mutual engagement. It is rather to suggest that imagination involves a different kind of work of the self – one that concerns the production of images of the self and images of the world that transcend engagement'. (Wenger, 1998: 177)

reflected on this whether there was a parallel in here to the long-held tenet in feminist theory that analyzing gender roles and how they are played out can be interesting and useful in a positivist way, but this analysis cannot shed light on how the roles came to be or what knowledge and action they hold in place. By contrast, analyzing gender relations occurring in given space and time permit understanding and thus the possibility of changing them" (Milroy, 1996: 2)

Crosta (2003) taking such a comment of Miloy distinguishes between ‘the kind of interactivity in which *people* come to a process and *play their role*’ – ‘weak interaction’ - and other types ‘in which *people* arrive and subsequently figure out *what the problem is* and what needs to be said about it or can be said about it. The “strong’ (interactivity) form occurs if the people *come together* to create the play or find the ‘author’’. This concept is an inspiration for me to interpret the EMB policy-making process towards a *re-composition of the actors in partnership* looking for a *discursive common strategy* in ‘cross-border’. The trends of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ interaction seem to me also particularly to ‘fit’ in a cross-border governance mode. This is because a ‘common discursive strategy’ is not given ‘a priori’ and ‘defined’ but copes with a process in which the ‘outside’, ‘inside’ and ‘other side effects’ collaborate on the actions. The reference to the identity problematization in terms of ‘regional identification’ for the cross-border regionalism can also find an interesting continuity in this thinking about interaction. The space and time of European integration⁵⁰⁸ is part of this ‘side’ space where the cross-border regions have an institutional ‘recognition’. This is a perspective which I have just the occasion to sketch elsewhere for future developments.

6.1.1 The Discursivity of the Interaction Between the Actors

EMB policy-making in regionalism through its ‘actors’ appears as an interactive process (weak and strong). The concept of patterns of *interaction* is used here to understand the EMB project according to a *discursive approach*. As such, the analogy with Pirandello’s theatre seems to me particularly curious in describing the relations between the ‘formal actors’ and ‘the characters’ which appears on the stage of the EMB project as resemblance with the drama of the ‘Six Characters in Search of an Author’. Such an analogy lets me think of the EMB in terms of scenarios. Scenarios are built around one central theme.

⁵⁰⁸ I refer to the interpretation of the ‘identity problem’ in cross-border regionalism according to the ‘claim’ for recognition. During Chapter 3, conceptualising around this issue, I mentioned for instance the point raised by Fraser (2001) as regards the topic of ‘parity of participation’ of citizens and the cultural value in demanding ‘equal recognising’ in domains of ‘cultural differences’. These are topics, which agree with my inflection in suggesting the issue of the cross-border regional identity question within European spatial integration and its regional strategies. In the current work I can just sketch this inflection of mine, sometimes in tones not always explicit.

'Most of the time there is not just one scenario written. Scenarios come as a cluster of three or four, which makes clear that they are possibilities rather than predictions. The various scenarios have the same ingredients but their consequences can be different. In a scenario, therefore, the developments that lead to a certain outcome are also described: it is not just a vision of the future, it also explains why the future could look like the one described. The cluster shows at the same time that scenarios do not want to describe the ideal future. To point this out even more clearly, all scenarios of a cluster encompass both positive and negative aspects. (Visser, 2001: 84)

In the initial EMB 'scenario', the 'formal actors' play between them according to a weak interaction. There are also those who directly concern the existing institutional origin within the nation-state border. Their habitus in facing up to a policy problem is at first included in their competences of 'meso-level' pertaining to environmental protection sectors. Their explicit work is shifting in a second moment towards a European policy application. This refers to a diverse institutionalisation path in cross-border cooperation activities; in other words their skill begins to progress on the *double table* of Europeanization. The 'characters' pertain to 'various other characters' able *to speak* on the stage of the EMB. They collaborate in making discourse structuration also through self-interests. The arenas, which emerge from my empirical work, come from different origins and sources of behaviour. They belong to more traditional or unexpected domains. Existing institutions within nation-state borders come together with actors who are seeking their role approaching the EMB policy-making during its process through interactive attempts. Various forms of 'public' at the EMB stage respond to diverse typologies and actions. They compose both multifaceted situations (interactions) and (co)-presence in discursive 'common strategy'. In other words, all of them are politicising the EMB as a 'space for the actions' in cross-border account. The initial 'scenario' of the EMB project appears as the stage of a spectacle, which is not completely prepared. The 'actors' are waiting assuming that a 'script' is *elsewhere* already 'scripted'. *Espace* is like an 'empty' space in which the rules and the general setting of the scene are inputs *not-yet*⁵⁰⁹ given⁵¹⁰.

Scenarios describe alternatives to the present way of organising society. Like utopia, they can be regarded to offer compensation for things that are lacking. This is also the reason why both genres criticise present-day society. Although it is this function, which gave utopia its negative reputation, for scenarios change is an explicit goal. Discussions on the basis of scenarios are meant to develop a new vision from which new policies can be

⁵⁰⁹ This is a reference to the 'utopia' thinking. Utopia is always 'somewhere else', either in a different time or in a different place. Visser (2001) reporting Poldervaart points out that utopias are always about a spatial-temporal *not-yet* (Poldervaart, 1995: 22).

⁵¹⁰ An evocation also recalled by the name *Espace*, which doesn't define a well-established policy, to refer or any instrument to be provided.

drawn. Poldervaart states that utopianism has the function of criticising society, indirectly or directly (Poldervaart, 1993: 48). I would say that in this case criticising is the same as discussing (Visser, 2001: 87-88).

Role of Actors		Level of discursive practices in EMB policy-making	Weak –strong interaction
First Scenario	State Control in exclusive steering actions	Side-by-side the discursive practice of EMB (in other discursive practices) Local actors at the nation-State border play their 'assigned' role derived from their competencies and from the 'double table'	Weak interaction discourse structuration Actors as takers of 'problems' and seeking for means of representation Park policy looking for a solution
	Nation-state Borders as limits	In-side the discursive practice of EMB (techniques of determination of objects and in the adjustment or refinement of concepts also through information)	
	Hierarchies		
Second Scenario	Re-composition System of relationships between multitude of stakeholders	Out-side in EMB discourse structuration (diffused governance) In-side the EMB continuous discourse structuration in defending versus outside	Strong interaction What the EMB problem is according to interpretative characters Actors play a 'role' as interaction with the others
	Patterns of interaction	In-side the EMB in discourse institutionalisation in devising	
	Heterarchies in 'partnership'		

Scheme 6.1. –Weak and strong interactions in EMB discursive institutionalisation process

Both utopias and scenarios are descriptions of alternatives to contemporary society, whether ideal or not. Both are descriptions of the 'not-yet', to use Poldervaarts words, of places or times other than the present. Indirectly, the 'not yet' is expressed through creative envisioning... (Visser, 2001: 87)

The first 'actors' who intervene in the EMB stage as the *formal actors* – those who are playing in a separate institutional setting within the nation-state border and therefore are

those fully legitimated to act their role. According to the initial 'problem' of policy in which a first discursive structuration is formed, these actors have a determined 'position'. This is determined by the existence of a fixed script, related to their competencies and their explicit role within a 'fixed' institutional setting. They have already a role and a part to sustain. In other words, they have a path of policy to correspond with their usual practices and behaviours in a prescriptive form. The EMB stage is the 'locus' where a problem exists and where there is a separate institutional setting where formal actors within nation-state border can solve this/their problem. In such a first scenario there is both a general action at the stage and a particular action to refer to each actors. They are each waiting for their own, in not coordinated between each-other actions; they focus on each competencies to rules in studies of feasibility. During this first time, a 'script' seems to be consistent as 'regulative' issue relative to the MB park policy-making. The 'problem' assumes thus the consistence of a need for coordination between three existing lateral institutional settings. In this first time the 'park' policy is the 'problem' looking for a solution. The separate institutional settings at the MB nation-state border form a first arena. This is oriented mainly towards the possibility of verifying the 'actual' tri-national agreement for the park policy procedure. On the impetus of some 'mountaineer organisations' as a part of 'public opinion', the central-state is the institutional setting called to steer this policy process; a consequential arrangement of their agendas is also required. On this stage, the actors in power to steer the policy process convene according to their own competencies and 'territorial' legitimacy. The regulatory passages are overlooked as preparatory phases. Other local formal actors also arranged to represent the actions for each separate institutional part at the nation-state border. Each of them is an expression of determined competencies and of a defined manner to solve a 'problem' in part of the park policy. This is for them an actual practice within the feasibility study of the MB park policy. All these actors act in the first scenario as in 'waiting' expecting an event, which has to happen in the short term. They respond to a behaviour conforming to their own rules given by separate policies existing from their institutional affiliation perhaps waiting for a device which should be suggested. The park policy seems to agree with their initial expectations. In the scenarios of the MB park policy, also the 'environmental organisations' meet. They subsist in the new actors, who suggest actions in favour of traditional policy founded on regulation. This horizon of actions includes the NGOs in beginning to enter in some way on the 'stage'. This first time frames in explicit form a

