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**SOCIAL SCIENCES  
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**JUSSI LAINE**

***New Civic Neighborhood***

*Cross-border Cooperation and Civil Society  
Engagement at the Finnish-Russian Border*

PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND  
*Dissertations in Social Sciences and Business Studies*



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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the actual and potential role of Finnish civil society organizations in developing new forms of cross-border cooperation with Russia. It puts forth the concept of civic neighborhood as a bottom-up alternative to the official notion of 'EUropean' Neighborhood. As the period to be analyzed begins with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it covers the era during which Finnish-Russian bilateral relations became a part of broader EU-Russia relations. The formation of civic neighborhood is studied on the basis of two major empirical primary datasets, of which one consists of interviews and another one of published newspaper materials. The two datasets provide different, yet mutually complementary perspectives on the phenomenon under study. It is vital to study both perspectives as perceptions, since images of the other and discursive relations are not mere results of cooperation practices but also – and more importantly – their prerequisites.

The optimal way to normalize neighborly relations is to increase people-to-people interaction, and preferably this ought to occur from the bottom up rather than the top down. While state institutions and structures may contribute to the shaping of the general operational environment, the maintenance of civil society cooperation cannot be expected to rest entirely on the state. In light of the current trends that reduce the funds allotted for cross-border cooperation on the one hand, and the decentralization and privatization of public services on the other hand, it would be fruitful to conceptualize a cross-border space for social contracting and entrepreneurship through civil society organizations. This would allow the civil society organizations to gain further leverage to fill in the gaps created by borders and bordering, and to bridge the apparent intersectoral crevasses.

Keywords: civil society, neighborhood, cross-border cooperation

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Väitöskirja

## **ABSTRAKTI**

Tämä tutkimus käsittelee kansalaisyhteiskunnan todellista ja potentiaalista roolia Suomen ja Venäjän välisen rajan ylittävän yhteistyön kehittämisessä. Se nostaa esiin kansalaisnaapuruuden käsitteen alhaalta ylös rakentuvana vaihtoehtona viralliselle ajatukselle 'Eurooppalaisesta' naapuruudesta. Analyysissä tarkasteltava ajanjakso alkaa Neuvostoliiton romahtamisesta ja ulottuu vuoteen 2010, minä aikana Suomen ja Venäjän kahdenväliset suhteet ovat tulleet osaksi laajempia EU:n ja Venäjän välisiä suhteita. Kansalaisnaapuruuden muodostumista tarkastellaan tutkimuksessa kahden pääasiallisen empiirisen primaariaineiston avulla, joista ensimmäinen koostuu haastatteluista ja toinen sanomalehtimateriaalista. Nämä kaksi aineistoa tarjoavat erilaiset ja toisiaan täydentävät näkökulmat tutkittuun ilmiöön, joiden molempien tarkastelu on tärkeää, sillä käsitykset, toiseuden ilmentymät ja diskursiiviset suhteet yleensä eivät ole vain rajat ylittävän yhteistyön seurauksia, vaan myös – ja mikä tärkeintä – niiden edellytyksiä.

Optimaalinen tapa naapuruussuhteiden normalisoinnissa on ihmisten välisen henkilökohtaisen vuorovaikutuksen lisääminen, minkä tulisi tapahtua ennemmin alhaalta ylös kuin ylhäältä alaspäin. Valtiolliset rakenteet voivat vaikuttaa yleiseen toimintaympäristöön, mutta kansalaisyhteiskunnan yhteistyön ei voida olettaa olevan kokonaan valtion vastuulla. Kun otetaan huomioon viimeaikainen yhteistyöhön kohdistettujen varojen väheneminen sekä julkisten palveluiden hajauttaminen ja yksityistäminen, olisi kaukonäköistä käsitteellistää kansalaisjärjestöjen avulla rajat ylittävä tila sosiaalisille ja yhteiskunnallisille sopimusjärjestelyille ja yrittäjyydelle. Tällä tavoin kansalaisjärjestöt voivat saada lisää vaikutusvaltaa täyttääkseen rajojen ja rajaamisen luomia kuiluja sekä kaventaakseen yhteiskunnallisten sektorien välisiä railoja.

Asiasanat: kansalaisyhteiskunta, naapuruus, rajat ylittävä yhteistyö

# Foreword

This is an inquiry into coalition forming among people, less so of that between states. As a human geographer, I find it interesting to explore how people interact not just with the world around them, but also with each other – and how the changing world impacts their behavior. But this study deviated greatly from its original premise. It combines my own interests in also international relations, political sociology, and history, all of which offer valuable insight into the topic at hand. The focus on civil society was chosen for its ability to function as a locomotive for cooperation, often overlooked by grand scale policy proposals, aiming to bring the two sides closer to each other. This study aims to underline the dynamics from below – as the process of European integration is, after all, a result of civil society pursuit.

The evidence of globalization is all around us, yet geography remains overwhelmingly important – and so does history. One's life is still largely defined by his or her place of birth and where one chooses to live after that. In most cases, these two coincide as despite increased mobility surprisingly few people live outside the country in which they were born. While reasons for this are multiple, it is clear that belonging to a certain nation has a certain appeal. The territorial trap endures and endures, because people prefer confined, familiar spaces. As a container, the nation-state has, however, become leaky as there are ever increasing challenges to state authority. Following ideas put forth by Rumford, this study maintains that the focus should indeed be shifted from the state towards borders that are woven into the fabric of society. It is borders, not necessarily states, that are the key to understanding networked connectivity. Borders are no longer at the edges, in the marginal. They have become important spaces of where questions of identity, belonging, political conflict, and societal transformation are discussed and acted out. That is why they have also found their way into the heart of politics.

I have proven by actual trial that a dissertation, which takes five years to write, takes only about three days to read! Certainly, to write some 400 pages can be done more quickly, but I was always keen to believe that one has to know his or her topic before writing about it. This, however, presented another problem. The more one learns, the more he or she understands how much else there is to learn. If I feel more ignorant now than when I commenced this journey, I must have learned a great deal.

To write a foreword for this body of work is all the more daunting. I regret that the lack of space prevents me from having the satisfaction of acknowledging all of those who have, in a way or another, given their help in



putting this book together. I cannot, however, let this opportunity pass by without expressing my deep obligations to the pre-evaluators of this dissertation, Professor Vladimir Kolossov (who also kindly agreed to be my Opponent) and Dr. Docent Pirjo Jukarainen. Your insightful comments and suggestions for improvements have played a key role in turning my manuscript into an academic dissertation.

With this dissertation, I attempt to bring to fruition a set of ideas planted in my mind by my supervisors Professor Heikki Eskelinen, Professor Ilkka Liikanen, and Professor Markku Tykkyläinen, all of whom took care of their respective duties in an exceptional manner. I thank you for having believed in the merits of this study and providing the encouragement that has helped me see it through to completion. Without your constant support and constructive feedback throughout my doctoral studies, this dissertation would have never been possible. I am also deeply indebted to Professor James W. Scott who has not only been a great inspiration to me, but has included me in many of his projects. Working with him has been not only beneficial, but also a great joy. I am proud to be in such company.

I would also like to thank Dr. Martin van der Velde, from whom I have learned a lot during the last years. My gratitude goes also to Prof. Jopi Nyman for his valuable guidance. In order to mention all those who have helped me during the course of these years would take another 400 pages; I trust that you know who you are. I promise to thank you in person the next time our paths cross.

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I wish to thank my beloved sons, Gabriel and Benjamin, who have taught me valuable lessons about life and how to prioritize. Last, but certainly not least, I wish to thank my wife, Kate, for her help in finalizing this work, but more importantly for her unending patience.

Vantaa, May 11, 2013

Jussi Laine

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Arctic Council
BASTUN	Baltic Sea Trade Union Network
BCCA	Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEP-CMAF	European Standing Conference of Co-operatives, Mutual Societies, Associations and Foundations
CFSP	Common foreign and security policy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoR	Committee of the Regions
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
CSO	Civil society organization
DG	Directorate-General
EC	European Commission
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community

EDC	European Defense Community
EEA	European Economic Area
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EFP	European Foreign Policy
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EK	Euregio Karelia
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union
ENI	European Neighborhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
ENPI CBC	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, Cross-border cooperation
ENPI	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument
EPC	European Political Community
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FIM	Finnish markka, the pre-euro currency of Finland
FNPR	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
FRCC	Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce ( <i>Suomalais-Venäläinen kauppakamari – SVKK</i> )
FSB	Federal Security Service (Russia)
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HCF	International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region
HS	<i>Helsingin Sanomat</i>
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IR	International Relations
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs, the former name for a pillar of the EU; renamed Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters (PJC) in 2003
JMA	Joint Management Authority
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JOP	Joint Operational Program
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
KANE	Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy ( <i>Kansalaisyhteiskuntapolitiikan neuvottelukunta</i> )



LIEN	Link Inter-European NGOs
MAUP	Modifiable areal unit problem
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MLG	Multilevel governance
MTR	Mid Term Review
NAC	Neighboring Area Cooperation
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCM	Nordic Council of Ministers
ND	Northern Dimension
NDBC	Northern Dimension Business Council
NDEP	Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership
NDI	Northern Dimension Institute
NDPC	Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture
NDPHS	Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being
NDPTL	Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIS	Newly Independent States
NPM	New Public Management
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SE	Social Economy
SEA	Single European Act
STETE	Finnish Committee for European Security ( <i>Suomen toimikunta Euroopan turvallisuuden edistämiseksi</i> )
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent tates
TAN	Transnational advocacy network
TCE	Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, a proposed constitutional treaty of the European Union
TEU	Treaty on European Union, formal name of the Maastricht Treaty (1992)
TTT	Agreement on economic, technical, and industrial cooperation ( <i>Tieteellis-taloudellis-tekninen yhteistyösopimus</i> )
UN	United Nations
US	United States (of America)
USA	United States of America

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization
WW	World War
YYA	Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance ( <i>Ystävyys-, yhteistyö- ja avunantosopimus</i> )

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 PROLOGUE

Borders have long been one of the most central topics to political geography. However, much has changed since the pioneering framework of early border studies. The focus of border studies has developed in relation to the predominant geopolitical models and visions – from studying borders as delimiters of territorial control and ideology towards areal differentiation and later towards more dynamic role of borders as bridges rather than barriers. The emergence of globalization and the rhetoric of a ‘borderless world’ only fuelled interest in borders. The apparent renaissance of border studies that followed acquired an increasingly interdisciplinary take. The significance of borders is doubtlessly in flux, but instead of disappearing altogether, the borders themselves seem to be merely changing their institutional form. The traditional definitions and comprehensions of borders have been challenged primarily because the context in which they were created and existed has also altered. Borders continue to separate us; we live in a world of lines and compartments. Even though we may not necessarily see these lines, they order our daily life practices, strengthening our belonging to, and identity with, certain places and groups and in so doing perpetuate and re-perpetuate notions of difference and othering (Newman 2006).

This study draws on the experience from the border between Finland and the Russian Federation<sup>1</sup> where CBC has reflected both the political and socio-cultural change as well as politically and economically motivated interaction. The border provides an illuminating laboratory in which to study border change – or the lack thereof. Finland’s post-WW II relationship with the Soviet Union, and more recently with Russia, has been both close and distant – at times both concurrently. It has been shaped by a common history, Cold War realities, pragmatism, interdependencies and the lessons learned from devastating armed conflicts.

Despite these tensions, the basis for civil society’s role in cross-border ties was also forged already during the Soviet era. The 1948 Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (the YYA treaty) began to serve as the key document for governing post-war relations between the two countries. Dictated by the treaty, post-WW II Finnish foreign policy towards the Soviet Union was based on the principle of ‘official friendship.’ Even though the

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<sup>1</sup> The Russian Federation is hereafter referred to as Russia.

border remained heavily guarded between two separate armies, a sound and trusting relationship with the Soviet Union was sustained in order to avoid future conflicts with the ideologically alien superpower at Finland's doorstep. Interestingly, while such a friendship was orchestrated at the level of intergovernmental relations, it was put in practice through paradiplomatic links within which Finnish civil society organizations (CSOs) also played an important role (e.g., Eskelinen, Liikanen & Oksa 1999).

As the geopolitical situation ameliorated in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, Finnish-Russian cooperation began to develop rapidly. After being practically closed for decades, a more open border enabled actors from the both sides to interact with each other. In addition to historical ties and the related 'nostalgia tourism,' much of this early cooperation was fuelled by the paradiplomatic friendship-town system and then increasingly by the Neighboring Area Cooperation (NAC) funded by the Finland Government. More open conditions also revealed the stark contrasts between the two sides. In Finland the formation of civil society has deep roots, and CSOs are perceived as serious partners for the public sector. In Russia the operations – or even the existence – of civil society as a social force independent from state ideology remained practically illegitimate until the collapse of Communism.

The practices and rhetoric of cross-border cooperation (CBC) underwent an exceptionally deep change, overlapping with broader changes in political perspectives as regional and local level actors were now also allowed and able to take an active role in cross-border relations by cooperating directly across the border (see Eskelinen, Liikanen & Oksa 1999). The administrative discussion concerning CBC policies acquired a new European twist when Finland joined the European Union (EU) in 1995. Suddenly, activities formerly administered through bilateral, state-level agreements became part of the broader dynamics of international politics and EU-Russia relations. This further fuelled cross-border interaction, and the related programs and projects became streamlined to fall in line with the policy frames defined by the EU and the new Europeanizing rhetoric (Liikanen et al. 2007). With the introduction of EU policy frames picturing a 'Wider Europe' and European 'Neighborhood' in the early 2000s, the focus of CBC shifted from technical aid and regional development towards external relations and the fostering of interaction between the EU and its neighbors. Such an ambitious vision of a 'ring of friends' around the Union was considered necessary in order for the EU to safeguard the transnational space beyond its external borders (Scott 2005).

The first backlash to this vision took place when Russia, the EU's largest neighbor, opted out of joining the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), the most explicit form of geopolitical integration between the EU and its immediate region, thereby rejecting the presumptions embedded in the policy. Instead, relations with Russia are nowadays developed under a 'strategic partnership,' which, however, also receives funding through the European Neighborhood

and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Accordingly, this study follows the suggestion made by Scott and Liikanen (2010, 423) that understandings of 'Neighborhood' ought not to be strictly limited to specific policies but can also be interpreted in terms of a political, cultural and socio-economic space within which the EU exerts transformative power beyond its borders. This is to say that cooperation agendas concern not only 'high politics' and that more attention should be paid to bottom-up dynamisms.

What stood out from the new CBC program documents was that the border-spanning activities they outlined were portrayed as laying ground for a new type of cross-border regionalization – even at the external borders of the Union. In order to accomplish this, more attention had to be paid to people-to-people connections. As the EU had already discovered civil society as a political force central to modernizing and democratizing EU governance, these new documents now expanded the civil society dimension to cover also CBC across the external border of the Union. While CSOs had already played a role in the Finnish-Russian bilateral CBC from the start, the Europeanization of the civic agenda politicized the cooperation and elicited the centuries-old interface between Western and Eastern notions of civil society. Given that civil society is characteristically not a stand-alone concept but is commonly paired with the concept of the state (O'Dowd & Dimitrova 2006), the EU's attempt to promote civil society cooperation could thus also be interpreted to involve an indirect agenda of reshaping political institutions in the neighboring states.

In contrast to explicit programs and policies, such as the Finnish government funded NAC or the ENP, this study draws attention to less formal and more subtle channels and networks through which the delimiting characteristics of the border can be eroded away and new, less loaded and more pragmatic relations formed in their place. In engaging in various cooperation practices across the border, individual citizens as well as various types of civil society organizations are building a new civic<sup>2</sup> neighborhood, crucial not only for the bottom-up diffusion of 'Europe' beyond EU borders and also for fostering the less value driven people-to-people connections that would form the foundation for the development of interaction and integration.

The formation of the civic neighborhood is studied with the help of two major empirical primary datasets, one consisting of transcribed interviews and another comprised of materials gathered from newspapers. The two datasets provide different yet mutually complementary perspectives on the phenomenon in question. Following Habermas (1991) civil society is approached here not only from an institutional angle but also from a discursive vantage point; i.e., not

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<sup>2</sup> I have chosen to use the word 'civic' instead of 'civil' in order to imply (inter-)action that is voluntary and takes place between or among citizens and other non-state groups but does not exclude action undertaken under the direction of the state if it is determined to contribute to the public good as defined by the people.

only as a sphere of organization but also as a sphere for public discussion. It is expected that civil society plays a vital role as a field of discursive practices that shape the image of Russia, and, at the same time, the image of Russia as a neighbor influences and even directs civil society engagement. The newspaper material is thus used to illuminate the state of public debate within which cross-border relations have evolved. The interview material is then used to provide a complementary perspective emphasizing institutional practices that have influenced these perceptions. It is vital to study both sides of the coin as perceptions, image of the other, and discursive relations altogether are not only a result of CBC practices but also – importantly – their prerequisites.

Defining what is meant by civil society is a political project in itself. It is a social construct that is often invoked in debates on democracy, governance and intercultural understanding. A comparative setting, here between Finland and Russia, confirms that using the term ‘civil society’ in a global sense obscures as much as it illuminates, proving that the nature of civil society can only properly be understood within the context of, or in terms of, particular societies (Crook 2002, 2). In the Western European context, the idea of civil society gives expression to the expectations of European citizens of more direct participation in their future and the collective choices that it entails (Mokre & Riekman 2006). With fiscal retrenchment, reduced redistributive outlays, and the privatization of public services, debates on civil society have also increasingly focused on its role in economic life and in the support of social welfare policies. As a political and increasingly economic force, civil society organizations and philanthropic associations are often seen as a mirror reflection of an increasing lack of confidence in the capacity of traditional governance modes to address problems of modern societies. By the same token, organizations of the ‘social economy,’ such as cooperative style enterprises, mutual help societies, and voluntary associations have long played an important role in national and regional development in Western countries.

Within the context of post-socialist transformation in which the Finnish-Russian CBC largely developed, civil society is understood not only as a democratizing force but also as an actor capable of compensating for state ‘dysfunctionality’ (Fritz 2004). In Russia, in particular, the state has reduced its involvement especially in social welfare services. Here, CSOs have stepped in to provide basic services to those who have suffered the most from economic change. In addition to these vital services, CSOs have also been engaged in areas of local development that encompass cultural, educational, training, and business development activities – areas where the state has shown little presence, either for ideological or practical reasons (Laine & Demidov 2013). To understand the dynamics underpinning civil society involvement in social welfare and local development issues in Russia, it is necessary to assume an unbiased perspective. Russian civil society needs to be approached as a ‘cultural

formation' (Kennedy 2002), as a product of a specific context within which it has evolved.

## **1.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1.2.1 Niche and Approach**

On the face of it, the significance of Finland's borders appears unaffected. The border with Russia remains secure and well controlled; younger generations can hardly remember that there would have ever been a 'real' border with Sweden, and even fewer recall that Finland shares some 730 kilometers of borderline with Norway somewhere up north. Running through nothing but forest and some occasional lakes for almost its entire length, the Finnish-Russian border does not inevitably appear to be a pressing research object, at first glance. In terms of dynamics, it fades in comparison with other EU borders as well as with other seemingly asymmetrical borders, such as the border between the United States and Mexico.

Given what was stated above, the scholarly and popular attention the Finnish-Russian border has attracted, and continues to attract, is astonishing. Even though many of these writings discuss not the border per se but what lies beyond it, it is the border that has gained a sizable symbolic load. The lengthy shared border with Russia is still commonly put forth as excuse for why various issues are as they are and not necessarily as they could or should be. Everybody, even those who have never seen or crossed it, seem to know the meaning of it and what it stands for, and thus many statements on it go unquestioned. Alas, quantity does not compensate for quality. It has been customary to assume a rather (banal) nationalist stance and build on uncontroversial acceptance of the historical setting and current state of affairs. Their actual merits aside, such writings reproduce a particular image and perspective and in so doing diminish room for alternative views. While historical perspective and context specificity are crucial for understanding a particular border, the Finnish-Russian one in this case, placing it in the greater European perspective broadens the analytical frame and allows for the interpretations that a more narrow approach might preclude.

Similarly, the borders of a particular discipline, geography in this case, might also confine the analytical lens. Even if disciplinary specialization has its benefits, a strict immersion in a particular field, as Strober (2006, 315) notes, may limit social innovation and the intellectual horizon of researchers. Interdisciplinary research, in turn, runs counter to the disciplinary taken-for-grantedness, thus allowing more holistic, richer understanding of the topic at hand. As Baerwald (2010, 494–495) remarks, the drive to study the broad ranging and intertwined problems that encompass a complex mix of phenomena and processes, which taken together lie beyond the margins of existing

disciplines, has impelled the conduct of research that necessitates inter-, if not postdisciplinary approach.

Fortunately for geographers this is not a major cause for concern. While many traditional disciplines are defined by the topics that they study, geography has been inherently interdisciplinary since its establishment as a modern discipline. Among the classics, Richard Hartshorne (1939) acknowledged that geography could never be understood as a discrete science but rather as a synthetic, unsystematic enterprise that aggregated data from the other sciences to create a larger understanding. In 1934, A. E. Parkins contented himself with summing up quite insightfully that “[g]eography is what geographers do” (Martin & James 1993, 356) – as a result there has been plenty of room to maneuver within the discipline. The active pursuit of inquiries related to space, place and interactions leads geographers to venture far from the field’s core and explore realms where geographical perspectives intersect with those from other fields (ibid., 495–496; Gober 2000, 4).

Recently, geographers have delved, *inter alia*, into the interrogating potentials for a democratic governance of borders (Anderson, O’Dowd & Wilson 2003), exclusion and discrimination (van Houtum & Pijpers 2007, van Houtum & Boedeltje 2009), the technologization of borders and visualization practices (Amoore 2009), violence of borders and ‘teichopolitics’ (Elden 2009; Rosière & Jones 2012), the relationships between ‘traditional’ borders and the so-called borderless world of networked, topological space (Paasi 2009), external drivers, such as the EU and CBC (Johnson 2009; Popescu 2008), the conflicting logics of ‘national’ borders and ‘supranational’ unity (Sidaway 2001), and the ‘new’ European borders as ‘sharp’ markers of difference (Scott & van Houtum 2009). However, geography by no means monopolizes border studies. Borders have spread also not just into international relations, political sociology, and history, but also into cultural studies (Rovisco 2010) and philosophy (Balibar 2009). The bordering (border-making) perspective not only transcends disciplinary boundaries, but it takes a step further by advocating that scientific knowledge ought not to be privileged over everyday geographical imaginations and popular geopolitics (Scott 2009).