‘direction’ of keeping the role of the central governments as steering power and civil responsibility. Steering here means having the power to decide over the parts on environmental policies also having the responsibility of seeking ‘alternatives’. Alternatives include the participative actions by local actors at the three sides of the nation-state border. The arrival of the ‘local’ actors as consultant of the central states in the existing institutional setting - regional, municipal, canton – also open a new scenario. The local ‘power’ does not just cover the rule in corresponding the regulations and the nation-state routines. It also represents a series of opposite ‘reactions’, which the local society immediately expresses in the face of state-centralised decisions concerning the park policy. A ‘reaction’, which is led as legitimated by the hierarchical territorial levels nested in existing separate local institutions. Local actors assume possible interpretations about the park policy alternatives according to a plurality of actors, sectors, and parts of consensus. Certainly, their action of ‘reaction’ is also located in a detailed ‘temporality’ within which the park policy is spread into forms of nation-state discursivity. The ‘reactions’ of the ‘local actors’ include the possibility of interpreting their role according to the prescriptions foreseen by the existing routines of the park policy. Their regulatory presence also gives them access to the scenario. The scenario seems to shift in time. The interaction between actors appears ‘weak’ because their roles are as if already given in separate competencies from territorial levels. The park policy-making remains as it pertains to decisional and territorial existing powers in fixed roles and defined terms of interaction. A different context of/for public actions transforms the local existing institutional reaction into an alternative. This is thus projected as a new ‘common discursive strategy’ to achieve by the state central actors: it pertains to the creation of a cross-border cooperation policy. From the park policy to the cross-border cooperation concern a ‘change’ is appreciable. It consists of the desire, which the local actors assume towards a new scenario of actions. As actors-activators, they assume new ‘habits’ towards the intention of becoming characters. They seem to be realities created ‘for the art’ to cross the nation-state border. Through them, a Border State⁵¹¹ realm takes place in cross-border cooperation realm. This context takes place as the EMB scenario. In other words, the local actors have mutated their initial ‘masks’ into performance. Their intentions in the EMB realm is to act in a mutated expression of their role which is according to a different rather than previous one.

⁵¹¹ To this definition is dedicated the theoretical framework of this thesis. However, in this circumstance it can be considered briefly as the nation-state border in transition.

First Scenario – Domain of the ‘park policy’ as ‘common discursive strategy’ creation

Actor with fix ‘role’	Problem	Other actors and ‘role’
States and Sub-national state institutions ‘Problem’ which already exists	Park Policy	New actors environmental and mountaineer organisations (solicit the ‘problem’ also as ‘self recognizing means)
‘Local’ actors existing in institutional setting - regional, municipal, canton (Reactions to the problem at the various sides of the border state institutional setting)		
Kind of interaction		
General action	Actors’ action	
The stage is dominated by the waiting for a decision to start the ‘park’ policy hypothesis	The actors are cast, each in his own ‘place’ and prepared to act each in his own ‘part’. Between them there is a weak interaction, a well-established hierarchy (the state actors, the local institutions at the border, the other organisations – mountaineers and environment). The state actors call the local institutions at the border to collaborate in a park policy preparation.	

Scheme 6.2. – First Scenario: Weak interactions in the ‘Park Policy’ as common discursive strategy creation

The cross-border acting transforms the ‘characters’ and introduces a second scenario, overcoming the current stage. (Scheme 6.3) The creation of the cross-border possibility by the ‘local’ actors transforms their role, which they express in their current institutional settings. A different tension oriented to the cross-border policy creation includes new intentionality in ‘discourse structuration’. The hypothesis of the activation of the EMB policy transforms the interaction between the local actors who work in a separate institutional setting at the nation-state border. Such a shift can be defined by the passage between the weak and the strong interaction. In other words, by the play of transaction. EMB thus becomes the new hypothesis of a ‘common discursive strategy’. According to this possibility, a ‘new’ role to sustain is assumed by the existing local actors. This cross-border possibility ‘invests’ the existing actors on the stage of the former park policy and the local actors according to a relation of ‘transaction’.

In this new frame, also other actors are included, such as mountaineers and environmental associations in changing their former role within EMB procedure. For instance the NGOs, instead of maintaining a role of 'sustainers' in favour of EMB become the 'opposite part', which run against the cross-border policy. This is their new role in the implementation and structuration of EMB as a new discursive practice. On one hand they create a debate around the EMB as a problem; on the other hand they implement the 'creation of a common strategy' about what EMB is in their expectations and what it should become. The promoters of the EMB project are looking for an alternative to solve a policy problem shifting the centralised 'park problem' 'side-by-side' the EMB discursive structuration. Involving in a transaction the other actors, EMB looks like a new 'site' for diverse forms of representative-ness, which are inclusive of environmental and mountaineer organisations. Cognitive and symbolic references are immediately applied from the beginning of the EMB project. Hence, the interaction between local actors, new actors like the NGOs, and the nation-state-central actors become strong. In other words, the existence and expression of one of them has origin only for the existence of the others. This is the scenario of the EMB policy around which the construction of a 'common discursive strategy' assumes to become. This thinking about 'interaction' conceptually refers to the essence of relational geography⁵¹²; that is founded on 'relational geometries'. Relational geometries refer to complex webs of heterogeneous relations among actors in which power and identities are inscribed and play a part out. Actors in these relational geometries are not static 'things' fixed in time and space, but rather agencies. These relational practices unleash power portrayed in relational characteristics whose identities, subjectivities, and experiences are always (re) constituted by such practices. A relational view of cross-border local and regional development preludes to frame cross-border regionalism as an 'unfinished project', rather than an ultimate guide in planning actions.

⁵¹² As famous references report, these theories are also linked to the domain of economic relational geography : "institutional thickness" (Amin and Thrift, 1994), "untraded interdependencies" (Storper, 1995; Storper and Salais, 1997), and "learning regions" (Hudson, 1999). My study in cross-border regionalism is inspired by the contents of relational hybridity and fragmentation in social networks, where the plurality and the multiplicity of actors correspond to relational activities across space.

Second Scenario – Domain of the ‘EMB’ as ‘common discursive strategy’ creation in cross-border

Actors shift in fixed roles	Shift in Problem	Embodiment of other actors and ‘roles’
States and Sub-national state institutions ‘problem’ which already exists	EMB Transformation of the problem in cross-border possibility	EMB as problem for the environmental organization ‘A not-solving policy’
‘Local’ actors existing in institutional setting - regional, municipal, canton (Proposal to change their role according to the EMB project invention to the problem at the various sides of the border state institutional setting)	Transformation of the ‘local’ actors’ intentions in creation of their ‘role’ in a cross-border arena hypothesis	For the inhabitants EMB is another way to not say park policy
Kind of interaction		
General action	Actors’ action	
Interference of surprisingly ‘unbalanced’ elements in the general actions caused by the cross-border hypothesis and the creation of role ‘others’ within another ‘policy’ and in their forms of ‘proposals’.	The local regional actors in cross-border policy hypothesis start a ‘strong’ interaction, which involves the former actors and the state-actors. Suspension of the decisions as regards the ‘attempt’.	

Scheme 6.3. – Second Scenario: Strong Interactions in EMB as common discursive strategy creation

The analysis of the scenario emphasises for the EMB policy-making a path of institutionalisation, which is actor networks driven. An inspiration to Gibson-Graham (1996: 15-16), I shall argue that the EMB study is an example of variant of the nation-state border institution in cross-border cooperation heterogeneous actions driven. According to these lenses, EMB looks like a Border State space, which is constituted, continually in a changing and contradictory ‘outsides’. The relational geometries according to the approach refer to the notion, to which Allen refers with ‘spatial assemblages of power’ in which spatiality is imbued with power and power is intertwined with spatiality, which I maintain for the study of cross-border regionalism. In other words, I concern the production of outcomes or effects in spatiality. In other words, EMB emerges with a diverse form of power, which embeds diverse forms of relational geometries. Allen’s conception of power as ‘a relational effect of social interaction’ (Allen, 2003: 2) is here my main reference in studying the EMB according to these relational effects in actor-specific practice of cross-border cooperation

actions. The relational conception of actors and structures of interaction according to an analytical description of the EMB scenarios evidences the role of the actor as mediator of power. When the actors blame each other of *being* part of the 'policy problem' for instance, this has the effect of multiplying the subjects of the EMB policy process. Subjects as competencies and themes and various spheres of action come together in a network of heterogeneity where environmental problems, tourist, and traffic managements are part of the EMB discursivity. These features converge in a common discursive strategy in the EMB. The 'inclusion' of actors, actions, and problems 'opens' a domain of policy in cross-border cooperation. The interaction in the EMB scenarios is 'strong'. Formal nation-state actors, local actors, and the NGOs (new actors) express their expectations according to an incremental enlargement of the political space at the nation-state border state. In this incremental enlargement, the inhabitants, the tourist services together with actors more or less 'glocal' (Mountain Wilderness, Greenpeace, WWF, Pro-Mont-Blanc) are involved. Central nation-state-actors no longer articulate at the EMB scenario their power in controlling and steering actions. The park policy is another thing rather than the EMB scenario. The course of the EMB as discursive practice in cross-border cooperation account occurs between polemics and 'voices', which accuse this policy of not solving any 'problem'. While environmental and mountaineer organisations attack the EMB and its arenas for being far from actual effective practices for environmental protection; at the same time the inhabitants and the local tourist services blame the EMB for hiding with another name traditional forms of constraints and regulations. All the voices implement in diverse ways the structuration of the EMB discourse. All this mechanism addresses the consideration that the change, which the EMB project introduces at the nation-state border, does not consist mainly of the transformation of the nation-central actor role. Dismissing its traditional function of steering the course of the cross-border interaction, the nation-state institutions are validated through their system of delegation. The 'common discursive strategy' changes from the park policy to cross-border cooperation. This passage seems explicit 'inside' the 'local actors' at territorial meso level institutions on the three sides of the nation-state border. They are in charge of steering the EMB actions replacing the park policy. Hence, the creation of a cross-border arena becomes the alternative discharge control device for other institutions. In other words, it is a kind of other means to embody the protection policy on another 'level' of 'discursivity'.