In the field of border studies, theorizing has proven to be quite a challenge. All borders are unique, and each of them is related in different ways to local, regional, state-bound, and supranational processes – the geosociologies of political power (Agnew 2005, 47). As a result of this, however, concerns have been raised that during the past decade border studies have been overly focused on case study material, which has been thought to overshadow attempts to develop the discussion of concepts, theories, and common ideas (Newman 2012). There is little abstract theorizing in border studies, and those who have attempted to theorize on borders have run into unique circumstances that make it impossible to conceptualize broad scale generalizations (Kolossoff 2005; Newman 2006).



Even so, attempts have been made. Van Houtum and van Naerssen (2002) have sought to understand borders through sociological concepts of ordering and othering. Brunet-Jailly (2004; 2005) has put forth an attempt to theorize by drawing the general lessons that single case studies can offer. The same logic has been used more recently by Moré (2011). Newman, who earlier went against the grain by calling for a general border theory (Newman 2003a/b; cf. Brunet-Jailly 2004; 2005; Kolossov 2005; Paasi 2005a/b; Rumford 2006), finally gave up and accepted that “it is futile to seek a single explanatory framework for the study of borders” (Newman 2006, 145). Border as a research topic is complex, making the study of borders so diverse, both in terms of geographic and spatial scales, that any attempt to create a single analytical metatheory is doomed to failure. Borders as a topic of research must be untangled in a context specific manner. We need not restrict ourselves to mere case studies, but go one step further to establish broader conceptualizations, trajectories, and even a common glossary. While all borders are unique, they are still affected by the same global phenomena; it is their regional implications that differ.

Even if most scholars have given up on the enterprise, Payan (2011) continues to insist that in order to advance the field of border studies beyond purely descriptive work, “[c]ontinued theorizing on borders is not only a pending task but necessary today, particularly because the optimistic discourse on a borderless world... has fallen flat and there is in fact a renewed importance assigned to borders both in the political and in the policy world.” He claims that the path to border theorizing is not closed but only out of sight because border scholars have been looking in the wrong place. Precisely due to the fact that border scholars are spread around the world and are in fact disciplinary and geographical specialists, “often miss the forest for the trees, and need to take the bird’s eye view and find what unites us” (ibid.).

What unites us, Payan (2011) suggests, is our methods: in order to theorize on borders, scholars need to engage in a dialogue on the methodological strategies as well as the tools used and pick those that can enhance our explanatory power. Even though Payan is correct in arguing that more comparative work in teams is needed in order to discover the optimal tools to identify what actually gives shape and character to the borders of today, his argumentation postulates that border studies would form its own academic discipline, no different in nature, say, from geography, sociology, history, or anthropology with their own accustomed and well established currents of research. That, border studies is not. Instead, borders studies’ main contribution lies in its ability to draw these disciplines together. It is fueled by the diversity carved out by its eclectic multidisciplinary. Creating a metatheory and naming the variables to be used by all would only restrict the potential that border studies as a discipline has to offer.

This study combines my own interests in geography, international relations, political sociology, and history. I am a firm believer that geography, even if

subjective, matters in the understanding of a wide variety of processes and phenomena – and borders are evidently not an exception. Despite the forces of globalization, we remain located somewhere and this has an impact on how we perceive that which surrounds us. Newman's (2003a, 130) notions that "the longer they [borders] remain *in situ*, the harder they are to remove or change" seems valid and clouds the assumption that humans would interact most with those to whom they are the closest – the axiom being that the way in which a border is perceived affects the volume of interaction across the border. A good policy then needs geography and history. A historical approach complemented with postmodern concepts, which acknowledge that postmodernism is a historical condition in itself, provides an essential context for the analysis.

Even if geographical realities do not change, their meaning for different purposes may. Relying on the ideas of North (2005), a change is, for the most part, a deliberate process shaped by the actor's perceptions on the consequences of their own actions and beliefs, which are typically blended with their own preferences. Choices and decisions are made in light of those perceptions with the intent of reducing uncertainty in pursuit of a given goal. As a result, borders may lose some of their functions while simultaneously obtaining new ones; these functions are seldom stable but rather under continuous change. Borders may not disappear completely, but they can become more transparent and permeable in terms of some of their functions. A gradual opening of a previously closed national border enables the formation of new forms of interaction between countries but may also reveal political, cultural, and economic inequalities. All this makes them more tangible for people, especially borderland-dwellers. In some cases, a border may be so profoundly rooted in the minds of people that some of the border's functions may never lose their relevance even if the actual institutional border would eventually subside.

It has to be acknowledged that in order to appreciate the big picture and to challenge its taken-for-grantedness, a purely geographical approach would be insufficient. In addition to taking a spatial perspective, it is necessary to view the context both temporally and structurally (cf. de Blij 2005). This study takes O'Dowd's (2010) call for "bringing history back" in seriously. He argues that in privileging spatial analysis – space over time, that is – many contemporary border studies lack an adequate historical analysis of state and nation formation. A failure to acknowledge the historical positioning thus easily leads to a disfigured perspective of the present. Over-emphasizing the novelty of contemporary forms of globalization and border change, propped up by poorly substantiated benchmarks in the past, failing to recognize the 'past in the present' as in the various historical deposits of state formation processes, and an incapacity to recognize the distinctiveness of contemporary state borders deceptively discount the "extent to which we continue to live in a 'world of diverse states'" (ibid., 1032–1034).

While the field of international relations has evolved from its positivist premises – from a single means of understanding and studying world politics towards a more nuanced and holistic approach –it still remains insufficient for the understanding of the big picture. Despite recent efforts to broaden the field, it remains tied to great power politics and its basic units of analysis remains the modern state. As such, alone it is incapable of explaining the multileveled and multiscaled processes that take place today.

There is a clear need to incorporate several voices that are, in turn, able to communicate with each other. Warkentin (2001, 14–15) suggests placing people at the center of things: “[p]eople are not only at the center of world politics, but they ‘make’ politics” (ibid., 15). Accordingly, attention needs to be paid to morals and ethical values as the basis of people’s decision-making and interaction with one another. Consequently, civil society, which can be appreciated as an aspect of politics, is a dynamic phenomenon created and shaped by individuals through social interaction. He specifies, firstly, that people as agents, as actors and doers, have the ability to make things happen and, secondly, people are also social beings, naturally oriented towards establishing and maintaining social relations and conducting their lives within the context of relational networks (ibid., 17).

As was already mentioned, the EU’s emerging politics of regional cooperation have placed increased attention on the actual and potential roles attributed to civil society. Civil society is understood as a political force central to the development of a wider community of values and societal goals; it is seen to have a modernizing and democratizing function within state-society relations (Scott & Liikanen 2010, 424). It also provides a significant political forum for the articulation of social, cultural, environmental, etc. agendas. As a forum, as a public space, it has become increasingly transnational. CSOs now operate not just within and but also beyond the state. The number of organizations and networks operating across the border, often through concrete projects, has been on the increase not only within the EU but also between the EU and neighboring states.

The EU cannot build its CBC agendas only on ‘high politics’; the building of ‘Neighborhood’ must encompass also social and cultural issues. However, the previously unseen premium placed on the role of transnational civil society cooperation raises also the issue of the EU’s impacts on civil society agendas in the neighboring countries and the EU’s ability to promote CBC across its external borders. The EU’s normative power is not only exercised through explicit policies but also through more subtle and informal channels (Scott & Liikanen 2010, 424).

Borders offer us a useful lens to view the changing shape of governance. Through the processes of horizontal political socialization (‘network governance’), the overall societal significance of the EU *acquis* has not only increased but also extended beyond its borders (Filtenborg, Gänzle & Johannson

2002). Europeanization proceeds through the cooperation practices of CSOs that, intentionally or not, promote and develop 'EU values,' creating an informal institutional basis for their diffusion beyond the confines of the EU (see, e.g., Scott & Liikanen 2010; Laine & Demidov 2013).

At the EU-Russian interphase, Western explorations of its complexity have often been eschewed in favor of a normative approach in which the relationship between civil society and the state is underpinned by liberal democratic assumption rather than by engagement with wider debates about the politics of post-Soviet development. The turmoil of the 1990s in Russia allowed the EU, in particular, to insist that relations with a nascent Russia be built on the principle of conditionality with the underlying objective of steering Russia gently yet forcefully on its path to a 'better,' i.e., European, future. Gauging the development and progress of Russia's civil society sector on the basis of 'international norms' privileged form above function. However, in order to comprehend Russian civil society's role as an agent of social change it is more telling to assume a more pragmatic, contextualized and less value-laden approach and seek to understand the political role of CSOs, the logics that inform their agendas as well as their embeddedness within more general societal contexts.

### **1.2.2 Research Objectives and Focus**

This study of human geography focuses on the cross-border cooperation practices of civil society organizations at the Finnish-Russian border. While it is acknowledged that the concept of 'cross-border cooperation' or 'CBC' connotes a direct links to EU policies and objectives, it is used here more broadly to refer to transnational interaction, the processes of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit across borders. Empirically, this study analyzes the development of the operational forms of cooperation on the one hand and that of the discursive practices that shape the image of Russia on the other and tries to unearth the relationship between the two. The analysis begins from the onset of collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, covering thus a period during which Finnish-Russian bilateral relations became enveloped into the broader EU-Russia relations. Thus, even though the analysis draws from the border, it cannot exclude the wider entities that it divides. Critical notions concerning the theories of Europeanization and post-national borders raise the question how thorough and how rapid the change in practices of CBC has actually been on the regional level and in civil society relations that have stood in the center of the new EU policies. While the focus remains on the Finnish-Russian cooperation, setting this binational context against the EU framework allows us to examine in which ways the changing contexts that govern cooperation have affected the perceptions of Russia and the work carried out in practice.

Through the analysis of perspectives of civil society actors and those voiced in the media, this study strives to achieve a better understanding of present-day

multi-layered Finnish-Russian and EU-Russian relations, especially with respect to the role that civil society plays. Furthermore, the goal is to introduce new, more nuanced perspectives to the discussion on Europeanization of the institutional and discursive practices of CBC. The research executes this analysis by exploring empirical experiences from cross-border cooperation as well as popular perceptions towards Russia as a neighbor and as a partner. Extra focus is placed on the role of the EU in shaping its relations within 'wider Europe.' The analysis is anchored by two main thematic questions:

1. How has the actual role of Finnish civil society organizations in developing new forms of cooperation with Russia changed, and what might their future roles potentially be?
2. How has the image of Russia portrayed in the public discussion within Finland evolved, and how has this affected civil society cooperation?

Though formulated as two separate questions, the two inquiries are interlinked. The latter question aims to enlighten the discursive practices – not just as a context for CBC but also as a sphere for public discussion. The former explores the CSOs' institutional role – civil society as a sphere of organization. Particular focus is placed on the impacts of CSO networks, the organizational and financial arrangements that characterize them, as well as the social and technical issues that condition – and often complicate – civil society cooperation. The public discussion and the image of Russia it portrays are then analyzed specifically within the CBC context. It is assumed that the 'gestalt' in image of Russia differs from the image of Russia as a neighbor and as a partner for cooperation.

The answering these research questions is done from various angles, all of which have their own specific questions guiding the analysis. In geographical terms, this study aims to clarify what is special about the Finnish-Russian border and what makes it a special case within the European frame and likewise within the frame of other asymmetric borders. In historical terms, it asks how the specific history of the border and the Finnish nation influence the current situation and events. Does the understanding of historical positioning help explain the way things are today? Structurally, this study ponders how the contemporary forms of globalization are influencing the functions and the distinctiveness of state borders. Is the world becoming borderless or do borders continue to profoundly influence us? Finally, contextually, this study aims to find out to what degree do the practices and rhetoric of regional level CBC projects reflect changes in the definitions of CBC in EU level policies and to what degree do they still carry traces of preceding traditions of Finnish political culture and Finnish-Russian relations.

The research questions necessitate familiarization firstly with the state of border research and especially with how cross-border cooperation has been analyzed (Chapter 2). Secondly, it is necessary to outline the development of the

concept of civil society and the specificities of the Finnish and Russian conception of it (Chapter 3). Thirdly, these two themes have to be placed in the broader European context, to which they are inherently linked (Chapter 4).

### **1.2.3 Research Process and Methodology**

Narrowed views of the world tend to be misleading. In order to create a research design across many disciplines and to unearth a more profound understanding of a research problem, the subject needs to be approached from a variety of perspectives and with different tools. As distinct methodologies each have their particular strengths and weaknesses, using more than one allows us to gain a clearer and more complete picture of the social world and make for more adequate explanations (Creswell 2009).

A multimethodological approach is used in research situations within which the problem can be better understood through both investigation and interpretation (Rauscher & Greenfield 2009). This has been increasingly the case during the postmodern era as many of the research agendas are already from the start too broad, complex and multidisciplinary to be confined to a narrow methodical frame. The requirements during the different phases of a research project all make their own specific demands on a general methodology (Creswell 2009). Accordingly, mixed methods research has become more prevalent as researchers seek a more complete understanding to research problems in the social sciences (Whitney 2010).

The research here is based on methodological triangulation, a mix of material and methods involving the mapping of actors, newspaper screening and semiotic analysis, basic background and more thorough in-depth interviews (96 in total), document analysis, and active participant observation. Empirical work also includes the gathering of supporting material by collecting other relevant official documents, political statements, press material, reports of debates and brochures, and by participating actively in not just academic but also more practical civic activity related conferences, seminars, forums, workshops, and other types of meetings in Russia and Finland, as well as elsewhere in Europe. This was felt necessary to experience first-hand how cooperation is planned, maintained, and generally discussed in practice. Correctives and supplements to views brought up in the interviews were later on gathered through numerous – less formal but enormously useful – personal communications.

While the main focus of this study is on the Finnish perspective of the topic at hand, material was also collected from Russian actors as CBC by nature involves actors from both sides of the border. Without the Russian perspective, the analysis and results derived from it would be inevitably lop-sided and therefore incomplete. Out of the aforementioned 96 interviews, 28 were conducted on the Russian side of the border in the Republic of Karelia, the city of St. Petersburg, and Vyborg, a city within Leningrad oblast. I owe a debt of gratitude to Andrey Demidov and Dr. Elena Belokurova for conducting these

interviews and providing me with the resulting material as my own language skills would have not allowed me to do so. One additional interview focusing on the EU-Russia level issues was conducted in Brussels.

The insights acquired from the interviews, local seminars, and personal communications are reflected against official documents and statements originating from national sources and the EU, as well as the newspaper material. As a process, the newspaper analysis was clearly the most time consuming phase but also one of the most revealing ones for it provided an exceptional historical record of a day-to-day basis of ephemeral information (for a more detailed description, see subsection 5.1.2), much of which tends to be forgotten or purposefully left out from interviews conducted in retrospect. The interviews of cross-border actors, of course, provided deeper, more detailed and practical information. This was needed in order to put the partial interpretations and rhetoric that had arisen from the newspaper material and also from official documents and statements, as well as policies formulated locally and regionally based upon them, into perspective. As already mentioned, the newspaper material from the leading Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, is, however, not only used to inform the context for cooperation but also analyzed in terms of the public sphere with the aim of tracing what sorts of opinions, images and perceptions arise from public discussion.

#### **1.2.4 Research Material and Its Use**

The mapping of actors and potential respondents was an important activity as it provided an overall picture of the CSOs operating within Finnish-Russian cross-border contexts. Upon completion a broad constellation of CSO actors and agencies relevant to CSO activities emerged and interviews carried out. Most of the interviews were conducted in connection to the EUDIMENSIONS<sup>3</sup> project. A total of 96 persons from 78 organizations were interviewed. The distribution of selected organizations is based on the mapping exercise conducted and reflects the prevalence and activeness of the respective sectors in CBC. On the Finnish side, the primary research area included the provinces of North Karelia, South Karelia, and Kymenlaakso. Also actors active in the border region, yet based elsewhere (most notably in Helsinki), were included. The basic interviews were conducted in late 2007 and early 2008 and the in-depth interviews in late 2008 and early 2009.

The research commenced with a set of basic interviews in order to ferret out the most relevant CSOs to investigate. An indicative list of questions and the

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<sup>3</sup> EUDIMENSIONS “Local Dimensions of a Wider European Neighbourhood: Developing Political Community through Practices and Discourses of Cross-Border Cooperation” project was supported by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Program for Research and Technological Development of the European Union under PRIORITY 7 (Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society), Area 4.2.1 “New Borders, New Visions of Neighbourhood.” Contract no: CIT5-CT-2005-028804. The project ran from May 2006 through June 2009.

topic to be discussed was sent to the interviewees upon their request. The persons to be interviewed were first contacted by telephone and in some cases by e-mail to explain the purpose and focus of the research. While general understanding of CSOs and their cooperation activities had been formed through various documents and online research during the mapping exercise, a more thorough and up-to-date picture was formed during the basic interviews.

The more involved interviews aimed to gather perceptual information on the contexts within which civil society cooperation is developing between Finland/the EU and Russia. Both the political and social contexts in which CSO are embedded and have a bearing on CBC were discussed. Interviews consisted of both simple structured questions and section of open-ended questions. However, as the interviewees formed a rather heterogeneous group, the interviews often developed into rather open narrative interview on the personal experiences of the interviewee in question. This openness allowed the interviewee to steer the discussion and, instead of answering a pre-defined set of questions, introduce the aspects and issues concerning the topic at hand which he or she felt to be the most imperative. Whenever possible these interviews were recorded and always with the consent of the interviewee. While interviews were set up with a particular person from a particular organization, in a number of cases the person in question was joined by other representative(s) of the same organization as it was felt that expertise from different tiers or sections of the organization was needed in order to competently answer the questions.

Several interviewees in the very beginning of the research asked that their names not to be used. The reason for this was that it would prevent them from mentioning critical aspects of their experiences as it might harm their future initiatives. I firmly believe that for the purposes of this study, what was said was more important than who said it. As no apparent benefit would result from using the names of the interviewees, the decision was made to conduct all the interviews anonymously as to allow unrestricted opinions to be voiced. The list of organizations can be seen in appendix I, and an indicative list of the interview questions is found in appendix II. As there have been many developments since the interviews were conducted, in numerous occasions it was necessary to update the information via phone or e-mail.

Newspaper analysis was seen as particularly fitting to complement the insights gained from the interviews of the civil society actors. The public discussion, for which the opinion pages of *Helsingin Sanomat* provide a forum, is relevant here firstly for it forms an important aspect of civil society. Secondly it provides a contextual frame for the interpretation of the interview material (see subsections 5.1.2-3). Media plays an important role in the formation and success of a strong civil society structure not just by swaying public opinion but also by influencing and even directing social change. As Galaty (2003, 2) explains, by providing accurate and timely information the media is a tool that can help put civil society principles into action and enable more effective participation in a



civil society framework. Responsible journalism also helps to reinforce accountable behavior in society and drive public perception, by either creating or eroding support for the work of governments, CSOs and businesses (ibid.). Newspapers and the media in general play a crucial role also in terms of border work in defining how CSOs involved in CBC regard the 'other.'

A total of 4,708 opinion articles were collected from the years 1990–2010 as a resource for analyzing the Finnish context within which Finnish-Russian CBC has developed. The collected empirical material consists of opinion pieces: editorials (E), op-eds (OE), and the letters to the editor (L). The fundamental logic and methodological basis of the approach relies on social semiotics (see subsection 5.1.6). As social semiotics investigates human signifying practices in specific social and cultural circumstances and tries to explain meaning-making as a social practice, the aim here is to situate what has been reported in the context in which it has occurred in order to investigate the discursive field in which they exist and describe the potential changes in the foci of the debates by interlinking them with the broader changes that have occurred at the border. This is not an attempt of a quantitative extrapolation from a few individuals and their opinions to many. I rather seek to give a contemporary human voice to situations often talked about in retrospect and in a very academic and formal manner and to move, following Kuus' (2011a) example, these specific anecdotes and incidents to the broader discursive field that has enabled these particular incidents and constrained others.

The number of articles used, was then narrowed down to 2,383 articles as only those relevant to the study were chosen for further scrutiny. A large encompassing database was nevertheless needed to begin the analysis of the border and to observe which topics received mention as opposed to presuming in advance which topics must be important. The core of the semiotic analysis involves coding the articles with signifiers. Based on the work of Hall (1986), Edensor (1998; 2002), and Wodak (2004; 2008), five categories of signifiers have been distinguished: *places* (specific geographies and landscapes), *activities* (performances of longer duration), and *objects* (abstract or physical, people) but also *stories* (narratives, myths) and *events* (lasting limited duration of time). In addition to determining the signifier, it is important to establish the connotation of the signified. I confine myself to a coding of articles that is based on their tone with respect to Russia (negative, neutral or positive). The thematic categorization is adopted from Virtanen (2004); though given that most articles consisted of elements based on which they could have been placed under more than one of the categories, the use of the themes loses some of its applicability.

Despite the context specificity and codedness of the newspaper material, the Finnish language material is presented here in English. While having to accept that some things are lost in translation, I firmly believe that the benefits of this approach outstand its drawbacks, already for the reason that this is something that has not been done to any major extent before. Finnish-Russian relations are

written and talked about differently in Finnish and in English – and by different people, to different audiences. Even though exceptions certainly exist, in academia, those who seek to emphasize that internationalization and Europeanization have tended to write in English while more national and bilateral issues are commonly discussed in Finnish. Public opinion and its spontaneous, unstructured representations are logical and with every reason largely limited to national fora.