The cross-border policy is almost immediately a shift of the park policy towards an overlooking of the territorial 'future' for these areas at the nation-state border. Stakes seem to report to my general conceptual framework:

- 1) EMB is a seeking for a functional-regional cross-border identity question. This is because the common 'dimension' of borderlands at the slopes of the Mountain reinforce the common vocation in economical developments. The impact of the existing infrastructure facilities (tourist and transport) reports to the intents to share the commonality of future territorial development problems. While separate local 'urgency' needs to respond in separate ways to social requirements, the cross-border policy emerges as a possibility to respond with a new framework of discursivity as an institutional alternative. This is the more general geopolitical need for a regional cross-border policy creation. In other words, this is a tension of recognising under an European umbrella;
- 2) EMB is a social 'strategy' of public; it is a new means for communication towards a social mobilisation. It is a tension towards a discursive institutionalisation;
- 3) EMB is the board where the interactions and the transactions are 'strong'. A diverse vocabulary appears between existing institutional policies where policy-making and problem solving converge side-by-side on other decisions and consultative characters.

The interaction aims to assume the skill of 'regionalisation' for EMB policy-making. Although the 'local' actors appear emphasised by the EMB procedure, nevertheless the nation-state-central government emerges as the normative statement for these areas. At least the tensions in regulative powers working on separate 'sides' at the nation-state border seem not to be dismissed. The EMB scenario is just 'another thing' which works side-by-side all processes already existing. EMB is a way in which the cross-border development can be represented in a unique frame. However, co-ordinating actions across the nation-state borders are as sited within an eventual future representation. Various actors intervene on a 'site' where interest 'problems' are described and represented in the EMB.

EMB is thus a kind of experimental learning, which pertains to a strong interaction between the actors. Its 'common discursive strategy' is expressed through a frame of indefinite descriptions where expectations and realizations, means and possibility, illusion and reality collaborate in a continuous mutation of representation. The EMB scenario moves incrementally discursive 'rooms' and discursive 'subjects'. The 'actors' lose their fixed rules in the EMB as cross-border reality inventing the intentions and the means for a new reality. EMB cross-border institutional building can be interpreted as a discourse institutionalisation. The creation of an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorisations – although contested and in contesting – have created a sort of a 'common discursive' in cross-border cooperation. As a 'mode' which changes the game of an already existing interaction in which each 'subject' has its own part to play and fixed options to correspond with their competencies. Such a 'mode' in which the actors interact is principally caused by the action of crossing the nation-state border from the point of view of the actors involved. EMB changes through the cross-border cooperation activity the 'mode' in which the actors interact. EMB indeed changes the 'scenario' in which the 'actors' are separated by a nation-state as the limit of their actions, each at its own place. EMB is a space where no fixed defined correspondence between subjects and actions is bounded in a domain of actions already given. EMB changes the scenario in which both the representation and the mode of interaction between the actors take place. The mobilisation and the participation of the actors become strong in sharing a common policy discourse. The subjects become actors 'because' a kind of reality exists in cross-border cooperation. This changes their relations changing their own 'frame' of reference in which to project their parts. This aspect points to a reflection, which occurs on the passage between 'policy' and the 'polity'. EMB is in-between this passage because it represents both a sets of relations in power and a causal effect because of the presence of their constitutive parts (e.g. actors or structures) precedes any concrete effects or outcomes in this detailed kind of experience. EMB is thus as a process of 'politicising' based on tension of institutionalisation in creative aspects, which converge in a 'discursive common strategy'. Such a kind of representation or results in cross-border regionalism in the EMB policy-making do not shape spatial forms 'redrawing' new boundaries in a new pattern. EMB is rather a process of 'dialogue' in policy network which does not conclude its domains of politicising. In an extreme synthesis, EMB spreads its politicising path across two fundamental passages.

- 1) Cross-border cooperation as a policy changes the interaction mode between actors and institutions at the nation-state border. Cross-border cooperation policy application refers to a diverse context rather than those, which pertain to every actor in his/her own part in playing within a current separated context (weak interaction). It triggers a mode of 'strong interaction' (cooperation in-common 'stage').
- 2) Subjects/actors interaction changes in a cross-border realm. In other words, the interaction is a kind of representation, which enlarges in dialogue terms the political domain of the nation-state border.

The arenas are not just shaped by actors who have a definitive role and regulative or legitimate course of actions. The EMB scenario represents a stage through which the subjects can assume an expression as actors. The locus in which the formal and informal actors 'speak' is part of the institutional creativity expressed by the cross-border discourse structuration in regionalism which is like a kind of 'institutional design'. What does all this stage produce? Talking as Foucault of a 'mode of acknowledgement' produced by an event and as such to determine, (also) by falsification, an 'effect of truth'⁵¹³.

' The practices must be considered as the *locus* which links together that which people say and that which people do, that which people impose as rules and what people give them as reasons, projects and evidence. To analyze '*regimes of practices*' means to analyze programs on the basis of behaviour, which they have, and at the same time, the effects of prescription related to what people must do (jurisdictional effects) and effects of codification related to that which people must know (effects of truthfulness). (Foucault, 1978).

The invention of a kind of practice of discursive, which EMB meets, is inherent passages like the construction, the structuration or institutionalisation of discourses. Social mobilisation and social inclusion in participate actions in EMB policy-making constitute the keystones for a relational spatial process based on discursive practices. Persuasive means in communication are also part of this logic. As also the analysis of the INTERNET websites has showed, those who speak about EMB in this vision of public space are a series of 'mirrors' whose subjects and interest relations coexist in 'practices of social space'. This sounds like a small piece of a wider framework where a series of 'a set of technical practices which are themselves a rhetoric, a form of persuasive communication' (Harley, 1992: 243) or suggest images in a different alternative form rather

⁵¹³ M. Foucault, (1978) Table Ronde, 20 May in Id. *Dits and Ecrits*, cit. Vol. IV text n. 278 p.22

than ‘maps’. This is perhaps the discursive reflexivity of the EMB as an agency in practices of processes in course of structuration.

6.2 IS EMB TERRITORIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE?

The social arenas involved in the EMB policy-making, while appearing within a framework of relations in a web of social relations which can be assumed as skills of the policy network features of such cross-border regionalism, pose at the same time a new question in terms of what Giddens’ (1984) mentions in terms of the ‘structuration’ conception. The emphasis on the actor-action just presented above in terms of scenarios attempts to signify EMB as a domain of structuration in its duality⁵¹⁴. Within such a duality, both processes and effects enter. In the particular case of the EMB, Europeanisation effects influence furthermore the policy-making process of structuration reporting other issues in this framework. For instance, the trans-national construction and the local nation-state border significance in cross-border policy-making involve European regionalisation processes and a cross-border governance hypothesis. As the former chapter pertaining to the analysis of the policy-making phases has pointed out, the social spaces achieved in the EMB governance structuration come from diverse and heterogeneous domains and spheres of action. As such, the question in terms of governance, which emerges, concerns the kinds of interaction which are involved and developed in cross-border practices. This includes a tension in terms of contents in-between the need to communicate the EMB by the various arenas as an ‘invention’ of a new creative process of institutionalisation and agency across the nation-state border and the structuration of the ‘contents’ of this form of agency. EMB appears ‘itself’ as an outcome of discursivity in this process agents-agency structuration. In other words, the processes of social mobilisations triggered by the EMB project are an integral part of its cross-border regional policy in action. Effects and influences are part of those ‘ghosts of networked others that continually informs that action’ (Thrift, 1996: 54). Cross-border cooperation actions activated before the introduction of the EMB project are also an integral part of this process. However, such actions respond primarily to nation-state steering involvements and centralised agreements and interests. The Tunnel du Mont-Blanc (TMB) creation began a series of actions, which had the role of representing the achievement of peaceful relationships between nation-states and the will to develop in a joint way a different new

⁵¹⁴ Giddens underlines in his notion of ‘duality of structure’ that enters into the constitution of the agent and from here into the practices that this agent produces. Structure is thus a significant medium of the practices of agents.