## **1.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

### **1.3.1 Finland and Its Neighboring Regions**

For the majority of its 1,340-kilometer length from the Gulf of Finland to the high north, the Finnish-Russian border runs through forests and extremely sparsely populated rural areas, the metropolis of St. Petersburg lying some 150 kilometers from the border being the only notable exception. Even though small towns and villages are located near the border, urban centers are situated far away from each other and from the border precluding the existence of any authentic twin cities. The actual borderline is beefed up on either side by a special border zone, accessible only with permission from the Border Guard authority. At its widest stretches on the Finnish side, the zone is three kilometers in width. On the Russian side, the actual width of the zone has been altered on several occasions and has ranged anywhere between five and 130 kilometers. During the Soviet period, the zone ballooned up to 200 kilometers in width.

In 2010, the population living on the Finnish side in the border municipalities amounted to approximately 300,000 and in the border provinces (*maakunta*) numbered around 1.14 million. A common characteristic of the border region is that with the exception of the main regional centers, such as Joensuu and Lappeenranta, population continuously dwindles. On the Russian side, population in the three border regions (Leningrad Oblast, the Republic of Karelia, and Murmansk Oblast) totals 3.47 million while the city of St. Petersburg with more than five million inhabitants makes up a separate administrative unit inside the Leningrad Oblast and forms a federal subject of its own. Certainly the use of administrative units in defining the border region presents a typical modifiable areal unit problem (MAUP), which needs to be taken into consideration during the analysis. Already the mere sizes of these units differ greatly between the countries; the three Russian regions cover an area (401,800 km<sup>2</sup>) larger than Finland in its entirety (338,424 km<sup>2</sup>). Depending on the definition, Finland itself could be considered to be a border region while the three Russian regions in question form only a small fringe of Russia's vast territory.

During recent decades, Finns had grown accustomed to the fact that the interaction across the eastern border was highly regulated and restricted. Even if

the border today is far from ‘open,’ the situation has changed remarkably. New crossing points have facilitated a rapid increase in the total volume of cross-border traffic. Currently, there are nine international border crossing points along with several temporary border crossing points that are subject to license. The number of border crossings skyrocketed from less than a million in 1990 to 10.7 million in 2011 (Finnish Border Guard 2011). In view of Russia’s recently granted WTO membership and the possibility of a visa-free regime in the foreseeable future, interaction across the Finnish-Russian border can only be expected to increase in the years ahead. The number of border crossings is expected reach 20 million in five years even if the visa regime would stay in force (Finnish Border Guard 2013).

Interestingly, whereas in the early 1990s most people crossing the border were Finns, recently it has been Russians whose share constitutes the vast majority of the crossings (Figure 1). In 2010, Finland granted over 950,000 visas to Russian citizens, which made Russians to make up over half of the tourists visiting Finland (Torstila 2011). Given that the Finnish embassy in St. Petersburg is famous throughout Russia for being one of the most liberal ones there is (Makarychev 2012), a practice has evolved whereby the Finnish visa is used to travel also elsewhere within the Schengen zone.

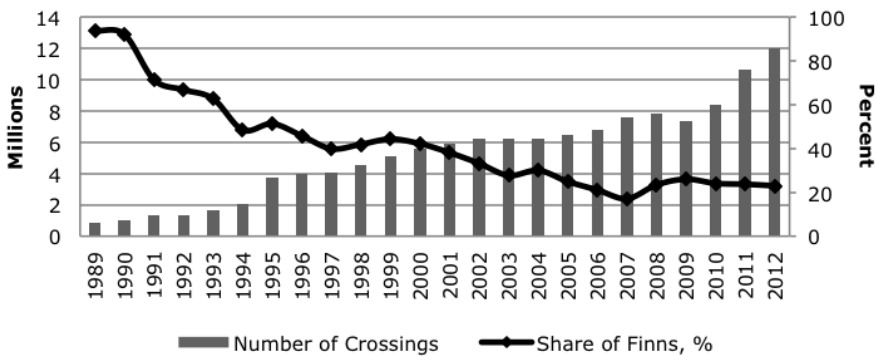


Figure 1. Total number of border crossings and the share of Finns at the Finnish-Russian border 1989–2012. Data Source: The Finnish Border Guard

The so-called opening of the border can easily be seen from Figure 2, which illustrates the increase in border crossings at the Vaalimaa border crossing point, the oldest and busiest border-crossing point at the Finnish-Russian border. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the border became more porous for everyday people. On average, more than approximately 8,700 people cross the border at Vaalimaa daily; that is twice the number of crossings during the entire first year

that the border crossing point was opened to traffic in 1958<sup>4</sup>. Today the Vaalimaa border crossing point is not only the busiest border crossing point along the Finnish-Russian border, but also the most trafficked at the external EU border with Russia altogether.

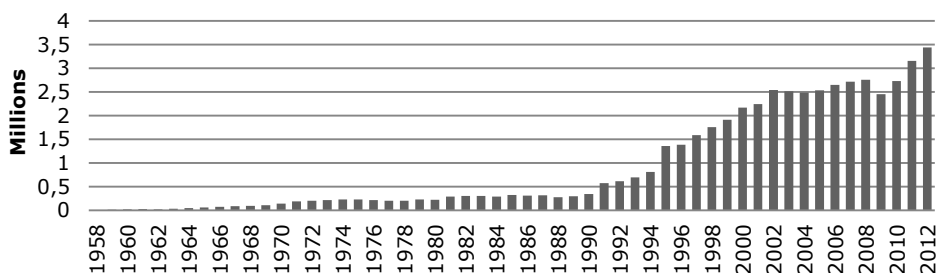


Figure 2. Border crossings at Vaalimaa in 1958–2011. Source: Statistics of the Border Guard, Finland

When compared to another asymmetrical border, for example the United States-Mexico border where an estimated half a million illegal border crossings take place yearly, the numbers of illegal crossings in the Finnish-Russian case are miniscule; e.g., a total of seven in 2011. While the obvious differences in the respective populations explain much of the story, the extremely low number in the Finnish-Russian case also suggests that the border is highly controlled.

The importance and impact of freedom of movement on Finnish-Russian relations have remained underutilized; while institutional barriers have relaxed, the border still poses a barrier to spontaneous interaction typical to many other border settings. Nevertheless, alongside tourism, shopping excursions, and business travel, migration from Russia to Finland has increased. Migration has contributed to a growth in the number of bicultural people, which in turn can be seen as a potential resource for cross-border interaction. The net migration from Russia to Finland increased significantly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and has consisted of approximately 2,000 people annually since 2000. According to Statistics Finland, there were 29,585 Russian citizens living in Finland in 2012, but the number of native Russian speakers had already reached 58,331, slightly more than one per cent of the entire population of Finland. Most of these individuals live in the capital region or inhabit the Eastern part of Finland.

<sup>4</sup> The Vaalimaa border crossing point was officially opened for tourism and freight traffic in August 1958. However, during the first years the border crossing point was open only in certain months. By 1966, the traffic had increased to the extent that it was decided to keep the crossing point open year-around, even if only during the daytime. It was not until 1993 when the border crossing point was opened for 24 hour per day traffic. See Kononenko and Laine (2008).

) of the Russian Federation, especially the Republic of Karelia, the Leningrad and Murmansk oblasts, and the city of St. Petersburg (Figure 3). According to the 2010 census, out of Russia's total population of 143 million, 13.6 million (9.5 per cent) live within the 1,677,900 square kilometer area of the Northwestern Federal District. The metropolitan area of St. Petersburg extends into Leningrad Oblast and boasts more denizens than the whole of Finland.

In the early 1990s, most of the activities initiated by Finnish CSOs were first directed towards St. Petersburg. The difference in scales became apparent also in the assessment of problems and needs, some of which were unheard of within the Finnish context. Practical operations revealed that there were profound differences between the countries with respect to the very systems through which the work had to be carried out (Skvortsova 2005, 38). Soon after, activities began to spread largely to the small villages of nearby regions, most importantly the Republic of Karelia, where the presence of Finnish CSOs has remained strong ever since.



Figure 3. Finland and its neighboring areas

The activity sectors and themes are also clustered geographically. While organizations have formed their own multinational networks within the Barents region in the north and Baltic region in the south, Karelia in the middle is still

largely treated in binational terms. For example environmental cooperation is undertaken throughout the border area yet through different frames depending on the location. Along with social and health-related organizations, older cultural CSOs also focus on Karelia – largely due to the historical reasons – while many newer organizations see the metropolis of St. Petersburg as a fascinating target. Interestingly, the cooperation in the field of sport has practically vanished. Economic and political cooperation tends to cover Russia more broadly.

### **1.3.2 Shifting Significance of the Finnish-Russian Border**

The significance and resultant role of the Finnish-Russian border have been highly varied, reflecting not only Finnish-Russian relations but also changes in global geopolitics (Paasi 1999b, 669). The border which today separates Finland and the Russian Federation was first drawn as a result of the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 between the then rulers of Sweden and Novgorod, a medieval Russian state. Being a demarcation zone between resurgent Swedish and Russian rule and emerging empires, and thus also linked to the division between eastern and western Christianity, the border was frequently redrawn according to the changing balance of power. The border came to separate two cultures, religions, and languages, yet in geographical terms it did not follow any logical contours nor did it erect any clear-cut natural barriers to interaction. For centuries, the border in practice did not exist at the regional level and people were free to move back and forth.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Russian Empire gained supremacy, which in 1809 resulted in the Swedish Empire relinquishing the territory of Finland. Finland became an autonomous grand duchy within the autocratic Russian Empire. During this period of autonomy, Finland maintained a national economy and a customs border with Russia; however, the border was otherwise an open one and very much a formality (Paasi 1996; Liikanen et al. 2007, 22). In economic terms, the growing metropolis of St. Petersburg had important effects on the Finnish side of the border due to its constantly mounting demand for goods and labor (Katajala 1999). Finland retained its own religious organizations as well as the laws and administrative structures established under Swedish rule. For the first time in history, Finland formed an administrative unit of its own (ibid.).

The nineteenth century witnessed the rise of an active nation-building process in Finland whereby the border became progressively defined in terms of an autonomous nation-state (Liikanen 1995). Broad social and political mobilization enforced the nature of the border as a political, social, and cultural dividing line at the beginning of the twentieth century (Alapuro 1988). As internal problems together with the losses in the First World War fuelled a revolution in Russia in spring of 1917, Finland took advantage of the turmoil and began to probe possibilities for its own independence. Following the

Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia later that year, Finland immediately seized the opportunity and declared its independence on December 6, 1917.

The independence gained also ushered in more freedom of action to the competing internal groups and fuelled the power struggle between the 'Reds,' the Social Democrats led by the People's Deputation of Finland and supported by the Russian Soviet Republic, and the non-socialist, conservative-led Senate forces, the 'Whites' who were supported by the German Empire. The struggle soon escalated into a bloody and traumatic civil war and a Bolshevik-backed abortive revolution in 1918. The war was a definitive catastrophe for the newborn Finnish nation and society at large. It broke up, *inter alia*, the Finnish labor movement into the moderate Social Democrats, the left-wing socialists, and communists (Jussila, Hentilä & Nevakivi 1999).

The Republic of Finland and Soviet Russia signed a peace treaty (Treaty of Tartu) in 1920 in order to stabilize political relations and settle the borderline between them. In Finland, a strong effort was made immediately to secure the border against Soviet Russia (and later the Soviet Union) in order to signify the territoriality of an independent state. A heavily guarded, hostile military border was formed and all forms of cooperation interrupted. During the interwar period, the desire to redefine the border along ethnic terms by uniting the Finns and the Karelians within one state enjoyed strong support among the intellectual and military elite but was not adopted as part of the official state politics (Ahti 1987). The border was redrawn for the last time during World War II during which two wars between Finland and the Soviet Union were fought<sup>5</sup>. Under an interim peace treaty in 1944, Finland had to cede large portions of its domain to the Soviet Union, and almost the entire population of these areas, more than 420,000 people, was resettled to different parts of Finland.

As Paasi (1996; 1999b/c) has scrutinized, the construction of exclusive political borders was a decisive part of the process of Finnish nation-building and strengthening the state. A determined effort was made to cast the Soviet Union, the 'other,' under a dark shadow whereby the border became a mythical manifestation of the 'eternal opposition' between the two states and a crucial constituent of Finnish national identity (Paasi 1997; 1999b). In connection to World War II, an endeavor to extend Finland's territory towards its 'natural' border in the east, a counter move to the Soviet offensive and the following invasion attempt, eventually led to Finland having to cede considerable portions of its territory to the Soviet Union.

The border between Finland and the Soviet Union was the longest border between a western capitalist state and a socialist super power (Paasi 1999b, 670). In addition to its ideological weight, the border was increasingly perceived as playing distinct historical, political, natural, and yet artificial roles (Paasi 1996), the influence of which are still felt today. Within the Cold War geopolitical

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<sup>5</sup> The Winter War (1939-1940) and the Continuation War (1941-1944).

order, Finland sought neutrality and became placed into the grey zone between the Eastern and Western blocs. Whereas Finland had been a 'Western' country in the geopolitical literature prior to World War II, many post-war representations placed it in Eastern Europe (Paasi 1996) as "a semi-independent oddity positioned under the Russian sphere of influence" (Moisio 2003a). The blame for this, Moisio explains, was put on the 'incorrect activities' of Cold War era politicians who expressed 'dangerous loyalty' to and fraternized excessively with the Soviet Union: "Finland indeed told to others that it is a part of the West, but its practices referred to a deep need to please the eastern neighbor."

The crux of the matter was that the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance allowed the Soviet Union to interfere with Finland's domestic life. The agreement served as the key document for governing post-war relations between the two countries and defined also the international status of Finland not only in regards to the Soviet Union but to Western countries as well (Liikanen et al. 2007, 27). The border itself remained heavily guarded between the two armies, as the treaty did not necessitate military cooperation, as had been the case in the Soviet satellite countries of Eastern Europe (Nevakivi 1994).

Even though the new geopolitical regime based on the YYA pact included more extensive economic interaction between the countries under centralized bilateral agreements, the border was a closed one for the most part, and the longer it remained closed, the wider the gap between the countries grew. This was hardly helped by the fact that during the Cold War the border became increasingly seen as a line dividing two competing socio-political systems, the communist and the capitalist, and forming a 'civilizational' frontier zone between East and West. A closed, politically and ideologically charged border had a severe impact on the development of the border area, as cross-border connections were cut and investments to this buffer zone remained slim.

During October and November 1991, the two countries held negotiations on the new Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation that would replace the YYA pact. The urge to sign a contract with the already doomed to collapse Soviet Union was grounded in the desire to nullify the YYA treaty as soon as possible but also in the confusion about what was to follow and who would have the authority to enter into treaties. The initialing of the text of the new treaty took place on December 9, 1991 and was set to be signed on December 18, 1991 in Moscow. The treaty was, however, rejected in the last minute by Boris Yeltsin, who had been elected to the newly created post of President of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on June 12, 1991.

The situation changed radically once the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Finland recognized the Russian Federation as the Soviet Union's successor and was quick to draft bilateral treaties with it. The treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation was adapted to the new political situation and finalized with a



newly formed Russia in January 1992, and in so doing nullifying the YYA treaty and the previous special relations dictated by it.

The YYA treaty had been “a child of its moment of birth, and an unfair ballast to Finland.” Nevertheless, many agreed that it had “still served... reasonably well the relationship between the countries in the Cold War conditions” as, with the exception of the note crisis of 1961, “[t]he Soviet Union did not, fortunately, resort to its outright abuse.” (OE 21.1.1992.) Whereas the YYA treaty had been a document, “in which the Soviet Union threatened Finland with providing assistance if Finland did not seat and give paw,” the new agreement was seen not to form a “barrier to friendship,” as its predecessor had been, but “provided opportunities, not threats in guises” (OE 13.7.2007). The new agreement, named straightforwardly as the “Agreement on the Foundations of Relations between the Republic of Finland and the Russian Federation”<sup>6</sup> was seen to provide an exception and a refreshing breath of fresh air in the midst of deception and cover-ups. The same clear line continued through 12 articles of the compact and readable agreement.

Under the new agreement, Finland became the first country outside of the former Soviet Union to sign a new political agreement built on the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) principles of directly with Russia. It also began to form the basis for Finland’s Neighboring Area Cooperation with Russia. However, on the other hand, the treaty allowed Finland to make the move towards what was consider to be its right reference group (Sutela 2001, 6–7); in March 1992, only a few weeks after signing the new cooperation treaty with the Russian Federation, the Government of Finland with the support of Parliament, applied for EU membership.

Moisio (2003b) has aptly asserted this decision was fundamentally about applying for recognition for its own other Western Europeanness. It was essential to show the others that “the story we told about our country’s place among the nations” was indeed true. The international Finlandization debate, Moisio explains, had questioned the story as Finns told it to themselves and instead situated Finland in the “wrong place,” from which Finland aspired, to escape from with the help of EU membership.

Finland’s entry into the EU and western links in security and defense policy altered its location in the geopolitical imagination (Paasi 1999b, 670). With its membership, Finland tried to prove its “cooperation abilities with other nations it deemed as good,” so that all the speculations and explanations about the position of Finland would become redundant (Moisio 2003b). These new conditions allowed also freer and more critical and more public debate. Most notably, a number of organizations began actively promoting debates on the future of the ceded areas, at times in Ratzelian spirit by and seeking to heal the

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<sup>6</sup> Finnish Treaty Series 63/1992.

wounded body of the Maiden of Finland and fixing her natural living space (Paasi 1999b, 672).

When joining the Union in 1995, Finland jumped aboard a moving train. The process of European integration was underway and had been fuelled remarkably, first, by the signing of the Single European Act in 1986 and, second, by the new enlargement prospects evoked by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. By its nature this process necessitated policies aiming to transcend internal borders, perceived in Schumanian spirit as products and remainders of former conflicts. Borders were depicted as the results of the differentiation of groups in space. Keeping 'us' apart from 'them,' they were perceived to preserve heterogeneity and a lack of coherence, both to be replaced with unity and common Europeanness. As integration was assumed to follow from increased interaction, borders as barriers had to be eroded, whereby the role of borderlands as integrators became of high importance. Underpinned by a strong regional development and spatial planning rationale, cross-border cooperation became a tool for building cohesion and blurring divides while local cross-border diplomacy enjoyed, first and foremost, a more a symbolic status.

With the EU membership, activities formerly administered through bilateral, state-level agreements became a part of the broader dynamics of international politics and EU-Russia relations. The binational border was suddenly upgraded to an external EU border, and this necessitated also amendments in political language and rhetoric. As Emerson (2001, 29) states, the Finnish-Russian border served as a prime example of a clean-cut periphery where one empire ended and another began. The Finnish domestic debate thus acquired an alternative thread, which depicted Finland, having the only EU land border with Russia, as a sort of a bridge builder between the two. For this reason and also because of the increased importance of the EU's borders that was observed in the key EU decision-making bodies, Finland now had a unique opportunity to profile itself in the field.

Given its geographic location, Finland became a logical avenue for increasing EU-Russian trade. The Finnish easterly business expertise stemming from the Soviet era was used to market Finland both as a gateway to Russia and a window to the West. As a new EU member state, Finland was also interested in providing the EU with a special agenda towards its Russian border, i.e., towards the "challenges and possibilities presented by having Russia as a neighbor" (Stubb 2009). This then materialized in the form of the Northern Dimension initiative.

The opportunities were not, however, really realized until it became clear that Finland's distinction of being Russia's only EU neighbor would be threatened by the upcoming 2004 enlargement. While the domestic debate remained largely unchanged, at the EU level Finland began, willfully and consistently, proclaiming itself as something of a litigator of Russia in all things

Europe, even if with only occasional success, claiming to possess Russian expertise that others did or could not have. The Finnish-Swedish border became an internal EU border, yet practically nothing changed, as passage had been unrestrained already for decades. Thanks to the Nordic Passport Union, also the Finnish-Norwegian border, now officially an external EU border, remained uncontrolled. As of 1996, all Nordic countries joined the Schengen Agreement, which became fully applied from March 25, 2001 onwards. In the Finnish context, the word 'border,' when used without any specifying country names, thus refers commonly to the border with Russia.

The 2004 enlargement of the EU and the introduction of ENP policy epitomize a political attempt to extend the 'de-bordering' momentum of the late 1980s and 1990s beyond the territory of 'Core Europe.' The EU embarked on an ambitious mission to look beyond its internal borders and create a transnational space extending beyond its external borders by engaging neighboring states in a new process of cross-border regionalization. Despite being marketed as 'Ring of Friends,' this approach embodied an apparent shift whereby the 1989–2003 'scars of history' discourse that had attempted to transcend borders began to be replaced by a securitization discourse. Particularly the external borders re-emerged in practical and discursive/symbolic terms as markers of sharp – to an extent civilizational – difference (van Houtum & Pijpers 2007).

Suffering from an acute form of enlargement fatigue, the EU moved to stabilize and consolidate itself as a post-national political community. Formal relations with the neighboring countries were privileged at the expense of local cooperation, which as a consequence became increasingly based on context and need ad hoc. This transformed the integrative role of the borderlands to that of a buffer zone or a filter. While the new forms of regional cooperation were presumably based on mutual interdependence, the EU's restrictive border and visa regimes gave an unambiguously exclusionary impact, making the EU seem to be a contradictory international actor.

Nationalist populism, already on the rise since 9/11 and the following terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, was fuelled further, inter alia, by threat scenarios of illegal immigration, islamophobic readings of a potential Turkish EU membership, and a general loss of control over not just borders but domestic issues of all sorts. The emphasis on cultural-civilizational difference in defining 'European' became mainstream political discourse and led to a heightened demand for more defensive borders for the EU as a whole. On the level of member states, the reclamation of national identity and sovereignty, often termed as a 're-bordering' of national-states within the EU, led the national governments to propose policies of their own and in so doing challenging the EU's top-down supranational thrust. In Finland, the rise of national populism was, and is, not directed in any specific way against Russia or Russians but builds the argument that immigrants in general are threatening Finnish jobs and welfare (welfare chauvinism) and, in more extreme cases, Finnish culture

(cultural nationalism). Similar tendencies are apparent in Russia, where its leadership has resorted actively to nationalist rhetoric and foreign threat scenarios in order to lead the lower and the upper classes and to control the growing middle class and civil society in between. In all, this situation has created a complex political-territorial environment for CBC as the less powerful but still active local institutions in the border regions react to the national and supranational policies affecting them.