political and economical horizon. The impressive infrastructure able to cross the top of the Alps and the nation-state border signified a balance reached. EMB has introduced another 'layer' of public actions, beyond existing centric governance balances. These actions are absolved through no other existing institutional level. EMB is a process of institutionalisation in continuous structuration. Its design receives the problems from other agendas in institutions, which pertain to other levels of problem solving. At the same time, EMB also reflects actions on other levels in considering the mobilisation activities, the participation and the practices of communication. However EMB is also an institutional form, which does not directly solve the singular needs received from single agendas. EMB is a table of discussion where the problems do not have a direct solution or institutional and regulative practices to be applied. Instead EMB results a practice of politicising space. As such, sources of socio-political mobilisation and techniques of participation reflect in the EMB space an open network of interaction. EMB space does not reproduce nested levels of hierarchies, nor closed re-boundaries. If a technocratic language exists in EMB as well as in the Euroregions and the EU working communities across the nation-state borders, this does not preclude the heterogeneity of the participation in actors and actions. Instead actors and actions are neither qualified in challenging means of socio-political inclusion and exclusion; nor closed within a fixed position to correspond in a cross-border manner. In other words, such a mechanism addresses a device of space politicisation not ended across the nation-state border in practices of relations. This is perhaps the very essence of the EMB project. EMB has not solved the series of problems and policies concerning for instance MB environmental protection, merely economical interests concern the tourist masses or the lorry transport across the valleys. EMB does not alleviate the anxiety of the inhabitants or the 'local' institutions or service infrastructures that are victims of some strictly 'top-down' impositions in regulatory policies. EMB is far from being an institutional path, which reinstates the decisions and the competencies of the nation-state and its sub-national institutions. EMB is not a substitute arena for decision-making as regards the competencies of the nation-states. EMB is the essence of a discursive institution in cross-border cooperation actions, which emerges as a device strongly dependent from other agendas, and levels of decision-making as possibility and ability. Functions and competencies in trans-national, national and regional or local levels exist in a parallel way according to the EMB policy-making and themes and problems here introduced. EMB is like a channel, which allows heterogeneous institutions and actors to enter a process of communication through

the theme of the cross-border cooperation policy. EMB is thus a reaction to stimulus, which concerns the re-producing spaces in forms of discursivity. As the policy-making phases emphasised, the existence of a social domain is founded on the disputes and not accountability in punctual policies. However, the EMB works on coupling and triggering different kinds of actions in a not illusionary consistency between actors involved in participative actions. Working in coupling with other interests or contesting the CTMB arena, EMB pertains to a cross-border regional recognition ability both inside and outside the recognition of a formal cross-border political arena. EMB practices perhaps create a sort of rearrangement in shaping political alternatives. Moving by alternatives means considering the transformation of the nation-state border as an institutional challenge through cross-border cooperation policies. As an institutional profile, EMB policy-making pertains to tracks for a perspective of peaceful coexistence in diversity of actors and actions. Perhaps tempting the social spaces to enter a construction as the 'border state'.

Relational Perspectives of 'Territorialisation'

In an approach which Healey defines 'not-essentialist' because focused on a relational conception of space in a continual co-production of 'things' and 'meaning' (for instance Allen, 1998; 1999; 2003; De Matteis, 1995; Thrift, 1996) she says that

'this conception means that, rather than searching for some inherent 'natural' qualities of place to mobilize into spatial concepts for strategic purposes...the spatial vocabulary for a spatial strategy is...a highly political process, involving struggle and selectivity, not just between different interests and power blocs but within a terrain of the mode of analysis and representation of the spatiality of phenomena' (Healey, 2004: 47).

This conception is a very interesting linkage between the previous analyses, which leads through the EMB case study. A diverse vocabulary here pertains:

- _ 'New regulation' within emergent typology of actors and forms of interaction between them;
- _ Discursive regionalisation which appears as an integral part of a new cross-border relational geography and 'spatiality' hypothesis;

- Cross-border governance processes as spheres of the discursive institutionalisation process.

All these aspects, considered here as related to the frames of cross-border regionalism in general and the EMB project in particular, open a perspective in terms of European strategic spatial planning. Indeed the CBR can also be seen as part of those ‘discursive struggles’ which if easily includable in a new series of spatial ‘geographical’ concepts are not yet included in a possible ‘spatial planning’ vocabulary which specific theoretical orientations still lack. Healey’s point about the importance of policy *discourses* on spatiality and her reference to be considered ‘strategic’ on the other hand lack an analytical reference, to enter a spatial planning perspective. This is a critical aspect for the study of cross-border regionalism in such terms. Indeed the EMB example has just explicitly marked that the cross-border cooperation ‘spatiality’ is ‘strategically’ linked within EU geopolitical orientations. In terms of macro and micro regional strategy for territorial development this means that new dynamics of relational conceptions report the border state as a ‘matter’ in which:

- 1) ‘Specific policy relations’ link together various frameworks of action – referring to ‘spaces of/for planning’ for instance the EU, national, regional, local policies;
- 2) Institutional contexts are those in which both ‘places’ and ‘spaces’ are mobilised on ‘practices’, they are made between planning ‘rules’ and ‘demands’;
- 3) Relational dynamics of multiple relations pose questions in terms of locally based coordination policies. They can address and suggest capacities and values.

For Healey, emerging contemporary ‘relational geographies’ and ‘discourse institutionalisation’ consist of new frameworks for examining different contexts of ‘spatial planning’⁵¹⁵. According to such frameworks, six analytical criteria mark the experience of this new framework, which interprets the territorial policies in the significance of change between essentialist and relational geographical approaches. The pieces of this ‘evaluative frame’ refer to ‘an interpretative policy analysis to analyse the discourses and practices of

⁵¹⁵ The cases have no connections with cross-border regions. Instead, they are three episodes of strategic spatial planning: the Netherlands Fifth National Policy Document on Spatial Planning 2000-2020, the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 and the Framework Document for Municipal Policies for Milan.

episodes of strategic spatial planning'. They pertain to the treatment of scale, and of position, regionalisation, material and identity (problem), (concept) of development and representational forms.

Criterion	Essentialist conception	Relational conception
Treatment of scale	Nested hierarchy	Relational reach in different networks
Treatment of position	Hierarchy and borders	Different positions in different networks
Regionalisation	An integrated differentiated physical fabric	Fragmented, folded conceptions of space; multiple networks coexist
Materiality and identity	A material physical future can be built, meshed with social relations in an integrated way	Materialities co-exist with conceptions of identity and iconographies of space/place
Concept of Development	An integrated linear trajectory	Multiple, non-linear, continually emergent trajectories
Representational form	Material metaphors of functional integration, expressed in maps	Metaphors of movement and ambience expressed in multiple ways

Scheme 6.4 – Healey’s scheme on criteria for evaluating concepts of space and place linked to the ‘policy discourses’ in spatial planning

Healey’s approach considers a series of spatial concepts, which give us critical signals in essentialist and relational contrast. She defines these terms in transition as ‘criteria’ as critical contexts of spatial strategies.

Scale is a critical term, which distinguishes nested hierarchies of the essentialist conception from the potential multiple scales in play at different sites of interaction.

Also *position* is a critical term between the essentialist conception of organised space within boundaries and relational approach, which defines networks in particular intensity of networks. Position is thus an institutional site rather than a geographical point.

Regionalisation in classical geography refers to geographical areas in homogeneity of activities or function. Relational geography talks about regionalisation as relational layers outside clear models of socio-spatial organisation.

Materiality, another critical term is problematised by Healey according to an essentialist conception, which focuses on the ‘objective’ dimension of spaces as cities or regions which can be concretely built in the future across plans. Relational geography looks at future

materiality as continually emergent and unknowable, yet shaped by the interaction between imaginative work and materialisation.

The criterion concerning the *conception of development* is seen by essentialist geography as a linear trajectory. Relational geography emphasises the development as shaping between multiple forces with different options and potential; local histories and wider relationships.

The criterion relating to the *representation* of the ideas of spatiality is approached by an essentialist geography across the principles of proximity and the dimension of maps. The relational approach opens representation to a wide possibility of forms and expressions, which help in social understanding and mobilising.

I suggest that the approach, which Healey considers as regards the ‘policy discourses’, is rather interesting speaking about cross-border regionalism as space in politicisation or ‘Border State’. The difference between essentialist and relational geographies appears as concerning some topics, which I have previously considered essential for the treatment of cross-border regionalism. EMB is not directly descended from traditionally spatial strategies and spatial conceptions; the criterion just enounced above does not match a current spatial realm. As pertains to the discursive institutionalisation, the features of cross-border governance do not figure cross-border regionalism in a determined spatial form. As an organisation of territory, the qualities of places remain within an unquestioned shaping. EMB seems to correspond to a territorial relational governance; however, ‘territorial’ here is neither ‘a trap’ nor a homogenous system or organisation bounded as ‘territory based’. Rather, territory is the subject of diverse directions in actors at different scales and actions, which different quality and consistence are shaping. EMB is thus a space in a process of continual re-representation. The cross-border regionalism problem, the strong and weak interaction between heterogeneous actors, networking governance and the provocative images of policy making across the nation-state border are all ‘critical categories’ which reflect the debate about EMB as a ‘spatial strategy’. Many of the concepts, which in the previous sections have been considered for the EMB study, are the terms in variation within traditional or essentialist approach to the territory. I suppose that cross-border regionalism episodes are changing the vocabularies of the territorial conception of space and its social strategies according to a ‘relational (geographical) conception’. This is a change of the public action at the nation-state border in strategy of border state. This is perhaps the lesson

learned from the EMB study. Various connotations of 'territory' and of its 'policies' must find new references to approach contemporary 'episodes' emerging outside or alongside the fixed-scales in politicising spaces. Cross-border regionalism within the European activities in cooperation account is a meaningful example to such. As the EMB policy-making reported, discourse structuration of policy can concern a material perspective for a spatial strategy. Perhaps this is not just a 'conclusion' related to a social desire for a new policy or accounted as a regional recognition across the nation-state border as a political function of re-bounded spaces. European integration is an institutional form in future embodying the discursive strategy of space making which includes the transformation of nation-state border in cross-border regionalism realms.

Summary of Chapter 6

Patterns of interactions between actors and actions have pertained to EMB policy making towards the problem of institutionalisation in cross-border realm. This chapter has presented a study of cross-border governance in EMB cross-border regionalism as a discursive structuration. Cross-border practices emerge thus as a process which is strategically interactive. Using the metaphor of the scenarios, I have illustrated the change of public action at the nation-state border, which states with EMB policy-making. Strong and weak interaction between the actors is here assumed as a current skill, which pertains to EMB. However, the actors who traditionally covered a competence in fixed roles within the nation-state borders find another expression in the EMB. Because it is based on discursive practices, the actors shift their roles in a mixture of relations with other heterogeneous actors in diverse relations. Cross-border cooperation as a course of actions and the interaction between subjects follow the sense of a 'duality of structure', in which EMB emerges as an agency in structuration. EMB is thus here considered an effect of truth, which produces an event in practices of social spatiality. Such forms of spatiality consider strategies the alternative to the 'territorial' based 'trap'.

Strategic is sometimes used to mean a high level of administration, or a more general or abstract level of policy. But it is also used to mean an overview, or more specifically, a framework. It implies selectivity, a focus on that which really makes a difference to the fortunes of an area over time. (Healey, 2004: 46)

It is starting from the urgency reported by Healey about the developing of new vocabulary of spatiality that EMB is here discussed in the second part of this chapter as a spatial strategy. Alternative to an essentialist geographical conception of spatial development and regionalization, EMB appears pertained to new relational geography based on network and various interactions between actors-actions. This chapter concludes with the consideration that EMB thus follows the criterion of a relational conception of space in discursive account of spatiality. An open issue remains on this path as democratisation. My conclusion will talk about the very meaning, which can be opened starting from cross-border regionalism in-between relational spatiality and democratic governance.

C o n c l u s i o n s

CROSS-BORDER REGIONALISM AS A 'RELATIONAL TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE' MORE THAN A UTOPIA?

Recently, utopia thinking has assumed other meanings rather than the blueprints for a perfect society. Ideological totalitarianism and technocracy, which generated aversions or negative sounds are nowadays, no longer unquestionably associated with this term. Contemporary theoretical studies have contributed⁵¹⁷ to struggle with the ideals of society in the significance of the utopia term. My conclusion is positioned within such a context; associating cross-border regionalism as a spatio-temporal utopia. The contemporary significance of utopias is seeking for their function as societal means, which 'reflect their times' (Poldervaart, 2001: 14). Utopia appears thus as a not static view which is fixed in time, rather a navigation across 'the exploration of possibilities' (Ricoeur, 1989) or 'the expression of desires to another way of living and being' (Levitas, 1990; Poldervaart, 1993). Nevertheless, as Poldervaart (2001: 14) points out reporting Ricoeur, utopia is an opportune place where critical reflections of our present society become possible.

'While we cannot place ourselves outside reality, criticism is only possible from a utopian dimension: utopia brings into question what presently exists' (Ricoeur, 1986: xxi).

My attempt is to elaborate the conclusion of my thesis on cross-border regionalism as 'territorial relational governance' using critical lenses of utopia thinking as spatial alternatives. The concept of utopia here is coupled with the mechanism of criticizing present-day society in its reflection as 'visions of future'. However, why use a such a controversial concept in my conclusion?

Utopia is a concept, which refers to diverse contents, forms and functions. This ambiguous - because ambivalent - term was already present in Thomas Moore's work: it means together a 'good world'⁵¹⁸ or 'non existing' world. Many other authors have given, during consequential historical developments a diverse meaning of this word. However, after

⁵¹⁷ Mannheim, 1929; Bloch, 1959, Marcuse, 1968, Kolakowski, 1976, Thoenes, 1976, Levitas, 1990.

⁵¹⁸ As known good world is 'Eutopia' and not existing world is 'Outopia'; both are Greek terms

Moore's definition the further approaches have never neglected the ambiguous meaning inherent to utopia. Contemporary studies have given interesting contributions to this significance reawakening utopias in the wider significance of description of a society. Levitas (1990) for instance has proposed a contemporary meaning of utopia as a description of a desirable form of society in a certain time. Utopias are according to this significance, a sort of mirror, which in present-day society consists of what people wish to change. As Visser (2001) emphasises examining different literary fiction with a scientific touch, utopia always pertains to a 'somewhere else'. As such, it refers to a different time or to a different space. This is also what Poldervaart (1995) mentioned as 'not-yet'. The 'not-yet' is indeed a common reference in a widespread literature, which concerns and debates the concept of utopia (Poldervaart, 1995: 22). While authors are still debating about what utopia is⁵¹⁹ (ibd.); other authors speak about how points about how utopias work (Levitas, 1990)⁵²⁰. The function of a utopia according to this framework concerns a process, which pertains to three segments or issues: compensation, critique and change. As such, a utopia considers the alternatives of scenarios within a certain society and it presents the issues about the present in a creative envisioning.

'Scenarios describe alternatives to the present way of organizing society. Like utopias, they can be regarded as offering compensation for things that are lacking. This is also the reason why both genres criticize present-day society. By describing what 'could be' they describe at the same time 'what is not'. (Visser, 2001: 87)

Utopia is also a method to frame the reality in the form of criticizing and thus discussion. In other words, adopting a utopian approach can signify shifting our inquiries about the forms of critical discursivity emerging in the present. I want to suggest this conclusion to my study on cross-border regionalism according to this issue in space and time.

The utopian is beyond a conception of space or place because the utopian, ironically, cannot be regarded as topological at all. It does not conform to the logic of spatiality. (Grosz, 2001: 134)

This logic of *non-conforming* is perhaps an interesting aspect to consider in studying the mode of politicising cross-border regionalism as a reflection in space-time contemporary discursive

⁵¹⁹ Poldervaart reports four recurrent themes in utopia: the desire for a different way of organising society, the desire for a different way of 'being human', the questioning of economic relations, and the questioning of sex relations and roles (Poldervaart, 1993: 48)

⁵²⁰ Levitas suggests three main functions of utopias: compensation, critique and change (Levitas, 1990: 180)

practices and interactions between different forms of meta-power and communicative practices. This is a way in which a 'territorial policy-making' can be intended in relational forms; which does not stop at the nation-state boundaries. The concept of 'territorial' here is beyond the 'territorial traps'. This means that the policy making in cross-border cooperation practices is not bounded by a fixed scale in traditional forms of territorial democratic governance. However, my thesis sustains that we can conceive cross-border regionalism as a 'site' where relational forms interact 'shaping' a space discursively negotiated and communicated. This 'shaping' involves practices of democratic deliberation based on the interaction between diverse forms of participation. As such, this is a heterogeneous domain of groups, citizens, administrators and politicians. The ways in which they act in the cross-border policy-making occurs between various ways to communicate and to deliberate actions, which have yet to be indentified. In other words, we are challenging the meaning and the vocabulary of the 'territorial governance' according to a relational approach in action-oriented attempts. This is my argument for cross-border regionalism as for communicative structures. The change of public action across the nation-state borders emerges as such as a critical understanding of existing practices and of institutions towards a model 'other' than participatory actions. Such actions are spread in a domain of diffused 'public' where governance assumes another meaning rather the state-centric dynamics. As such, cross-border regionalism identifies a governance mode of interaction across the nation-state.

'some will say that the whole idea is utopian because people are so attached to the nation-state as the primary point of political reference. Others urge that we cannot wait for the political world to catch up with the philosophers'. (Keating, 2001: 168)

'we are seeing the emergence in Europe of a complex new order that is ever more difficult to squeeze into the procrustean form of the nation-state. This new order is not based on traditional inter-state diplomacy nor on self-renunciation on the part of the states, but on new roles and relationships, embedded in a series of founding principles'. (Ibid.)

Is the European integration process in the post-sovereignty context, which is managing a multi-national space, transforming the frontiers between the nation-states and the meaning of territoriality? Are the cross-border regions (CBR) the example of the emerging of innovative institutional forms in practices of space, scale, experimental organisational typical of a European policy-making? Is the 'border state' the key-place in order to understand the

evolution and the dynamism of the territorial policy-making and the orientations of its political modernisation? Starting from a critique of the existing conceptualisation of cross-border institutional approaches in literature, my attempt has been a contribution to this branch of research. However, the relationship between the nation-state borders in terms of function, representation and institution has involved my work towards a territorial meaning. As such, cross-border regionalism has assumed during the development of this thesis not just the shadow of a project which transforms the institutional account of the nation-state border in possibilities of cross-border actions. A diverse 'territorial policy making' founded on meaning of democratic governance across the nation-state borders emerges from different faces. On one hand, Europeanisation affects both institutional structures above and below the nation-state with new policies. New balances in trans-national and local institutional arrangements as mutual adaptation meet the nation-state as locus of these series of transactions. Cross-border regional policy is like a particular effect of these developments at the nation-state border. Governance at the nation-state border is then synonymous with social and political possibility, mobilisation and participation where the formation of patterns and arenas others, responds to groups of collective actions in restructuring the meaning of domains of action. Cross-border-governance emerges thus as a consequential concept just rooted to the trends of the new governance. As such, like one of those processes loyal to both social and political space making stretching beyond the formats of given borders of government for the governing of the territory. New forms of practices across the nation-state border transgress and simultaneously involve issues on discursive institutionalisation. The European *Border-State* appears to be the outcome of a particular no longer a term, no longer the institution symbol of territory, security, population, and sovereignty. It does not look like the analogue of nation-state, the locus where an accumulating power ends in order to leave the place to a 'state' other. In forms of politicising, the *border state* is a social construction since it makes part of EU transnational spatial strategy in the ways in which it is 'locally' transformed in space. As such the border state is a subject redesigned and redesigning a project of territory. In such a hypothesis the questions about the cross-border regional policies are in-between edges of policy and political frames. This can pertain to new question research towards new domains of public regulation in 'colonising' the transformations of the territory. And its 'political modernisation'⁵²¹.