### **1.3.3 Russia: So Near and yet so Far**

Today, the spectrum of Finnish-Russian relations is unprecedentedly broad and diverse. Even though the dialogue between the two countries has become more 'normal,' Finland has sought to continue the 'special relationship' and stay among the 'good countries' (Table 1). The presidents, the Prime Ministers, and Foreign Ministers meet regularly during bilateral visits but also at international and European forums. Within the Cabinet Finland's relationship with Russia is discussed on a regular basis. In addition, the aim has been to create direct and effective relations between all ministries and key government bodies with their counterparts in Russia. According to Alexander Rumyantsev (2012), the current Russian ambassador to Finland, Finnish-Russian relations are built on mutually beneficial issues. According to him, these include open political dialogue, increasing trade, more than ten million border crossings, a gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea, the Saimaa Canal, the Helsinki-St. Petersburg high-speed railway, and cultural cooperation.

Even though Finnish-Russian relations are commonly addressed from a more or less equal footing – in the media and also in academia – it is hard to erase the apparent fact that the relationship is, in the end, quite a typical relationship between a small state and a superpower. Russia is not Sweden for Finland, nor should it be (Lounasmeri 2011a, 15). Such neighborly relations are always more important for the smaller country – Finland needs Russia, but Russia would quite likely manage just fine without Finland. The city of St. Petersburg alone has a greater population than Finland as a whole. By total area, Russia is 50 times larger than Finland, and the Soviet Union was 66 times larger.

The two countries share significant overlaps in history, and with the exception of a couple of conflicts, the relationship between the two has remained somehow 'special.' With a common border of more than 1,300 kilometers, Finland has always been closely tied to its eastern neighbor. Despite the physical proximity, the Cold War era closure of the border increased the mental distance between the two sides. For a long time, a good fence indeed made good neighbors, but it also made the other side seem increasingly unfamiliar. The resultant 'us' versus 'them' mentality sketched in the minds of many has proven to be far more deeply rooted and harder to erase than the border per se.

*Table 1. An index of friendliness towards Russia. Zero indicates the lowest rate of friendliness towards Russia and 1 the highest (Braghiroli & Carta 2009, 12)*

Estonia	0	Eastern Divorced
Lithuania	0	
Poland	0.11	
Latvia	0.17	
Czech Rep.	0.19	
Slovakia	0.25	
Sweden	0.3	Vigilant Critics
United Kingdom	0.39	
Romania	0.44	
Slovenia	0.44	
Portugal	0.47	
Bulgaria	0.5	
Hungary	0.53	Acquiescent Partners
Denmark	0.55	
France	0.55	
Ireland	0.55	
The Netherlands	0.55	
Belgium	0.64	
Germany	0.64	
Luxembourg	0.64	
Spain	0.64	
Finland	0.69	
Italy	0.72	
Austria	0.75	
Greece	0.89	

The Finnish nation-building process in the late nineteenth century<sup>7</sup> and particularly the post-Civil War White history reading have projected Russia as eternal other to Finland. In order to build a coherent nation, it was necessary to define who 'us' actually were and what was actually 'ours' – and in order to demarcate that, a border was utterly needed. In a way, the Finnish identity was built on differences vis-à-vis its neighbors; Finns were something that Swedes

<sup>7</sup> Different stands existed. The Fennoman conservative Finnish Party was split in two in 1894 when a more critical faction of the party founded the Young Finnish Party and advocated passive resistance towards Russia. The remaining Finnish Party, now the 'Old Finns', supported appeasement and saw cooperation with Russia as a way to enact its language policies (see Liikanen 1995, 349–351).

and Russian were not. Accordingly, the borders have played a key role in the Finnish nation and identity building; to remove them would therefore remove part of the Finnish identity.

Balancing at the border of East and West was not taken as a zero-sum game. Finnish President Paasikivi's dictum that if one bows to the West one is bound to turn one's bottom to the East – and vice versa – has never been put to a test. The mutually understood fact that "We cannot do anything for geography, nor can you"<sup>8</sup> has been, contrary to its original connotation, transformed to mean that the two countries now had a lot of potential to utilize the opportunities offered by geographical proximity (see Stubb 2008).

The overriding question of Finnish foreign policy, as Finland's long-serving President (1956–1981) Urho Kekkonen (1958) explained, is the relations with her Eastern neighbor "upon which our destiny rests" and the "future of our nation depends..." – "[t]his always has been the case and always will be." Kekkonen had co-opted many of his ideas from his predecessor, J. K. Paasikivi, whose thinking derived from Lord Macaulay's suggestion that the beginning of all wisdom lay in the recognition of facts. Paasikivi's famous foreign policy line maintained that Finnish foreign policy should never run counter to the Soviet Union and our Eastern neighbor must be convinced of our determination to prove this. The Finnish-Soviet relations in aggregate became later personified strongly by Kekkonen, who discussed important issues directly with the Soviet leadership often with little or no consultation with his own administration or the parliament (Saukkonen 2006).

The Paasikivi line, ranking all other issues behind relations with the Soviet Union, was adhered to for decades. Outside the country, the line became dubbed 'Finlandization,' a term coined in 1961 by German political scientist Richard Löwenthal. The pros and cons of this policy are still actively debated. A secret CIA Intelligence Report of August 1972, which was approved for release in May 2007, found that "the Finns have ingeniously maintained their independence, but a limited one indeed, heavily influenced by the USSR's proximate military might, a preconditioned prudence not to offend Moscow, and the existence of various Soviet capabilities to complicate Finland's domestic life" (Central Intelligence Agency 1972, 3). Whereas the right-wing commentators accuse the Finnish government of continuing the policy of Finlandization, commentators more towards the left underline that such an approach was, and to a limited degree still is, necessary in order to cope and deal with a culturally and ideologically alien superpower without losing

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<sup>8</sup> On October 5, 1939, Russia invited J. K. Paasikivi to Moscow to discuss land questions at the Finnish-Russian border. Soviet head of state Joseph Stalin, being frustrated over negotiations that were not progressing, burst out: "We cannot do anything about geography, nor can you. Since Leningrad cannot be moved away, the frontier must be further off." The failure of these negotiations led to war (Paasikivi 1958). The beginning of the dictum was later used by Paasikivi himself on several occasions.

sovereignty. Finlandization has remained a sensitive issue in Finnish public discourse to this day.

As a Grand Duchy under Russian rule, Finland had maintained a custom border with Russia. Russia had been clearly the most important trade partner for Finland for decades until the World War I changed the situation profoundly. With the outbreak of war in 1914, Finland's foreign trade grew as a result of increased orders from Russia. At the same time, the trade deficit deepened due to the foreclosure of Western markets. A couple of years later, the situation changed even more drastically as a result of the Russian revolution and civil war in 1917; all forms of trade were terminated (Figure 4). Russia's share of Finnish exports and imports fell abruptly from 97 and 68 per cent respectively to zero (Finnish Customs 2007). The trade between the countries remained at very low levels throughout the entire 1920s and 1930s.

After the Second World War, trade upticked again, even though otherwise the border remained practically closed, as Finland was forced to pay the Soviet Union's sizeable war reparations. From the 1950s onwards, Finnish-Soviet trade was based on a bilateral clearing agreement, which dictated that both Finnish imports to and exports from the USSR had to be equal in value. This meant that the more Finland purchased supplies from the USSR, the more the USSR was obligated to purchase supplies from Finland. This system was often presented, particularly in Soviet propaganda, as an example of how a large socialist country and a small capitalist country can engage in mutually beneficial cooperation and trade (Laurila 1995, 11).

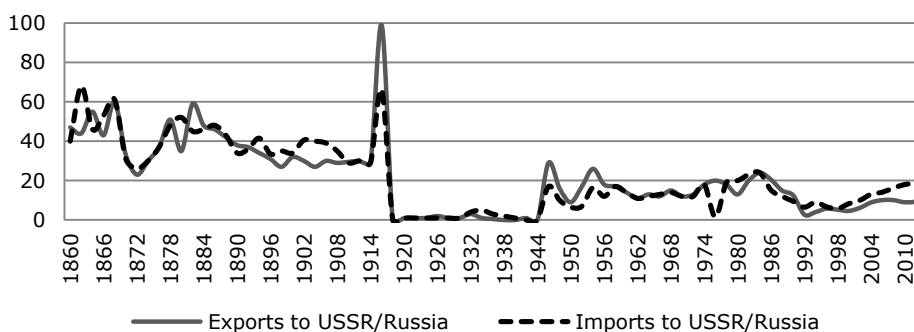


Figure 4. Share of Russia/Soviet Union/Russia in Finland's Foreign Trade 1860–2011. Per cent of total exports and imports. Data Source: Bank of Finland and the National Board of Customs, Finland

Despite the strained relations during the post-World War II climate, the Soviet Union was, until its collapse, by far Finland's most important trading partner. Even though largely politically determined, the bilateral trade had helped

Finland to industrialize and contributed to its welfare in several ways. The Finnish economy had been structurally dependent on this trade with its Eastern neighbor to such an extent that its sudden disappearance contributed to an economic recession in Finland, which soon deepened into a depression on a scale not seen since the early 1930s.

Trade relations have been on the mend from the 1998 Russian financial crisis. Even though trade and investments have not boomed hand in hand with levels of cross-border traffic, during the last decade trade between the countries grew steadily. A major driver behind the growth of Finnish exports to Russia was re-exports, i.e., goods that are imported by a purchaser in one country who then exports the product to a third country without processing (Ollus & Simola 2007). The most recent economic crisis slowed down exports to Russia by not less than 47 per cent and imports by 31 per cent respectively between 2008 and 2009 (Finnish National Board of Customs 2009), though already in 2011 imports (85 per cent of which was energy) rebounded over the pre-crisis figures to more than EUR 11 billion and exports more modestly from EUR 4 billion in 2009 to EUR 5.3 billion in 2011 (Finnish National Board of Customs 2012).

As Haukkala (2003; 2009) argues, Finland has gained Russian elite's trust due to its historically rooted tendency towards pragmatism. He points out that unlike many central and eastern European countries traumatized by communist-era experiences of direct coercion and ideological subjectification, Finland's relationship with Russia has always been based on more or less voluntary and down-to-earth interaction. The continuation of this 'special relationship' does not imply that problems do not exist. Recent bilateral issues include, but are not limited to, persistent truck queues at the border, airspace violations, the pollution of the Baltic Sea, and an increase in Russian duties on wood exported to feed Finland's pulp and paper industry, the latter of which has, however, now been somewhat eased as the WTO welcomed the Russian Federation as its 156<sup>th</sup> member on August 22, 2012. The so-called Karelian question, the debate over Finland's re-acquisition of the ceded territories, and potential borderline adjustment pops up in the public discussion every now and then but cannot be regarded as a political issue as both of the governments in question agree that no open territorial dispute exists between the countries<sup>9</sup>.

On the other hand, Russia has retained its position as Finland's favorite enemy. As stated by the former Minister of Defense Jyri Häkämies (National Coalition Party) in his (in-)famous speech given at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington on September 6, 2007, the three main security challenges for Finland are "Russia, Russia, and Russia." It is unclear

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<sup>9</sup> Whereas Russian leadership has indicated on several occasions that it has no intention to take part in discussion concerning the matter, Finland's official stance is that the borders may be changed through peaceful negotiations, although there is currently no need to open talks, as Russia has shown no intention discussing the question.



whether the uproar that followed was sparked by Håkämies being simply wrong or perhaps because his remarks had hit too close to the mark.

As the Cold War came to end along with the Soviet Union, academic research devoted to the topic of Russia was downscaled in most western countries. In Finland, however, the opposite happened. A freer climate allowed for more objective research. Even so, most studies have focused on what Russia lacks rather than on what it has to offer. Few studies explore Russia as it was, but instead approach it as being always undergoing some kind of reform or transition into something (Smith 2012). As a result, the knowledge and understanding of the current situation in Russia as well as the factors behind it remained slim. This, in turn, limited the ability to realistically assess the impact of Russia on Finland and the rest of Europe as well as the extent to which there could be a meaningful debate about what should be done and, in particular, what can be done.

## **1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE WORK**

With this introduction I have tried to explain the premises for this dissertation and clarify the methodological choices made and utilized throughout the analysis. Next, in chapter two, I start with a discussion on the underpinnings of borders and cross-border interaction. The chapter maintains that in order to understand borders today, we must first understand how they came to be. It further underlines that a multifaceted understanding of the political, social and symbolic significance of borders is needed in order to interpret the broad socio-political transformations that have taken place in Europe.

In chapter three, I introduce the specificities and complexities of civil society, as without an understanding of them, we cannot seek to understand the potential that civil society organizations stand to play in CBC. It begins by suggesting that the EU's borderland provides a fascinating context within which deep-rooted 'Western' and 'Eastern' understandings of state and civil society meet and overlap. Building on numerous earlier studies, it suggests that civil society should be understood as an arena that occupies the space where the other arenas of the society interact and overlap and where people associate to advance common interests.

In chapter four, I discuss Europeanization as a new frame for cooperation at the Finnish-Russian border. It analyzes how different understanding of the EU lead to different understandings of its external borders and what can or should be accomplished by cooperating across them. The concept of Europeanization is understood as a process away from state-centeredness and as a phase during which new supra-national administrative structures were put in place in the development of the Finnish-Russian relations.

Chapter five seeks to trace the development of the discursive practices that shape the image of Russia within the context of CBC by analyzing the public discussion in *Helsingin Sanomat* during the years 1990–2010. The newspaper material is thus used to illuminate the state of public debate within which cross-border relations have evolved and how the perceptions have affected cross-border practices. Chapter six turns this setting around and studies how the practices have influenced these perceptions. It focuses on the institutional practices of civil society and presents the main findings of the interview material by placing them in the broader frame of the Europeanization of cooperation. Lastly, in chapter seven, I seek to summarize the analysis, provide answers to the research question and draw recommendations for the future.

# *2 Understanding Borders and Cross-Border Interaction*

As the new civic neighborhood that this study aims to illustrate is being built across a border between two very different neighbors, it is necessary to get acquainted with how borders have and can be understood. The logic here is that the way the border is understood defines how, by whom, and for which purpose it can be crossed, transcended, or even eroded. Applicable models of cross-border interaction are introduced as to outline the role that the civil society actors in particular could play in neighborhood building.

## **2.1 USES AND ABUSES OF BORDERS**

The simplest way to understand the significance of borders is to examine them by their function – borders serve a purpose (van Houtum 1998, 21). Even though borders limit our lives, they also continue to influence socio-spatial behaviors and attitudes, how we perceive different places (Hallikainen 2003, 18), and how we perceive and interpret our own actions. Borders help us to create and perceive differences, indispensable for us in order to construct contexts and meanings (Hall 1999, 152) and to construct meanings in order to make sense of an otherwise complex society in which we live (Paasi 1999a).

### **2.1.2 Nations and Nationalisms in a Borderless World**

When discussing cross-border interaction and integration, one must be aware of the broader context within which these processes take place. A constantly widening and deepening integration process, rescaling of the state, strengthening regionalization, and the raising influence of trans- and international organizations, as well as globalization in general have undoubtedly shaken the role of the nation-state. For a geographer in this 'borderless world,' there is no business like border business (Newman 2006).

While the processes of globalization certainly threatened the particularity of borders, this did not lead to the devaluation of history, but rather to more complicated ways of grasping the past (Dirlik 2002a/b). If we accept that borders only came into existence with nation-states as suggested, e.g., by Giddens (1985, 50), it is also logical to suppose that as the role of the nation-state crumbles so would that of its borders. Globalization, in particular, initiated a development

once deemed to lead to the end of the nation-state and the disappearance of international borders (Ohmae 1995), if not geography altogether (O'Brien 1992). Certainly, globalization has caused the institutional crumbling of borders, compaction of cross-border social relations, increased interdependence and cross-border activities, and the intensification of flows. The EU serves as a fitting example of this. Yet, as Edensor (2002, 1) notes, the scalar model of identity and society remains primarily anchored in national space both at theoretical and popular levels. This is apparent in the Finnish-Russian case, as this work aims to show. These tendencies occur simultaneously, working often in cross-purposes.

In Europe and in North America, free trade regimes have pressured governments to ease regulations, to open new markets (Keohane & Milner 1996) and enhance sub-national entities' role vis-à-vis that of states as economic players (Ohmae 1990). In all, the relations of states and other government tiers with market forces have been in flux, making governing much more complex. This, Sassen (1996) suggests, has led to new legal regimes that "un-bundle sovereignties" and "denationalize territories," which in turn have had "disturbing repercussions for distributive justice and equity." State spaces are thus being "recalibrated," which has made the regional-central government relations more horizontal, competitive, and developmentalist (Brenner 2005).

Another approach to the topic has been to consider society as a functional network of regional and global flows (Lash & Urry 1994; Urry 2000; Vartiainen 1997). Castells (1996; cf. Blatter 2004) suggests a fundamental transformation of the relationship between politics and market forces: from "spaces of places" to "spaces of flows." He argues that networks should be seen as a new space for social interaction, which is not only the gradual extension of historical trends but also has its own novel characteristics and dynamics. Wellman's (2001) idea of a paradigm shift from group-centered relations to 'networked individualism' posits that new personalized technologies, such as e-mail, mobile phones, and social media, are part of an ongoing global shift from societies built on place-based solidarities to 'networked' societies organized around individuals' personal networks.

The conception of the nation-state has been appropriately criticized for its taken-for-grantedness as a geographical entity. Instead, it has been suggested, it is precisely the unquestioned nature of territorial imagination that functions as a significant seat of social power (Olsson 1991; Pickles 2003). While the transformations depicted above have overshadowed the conception and prominence of a nation-state, they have done little to dim its role in people's minds. Nationalism, Jusdanis (1991, 165) points out, allows people to forget contingency. It continues to play an important role behind people's opinions and views as well as actions, or lack thereof, based upon them. Ideologies, such as nationalism, and its reflections are not necessarily right or wrong, but they help construct meaning in the given context, are charged with emotions and therefore uphold the belief systems that people have about their own country

and its neighbors. In this sense, the Finnish-Russian border is still often seen very much as a traditional binational *interstate* border, on the different sides of which Finnishness and Russianness, respectively, is acted out in the frame of a nation-state. Such a collective 'practice of nation' affects also political behavior by relocating the emphasis of understanding away from powerful social actors, official institutions and mechanisms, important policy decisions, and 'critical junctures' to the everyday repetition of national 'rituals' typified by, and enshrined in, popularly resonant myths, memories, and symbols (Githens-Mazer 2007).

Deconstructing what is meant by a nation and nationalism is also needed in order to better understand Europe's changing borders and accordingly also interaction and integration across them (see subsection 3.3.1). Despite growing centrifugal forces, the Finnish case, *inter alia*, clearly suggests that the nation-state has endured as an ideal mode of organization and the pre-eminent spatial construct. The scientific perspectives on it have, however, evolved. The geodeterministic reading saw nation-state as means for safeguarding self-determination and territoriality, the functionalist account stressed its usability for territorial organization and geopolitical stability, while the postmodern era and the advocates of critical realism began to see the nation-state in terms of systemic regulation and consolidation of power. Giddens (1985, 5–6, 11, 172) famously describes the state as a 'bordered power container,' and Taylor (1994, 152) puts forth that apart from power, states have developed into wealth, cultural, and social containers as well. Similarly, Agnew (1994) draws attention to the different assumptions that are rooted in our understanding of the modern nation-state. He argues that nation-states have been taken as historical and territorial givens without taking into considerations the social, political, and economic processes involved in their emergence and existence. The geographical assumptions – 1) states as fixed, pre-existing units of sovereign space, 2) the domestic/foreign polarity, 3) and states as 'containers' of societies bound neatly by their territorial borders – have led into the 'territorial trap,' which could be escaped only by fundamentally rethinking the validity of these underlying assumptions (Agnew 1995, 379).

The social construction of the nation as a political institution originates from state attempts to commit people to a territory (Taylor & Flint 2000, 29–30). This has succeeded to an extent; even if the traditional role of the sovereign territorial state has become less of a focus of attention and been challenged by a variety of competing spaces and networks of political, economic, and social significance, territory remains of paramount interest (Elden 2005, 9). The "territory's continuing allure" (Murphy 2012) has been explained from the perspective of human territoriality (Sack 1983), spatial-socialization (Paasi 1996, 8), state-driven knowledge production (Häkli 1999; 2002), or regimes of territorial legitimation (Murphy 2002), that is, the resilience of territorial nationalism in local and global affairs.

The significance of nationalism lies in its power not only to uphold the belief systems that people have about their own country and its neighbors – preventing, in so doing, people from re-examining the opinions and viewpoints that they have assumed. It molds a territory into a ‘national space’ and maintains borders to other comparable units. It affects not only the people living within the territory but also those in neighboring territories who must re-conceptualize and re-construct the adjoining spaces and either accept or reject the national assertion of others upon those places (O’Loughlin & Talbot 2005, 28–29). The same applies also the logic of Europeanization, whereby the border regions adjacent to the EU external border have become branded as a *European Neighborhood*. In the case of Russia, such reconceptualization has been accepted on the regional level (where the ENPI funding can be applied) while at the state level the neighborhood rhetoric was famously rejected (see subsection 4.4.2).

However, as Sahlins’ (1989) work illuminates, national borders are not always imposed merely by the center; it was the local society that “brought the nation into the village.” Local, every-day perspective is thus not always apolitical, something opposed to top-down political perspective. Peoples’ emotional attachment to places and their perceptions and feelings about particular places give them meanings (ibid.). This is what Agnew (1987) has termed as a ‘sense of place’ in contrast to mere ‘place as location.’ The history of a nation, its struggles, conflicts, defining moments, and tragedies all happen in particular places, but they also have an influence on how the place is experienced. Furthermore, as O’Loughlin & Talbot (2005, 29) observe, these incidents also shape the character of the whole nation as well.

While many aspects of globalization challenge territorial sovereignty, it has remained one of the leading principles upon which international relations are based (Murphy 1996). Häkli’s (2008) study of Finland has shown that the idea of territorial space is not defunct or redundant but rather a continuously relevant form of social spatiality complementary to networked and fluid spaces (see Law 2002). State borders continue to be deeply constitutive of the way in which social change, mobility and immobility, inclusion and exclusion, domestic and foreign, national and international, and internal and external, as well as ‘us’ and ‘them’ are thought about (O’Dowd 2010, 1034). It is these long-term social processes, along with the collective memory of borders, which are embodied in everyday life experiences and remain continually present immediately under the surface of new policies (Bucken-Knapp & Schack 2001, 16). While there are clear interests on both the governmental and non-governmental level to promote CBC, the reality of this cooperation often shows the persistence of state borders (ibid.).

O’Dowd (2010, 1034; cf. Rumford 2008) makes a valid point by arguing that while much of the contemporary analysis of borders and globalization insists escaping from state-centric thinking and advocates grasping the novelty and

promise of the new world order 'beyond the nation-state,' even those social scientists, who are most critical of state-centric approaches, continue to use the territorially bounded state as an abiding reference point. The 'borderless world' debate (see Parker *et al.* 2009) once fuelled by the acceleration of new forms of economic, political, and cultural globalization has been replaced by increased attention to a 'world of borders' (O'Dowd 2010). Even though this approach acknowledges, thanks to the increased interdisciplinarity of border studies, that state borders are only one type of borders among many, they continue to outrank their alternatives within and beyond the national state. There has not been a clear-cut turn development toward post-national borders; state borders prevail even if in a reconfigured form.

The global primacy of state borders cannot but be taken as a sign of the hegemony of the nation-state ideal. The fact that borders are seen as important is not so much resistance to globalization but a particular historically and socially situated process that necessarily happens because small countries need to delineate space that they can claim as 'theirs' in order to confirm the continuity of their identities (Shklovski & Struthers 2010, 13). The increased nationalist politics and populism in Finland, among many other European countries, serve as a proof that the EU has not overshadowed the nation-state and national identities, but for many the significance of Finnishness has become only more valuable and significant because of the EU. There are close to 200 independent countries, around 300 international land borders – and at least double the narratives (Paasi 2010). Belonging to a certain nation has an enduring appeal, and despite increased mobility surprisingly few people live outside the country in which they were born.

As Anderson (1995, 79) once stated, nation-states appear drawn on the political map of the world in such a permanent manner that, at times, they may seem even as 'natural' formations. Such false imagination is commonly cemented by cartographic illustrations such as the one presented in Figure 5, which creates an illusion that Finland, with a clearly demarcated territorial space, would have existed already for centuries. As Häkli (2008, 18) clarifies, in the mainstream 'nationalistic historiography' of Finland, the awareness of Finnish identity has typically been postulated into historical contexts where it could not have existed and the related historical events are presented as causal chains leading to the 'predestined occurrence' of Finland gaining independence in 1917.

Still, as the rise of the territorial and administratively separate state had preceded the Finnish nation-building process, the course of events in Finland took a rather banal form, equating the state with society and everyday life. To build a *nation*, it was necessary to define who the *people* were. Fixed borders around the territory that then became called 'Finland' helped to define its people, the Finns. As a result, the most social, cultural, economic, and political

practices in Finland are still today informed by modern cartographic reason (Häkli 2008, 6) – a look at the world as regions and territories.

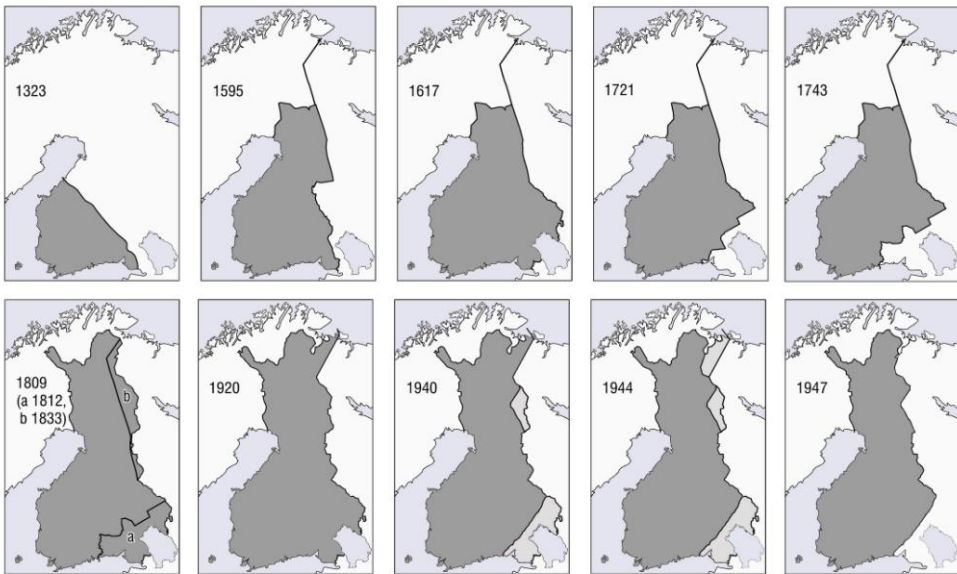


Figure 5. Territorial shape of Finland since 1323. Modified from Jukarainen (2002, 84)

While it certainly is important to break away from traditional territorial imagery as the dominant conception of space, it is still useful to analyze how national territories are produced and how this production is related to other kinds of spatialities pertinent to nation-building and national identities (Häkli 2008, 6). Nation-states are inescapably defined by their respective borders. These borders have their physical manifestations (a geographically drawn line), but they also have tangible symbolic and mental manifestations. In trying to determine the actions and behavior of people at and within the national borders, the borders themselves are no longer seen merely as territorial lines at a certain place in space but as symbols of processes of social binding and exclusion that are both constructed or produced in society. Borders are reproduced via perceptions, symbols, norms, beliefs, and attitudes (van Houtum 2000, 7), for instance, in situations of conflict where historical memories are mobilized to support territorial claims, to address past injustices, or to strengthen group identity – often by perpetuating negative stereotypes of the ‘other’ (Papadakis 2005).

Geographical borders continue to function as physical manifestations of state power, but they also serve as symbolic representations of statehood to citizen and non-citizen alike. While the nation-state has undoubtedly endured the pressures of globalization, the exclusively state-oriented approach with a focus



on the *interstate* relations serves only to confirm the already existing political borders.

### 2.1.3 Development of Early Border Studies<sup>10</sup>

#### Borders as Delimiters of Territorial Control and Ideology

Borders have long been one of the most central topics in political geography (Kristof 1959; Mignhi 1963; Prescott 1987; Paasi 1999a; Kolossov 2005). The pioneering framework for early border studies was developed by Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904). Ratzel's ambition was to establish geography as a holistic discipline that could tie both physical and human (social) elements together and be scientifically grounded in Darwinian laws of natural selection and evolution. In his 1897 *Politische Geographie*, Ratzel introduced the first systematic approach to political geography. It put forth an exceptionalist myth about the 'organic' relationships between *volk* (people), *boden* (territory), and *staat* [state] and the concept of '*lebensraum*' or "living space" and put forth the notorious idea about the state or empire as a living organism with internal organs, external protective boundaries, and an inherent drive towards expansion (see Ratzel 1903). Ratzel's ideas did not, however, emerge in a vacuum but, as Paasi (1999a, 12) points out, most of them had gained significance already before the actual institutionalization of geography.

Rudolf Kjellén (1869–1922) was struck by Ratzel's ideas. He agreed that the state was a kind of living organism, which had a soul and a brain embodied in the government, the empire forming the body, and the people its members. He underlined that such a state must have natural borders and territory. It was, however, Ratzel's student Otto Maull (1887–1957) who actually systematized his teacher's bio- and geo-deterministic principles in practice. For Maull, natural determination was the central element influencing the Society-Environment-System (*Mensch-Umwelt-System*), but he also emphasized the importance of the "willful political act" to establish states and boundaries. He specified that state was not an 'organism' in a biological sense, but rather an 'organization,' created by human societies to ensure the survival and viability of cultural groups (see Maull 1925).

While studying state formation in Europe, Maull focused attention on the morphological features of borders<sup>11</sup>, and their relations to the political conditions of nation-states. He made a distinction between 'good' and 'bad'

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<sup>10</sup> This chapter is based on the background research for the EUDIMENSIONS project and the author's collaboration with Prof. James Scott throughout the project. Though direct references have not always been possible, I wish to acknowledge I have become more knowledgeable about many of these ideas by way of Prof. Scott.

<sup>11</sup> Maull's (1925) scientific vocabulary included, for example, such concepts as: *grenzsaum* (border zone), *grenzlinien* (border line), *trennungsgrenzen* (dividing borders), *strukturgrenzen* (structural borders) and *strukturwidrige grenzen* (anti-structural borders).

borders. The most important indicators determining this division were defensive characteristics of a border and its stability. Good borders dovetail with natural and/or socio-ethnic borders, whereas anti-structural bad borders neither correspond to physical features of the landscape nor follow the borders of socio-cultural areas. In addition, bad borders do not have a border zone, allowing the border to function as both a connecting and filtering feature. These kind of bad borders are, Maull (1925) claims, places where conflicts between two states are most likely to happen. The characterization was adopted also by S. W. Boggs, who elaborated upon the notion by arguing that good borders serve the purposes for which they have been designed, with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of friction, while interstate conflict is due to bad borders that did not respect organic territorial limits.

Karl Haushofer (1869–1946), inspired by work of Kjellén, strived to develop political geography into an applied science. He focused on studying borders as delimiters of territorial control and ideology and asserted that the state's will to expand is part of its natural survival strategy. He further argued that the state's will to expand is part of its natural survival strategy, a teaching that has been seen to influence the development of Adolf Hitler's expansionist strategies. Ellen Semple (1863–1932), in turn, promoted the German school of *anthropogeographie* successfully in the United States and introduced some of Ratzel's ideas to the Anglophone community.

### Borders as Means of Description and Classification

The determinism that had helped provide the theoretical foundation for imperialist geopolitics and national-socialist ideology would be replaced after World War II by a generally positivist drive for objective facts, scientific rigor, and 'value-free' studies of borders (Scott 2006, 103). The institutionalization of academic disciplines accelerated, yet borders remained relegated to sub-disciplines, such as regional politics, regional economics and regional sociology, political anthropology, political geography, and geopolitics (Anderson, O'Dowd & Wilson 2010, 4). The latter two sub-disciplines had a long tradition of empirical research on borders, but in the 1960s and 1970s they almost died (see Taylor & Flint 2000, 49–52). Particularly political geography remained fragmented and lacked a central 'metatheory' until the late 1970s. Instead, functionalism, positivism, and a focus on 'Kantian' space prevailed (van Houtum & Scott 2005, 7–10).

Within the above mentioned parent disciplines, studies of border focused towards description, classification, and morphologies of state borders and likewise became concerned with the emergence of core areas of nation-state formation and the 'centrifugal' (i.e., fragmenting) and 'centripetal' (i.e., integrating) forces that influenced the growth and development of states (van Houtum & Scott 2005, 7–8). The widely used but "fundamentally illogical" (Hartshorne 1936, 57) division of 'natural' and 'artificial' borders came to an end

when political geographers began to emphasize that all political borders are consequences of conscious choices and thus artificial (e.g. Minghi 1963, 407; Prescott 1965; de Blij 1967).

For Richard Hartshorne, geography was a study of areal differentiation. Accordingly, his research on borders was grounded in the study of border landscapes; he suggested that the interaction between political borders and cultural landscapes were an important source of spatial differentiation. Hartshorne (1936) elicited a genetic border classification, according to which borders could be classified as pioneer, antecedent, subsequent, consequent, superimposed or relic based on the stage of development of the cultural landscape in the border area at the time the border is laid down. He understood that the geo-deterministic mindset of the German tradition of *anthropogeographie* had served to discredit Political Geography and proposed that the analysis of the functioning of the state would provide a meaningful context for scientific rigor (Hartshorne 1950, 129)

Ladis Kristof, Julian Minghi, and Victor Prescott, all prominent scholars of the functionalist school, focused research attention on the emergence of borders based on forms of social-political organization and processes of nation-building. Kristof (1959), followed Hartshorne's ideas on political geography, and similarly devoted himself to the systematic study of borders and boundaries as aspects of 'Realpolitik' and as organizing elements of the state. Kristof considered borders first of all as legal institutions: "...in order to have some stability in the political structure, both on the national and international level, a clear distinction between the spheres of foreign and domestic politics is necessary. The boundary helps maintain this distinction."

Kristof (1959) also made a distinction between frontiers and boundaries by suggesting that "while the former are the result of rather spontaneous, or at least ad hoc solutions and movements, the latter are fixed and enforced through a more rational and centrally coordinated effort after a conscious choice is made among the several preferences and opportunities at hand." He specifies that etymologically the word 'frontier' refers to what is in front, the foreland, of the hinterland, the motherland, the core of the state, kingdom or empire. "Thus the frontier was not the end... but rather the beginning... of the state; it was the spearhead of light and knowledge expanding into the realm of darkness and of the unknown" (Kristof 1959, 270). Whereas boundaries are *inner*-oriented, frontiers are *outer*-oriented, with their attention directed to those areas of friendship and danger, which exists beyond the state. Accordingly, boundaries, in Kristof's conceptualization, are *centripetal* in their function; they divide and separate, strengthening the territorial integrity of the state, while frontiers, in contrast, are *centrifugal* in character; they are outwardly oriented, integrate different ecumenes and challenge the control functions of the state. (Ibid. 270–272.)

Minghi (1963, 428) urged political geographers to acknowledge that “boundaries, as political dividers, separate peoples of different nationalities and, therefore, presumably of different iconographic makeup.” He suggested, the political geographers should obtain a more interdisciplinary approach and undertake investigations in the sociological, cultural, and economic areas “for the spatial patterns of social behavior can be even more important than other patterns in determining the impact of a boundary and its viability as a national separator” (ibid.). Prescott (1965), in turn, was mainly concerned with identifying spatial relationships between politics and geography. He saw the exercise of political sovereignty, of which borders are the formal delimiters, as an important source of morphological and functional variation of space (van Houtum & Scott 2005, 10).

## **2.2 CONTEMPORARY VIEWS ON BORDERS**

While the dynamic role of borders had been overlooked and borders as a research topic neglected during the preceding decades, the predominant geopolitical atmosphere directed research interests back to borders around the turn of 1970s and 1980s. Increased velocity and volatility of globalization and, later, the post Cold War ‘disorder’ and the associated tearing down the East-West division revealed that the empiricism, description, and categorization had their deficiencies. With the end of the Cold War, the previously stable border concept began to change and border studies began to be acknowledged as a discipline in its own right. Influenced by the broader critical turn in the social sciences, border studies became more inclusive towards the ethics of borders.

Since the end of the Cold War era, state borders have increasingly been understood as multifaceted social institutions rather than solely as formal political markers of sovereignty. Whereas the field had earlier pre-dominantly focused on the study of the demarcation of *boundaries* (i.e., the borderlines), the focus arguably shifted to *borders* as broader constructions. Dissatisfaction with the apolitical and ‘objective’ assumptions of empiricism fuelled the application of various critical approaches. Some of them became associated with postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives, which analyze the social construction of borders in terms of discourses, agency, and practices (van Houtum & Scott 2005, 1; Scott 2006, 103). Border scholars became interested in the social production of borders, sites at and through which socio-spatial differences are communicated. Borders, as a consequence, became viewed as relational, not given.

### **2.2.1 Post-National Practices of Borders**

The concept of post-national borders implies a certain obsolescence of the ‘state model’ in the face of an increasing interpenetration of national societies by

global processes (Kolossoff 2012, 15). The term should not be taken to suggest that a disappearance of states or the decline of state territoriality per se. Instead, the concept refers to new form of territorial sovereignty based on shared political responsibilities between states and the emergence of new borders, new border functions and/or new methods of territorial control that go beyond traditional notions of state territoriality (ibid., 16). It allows us to focus on the sub- and supranational logics of political interaction, which transcend the jurisdictional and conceptual limits of state the 'national' by creating new political functions of CBC.

McGrew and Held (2002), for example, offer an illustrative perspective of the post-national by underlining that globalized power involves a hybridization of national and international political spaces in terms of:

- shifting of political power away from nation-states,
- emergence of transnational political communities,
- conditioning of state sovereignty by interdependencies and inter-relations that crisscross state territories,
- new boundary problems that result from globalization processes, and
- increasingly blurred distinctions between domestic and foreign policy concerns.

The emergence of new political and economic units that partly incorporate but also operate beyond the context of the nation-state, such as communities of states, networks of cities or cross-border regions, is another example of post-nationalization (Kolossoff 2012, 16). European integration has promoted perhaps the most concrete notions of post-national polities and borders proposed to date (Joenniemi 2008). This has taken place in concrete forms of shared sovereignty and community policies, the support of local and regional cross-border cooperation, and more subtle discursive and ideational forms of Europeanization (Bialasiewicz, Elden & Painter 2005).

Critical geopolitics can also be seen to have emerged out of the need to investigate not only the legible reality of world politics, but also various social, cultural and political practices (Dalby & Ó Tuathail 1998, 2). It regards geopolitics as a much broader phenomenon than what has been traditionally described by analyzing the *geopolitical imagination* of the state, its foundational myths, and national exceptionalist lore (Agnew 1983). A particular attention has been paid to the boundary-drawing practices and performances, both material and conceptual, that characterize the everyday life of state (Dalby & Ó Tuathail 1998, 3). In this view, foreign policy can be seen as a "specific sort of *boundary-producing political performance*" (Ashley 1987, 51) as it invokes the making of 'foreign' as an identity and space against which a domestic self is evoked and realized. Dalby and Ó Tuathail (1998, 4) maintain that "geopolitics is not a singularity but a plurality... it is not a centered but a decentered set of practices

with elitist and popular forms and expressions” that are diffused throughout societies. They propose a three-fold typology of geopolitical reasoning, consisting of practical, formal, and popular geopolitics (Figure 6). Each of these different forms of geopolitics has different sites of production, distribution, and consumption, yet linked together they comprise the geopolitical culture of a particular region or state (Dalby & Ó Tuathail 1998, 5). Geopolitics saturates throughout everyday life; its sites of production are multiple and pervasive, ranging from official memorandum to newspaper headline or a cartoon.

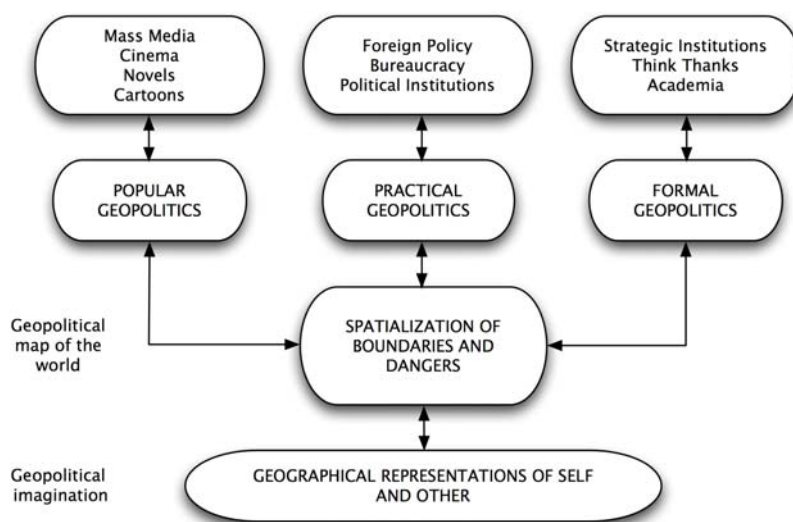


Figure 6. A critical theory of geopolitics as a set of representational practices. Adopted from Dalby and Ó Tuathail (1998, 5)

Lewis and Wigen (1997) use the concept ‘metageographies’ to refer to the geographical structures that people use to order everyday long-term spatial information. These structures are based on perceptions, experiences, and myths that, for the most part, go unexamined. According to these lines, Ó Tuathail (2002) puts forth that ‘geopolitical codes,’ i.e., a set of assumptions that the state apparatus uses to evaluate other states and regions beyond its borders, are passed on to the public through special kind of ‘scripts’ or performances that impart a conditioned way of viewing a situation or region. Governments, geopolitical intellectuals, and foreign policy elites, O’Loughlin and Talbot (2005, 26) have discovered, use these kinds of codes to promote specific agendas or actions “that could in turn mobilize public opinion to influence those actions.”

Building on the theory of critical geopolitics worked out by Toal (1996) and other authors, Kolossov (2003; O’Loughlin, Ó Tuathail & Kolossov 2004a/b; 2006)

has studied how ordinary people feel about their own country, its neighbors, and their place in the world and strives to find out to what extent the people are willing to adopt the official level geo-visions, as well as to what extent the actions and decisions at the state level are impacted by the perceptions and preferences of the lower levels. He makes a distinction between 'high' and 'low' geopolitics whereas 'high' geopolitics is a field of politicians and experts creating the concepts that they need in order to ground and justify the actions of the state at the international level, the place of the country in the world, and the system of international boundaries. Kolossov (2005, 624–625) explains that 'low' geopolitics is a set of geopolitical concepts, symbols, and images, for example, in the media, advertising, and cinema (see also Sharp 2000). These two sides of geopolitics need to match, to the largest possible extent, in order for the government to legitimate its activity (ibid.).

The (low)geopolitical knowledge that an individual collects through perception but also through ignorance, stereotypes, and prejudices shapes his or her feelings, opinions, and ideas towards the other (Laine 2008, 16). It forms a basis of the "world geopolitical vision," which includes representations about the territory of the ethnic group or political nation, its boundaries, preferable models of the state, historical mission, and forces preventing its realization (Dijkink 1996; Taylor & Flint 2000). Such a geopolitical vision of the relation between one's own and other places, Dijkink (1996, 10) argues, involves feelings of (in)security or (dis)advantage and/or invokes ideas about a collective mission or foreign policy strategy. Such a vision may or may not correlate with reality or a 'normative preference' (O'Loughlin & Talbot 2005, 27). It is a product of national history and culture: a "synthesis of views professed by different strata of the political elite, academic experts, the creative intelligentsia and public opinion as a whole" (Kolossov 2005, 625). Be it as it may, they do constitute one of the main components of the image of, and also interaction with, the other.