⁵²¹ Political modernisation refers to processes of transformation within a 'political domain' of the society. The political

'Territory has also become more important as a basis for political legitimacy with the emergence of new political spaces beyond and below the nation-state as a result of trans-national integration, especially in Western Europe. What has disappeared is the monopoly of the state in defining territory and its meaning, and new dispensation presents a more complex mosaic, in which multiple territorial identities and systems of action coexist. This has provided a new context for stateless nations and cultural communities and for the interplay between identity and territory' (Keating, 2001: 16)

My thesis maintains that cross-border regionalism can offer crucial observations in terms of space modernisation in territorial policy-making. However this is not because cross-border regionalism has an extraordinary sense making under profiles of institutional arrangement capacity compared to other modern state institutions. The efficiency of the cross-border cooperation institutional arrangement does not respond directly to the 'problem-solving' for singular policy problems, which come from different original organisations. CBR do not correspond in terms of contents to the policy-making as according to typical institutional arrangements within the nation-state border. CBRs are an example of open not pre-fixed interrelations of actors also working in policy networks where direct territorial outcomes are not fixed in practices or kinsmen into territorial plans. CBRs do not have target rules for mobilisation, communication and participation either involving their arenas or in their actions in conditions of consistency. As such, CBR pose the issue on the 'change' at the nation-state border, both in terms of policy contents concerning the cross-border cooperation policy introduction and in terms of cross-border regionalism as policy organisation⁵²².

'Policy change induced by political modernization provides an *institutional and structural* focus on social change, as a result of changing relations between state, civil society and market. Change stimulated by day-to-day interactions between actors is *strategic*, focusing on the arguments actors use in interactions, the norms and values they stand for and their problem definitions.' (Arts, van Tatenhove, Leroy, 2000: 202)

However, March and Olsen point out that features of political structures are based on the existence of rules, which constrain behaviour and secure a degree of predictability.

domain of society is the setting in which different groups (from State, civil society and market) produce and distribute resources (power and domination) and meaning (discourses) to shape public life. (Held, 1989; Giddens, 1990; van Tantenhove, Arts and Leroy, 2000)

⁵²² This consideration refers to Giddens' (1979) theory of the 'duality of structures'. Structure enters the construction of the agent and from here into the practices, which this agent produces. Structure is thus a significant medium of the practices of agent. Structure is also the result of the practices, which agents produce. Structure is thus both medium and result.

'the routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organisational forms and technologies around which political activity is constructed. We also mean the beliefs, paradigms, codes, cultures and knowledge that surround, support, elaborate and contradict those rules and routines' (March, Olsen, 1989: 16)

This is like saying that the analysis of the role played by historical specific techniques (structures) can be organised by a particular kind of person (agent) and, equally important, shaping commensurately particular configurations of the social (agency).

'Subjectification is not to be understood by locating it in a universe of meaning or an interactional context of narratives, but in a complex of apparatuses, practices, machinations, and assemblages within which human being has been fabricated, and which presuppose and enjoin particular relations with ourselves'. (Rose, 1998: 10)

Under which profiles of legitimacy are cross-border policy discourses generated, communicating their influences and transforming the every-day life or simply the present *border state* public life? If it is towards the 'subjects of the transformation' that our inquiry should look at, who and where are they, where do they go, what do they do? Which public spheres do they attend, which strategies do they use? If the state is no longer the territorial limit, what is the limit to the territorial policy-making which is responding in our modernity? (Is it still a necessity to seek for new limits?) If multiplicity is the key word, what do multiple networks of actors express the institutional arrangement of our modernity according to a contingency the spatiality? If it is towards the interactions that we have to seek - also going beyond issues origins of the actors and actions, is the space becoming a sort of causality? If no longer being transcontinental, continental, transnational, national, regional, local, are qualitative discriminate criteria which are referred to the social contexts that are spatially transformed what do define the new spatiality? And if I prefer to express myself in terms of space, do I transgress the body-territory? The interaction, then, becomes an indefinite network hollowing indefinite spaces where - perhaps - we must learn to invent time by time the discriminating factors, enclosing some things-means-people and excluding other things-means-people which design the social into political space? Are CBRs thus another sign of a 'risk society'? Despite the invaluable presence of all these factors, CBRs are positively interesting processes in territorial policy making. Since they are placed in a 'somewhere' of 'beyond' the nation-state borders according to a process capable of institutional learning based on the exchanges and new meaning of relational territorial governance. They are meaningful and necessary practices as production of perspectives for social mobilisation, re-organisation of technologies through which social groups and new

actors shift in communicative actions, symbolic effects, mobilisation of innovative resources and hope for democratic ideas of embedment and socialising institutional governance building. The European border state is a utopia, which refers to the cross-border cooperation practices at the present towards projection of futures. Utopia is critique and discursive scenarios in the hypothesis of cross-border regionalism as a pattern of governance in the European Union. Utopia assumes here the forms of criticizing and thus discussion function in contemporary Western European society. In my conclusion I would like to open other new perspectives for research oriented to seeking new signs of public action, which changes in our contemporary reality. CBR is a reality of these signs; utopia is thus here a tension towards the alternatives which emerge in social space as institutional creativity in which the Levitas functions of compensation, critic and change are mixed up and struggling in-between institutional design and institutional building of cross-border patterns of governance. Utopia finds a very positive interpretation if we refer to it as a democratic ideal of European society. A society, which is finding a crucial momentum at the nation-state borders in phases of de-nationalisation and trans-nationalisation according to a projection of cosmopolitan states. Utopia is democratic ideology if as such it can be intended in reference to the European Union in the tension towards ways of integration in the respect for national and regional diversity. In this sense utopia is referred to the European cross-border regions in strategical visions of spaces as 'the rings of junction' or the 'petites Europe' in attempts to draw the forms of de-centred polycentric development. Nowhere does the border state become crucially a new locus where the transformation acting in interaction is able to promote social and territorial cohesion. CBR is therefore utopia as an ideological functional cause, analogous at the micro-scale of a wider process of European macro regionalisation. Cross-border regionalism finds a process of legitimacy in an ideal idea of European integration and in processes of institutional socialising. Utopia is a democratic ideal in the forms of institutional 'in situ' creativity of cross-border regionalism wherever its arenas are opening towards multiple spheres of social and political composition and consistency of the arenas and their actions. In cross-border regionalism no limits are pre-given as assumptions in scales, spaces, territory to involve. CBRs aim at this result and medium which steps further but however includes normative or technocratic settings. Cross-border arenas are creative in their means of mobilisation communication, participation during the process of regionalisation. Such a process indeed is here 'of becoming' aimed at intentions to activate opening to new actors more or less local and to the new needs to manage processes of

governance in heterogeneity of public consequences and conflictuality towards a policy of recognition. Perhaps CBRs in such processes are also in relation to all the other existing spaces as new projections of reality in multiple mirroring. Meta-governance aspects are inclusive of heterotopias forging trans-local policy discourses in ideas, images, metaphors. If such an issue can find a point on the weak institutionalisation in which the CBR suffer, they also allow cross-border regionalism to remain an open arena where actors and actions are in continuous and not-ended processes of recognition and interaction. Utopia is herein also an issue linked mainly to the contingency of our modernity. In other words, the utopia of the CBR is a space-temporal in-between which poses the two previous foremost issues in relation between them (as EU demos and weak institutionalisation questions). In other words, Utopia is for the CBR a space-temporal 'not-yet' where an essentialist approach to the territory and an institutional weakness are constructs placed outside an eventual territorial materiality in order to become relational in a spatial-territorial. The ambiguity of the term utopia is therefore in my work a large-scale inspirational attempt at rethinking the territory in social and political spaces outside the boxes of modern reviews. In other words, this is a way to define a space-temporal contingency in which our society gives and orients their actions towards critical models. As territorial policies CBRs are in hybrid shapes in struggling with the modes of the modern spatial and its policies on planning and the practices rooted in fixed geographical scales for decision-making. CBRs are in my very conclusion new signs of the social action that changes in the relationship between territoriality and state, in the production of spaces whose many elements are (still) fugitive. We assist in our modernity to the institutionalisation of processes, in which the democratisation perspective works as 'projections of future'. If it is also true that these projections of future have always existed in the human vicissitudes and in the human visions of the relationships between space and society it is also true that the institutional forms which appear today at our concern as weak ones can be hypothesised as belonging to processes in becoming in which we can perceive them just as progress. CBRs can belong to such as kinds of events following the various and plural models of wider routines in formation. If in our modernity democratisation processes can be hypothesised as a "per se" expression progressing through institutional intelligence, cross-border regionalism can be assumed as part of this process. In other words, as a niche of dynamic territorial policy-making which involves power as relations. Discursive institutionalisations develop therefore also discursive forms in their democratic deliberations.