In order to form a coherent picture, it is necessary to apply a holistic view on borders. Kolossov's (2005) PPP-approach looks first at the *practice* of borders with a focus on informal cross-border networks in business, local authorities, CSOs, etc. It regards borders not simply as legal institutions ensuring the integrity of state territory but rather as a Lefebvrian product of social practice and integrates analyses at different spatial levels. The scale, form, and objectives of border activity are determined by the border regime, which, in turn, has an influence on it; the intensity of this activity depends on the role that the border plays or is granted to by the state, supra-national, and regional actors. Second, it considers border *policy* at different levels and legal infrastructures determining the relationship between the barrier and contact functions of the border. This infrastructure mirrors the strategies of the state, border regions, and local authorities and includes the tools designed to stimulate and/or to limit border activities as well as territorial integration. Third, the approach studies *perceptions*

of the border, i.e., the character, the evolution and the channels of influence of social representations on the border regions, on relations between neighboring states and regions, CBC, and 'high' and 'low' geopolitical discourse (ibid., 625–626).

### 2.2.2 Borders as a Construct

Affected by the critical perspective, the significance of borders became interpreted in a variety of ways. They were understood as socio-cultural constructs, and as such they could be also be deconstructed. Constructivist approach seeks to better understand how people construct borders according to their own experiences and knowledge. In trying to determine the actions and behavior of people at and within the national borders, the borders themselves are no longer seen merely as territorial lines at a certain place in space but as symbols of processes of social binding and exclusion that are both constructed or produced in society as well as reproduced via perceptions, symbols, norms, belief, and attitudes (van Houtum 2000, 7).

Anssi Paasi's (1996) pioneering work on borders is based on a rejection of positivism and a criticism of the concepts and empirical frameworks. He analyzes people's everyday reproduction of borders by combining the analyses of structural features and processes with the knowledge emerging from local social settings and contexts. For Paasi, there is no central 'essence' to borders, frontiers, regions, or even nation-states. Even if materially embedded, borders are socio-cultural constructs constantly subject to change. Likewise, representations, such as maps, are cultural texts which help construct the world rather than just mirror it. Paasi builds on Balibar's (1998) suggestion that instead of disappearing, 'borders are everywhere.' He suggests that borders ought to be seen as symbols, discourses, and institutions that interpenetrate all realms of society and that exist *everywhere* in society not only in border areas (Paasi 2009, 230; Paasi & Prokkola 2008). Today's borders vacillate (Balibar 2002). They are no longer mere lines on a map nor are they localizable. Instead, they are used in creating categories and social distinctions. Such a development has taken quite a step from traditional border studies to a direction where a territorial link is not always required.

While its true that border studies have become increasingly interdisciplinary and various borders, distinguishing, for example, neighborhoods, localities, cities, regions, macroregional blocs, nations, ethnic, religious, cultural, gender, and civilizational groupings (see O'Dowd 2010, 1034) for the sake of avoiding extending border studies to cover practically all social sciences, it might be more beneficial to draw the border somewhere and grant some societal distinctions an exemption from being bordered. More importantly, Paasi (2001, 141, 143) aptly argues that borders are relevant not just for their *function* but also because of their *meaning*; "attention should be paid not only to how ideas on a territory and its boundaries shape society's spatial imaginations... but also to analyzing how



these ideas gain significance as far as the spatial identity of territorial entities and the people living in them is concerned." As the meaning of different borders varies contextually, Paasi (2009, 226) proposes that this could be done by 'reading' the meanings of borders from the complicated practices and discourses taking place in such fields of social action as the economy, politics, culture, governance, and socialization. Borders are not neutral lines, but rather pools of emotions, fears, and memories that can be mobilized apace for both progressive and regressive purposes (Paasi 2011, 62).

Building on Shields (1991) work on social spatialization, Paasi (2009, 226) argues that more attention should be paid to how specific spatial ideas about a territory and its boundaries have been constructed and how they shape the images held by the society concerned. By reinstating Georg Simmel's 1903 dictum that "[t]he boundary is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that forms itself spatially" (Simmel 1997, 142), Paasi re-enacts his earlier concept of *spatial socialization* (Paasi 1996), i.e., "the process through which individual actors and collectivities are socialized as members of specific territorially bounded spatial entities, participate in their reproduction and 'learn' collective territorial identities, narratives of shared traditions, and inherent spatial images (e.g., visions regarding boundaries, regional divisions, regional identities, etc.), which may be, and often are, contested" (Paasi 2009, 226).

Spatial socialization is part of the process of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1998), through which territoriality is practiced – in other words, how the state territory is produced and reproduced among citizens through national education, especially in history and geography, and the operations of media (Paasi 2009, 226). Besides the analysis of existing and past institutional, legal, political, and administrative practices and discourses, Paasi (2009, 228) pits newspapers, for instance, among the most interesting documents for studying spatial socialization for they form a channel through which the processes of signification, legitimation, and domination take place in ordinary life and power relations and system integration (Giddens 1984) become realized.

Paasi (1996; also 2009) explains that the practice of spatial socialization accumulates in 'socio-spatial consciousness,' an abstraction striving to make sense of the social construction of spatial and social demarcations in the making of territories. It is not a sum of individual 'mental maps,' but rather a form of collective consciousness, which 'stretches' individual actors through various institutional practices (education, culture, politics, economics, administration, and communication) and discourses as part of a continuity constituted by the bounded society and of how this society is represented in territorial ideologies. Occurring on or through different socio-spatial scales (e.g., regionalism and nationalism), this consciousness manifests itself simultaneously in various institutionalized social practices, through which actors reproduce themselves and the social structure and through which the power relations operate. (Ibid.)

Socio-spatial consciousness renders it possible to understand the relation between human action and social structures, i.e., the rules and resources which are recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems (Giddens 1984), in the production and reproduction of collective meanings associated with borders (Paasi 1996). While some generations transform territorialities and its borders in concrete ways, the following generations reproduce and selectively shape the memorized territoriality, whether in words, deeds or the material symbols used in the discursive landscape of social power. As the newspaper material analysis conducted for this study suggests, the defining moments of Finnish history are constantly relived and reproduced by younger generations (see chapter 5).

Due to spatial socialization, state borders are commonly meaningful to most inhabitants but of particularly importance to those who have to face the border area in their everyday lives as border citizens or as border crossers, who enter, adapt to, or challenge the readymade worlds of practices and discourses regarding 'us' and the 'other.' As explained by van Schendel (2005), borderlanders are able to 'jump' scales (local, national, regional, global) and construct the scale of the border for themselves. The national border is not necessarily experienced only as an immediate limit but may rather be perceived as a 'local' phenomenon, a nation-state 'edge,' a transnational staging post or it may be reconfigured as a portal.

Paasi (2009) utilizes Moscovici's (1981) theoretical idea of social representation to better understand how individual people come to terms with the more general idea of socio-spatial consciousness. Social representations, such concepts, statements, and explanations emerging from daily life in the course of inter-individual communication, Paasi (2009, 228) argues, provide a mediating category between a more general socio-spatial consciousness (and the role of borders in it) and the interpretations of spatiality emerging from everyday life. For example, in his own study about the Finnish-Russian border, Paasi (1996) finds that different generations of Finns live in different 'worlds' as far as meanings attached to the border are concerned indicating that in this specific national context the content of spatial socialization differs from one generation to another.

Henk van Houtum has sought to understand the complex construction of borders from a political, economic, socio-cultural, and psychological standpoints. He asserts that the notion of border only really takes on meaning when understood as a product of 'bordering,' i.e., the everyday construction of borders through ideology, discourses, political institutions, attitudes, and agency (van Houtum 2002; van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002). Within this context, borders can be read in terms of a politics of identity (feelings of belonging, us versus them, who is 'in,' who is 'out'), in terms of a regionalization of difference (defining who is a neighbor, a partner, a friend or rival), or in terms of politics of 'interests,' in which issues of economic self-interest, political

stability, and security play a prominent role (Scott 2009, 235). Van Houtum further argues that borders exert both an ideational power that helps individuals and societies form identities along with a sense of security and comfort. (van Houtum 2002; van Houtum & Scott 2005).

Elden (2010, 811), in contrast, downgrades the role of bordering practices by insisting that borders “only become possible in their modern sense through a notion of space, rather than the other way round.” Territory ought not to be understood through territoriality but through an examination of the relation of the state to the emergence of a category of ‘space’ as a political category: owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered, and controlled (Elden 2007; 2010, 810). This requires rethinking unproblematic definitions of territory as a ‘bounded space’ or the state as a ‘bordered power container,’ because both presuppose the two things that should be most interrogated: space and borders.

In their attempt to better understand the threats that the nation-state as well as the border identities and regions tied to it face, Donnan and Wilson (1994; 1999) bring an anthropological focus to border studies. They stress that local and regional cultures in borderlands are not just reactive agents, but they also play a proactive role in policy formation, representation, and reception; the state policies which may encourage cooperation or conflict involve aspects of ‘national’ life but require also commitment from the regions and localities that straddle the border (ibid., 11–12; see edited volume by Pavlakovich-Kochi, Morehouse & Wastl-Walter 2004 for illustrating examples). In an anthropological sense, culture ties the people and institutions of the international borderlands to people and institutions within their own country *and* to those further very far away. Such cultural landscapes, which transcend political borders, are defined by the social interactions that construct them. They cannot be deduced from knowledge of the political and economic structures of the states at their border but through an investigation of how nation and state are routinely lived and experienced by ordinary people. (Ibid., 12–13.)

Rumford (2011, 67) proposes that instead of “seeing like a state” (a constraining lens given the increasing heterotopia of contemporary borders), as described earlier by Scott (1998), border scholars should move toward “seeing like a border”; i.e., disaggregate the state and the border in order to conceptualize the multiple actors and sites of borderwork. Rumford (2008; 2011) puts forth that the literature has seriously neglected the way in which ordinary citizens, entrepreneurs, and grassroots activists can construct, shift, or even erase borders by creating borders which facilitate mobility for some while creating barriers to mobility for others, appropriating the political resources which bordering offers as well as contesting the legitimacy of or undermining the borders imposed by others. In addition to broadening the concept of de-/bordering from an exclusive business of nation-states to include also citizens, and indeed non-citizens, Rumford also extends this process from the state's external borders to the interior of a polity.

The argument that Rumford (2008; 2011) advances is that changes to borders are in fact more far-reaching than can be captured by either the idea that 'borders are everywhere' or a security-driven rebordering thesis. Rumford (2011) asserts that rather than curtailing mobility, borders can also actively facilitate it. He depicts borders as 'engines of connectivity' through which bottom-up activity provides borderworkers with new political and/or economic opportunities. Instead of viewing bordering in terms of securitization, borderwork opens up the possibility to do so in terms of opportunities for humanitarian assistance targeted at those who may coalesce at the borders. The development of Finnish-Russian CBC from the early 1990s onwards can be seen as a practical manifestation of this (see subsection 4.5.2).

When seeing like a state, one is committed to seeing borders as lines of securitized defense, Rumford's (2008; 2011) suggestion to try to see like a border involves "the recognition that borders are woven into the fabric of society and are the routine business of all concerned." Borders are not only at the borders, bordering processes permeate everyday life; borders can be found "wherever selective controls are to be found" (Balibar 2002, 84–85). Borders are neither necessarily always working in the service of the state, perceivably ineffectual borders of the nation-state may fuel border-workers to engage in local bordering activity designed to enhance its status. Furthermore, borderwork, and the border it constructs, is not an activity of the marginal, but it may be the project of those seeking to gain further advantage in society, for instance entrepreneurs or affluent citizens. The capacity to make or unmake borders becomes thus a major source of political capital. Lastly, borders can be 'invisible' (to some but not to all) or designed not to be seen. Borders can be highly selective and work so as to render themselves invisible to the majority of the population, while constituting a formidable physical barrier to outsiders. (Rumford 2011, 68.)

### **2.2.3 Pragmatist Reconfiguration of Borders**

Finally, a pragmatic view of geographical research on borders focuses on problem-oriented aspects of state borders and CBC. O'Dowd's work offers an insightful example of bordering processes within the context of European integration and enlargement. Based on the history of state formation in Europe, O'Dowd (2002, 29) asserts that functions and meanings of state borders seldom remain fixed or stable for long periods. In the project of European integration and enlargement, Europe's borders, he suggests, have been reconfigured in terms of their function as barriers, bridges, resources, and symbols of identity (O'Dowd 2002, 21–29). He also considers that the existence of territorial state borders have been a *sine qua non* for the development of representative democracy. European integration with its 'democratic criteria' in turn has led to more 'democratic regulation' of borders, which critically influences the prospects for cross-border cooperation. (Ibid., 30.)

The pragmatic approach underlines that even if in flux, borders continue to serve a purpose. They mark out, distinguish, but also regulate, if not express control, prevent or facilitate. Borders may lose some of their functions while simultaneously obtaining new ones; they are seldom stable, but rather under continuous change. Whereas some of the border functions can be refuted by a single political decision – if desired, a border may, however, be rooted in the minds of the people in such a profound manner that some of its functions may never lose their relevance even if the actual institutional border would eventually subside. Westlund (1999) specifies that *technical-logistical* and *political-administrative* borders in particular are much less resistant to change than *cultural-historical*, *geographical*, and *biological* borders.

O'Dowd argues for the multilevel contingency of cross-border interaction. Generalizations are often difficult to make for the EU's borders are also very heterogeneous. This is reflected, for instance, in the segmented nature of its external border. Its Mediterranean, Balkan, Central, and Eastern European borders each involve different kinds of interaction with a variety of 'others' with varying claims and prospects to be included into the EU (O'Dowd 2001). More recently, O'Dowd (2010, 1034) has justly criticized the 'borders are everywhere' approach, which uses 'borders' as a synonym for all kinds of social controls, for "overextending the metaphor." He sees that what goes on within the territory of the state actually increases, if anything, the state's effective territorial sovereignty and hence the significance of its external borders. Thus, highlighting the diffusion of 'bordering' practices throughout the state territory deceptively obscures the significance, multidimensionality, and ambiguity of state borders (ibid., 1038).

## **2.3 BORDERLANDS AND CROSS-BORDER GOVERNANCE<sup>12</sup>**

What can be drawn from above is that borders are not merely lines drawn on a map, but they need to be understood as broader socio-cultural phenomena. Even though an explicit crossing of a border occurs obviously only at the very border, the impact of a border may reach deep into the interior of a country. Borders do not have a bearing only on cross-border traffic, but they also have a impact, to give an example, on cross-border governance, particularly with respect to territorial, urban, and environmental planning. Increased porosity of borders both enables and requires CBC.

### **2.3.1 Defining Borderlands**

The borderland, the areas adjacent to a given border, transforms hand-in-hand with the function and role of the border per se. The term 'borderland' is used

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<sup>12</sup> This chapter is based on Laine (2008; 2012).

here willfully to emphasize its vague and undetermined character, distinct from a 'border region,' which particularly in the European context often bears the connotation of being based on administrative units. A borderland is a nebulous zone in which the impact of the neighboring state and the border between these states is felt. A border with a high barrier function restricts exchanges across it whereas more open border facilitates cross-border interaction (van Geenhuizen & Ratti 2001).

Based on this notion, it has been suggested (e.g., Mc Kinsey & Konrad 1989; Martinez 1994a/b) that the width of the borderland is dependent on the intensity of exchanges across the border; the more open a border is, the wider the borderland. Nevertheless, a closed border, across which exchanges are negligible, also has a strong impact on the areas adjacent to it. Whereas an open border tends to fuel the formation of functional cross-borderlands, a closed border tends to create peripheries suffering from the cut-off effect of the border. Even if different by nature, in both cases the impact of the border on the areas that it divides is remarkable. Thus, the width and range of the borderland is dependent on the impact of the border; the stronger the impact – whether it be negative or positive – the wider the borderland (Laine 2008).

Borderlands have distinct features and unique characteristics due to either increased interaction or lack thereof. The imminence of the 'other' has had a severe impact on the way in which borderlands have evolved and developed. In the past, the respective center commonly wished to secure itself from undesired influences from the outside and hence hesitated to invest in the border areas, where the likelihood of conflict was perceived to be the greatest. As a consequence, border regions fail to develop at the same pace with the rest of the country. In certain places, borderlands transformed even into vacuum-like spaces where no central power reached and where political dividing lines restricted interaction across the border (Merks 2000). Conversely, the influence of borderlands on national politics and policies has most often been limited (van Houtum 1998, 20), and their role in national decision-making processes is closer to that of an object rather than a subject.

Borderlands are often characterized by isolation, backwardness, and disregard. The center-oriented production of services and the organization of activities have transformed borderlands into resource restricted backwoods, which have been more dependent on national, rather than transborder connections (Urwin & Rokkan 1983). Also, people living in these areas have been marginalized in geographic, economic, social, and political terms, the most visible aspect of which being an unbalanced division of wealth between the center and the periphery of a country (Hansen 1983; van Houtum 1998, 20). Given the insufficient subsidies available for these 'less-favored' areas, peripheral borderlands have been forced to fight harder and harder to attract investments, employment, and ultimately people (Käkönen 1999, 379), which has led to a vicious cycle in which border areas have become even more under

populated and regressive, reducing the already slim prospects for future development within the area. Due to their disadvantageous geographical *location*, as well as *position* in relation to a center, borderlands are often referred to as 'peripheral' (Eskelinen & Snickars 1995).

### 2.3.2 Modeling Borderland Interaction

The effects of the openness of a border are dependent on the specific conditions of each borderland and cannot be determined a priori (Clement 2004, 54). Despite their unique features, the dynamics between two borderlands separated by a border can be better understood through illustrative models. These models are seldom fully transferable, yet they do offer valuable insights as a good number of borderlands worldwide share similar characteristics. As an example, van der Schelde and Høekveld (1992) have developed a workable model emphasizing the functional aspect of cross-border regional systems that operate within borderlands (Figure 7). They see these systems not as massive quantities, but as multilayered structures in which every layer has its own scale and is part of a more extensive layer. The regional systems may extend across a border at all levels ('transnational,' 'intra-regional,' and 'level of the neighboring borderlands'), generating cross-border interactions and, in so doing, affecting the regional development of the entire borderland. (Ibid. 486, 493.)

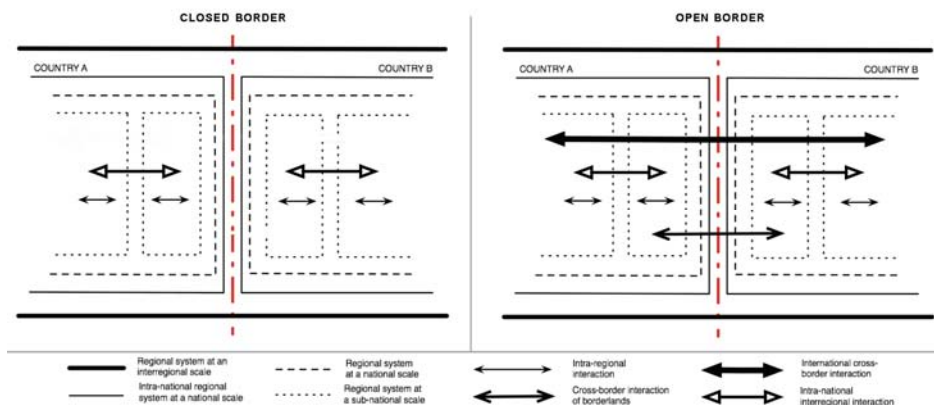


Figure 7. Influence of the opening of a border on the increase in regional systems cross-border interactions. Adapted from van der Schelde & Høekveld (1992)

Van der Schelde and Høekveld (1992, 497–498) found out that the capability of regional systems to cross the border is dependent not only on the characteristics and function of the border, but also on the way the actors in the daily regional systems adapt to external stimuli originating in the encompassing systems of which the studied regions form a part (the so-called external context). The lower

the barrier effect, the better chances these regional systems have to extend across a border. Yet, even if an open border allows interaction, it does not mean that interaction would immediately occur if local actors were not able to adapt and make use of the external (social or spatial) context: “[i]nternational flows traversing a region do not necessarily affect that region; rather, their importance depends on the nature of the regional systems they connect” (ibid. 486).

Giaoutzi et al. (1993) endorses that cross-border interaction does indeed occurred through multilayered structures. They sought to identify obstacles for interaction with the help of an enlightening layer-model of networks. They make a distinction between social, legal, economic, political, and cultural layers, which together produce a complex interaction-structure defined as the spatial layer (ibid., 105). This helps us understand that different networks operate in different layers. As a state border crosses these layers, it creates obstacles to interaction and networks. Whereas the political-juridical state border in Giaoutzi’s et al. (1993) model crosses all the layers similar way, Schack (2000, 205) makes an important correction by demonstrating that every layer has a border of its own and that the border crosses the layer at different points (Figure 8). The spatial layer is thus not a representation of a network pattern, but that of a society. Each missing link in the networks of each layer represents a border in that particular context. For this, we can deduce that a border has a different meaning in different contexts; i.e., it may be possible to cross a border effortlessly in one context, while it seems difficult in other contexts.

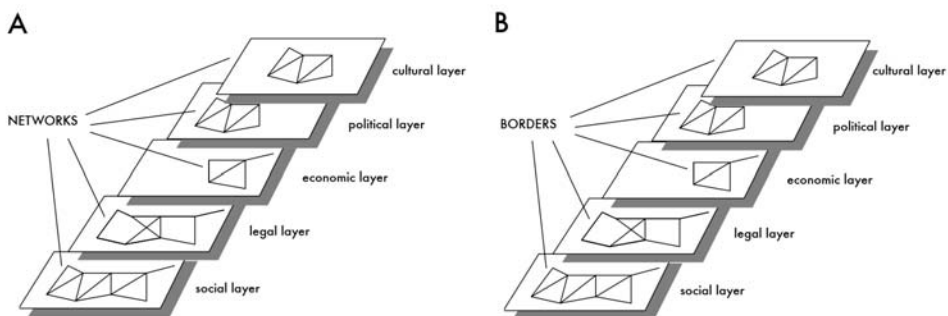


Figure 8. A layer-model of networks (A) by Giaoutzi et al. (1993) and its alteration, a multilayer model of borders (B) by Schack (2000, 205–206)

Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of borderlands, Martinez (1994a; see also 1994b) has succeeded in developing a workable generalization about features common to all borderlands and to posit a classification scheme based on the intensiveness of cross-border interaction. The fundamental argument behind Martinez’s (1994a) scheme is that as the geopolitical climate relaxes, more and



more borderlands evolve towards convergence rather than divergence. He proposes four models of borderland interaction as part of this process: alienated borderlands, co-existent borderlands, interdependent borderlands, and integrated borderlands (Figure 9). Each of these models illustrate a different degree of cross-border interaction and prevailing tendencies in a borderland; as the barrier effect of a border diminishes, a more intensive interaction across the border may take place. Hence, the area where the influence of interaction can be felt expands further inland and the functional borderland increases in size.

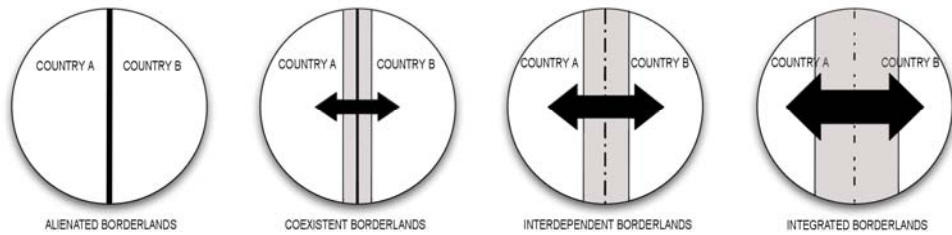


Figure 9. Four paradigms of borderland interaction. Adapted from Martinez (1994a/b)

Varying inclinations may be manifested at times but generally one of the four conditions is predominant (Martinez 1994b, 6). Alienated borderlands refer to a borderland where daily, routine interaction across the border is practically non-existent owing to extremely unfavorable conditions. Major causes for such alienation can be warfare or other political disputes, intense nationalism, ideological animosity, cultural and religious dissimilarities, or ethnic rivalry. Under such conditions, international strife may easily lead to militarization and the establishment of rigid control over the border. (Ibid., 2.) Co-existent borderlands in Martinez's (1994a, 2–4) classification refers to a situation in which unfavorable, international conditions still preclude binational cooperation, but the countries separated by a border have succeeded in reducing border-related conflicts to a manageable level, allowing minimal border stability to prevail. In such a situation, international contacts are possible, yet mainly on an irregular basis. The border is no longer closed, but its barrier function is still high enough to forestall people from crossing it routinely.

Interdependence can exist when a border region on one side of the border is symbiotically linked with the borderland on the other side of the border (ibid., 4–5). Symbiosis, by definition, implies complementarily, most noticeably in economic and social fields. Borderlands no longer merely exist in close physical association, but they need each other and interact in a prompt and enduring manner for the benefit of both areas. Stable conditions and increased interaction have led to an expansion of borderlands and encouraged borderland dwellers to attain friendly and cooperative cross-border relationships. Lastly, at the stage of

integrated borderlands, neighboring countries eliminate all major political differences between them; stability in the area is now strong and perceived as permanent and the economies of both countries are functionally merged (ibid., 5). An extremely low barrier effect of the border allows unrestricted movement of people and goods across the border, which enables regional systems to extend deeper across the border. As a consequence, the functional borderland grows deeper inland and borderland-dwellers perceive themselves as members of a single cross-border social system (ibid.).

Topaloglou et al. (2005), in turn, have developed an informative typology of the EU border regions based on a fuzzy cluster analysis of EU NUTS III<sup>13</sup> divisions (Table 2). Like Martinez above, Topaloglou et al. also propose there to be different models of interaction, which can be found in different contexts. While the format of the collected data that they use makes the actual analysis and its interpretation seem exceedingly economy oriented, quantitative and, hence, somewhat rigid, their study makes an important contribution in suggesting not only that the European borders are diverse and, more specifically, already the border regions themselves constitute a highly heterogeneous group of regions. While they correctly argue that “[b]orders are ‘melting’ in the EU external space and ‘freezing’ in the external one, drastically affecting the development prospects of border regions” (ibid., 85–86), perhaps an even more important conclusion of their work would be to underline that studying the border from the national angle is likely to obscure the difference among the different border regions; i.e., to approach borders as non-homogenous entities.

Accordingly, placing the external EU border in its entirety into the most disadvantaged cluster E is unquestionably a cursory oversight as the regional differences are not by any means limited to the internal borders. Taking a more regionally oriented approach would, however, reveal that, for example, in the Finnish case Lapland and Northern Ostrobothnia would be well placed in cluster B, if not in A – though only due to their links with both Sweden and Norway. Still, also the Finnish regions bordering only Russia, from the Gulf of Finland to Kainuu, also have their regional characteristics. Kymenlaakso particularly, through which the Helsinki-St. Petersburg axis runs, can hardly be characterized as a border region “with low market potential and no prevailing positive characteristics.” It is true, as Topaloglou et al. (2005) argue, that the process of integration in Europe remains associated with significant differentiation in border zones. The examples taken from the external EU border

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<sup>13</sup> Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) is a geocode standard for referencing the subdivisions of countries for statistical purposes within the European Union. Eurostat has established a hierarchy of three NUTS levels for each EU member country. In Finland, there are two NUTS I regions (Mainland Finland and Åland), five NUTS II regions (*Suuralueet*), and, as of 2011, 19 NUTS III Regions, which coincide with the Finnish provinces (*Maakunnat*).

could, however, be used to demonstrate that a higher level of integration does not automatically lead to greater convergence.

*Table 2. The EU NUTS III border regions typology (Topaloglou et al. 2005, 84)*

<b>CLUSTER</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
<b>A</b>	Highly integrated border regions with advanced economic performance, many cultural similarities and small size.	Border regions in the EU15 core, Scandinavia, Ireland, UK
<b>B</b>	Border regions that enjoy agglomeration economies but need significant structural adjustments in order to deal with the increased competition.	Border regions in the Baltics, Slovakia, Czech Rep., Poland
<b>C</b>	Highly integrated border regions that present significant economic performance, though much cultural dissimilarity.	Border regions in France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria
<b>D</b>	Border regions with high development potential due to their favorable geographic position, but with low economic performance.	Border regions in the western side of the EU new member-states
<b>E</b>	Border regions with low market potential and no prevailing positive characteristics	Border regions in the EU external borders prior to enlargement

Whether studied either from the national or from a more regional perspective, the setting in which Finnish-Russian cooperation takes place appears to be rather asymmetric. According to a conceptual framework developed by Clement, Ganster and Sweedler (2005), cross-border interaction at such unequal borders is characterized by economic and non-economic asymmetries. They see that interaction is based on economies of scale; i.e., both physical and social infrastructure as well as the marketing and lobbying efforts that ought to be undertaken and financed by all parties deriving positive externalities they generate. These externalities are economic complementarities that, in turn, generate a variety of both economic and non-economic cross-border linkages. The linkages represent opportunities, which can lead to higher levels of development if managed properly. The negative externalities, challenges that can hinder development, must also be managed as, say, pollution or communicable diseases that can potentially spill over onto the other side of the border. In asymmetrical settings also transaction costs are likely to be high in comparison to expected profits. Due to a lack of information, legal constraints, different business practices, language and culture, resources and time often have a better rate of return if invested domestically. (Ibid., 229–230.)

Kozák (2010) has also studied asymmetry, thought through more of an international relations perspective focusing on conflicting issues and tensions between the two countries. He maintains that a ‘weaker’ state and a ‘stronger’ state have different policy options when approaching each other. The weaker state can chose to ‘close’ (i.e., isolate) itself off in an attempt to protect and

safeguard its national institutions or policies against the overpowering influence of the stronger state. This often induces the weaker state to emphasize a legalistic concept of national sovereignty and to strive to protect itself through tariffs or active government role in the economy. The weaker state may alternatively opt to 'open' itself up towards the stronger state, i.e., to lower the economic and political barriers in an attempt to diminish the asymmetry by raising its level of economic and social development to be on par with the stronger state. (Ibid.)

The stronger state has four basic options in asymmetric relations. In addition to closing itself off (insulating itself against problematic issues arising from the asymmetry) or pursuing 'open' policies (assisting the weaker state with its most serious problems and trying to solve contentious bilateral issues in mutually acceptable ways), it can choose to ignore or to dominate the weaker state. A strong state may ignore the weaker state by focusing its attention to relations with other strong states or a different weaker state. Domination, in turn, is usually manifested in use of overwhelming (military) force to advance one's interests or promote one's values. (Kozák 2010.) While Kozák's logic, based on the US-Mexico setting, cannot be directly applied to the Finnish-Russian situation – where also the EU now plays a significant role, it brings up a vital issue: the same border, and the relations across it, may look very different and be given different value from different directions. This is to say that while the relations with Russia remain of utmost importance to Finland, for Russia Finland is just one neighbor among many.

Brunet-Jailly's has taken a up the challenging task of developing a border model that would allow scholars to compare borders effectively and thus expand the scholarly 'boundaries' of their respective fields of study (Brunet-Jailly 2004; 2005; 2007a/b). To understand borders and borderlands, he asserts, social scientists need to focus on the lenses of analysis that underscore the tug of war between agency (human activities and individual ties and forces spanning the border) and broader structural processes in the multi-scalar construction/deconstruction of states that frame individual action and their concurrent impact on border regions and policies.

National governments, Brunet-Jailly 2011, 1–2) asserts, are key players, yet governing has become more complex, which in turn modify the influence of central governments on borders and borderlands. The borderland dweller's priorities and perceptions often function at cross-purposes with those of national governments. This is particularly the case when national governments seek to manage and control the cross-border processes in borderlands in ways that challenge the interests and accustomed patterns of interaction of local residents; the local political clout either enhances the border effect or strengthens communication within the borderland, hence challenging the central government's border policies (Brunet-Jailly 2007b, 352, 355–356). The accustomed interaction of individuals and organizations across borders

cultivates varying degrees of interdependence that in turn contributes to varying degrees of ‘porosity,’ creating “problem(s) for the makers of security policy” (Brunet-Jailly 2007a, 2).

Based on an extensive review of border literature, Brunet-Jailly suggests a workable model, his theory of borders (Figure 10). He approaches borders through four different analytical, border-spanning lenses, all of which are assumed to enhance or complement one another. The lens of ‘local cross-border culture’ refers to the sense of belonging, common language, or ethnic, religious, socio-economic background. ‘Local cross-border political clout,’ in turn, includes active local civic and political organizations and individuals that initiate and expand local level relations, local policy networks, local policy communities, symbolic regime, and local cross-border institutions. The lens of ‘market forces and trade flows’ consists of various flows of goods, people, and investments, while the ‘policy activities of multiple levels of government’ span the border to link local, regional, provincial, state, and central governments but also different task-specific public and private sector organizations (Brunet-Jailly 2005, 645.)

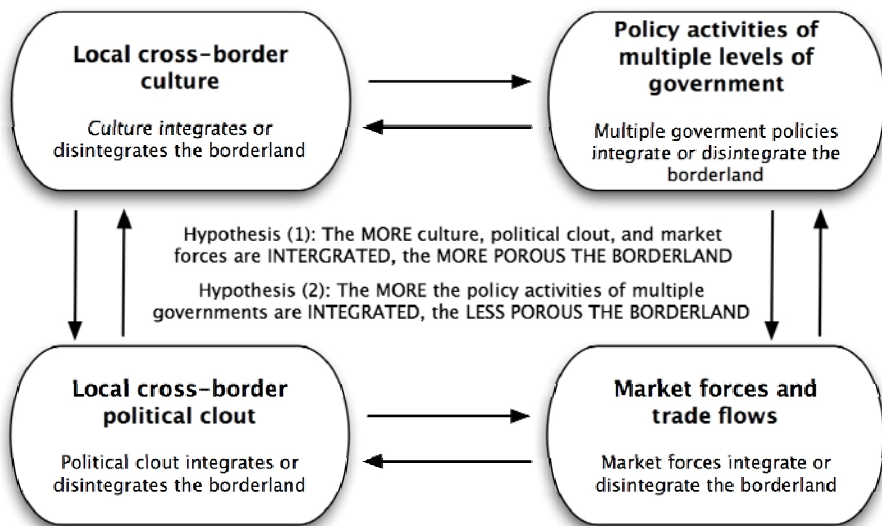


Figure 10. A theory of borderland studies. Adopted from Brunet-Jailly (2005, 645; 2007b, 355)

The different lenses in Brunet-Jailly’s model contribute either to the growing integration of borderlands or work at cross-purposes to one another. What emerges in the interplay of these lenses is a borderland region that is culturally emerging and integrating (Brunet-Jailly 2005, 645). On the other hand, unilateral or mismatched approaches, which fail to engage the local population, foster a

'tug of war' between culture, local political clout, market forces, and the multiple activities of governments in structuring borderlands (2007a, 4).

Brunet-Jailly (2007b, 355) proposes two hypotheses: 1) The more culture, political clout, and market forces are integrated, the more porous the borderland, and conversely 2) the more the policy activities of multiple governments are integrated, the less porous the borderland. With empirical examples demonstrating the validity of both of them, Brunet-Jailly (*ibid.*, 356) arrives at a dilemma. On the one hand, the less integrated a borderland is, the less need there is for governments to integrate their policies. On the other hand, the more integrated the borderland is due to similar culture, strong cross-border clout, and market forces, the more need there also is for the governments to better integrate their policies. While the basic premise applies also to the Finnish-Russian case, what stands out is that even though the local cross-border political and cultural clouts as well as the government policies and market forces certainly penetrate the border, this increased interaction has not led to any major forms of integration.

### **2.3.3 Openness vis-à-vis Interaction**

In the European context, it is commonly expected that with the help of multileveled governance border regions may be turned into places for action by encouraging its borderlanders to cooperate with their neighbors (Hooghe 1996; Hooghe & Marks 2001a/b; van Geenhuizen & Ratti 2001; Kramsch 2004). While the unification of Europe was set in motion already soon after World War II as the continent, tired of war, began taking steps to prevent future conflicts by learning to cooperate with former enemies, cross-border cooperation as a political tool was not actively practiced before the 1990s. Prior to that, it was rather the Council of Europe (est. 1949) that promoted the pan-European movement and cooperation between *all* countries of Europe.

Today, the greatest manifestation of European integration is, of course, the European Union, consisting of heretofore 27 member states. As the threat of conflict declined, borders became more transparent and the borderlands more stable and, therefore, more attractive platforms for growth and development. Former points of conflict began to transform into points of contact. As increased porosity of borders enabled the expansion of borderlanders' space for action (Ratti 1993) and fuelled the transformation of the borderland from a periphery towards a competitive field of interaction (Eskelinen & Snickars 1995), the vicinity of a border was no longer seen solely as a disadvantage. In Morehouse's (2004, 29) terms, a border's function was no longer merely to slice but also to bind, whereby borderlands tend to airbrush differences.

Under the dynamics of internationalization and global interaction, 'cooperation' and 'integration' now boast decidedly positive connotations. Borders are no longer regarded as protective bulwarks but increasingly as inconveniences that should be removed in order to facilitate less confined forms

of cross-border interaction. Even at the risk of losing the exclusive rights linked to nation-state status, the countries of Europe have been willing to relax certain functions of their borders for the lure of the common good. As flows across these borders have intensified, influences from each side of the border have also been felt more forcefully than ever before; the axiom being that the intensity of transborder influence is relational to the openness of the border.

An open border, it is assumed, no longer functions as a barrier but rather as a bridge connecting two sides of a border together, creating a meeting place for actors from various levels. Despite its ill effects, most notably smuggling, illegal migration, and other delinquencies, openness is often seen in a positive light; openness encourages cross-border activities, which is often envisioned to deliver growth. Increased cross-border interaction may also give rise to new complex identities along with creating stronger regional attachments across the border, improving thus the competency of the border region. Lower barrier effect may enable a border region to develop by allowing borderland dwellers, business, *inter alia*, to benefit from their new window-position. Openness creates new opportunities, but on the other hand also more competition as the border seldom opens one way only. Albeit a necessary condition, openness alone is insufficient to transform a border region from a mere transit zone to what van Geenhuizen and Ratti (2001) refer to as 'active space.' In order to generate cross-border interaction and subsequently to deliver social added value in terms of cohesion between the two sides, not only demand but also creative learning abilities and a concern for sustainability is required (*ibid.*).

Borders are subject to continuous, albeit gradual, change not only in *space* but also through *time*. Borders seldom evolve linearly from being closed to becoming open; instead the development is usually more punctuated. A border may also become permeable for some functions but remain impermeable for others. This is illustrated in border scholars' use of metaphors such as 'fuzzy borders' (Walters 2006, 142), 'smart borders' (Delanty 2006, 190), 'gated community' (Cunningham 2004), or, perhaps most appropriately, 'borders as firewalls' (Walters 2006, 151–154). The dynamics of change and the future opportunities it may bring along with it are often based on the mental construction that people have. In this respect, a border may well be open *de jure* but closed *de facto*. The same applies to interaction; it has to be perceived as mutually beneficial and favorable by actors themselves in order to maintain itself and prosper.

### **2.3.4 Reterritorialization and Regionalism**

The concept of reterritorialization (Sack 1983; Popescu 2008) provides a useful avenue to understand how territoriality plays its part in cross-border cooperation. Reterritorialization indicates a restructuring of a territory that has experienced *deterritorialization* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), an outcome of globalization whereby culture, politics, and economies become untethered to the

national territory. As a concept, reterritorialization refers to a multi-scalar process by which the state is not disappearing but merely organized differently. Central to this process has been the multiplication of extra-national channels for subnational political activity (Hooghe & Marks 1996, 73) and the consequent implementation of various CBC schemes.

Increased cross-border interaction and interdependencies require increased cross-border governance (Kramsch 2004; Brunet-Jailly 2007b, 356). In the EU this has principally taken the shape of subnational cross-border regionalism, the active promotion of the emergence and institutionalization of which became an important objective of European Union regional and cohesion policy. As summarized by Gualini (2003, 43), through the “creation of an area without internal frontiers” (Treaty on EU-TEU, Article 2) and the mainstreaming of CBC in various transnational public policy programs, cross-border regionalism extended in the 1990s from mere issues of center-periphery relationships and uneven development, towards everyday practice with its opportunities and complexities. Cross-border strategic alliances between cities, regions, and other subnational governments, as well as the initiatives of cities to promote their economic and political interests internationally, soon received also considerable research attention both in Europe and in North America (Briner 1986; Steiner & Sturn 1993; Cohn & Smith 1995; Church & Reid 1996). This was followed by a discussion of networks of NGOs as new and influential actors on a transnational scale (Mathews 1997; Zabin 1997).

The development of regional forms of cooperation across state borders has been characterized by a great variety of institutional designs and strategies; CBC frameworks consist of a myriad of systems operating at various spatial levels, involving both state and non-state and even supranational actors that contribute to regionalization processes. Cross-border regionalism did not become exclusively a matter of creating formal or semi-formal organizations, but universities, environmental groups, cultural associations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, and other non-governmental actors have also been active in promoting cooperation, even if they were not always able to develop harmonious working relationships with formal cooperation institutions. (Scott 1999, 606–608.)

The most visible form of cross-border regionalization has been the emergence of institutional cross-border regions, ‘Euroregions’ or ‘Euregions.’<sup>14</sup> These cross-border structures comprise of regional/local authorities that promote cooperation and coordination in regard to policy planning and implementation (Page & Sinclair 1993; Perkmann 2003a/b). Euroregions are technically national creations, but in practice they are often assisted by CSOs, and they receive direct financial assistance from trans- and supranational bodies such as the Council of Europe (Popescu 2008, 429). They may be seen as an example of the increasing

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<sup>14</sup> The naming convention varies in different contexts.



influence of the EU (Brenner 1999; Perkmann 2003a, 153) and a new governance structure, “post-modern challenge to a nation-state” Cronberg (2003, 235–236), in which the role of regional governance is strengthened at the expense of the nation-state.

Cannon (2005, 3–4) seeks to clarify the emergence of Euroregions with the help of two opposing approaches: the *cooperative* and the *competitive* embodied in the works of James W. Scott and Oliver Kramersch, respectively. The cooperative approach relies heavily on the role played by the EU as a framework and catalyst for cooperation; particularly through the use of cross-border and interregional community initiatives such as INTERREG. It approaches cross-border regionalism from the perspective of political geography and spatial planning and assumes a critical geopolitical sensitivity to the socio-cultural construction of space as it occurs through the jargons and vernaculars of EU institutions (Scott 2002).

Whereas Scott is interested in the development of new forms of identity through the formation of Euroregions, Kramersch’s interests lay in the spatial relationships of Euroregion participants (Cannon 2005, 4). Kramersch’s (2001) post-colonial interpretation of the mechanics of the construction of Euroregions results in seeing borderlands as sites in which the national borders and territorial state practices are brought into crisis by cross-border networks. Kramersch’s competitive school of transboundary regionalism, as it is dubbed by Cannon (2005, 4), describes the efforts of peripheral regions to level the playing field with more central regions by taking advantage of the cross-border opportunities offered by the creation of the single market and the growth of globalization.

Gualini (2003, 50) sees cross-border regionalism as part of a process of the ‘relativization of scale’ of which the most notable manifestation is the constitution of a geography of overlapping, experimental and often unstable territorial domains of governance and regulation. He asserts that cross-border governance appears as a result of processes of ‘strategic selectivity,’ which re-define the meaning of borders as historically determined institutional and socio-political constructs. That being the case, the created image of territoriality that supports governance initiatives in cross-border regions becomes a carrier of a political project. Visioning and sense-making become components of institution building practices. (Ibid.) The emergence of cross-border governance can be seen to exhibit the practices of ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1983) and ‘projecting spaces’ (Liepitz 1994) as well as an increased importance of the politics of identity (Jessop 2000).

Gualini (2003, 50) further clarifies that another major challenge facing the institutionalization of governance across borders has been caused by the “self-deceiving and quasi natural character of territorial identity – not only as a community of interests, but quasi as a community of destiny.” A sense of community might be seen as a precondition for cross-border regionalism, he

argues, but it is anything but an ideal reference for establishing concrete forms of collective action and stable patterns of governance. A region as a field of forces, Gualini (2003, 50) suggests, is just an imagined community and needs to be seen in light of the processes of its social construction or, as Paasi (1986; also 1999c, 2001) has put it, of a process of an institutionalization of a region, which entails the establishment of a territorial unit in a spatial hierarchy of territorial consciousness, i.e., in the structures of inhabitants expectations.