It is a primordialist illusion to think that if we removed the artificial framework of the state, the world would fall into ready-made national units. There are some territorial integrated stateless nations which could take their place in such a new order, but more commonly there are mixed nationalities and there are state majorities which identify with the whole state rather than one of its parts and who would therefore have nowhere to go.' (Keating, 2001: 169-170)

'Yet, the general principle, of respect for difference, of suspending belief in old doctrines of sovereignty, and of putting the state in prosper perspective, may help in managing nationally conflicts in places where there are much more difficulties'. (Keating, 2001: 171)

If this is the surface, a new framework around which institutionalisations based on social processes turn out further around the invention of policy discourse rather than on the creation of problem solving pointed to specific and historically determined policy problems. Hence their contents can appear more relevant in terms of the contents aimed not at the elimination of differences but in their recognition. This can open up new hope for the arenas of cooperation across the nation state border. On this basis it is perhaps possible to recognise the Border States of Europe within a framework of a new cosmopolitan project⁵²³. This means within the creation of experimental projects.

'The formation of states must be an experimental process. The trial processes may go on with diverse degrees of blindness and accident, and at the cost of unregulated procedures of cut and try, of fumbling and groping, without insight into what men are after or clear knowledge of a good state even when it is achieved. Or it may proceed more intelligently, because guided by knowledge of the conditions which must be fulfilled. But it is still experimental. And since conditions of action and of inquiry and knowledge are always changing, the experiment must always be retried; the State must always be rediscovered' (Dewey, 1927 [1953] : 34)

Where the redefinition of shared aims can be at the base of what reason assumes to be the guide in conducting interactions between others and 'us'.

Attachment

INTERVIEWS

**ACTORS INTERVIEWED AND ROLE OR LINKAGE WITH THE CROSS-BORDER ARENA AS IN
THE ESPACE MONT-BLANC PROJECT**

Barbara Ehrighaus – President ‘PRO Mont-Blanc’ Organisation (Collectif International des Associations pour la Protection du Mont-Blanc) (observer in the CTMB arena)

René Schwery -- Head of the Service de l’Aménagement du Territoire, Canton du Valais (Vice-President Swiss side Conference Transfrontaliere Espace Mont-Blanc CTMB arena)

Alberto Cerise -- Councillor responsible for Environment, Territory and Public Works Regione Valle d’Aosta (Vice-President Italian side Conference Transfrontaliere Espace Mont-Blanc CTMB arena)

Jean-Marc Bonino -- Chamonix Municipality Directeur du Service Aménagement et Montagne (Coordinator French side Conference Transfrontaliere Espace Mont-Blanc CTMB arena)

Stefania Muti -- Regione Valle d’Aosta Assessorato Territorio, Ambiente ed Opere Pubbliche (Coordinator Italian side Conference Transfrontaliere Espace Mont-Blanc CTMB arena)

Alberto Fosson – Director Fondazione Montagna Sicura Villa Cameron (side of the Scheme for the Sustainable Development of EMB)

Roberto Nicco – Vice-President Consiglio Regionale della Valle d’Aosta (delegate of Regione Valle d’Aosta for initial meetings of the three Environment Ministers and head of the working group of the Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Paesistico)

Bruno Gremo – President Ecological Organisation ‘Amici della Terra’ (observer in the CTMB arena)

Roberto Rota – Delegate Administration of ‘Funivie del Monte Bianco’ (Cable way Mont-Blanc Italian side Courmayeur) (cross-border linkage in discussion – also with regard to the sustainable development scheme and EMB principles)

Pietro Minuzzo – Journalist ANSA agency Redazione Valle d’Aosta (he has followed the EMB project for the press media)

Catherine Berthet – Director of Cabinet Chamonix Municipality (she has followed the EMB project from the beginning along side the mayor of Chamonix Michel Charlet)

Michel Charlet – Mayor of Chamonix and President of the Syndacat Intercommunal Espace Mont-Blanc Nature (Vice-President French side Conference Transfrontaliere Espace Mont-Blanc CTMB arena)

Fausto Ballerini – Director of Direction des politiques de la montagne et des relations transfrontalieres et interregional (coordinator of INTERREG programme in general in Valle d’Aosta)

Jean-Marc Berthier – Directeur Gérant of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel (GEIE) (cross-border linkage in discussion – also with regard to the sustainable development scheme and EMB principles)

Michele Tropiano – Direttore of the Mont-Blanc Tunnel (GEIE) (cross-border linkage in discussion – also with regard to the sustainable development scheme and EMB principles)

Serge Tuaz – General Secretary of Syndacat Intecommunal Espace Mont-Blanc Nature (Working group for the scheme of sustainable development)

Pino Crespi – Ex Councillor responsible for Culture Courmayeur Municipality (he followed and sustained the beginning of the EMB project)

Antonio Grosso – Councillor responsible for Transport Courmayeur Municipality (involved in CTMB area)

Ennio Mochet – Deputy-Mayor Courmayeur Municipality (involved in CTMB area)

Paola Verzè – Working Group for Air quality today with GEIE Mont-Blanc Tunnel group the (GEIE) (cross-border linkage in discussion –also – with regard to the sustainable development scheme and EMB principles)

Felice Rolla – Association Mont-Blanc Nature Natural Reserve (cross-border linkage in discussion – also with regard to the sustainable development scheme and EMB principles)

OUTLINE FOR THE INTERVIEWS

Historical sources at the national border between Italy, Switzerland and French in the Espace Mont-Blanc context (maps, charts, slogans of historical setting, symbols and representations, weak and strong historical symbols remained until today and debates still ongoing).

The birth of some interests or shared symbols and joint actions before the EMB project (e.g.: the building of the MB tunnel). Whether these constituted the topic of consensus in the initial phase of the project or whether the project has proposed very innovative policy topics (e.g.: sustainability)

The political launch of the project and its evolution (answering to which kind of needs, actors interested in sustaining the initial phase of the project and actors involved in the process in the following phases). Factors of success or of declared success used for instance by political parties to gain consensus and which kind of parties have sustained the project.

Moments of political life during the development of the project. Elections, changes of administrations, deviations with regard to the development of the topic concerned with the project, variations of the focus of the project ongoing and of the political tendencies.

Participation of the media in the spreading of information concerning the project.

MAIN ISSUES

Representations and symbolism

How did the idea of making a mapping (a re-bordering) of the EMB space emerge? Which kind of focus was it? When did you decide that? What value was such a mapping for you? Would the mapping communicate a transformation with regard to the existing borders? And if the answer is yes, in which way? Where has such mapping been spread? (e.g. the INTERNET, in some municipalities, in which kinds of official documents, in which kinds of informal documents, etc.)

What does the old border mean for you today? Which kind of symbolic value of refusing or accepting do you have regarding it?

Cross-border identity question

Do you think that this territory at the border has some traces concerning a common identity to express across the state border? (e.g. common language, geomorphologic features, and common economies). Has the EMB project answered a question of an 'autonomy cross-border identity'? And if yes, how?

Transformations in actions and practices in cross-border cooperation. Factors of hindrance or in favour

- *What does the EMB project transform? Which project – also 'top-down' – of decisions was already on the agenda of decision-makers? To propose a 'soft' project for 'hard' decisions? To contrast the competitiveness between tourist municipalities in a factor to share as a common focus to development?*

- *What has changed in your practices today? Which level or sector for you is mostly involved and shows the effect of the invention of the project?*
- *Which factors of hindrance were there in the past? The administrative level, the focus, or sectoral competencies? Today have these problems been overcome? If yes, why? Which factors of obstacles have been most relevant during the project till now and which for you are the most relevant today?*
- *Could you indicate some very favourable factors or moments in the course of the project? Favourable political moments of the project, agreement achieved, or other?*
- *Could you indicate a factor of success obtained by the project in practices?*

The stake of EMB or the umbrella for a cross-border joint action in the consideration of public goods?

- *Do you think that the aim of the Espace is to be a territory (is the territory the stake?) or is it better to think of it as a cross-border umbrella for actions?*
- *Do you think that the Espace is a field of joint actions? If yes, which kinds of recurrent difficulties have emerged as priority? (e.g. normative aspects of differences in the rules and competencies in different countries, different public participation in the borderlands of different countries or whatever)*
- *Which kind of public goods have been at 'stake' in the cross-border co-operation?*
- *Which background or needs from your side have you brought to the project? How have you received the needs of other sides? What do you think of the needs of the other sides? Is there a balance or an imbalance between the kinds of actors involved between the three parts? (e.g.: more private or semi-public participation on one side, more public on the other and so on)*
- *Who or what decided to call this project Espace? Did you choose this term with general consensus or was it a term debated in your arena?*
- *Who or what led the main topic of the project? Which kinds of questions?*
- *Which kinds of factors were aimed at involving the 'public' or have been activated during the development of the EMB project? Which actions of consensus have become strong points of the Espace today?*

Factors of exchange and involvement using communication actions

- *Levels of government involved during the development of the project, how the regional-canton-inter-municipal levels have involved the municipalities and local-domestic groups of interest.*
- *The consideration of the influence of the NGOs and their participation, influences from other groups of interregional organisations like the Alpine Convention or COTRAO, spreading of the*

information during the Espace project centred on problems of management or moreover the success achieved and by whom- factors or slowing down in the process of decisions (and for you why) or factors of acceleration (by who and when), factors which have locked some projects to include in the Espace, moments of hiding or persistency around decisions).

- *Involvement and relationships between the Espace and existing territorial levels (supranational, national, regional, cantonal, provincial, municipal).*
- *Involvement and relationships with territorial sectors (e.g.: environment, transport infrastructures, planning) at which level the most (e.g. Minister of State Environment)*
- *Involvement with private or semi public sectors (e.g. local-domestic organisations which have actively participated and influenced or oriented the project toward some topics)*
- *Involvement at non-Government levels, mountaineering, and environmental protection orientation.*
- *Do you remember any unplanned involvement caused for instance by the spreading of information? e.g. through the INTERNET?*
- *What do you think of the privilege of the mass media for the spreading of internationalities of the project? What was your influence on? What have you tried to communicate toward which kind of mass media?*

Institutionalisation

- *What do you think has changed from the beginning of the project (with INTERREG 1) until today?*
- *How you define the Espace from an institutional point of view?*
- *Which kind of institutional evolution do you think can be favourable to the development of the project today?*
- *What do you think of the possibility of implementing this evolution?*
- *Which kind of relationship have you developed between you and the rest of the Espace arena in a lasting way (with sectors, levels, or transnational or interregional organisations)?*
- *Which kind of lasting relationship is more important for you today for development of the project?*
- *Which kind of structure does the Espace have according to the organisation? (A sole cross-border site, decentred structures in the cross-border territory according to different competencies, overlapped situations on different sides regarding the same competencies. Which kind of structure do you have today?)*
- *How is the cross-border setting structured? With a common secretary, a common administration, and so on? How has this organisational structure changed during the project?*

Successes and failures

- *Can you indicate some events in which you have picked up favourable opinions for or oppositions to the Espace project?*
- *How have you perceived such opinions? Doing which kind of actions after that?*
- *Support and interest of private actors or quasi-public in the management of the project*
- *Which kind of actors? Have the initiatives been pushed by you or by them?*
- *On which kind of theme?*
- *Do you think that the private party in general (from management of the Mont-Blanc tunnel to tourism infrastructures can pursue the same focus as the Espace)? Why and how? What are your actions to let the private participate?*

Issues on Institutional Participation in the EMB Project

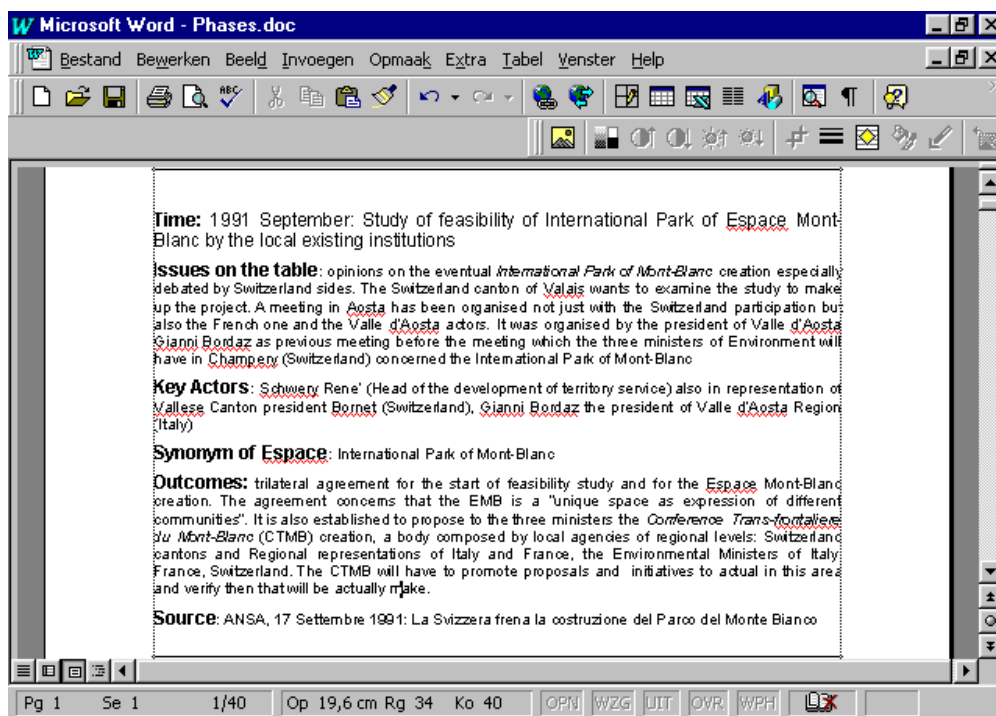
- *How is your institution represented in the EMB? Which role do you have and when were you involved in the project?*
- *Since when have you personally followed the project?*
- *What is your particular experience in CTMB participation?*
- *Which kind of 'instrument' is EMB for you?*
- *What part has the organisation or the institution in which you are taken in EMB? Have you raised debates or have your ideas been put into 'practice' within the project?*
- *What is your main role as regards the project? Have you contributed to a spreading of the project, through which kind of means? What was the reaction?*
- *Which kind of communication do you think could be more effective?*
- *Do you think that the TMB accident had some effect on the EMB project in public opinion?*
- *Which kind of policies do you see more clearly linked to the development of the project (environmental, transport, sustainable development, tourism, etc..)?*
- *Which other kinds of policies do you see more clearly linked to the EMB (UNESCO world heritage, Alpine Convention, ...)? What do you think of the idea that the EMB is a laboratory of the Alpine convention?*
- *Why speak about cross-border cooperation in this area? What is the main factor for you, which is linked to such a process (factors of communality-competitiveness, language, common economies, common problems to solve, particular policies which require cross-border agreements, a will for a different representative as regards the State – to overcome common roles of marginalities as regards central powers – an autonomy to raise?)*
- *What do you think of the idea that EMB can become a Euroregion?*

- *What has been for you the most favourable political moment, in these 13 years and both at local and national level, for the EMB project?*
- *For you which kind of asymmetries does the EMB live with regard to the respective local autonomies?*
- *What do you think of the ministerial participation within the EMB project?*
- *For what concerns the Scheme of Sustainable Development do you think that there is a local part that has more weight?*
- *What do you think of the communication means activated for the EMB dissemination?*
- *Which kind of strategies have you brought to the project?*
- *Do you think that this project has taken on a sort of 'credibility' in local consensus over the years?*
- *Do you remember a particularly difficult moment for the EMB project?*
- *Can you advise me to speak to someone who was part of the initial work or perhaps is not part of the CTMB but very collaborative in a sporadic way?*
- *How do you see the future for EMB?*

SCHEME FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PRESS ARTICLES

Time, Issues, Actors and partial Outcomes over time

The scheme proposed in this attachment summarises all the articles published examined in press references relative to the Espace Mont-Blanc project according to a scheme focused on: 1) the time of apparition, 2) the issues on the table relative to that time, 3) the key actors who have spoken in the article or which the article signals, 4) the synonyms of Espace used in the articles, 5) the eventual events or the contemporary arguments that became part of the debate or the information disclosed relative to the Espace Mont-Blanc project, 6) source of the article.



SCHEME FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE WEB-SITES

Space, Issues, Actors and partial Representation in time

The use of INTERNET websites as a tool of analysis doesn't extinguish the problem of the issue of identity of the trans-border region(s) neither does it hastily reach any conclusion; it is just a part of the research. The point of view is to follow a dynamic reconstruction of the networks above all through the external arenas of actors (websites) who exhibit symbolic manifestation of the social and different ideas of territorial problems around the localised area of Espace Mont-Blanc. This experiment is not a demonstration of the efficacy of the INTERNET as a public and democratic system of information in our time, here it is used as a partial tool of public policy analysis and not in the least holistic. The websites are choices for their way of interpreting and representing the cross-border region of Espace Mont-Blanc. The framework of sense is shared according to three variables in the interconnection between the examined websites: their message of 'communication', the emerging way to represent 'space' and 'time'. The issue is: Who speaks of EMB on the INTERNET public sphere at the same time in which I lead this analysis.

A first navigation

- An overview of websites: facts and problems around the MB region by search engines
- Interrelation between theme and internal/external localisation around the MB region

The message of 'communication' and management of the web -site

- Name of association or institution
- Management of the web -site (public/private)
- What is the action?
- The main topic. Skill of the message. Key words and slogans at first sight
- Existence of data bases
- Accessibility of access (passwords or not)
- General update
- Images, colours, symbolism and iconography. Where is the main subject
- Availability of the texts in languages (many languages or just one)
- Role of visitor(s) (the existence of possibility of exchanges)

The interpretation and the representation of 'Space'

- The way in the website to say 'space', 'territoriality' and so on
- The way in the website to say 'border*' (in what kind of declination)
- Representation of the 'space' (mapping? static, interactive ?)
- What is the problem? What is the declared focus?
- Sites of localization of organization in the world
- Link with other organizations in space (real and virtual) institutional or not

The interpretation and the representation of 'Time'

- Date of creation of association (for what, by whom)
- Documentation available
- Punctuality of up/date (every how long time)
- Counter of number of visitors

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