In some cases, as Scott (2006) justly argues, Euroregions have been used as vehicles to extend political control beyond national, and even the EU, boundaries. This comes down to what Popescu (2008, 431–432) refers to as the “conflict of territorial logics,” which functions as the driving force behind the process of cross border reterritorialization. The sovereignty based territorial logic of the nations-state competes with the border bridging territorial logic of cross border cooperation and it is at the border where this conflict is being negotiated. From the perspective of the Euroregion, in turn, the border is a barrier to be overcome, and from the supranational angle, the Euroregions are considered as having potential as territorial policy tools to be used in shaping the EU’s geopolitical imagination (Popescu 2008). There are, however, signs that the Euroregions are not mere tools but that their functioning has influenced national legal systems to be modified to facilitate CBC, encouraging small-scale cross-border economic investments as well as various social, economic, and cultural cross-border policies and events. While the Euroregions are not unified spaces outside the nation-state and the EU’s hegemony, they are territories experiencing an ongoing process of reterritorialization in a multi-scalar spatial context (Popescu 2008, 434).

## **2.4 RECONFIGURING THE INTERNATIONAL DOMAIN**

The intensity of cross-border interaction and common problems shared by the two sides has forced the governments of neighboring countries to communicate better with each other. As the Finnish-Russian case exemplifies, the number of high-level visits and international agreements have only increased. As a border separating two different countries is always, by its nature, an international one, the interaction across it has also been considered to be an *international* (or more precisely *interstate*) issue, an aspect of foreign politics to be administrated and run by the state officials in state capitals. In many cases, the capital cities with their respective decision-making institutions locate at safe distance from the actual border. This presents a problem as people’s perceptions of a subject matter tend to be more exaggerated the further away they are from the very subject in question. Similarly, in the case of the EU, decisions about the external border and interaction across it are made in Brussels from where they cannot but seem at least somewhat distant.

The very same border is often seen in a very different light at different levels. While local issues at the border often involve also national interests, the state (or EU) level actors' ability and/or will to pay attention to the local circumstances or problems is more limited. While for the local border communities the border may have always been 'intermestic' (Lowenthal 1999), for the center the border still fundamentally represents the limit of sovereignty and, hence, a separation between domestic and international politics. Even with the ENP, the fact that the EU's jurisdiction stops at its political border remains. In order to alleviate this problem, a previously unseen premium has been placed on the role of civil society cooperation in addition to the more conventional political and economic aspects, as CSOs are commonly less restricted to move back and forth across the border.

#### **2.4.1 Multilevel Governance and Paradiplomacy**

The calls for a wider understanding of power and agency in studies of global governance have been widely heard and responded to. In contrast to a world dominated by states and national governments, in a new Europe of post-national borders (see Berezin & Schain 2003), there are various spheres of authority that do not necessarily coincide with conventional territorial divisions of space. Rosenau (1999, 295) advises us "to focus on those political actors, structures, processes, and institutions that initiate, sustain, or respond to globalizing forces as they propel boundary-spanning activities and foster boundary-contracting relations." In addition to the fragmentation of power and increasingly complex *vertical* relations between actors organized at various territorial levels, there has simultaneously been increased integration and interdependency in *horizontal* relations between actors from public, private and voluntary spheres<sup>15</sup> (Rosenau 2004; 2005, 133–135). Such an accumulation of anomalies against the state centric paradigm has necessitated a transformation towards more multileveled governance.

Multilevel governance (MLG) refers to a system of continuous negotiation among governments at several territorial tiers (supranational, national, regional, and local). It entails a conception of the EU as consisting of 'overlapping competencies among multiple levels of governments and the interaction of political actors across those levels' (Marks et al. 1996, 167). This leads to a loss of the 'gate-keeping role' of the state, as the conventional representation via state executives is curtailed (Hooghe & Marks 2001a). In so doing, MLG challenges the conventional structure of centralized national authority that is exercised hierarchically by dispersing governance across multiple jurisdictions. This, Marks and Hooghe (2000) explain, is both more efficient than and normatively superior to central state monopoly. Governance must operate at multiple scales

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<sup>15</sup> He has suggested referring to these combined developments of fragmentation and integration as 'fragmeration.'

in order to capture variations in the territorial reach of policy externalities. As these externalities arise from the provision of public goods vary immensely – from planet-wide in the case of global warming to local in the case of most city services – so should the scale of governance. (Marks & Hooghe 2003.)

Multilevel governance arises from the national governments' perceived lack of capacity to solve issues and push for desired changes by acting alone. Instead, "effective power is shared, bartered, and struggled over by diverse forces and agencies at national, regional, and global levels." It is being repositioned and, to some extent, "transformed by the growing importance of other less territorially based power systems" (Held et al., 1999, 447). The notion of governance, per se, attempts to straddle the erected borders between domestic and international, between comparative politics and international relations, between public and private spheres, and between the state and civil society (Meehan 2003, 5; Aalberts 2004, 24). It is assumed to include the establishment and acceptance of a set of rules of conduct and norms that 'define practices, assign roles and guide interaction so as to grapple with collective problems' (Stokke 1997, 28). Unlike government, governance does not presuppose a material existence; it rather involves the establishment of social institutions involving state or non-state actors as a basis for cooperation (Young 1997).

Multilevel governance as a concept was introduced in the early 1990s as an attempt to move beyond the reluctant cleavage between intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism/supranationalism debate by presenting a new 'in between' (Aalberts 2004, 23–24, 27). This was done by providing a better description of the 'nature of the beast' (Risse-Kappen 1996; Jordan 2001) and shifting attention from *explanandum* to *explanans* (Jachtenfuchs 2001); i.e., away from the *process* of integration to the subject itself: the EU as a complex and *sui generis* entity (Aalberts 2004, 27).

As the discussion above suggests, debate concerning multi-level governance has focused on two directions of intergovernmental relations: 1) horizontal relations between similar governments or government organizations ('governance issues'), and 2) vertical relations ('intergovernmental relations') (Brunet-Jailly 2010, 3–4). Hooghe and Marks (2001a/b; 2003), however, note that multi-level governance is not only vertical and horizontal but also of 3) general-purpose governance (interaction of local, regional, national, international, etc. agencies of general-purpose jurisdiction) and 4) task-specific governance (interactions of actors from different societal sectors and levels within a specific policy process). Understanding these different types of multi-level governance helps us to analytically examine the development prospects of borderlands and cross-border interaction.

Multilevel governance theorists have remained remarkably silent on the specific relation between multilevel governance and state sovereignty (cf. Aalberts 2004, 39). Those who have attempted to clarify the link, such as Hooghe and Marks (2001a/b; 2003), have remained hemmed in a positivist approach

(taking sovereignty as an objective, 'hard' fact) for which reason their analysis does not account adequately for the endurance of sovereign statehood within the emerging hierarchical structures in the European arena. Aalberts (2004, 24) reasons that sovereignty must be addressed as what links the international arena to the domestic by combining independence from outside interference with authority over jurisdiction. Whereas domestic politics is organized through supremacy of the government (hierarchy), foreign politics is based on formal equality among governments (a lack of supremacy – anarchy). Thus, the modern state system on the one hand fostered a distinction between the two, while providing the exclusive terms of reference to bridge the divide on the other (Caporaso 1996; Bartelson 1995). Such an international 'living-apart-together' of states based on mutually recognized sovereignty, Aalberts (2004, 24) argues, provided also the parameters for interaction between independent states.

In contrast, MLG can be characterized as 'the world turned inside out and outside in' (Anderson 1996, 135). It challenges both the external anarchy and the internal hierarchy element of the Westphalian principle (Aalberts 2004, 25). However, this does not by any means suggest that states would not remain key actors in European politics (Keohane & Nye 1971; Walker 1994; Marks, Hooghe & Blank 1996; Tarrow 2001). Not only do they have central roles in national policy but they are also key figures in transnational actions. "To date," Aalberts (2004, 32) notes, "national state sovereignty has not disappeared to make way for a European sovereign state." She contrasts Walker's (1991, 458) claim that '[a]s a practice of states, it [sovereignty] is easily mistaken as being their essence,' by suggesting that it is not mistaken for being their essence but rather that "this 'essence' does not exist apart from practice and mutual understandings" (Aalberts 2004, 39; see Werner & de Wilde 2001, 304). Hence, "[a]s long as states accept and *act* upon each other as being sovereign, they *are*. In essence, this is what their individuality entails" (Aalberts 2004, 39, emphasis in the original).

The actors involved in CBC range from micro-level groups and individuals to supra-national organizations. The transregional frameworks for CBC, such as the EU's Northern Dimension, Marin (2006, 30) clarifies, 'devolve' the elements of actorness and responsibility for implementing common regional policies. Accordingly, Perkmann and Sum (2002, 5) suggest, European integration provides sub-state actors "opportunity structures to participate in international activities." These, they argue, include: a) the recruitment of subnational authorities as policy implementation partners on the part of supranational authorities (Balme 1996); b) an increasing role of subnational authorities in the formulation and implementation of 'their' nation-state's foreign policies ('catalytic diplomacy' see Hocking 1996) a growing density of direct international contact among subnational authorities, bypassing superior levels of government ('paradiplomacy,' see Duchacek et al. 1988; Henrikson 2000;

Keating & Hooghe 2006), in so doing creating a new class of local officials operating at the 'interface of the state and Europe' (Keating 1998, 182).

The ongoing discussions on sub-state paradiplomacy points to a growing number of regional and local authorities engaging in international cooperation (Blatter et al. 2009; Bursens & Deforche 2010; Cornago 2010; Criekemans 2010; Jeffery 2009; Rowe 2009). This process has been fuelled by the EU's influence of blurring of the distinction between what is 'international' and 'internal' politics (Hettne 1999; Joenniemi 1997), making the borders seem, to use Lowenthal's (1999) term 'intermestic,' i.e., not really international but not fully domestic either. As Perkmann (2003b, 6) identifies, this is exemplified by: 1) 'Europeanization' of local and regional governments as they are recruited as 'partners' into various EU policy fields (Goldsmith 1993), the non-central governments (NCGs) increasing role in formulating foreign and/or EU policy of nation-states (Hocking 1996) and by increasing number of NCGs in Europe involved in interregional and CBC initiatives that is increasingly paradiplomatic by its nature.

#### **2.4.2 International vs. Transnational**

Alongside states, world politics of today involves many non-state actors who interact with each other, with states, and with international organizations (Keck & Sikkink 1999, 89). The increased inclusion of international organizations and non-governmental actors to the relations between states on the one hand and the states' increased sensitivity to the decisions and actions by non-state actors as well as events in other parts of the world on the other, have brought up the need to question the accustomed theories and concepts of International Relations.

Credit for the coining the term 'transnational' is usually given to Randolph Bourne (1916), yet Karl Kaiser (1969; 1971) was among the very first IR scholars to use the concepts of transnationalism and transactional action. While mainstream IR had focused on foreign affairs between nation-states and global issues among states within the international system, Kaiser (1971, 791) urged more attention to be paid to the "direct horizontal transactions between societal actors of different nation-states, transactions which bypass the institutions of government but strongly affect their margin of maneuver; the various forms of mutual penetration of formally separate entities; and the growing number of non-state actors." When societal actors from different national systems come together for a specific issue, Kaiser (1971, 802) asserts, they form a 'transnational society,' which "cannot be understood geographically," but rather functionally; i.e., "circumscribed by the issue areas which are the object of transnational interaction."

It is, however, more common to begin one's review from the groundbreaking article by Nye and Keohane's (1971, 332) in which they clarify that whereas *interstate* interactions are "initiated and sustained entirely, or almost entirely, by governments of nation-states," *transnational* interactions "involve non-

governmental actors – individuals or organizations” (ibid.). Transnational interaction, by their definition, may involve also governments, but nongovernmental actors must play a significant role. Nye and Keohane (1971; 335), however, also diffuse the term by adding that transnational relations also “include the activities of transnational organizations, except within their home states, even when some of their activities may not directly involve movements across state boundaries.” This, they argue, suggests that “most transnational organizations remain linked primarily to one particular national society” (ibid., 336).

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that the recognition of new actors does not indicate that this would happen at the cost of state, as Keohane & Nye’s emphasis on “free-wheeling transnational interaction” seems to imply. Tarrow (2001, 3) makes a valid point by noting that social movements, transnational networks, and NGOs are not the only agents operating transnationally; states do not only have central roles in national policy but they have also always reached beyond their borders and played a key transnational role (Huntington 1973). Tarrow argues that they do so increasingly, for instance by signing international agreements, interfering in the internal lives of other (usually weaker) states, and building international institutions (ibid.). In doing so, they often aim to respond to transnational activities that states cannot control (Keohane & Nye 1974) or to provide ‘insurance’ that other states will honor their commitments (Keohane 1989). As a consequence, the dominant states in the international system have a profound effect on transnational relations, not only by controlling non-state actors but often by subsidizing them (Uvin 2000, 15), and by providing models of transnational politics from their own domestic templates (Huntington 1973).

Both Risse-Kappen (1995) and Walker (1994) question the usefulness of debate over the dominance of the state vis-à-vis non-state actors in international affairs. They suggest that it is more beneficial to seek to understand the nature of their interactions, their significance, and their mutual influence. Even so, Iwabuchi (2002, 16–17) emphasizes that the “transnational has a merit over international in that actors are not confined to the nation-state or to nationally institutionalized organizations. They may range from individuals to various (non)profitable, transnationally connected organizations and groups, and the conception of culture implied is not limited to a ‘national’ framework.

Even though Rosenau’s approach hits the mark in capturing the changes in the ontology of the post-Cold War world politics, Sending and Neumann (2006, 653) make a valid point by claiming that he has still been unable to transcend the state-centric paradigm, as Rosenau himself suggests. Instead, as Sending and Neumann note, he has rather begun to use it ‘negatively’ by analyzing to which actors power has moved from the state. Authority, by consequence, remains the analytical core of the concept of governance, which makes Rosenau’s approach seem to be founded on a zero-sum logic whereby the increased power of non-state actors indicates that the power of states has been lost.

Sending and Neumann (2006) themselves propose a more Foucauldian approach, which seeks to trace and explain the ways in which state and non-state actors perform governing tasks dynamically together. It builds on Foucault's (1991) term of 'governmentality,' a specific form of power that operates through the governed and thereby moves focus from institutions (what actors are) to practices (what actors do). Performed by different actors, these practices are aimed to shape, guide, and direct the behavior and actions of individuals and groups in particular directions. (Sending & Neumann 2006, 656–657.) The state thus no longer obtains power over non-state actors or civil society; on the contrary, political power operates through them: civil society is "redefined from a passive object of government to be acted upon into an entity that is both an object and a subject of government" (ibid., 651). This blurs the division between the state and civil society.

Vertovec (2004, 3) sums up that transnationalism broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states with the help of new technologies, especially telecommunications. Despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders – with all the laws, regulations, and national narratives that they represent – many forms of association have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a plant-spanning yet common arena of activity. He notes that whereas in some instances transnational forms and processes serve to speed-up or exacerbate historical patterns of activity, in others they represent arguable new forms of human interaction (ibid.).

### **2.4.3 Building a Transnational Space for Action**

Transnational spaces consist of persons, groups, institutions, and organizations and the set of values, norms, and commitments they have (Faist 2000, 114). They form a transnational society, which constitutes itself on a social and symbolic level not tied to geographically territory (ibid., 122). Pries (1999) rejects the 'container' approach and moves away from assuming the frames of nation states as appropriate units of analysis. He makes an analytical differentiation between the relational and absolutistic understanding of social space<sup>16</sup> (Pries 1999; see 2001; 2005). He proposes that transnational studies should focus not on transnational relations in general but on "transnational *societal units* as relatively dense and durable configurations of transnational social practices, symbols, and artefacts" (Pries 2007, 4). For the space can only be described as relational and discontinuous, the socio-spatial references of analysis have been transformed from the absolutistic geographical categories into pluri-locally situated

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<sup>16</sup> Pries (1999; 2001) suggests that while the absolutistic concept of socio-spatiality assigns a geographical 'container' to every social formation, the relational understanding of socio-spatiality presupposes the fluidity and inconsistency between social formations and their geographical references. Different types of social formations can share the same geographical container; alternatively, the selected social formation can be spread over different geographic-spatial units.



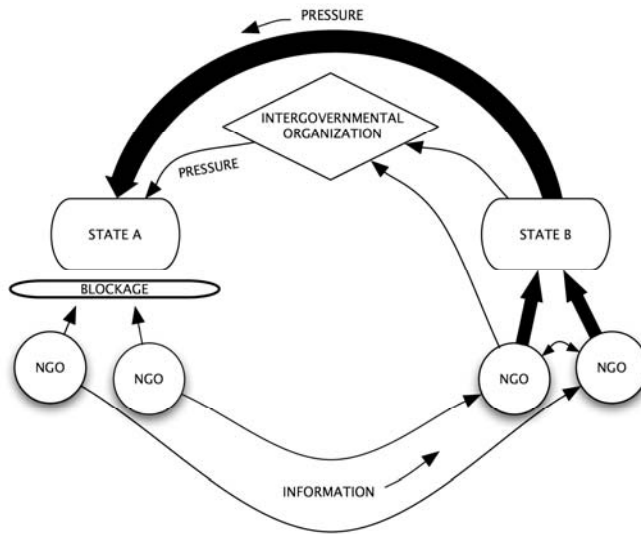
topographies produced by transnational everyday practices. The strengthening of the pluri-local and border-crossing social relations and fields create a transnational space, which spans above and between the traditional national container spaces playing out the figure of concentric circles of local, micro-regional, national, macro-regional, and global phenomena. (Pries 2007, 20.)

Keck and Sikkink (1998; 1999) argue that transnational interactions are structured in networks. A network presents a form of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange, which is 'lighter' than hierarchy and particularly apt for circumstances in which there is the need for efficient, reliable information (Powell 1990, 295–296). Despite the differences between domestic and international realms, the "network concept travels well because it stresses fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in special issue areas" (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 8). Typically such a transnational advocacy network (TAN) consists – inter alia yet seldom all at once – of research and advocacy groups, local social movements, foundations, the media, churches, unions, intergovernmental organizations, and parts of local governments, which have come together to communicate, share information and services, circulate personnel, and exchange funds in order to influence policy or address a particular issue (ibid., 9; 1999, 91–92). Building on Mitchell's (1973, 23) definition, Keck and Sikkink (1999, 89) specify that these networks fall outside of our accustomed categories as they brush aside material concerns or professional norms; instead they include those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values and a common discourse.

A transnational network is most likely to emerge when channels between domestic groups and their government are ineffective, setting into motion a 'boomerang' pattern (Figure 11). Activists may also believe that networking would help them advance their campaigns, when conferences and other contacts create arenas for forming networks (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 12). What is novel about them is their ability to mobilize information strategically to help create new issues and categories and persuade, pressurize, and gain leverage over much more powerful organizations and governments. TANs tactics include the employment of *information politics* (providing information), *symbolic politics* (framing, making sense of a situation), *leverage politics* (calling on a stronger actor, e.g., a foreign state when the affected group is weak), and *accountability politics* (holding politicians accountable for their principles and state policies) (Keck & Sikkink 1998, 16; 1999, 95).

With the help of these tactics, TANs have the most influence on issue creation and agenda setting, influencing state's discursive positions, changing institutional procedures, changing policy, and influencing state behavior (ibid., 25; 1999, 98). TANs are valuable as they create a space for negotiation. By building new links among actors in civil societies, states, and international organizations, they multiply the opportunities for dialogue and exchange. They

also make international resources available to new actors in domestic political and social struggles. In so doing, they contribute to a convergence of social and cultural norms able to support processes of regional and international integration and to help transform the practice of national sovereignty by blurring the boundaries between a state's relations with its own nationals and the recourse both citizens and states have to the international system. (Keck & Sikkink 1999, 89.)



*Figure 11. A boomerang pattern may occur when domestic NGOs blocked by the state (A) bypass it and directly seek international allies, activating a network whose other members pressure their own state (B) and a third-party organization, which in turn pressures the state (A). Adopted from Keck & Sikkink (1998, 13)*

Tarrow (2005) notes that Keck and Sikkink's boomerang model is essentially a bilateral model, which ignores other means of transnational advocacy, particularly direct action and the formation of direct access to intergovernmental organizations. Bob (2005) criticizes the model for ignoring the disparities between local partners and intense competition among them for partnership with international NGOs. Accordingly, Jordan and van Tuijl (2000, 2061) point out that while some TANs are indeed cooperative, at times "they reflect as much inequality as they are trying to undo." Networks start from a common issue, rather than shared values; weaker parties may move closer to the values of stronger parties as a means of making a bid for more resources, in so doing comprising their own key concerns (Bob 2005; Jordan & van Tuijl 2000).

Yanacopulous (2005, 94) builds upon Keck and Sikkink's model but suggests more attention be paid to variations in the strength of networks (cohesion) and resource environments in which different TANs operate. Different networks operating on different issues in different locations and time periods have different resources available to them. Uncertainty about resources, resource scarcity or competition may produce different network structures and impacts on their success. (Yanacopulous 2005, 98.) Carpenter (2007, 644, 658), in turn, would update the model by including the question of issue emergence and adaptation, which she considers as precursors to effective normative and policy change. Carpenter argues that politicking and bargaining within the network are more important determinants of issue selection than objective attributes of an issue or preexisting normative frames or pressure from media or real world events. Hertel (2006) concurs that the dynamics within TANs are more complex than recognized in the simple boomerang pattern. Members within the network may actually use contentious tactics against themselves, including blocking the campaign's progress and backdoor deals, depleting their scarce resources (*ibid.*, 265–266).

#### **2.4.4 De- and Re-rooting Transnationalism**

"[T]he terms transnational and transnationalism are used so vaguely and indistinctly that they are likely to become 'catch-all and say nothing' terms" (Pries 2008, 1). Once limited to the political economy, the study of transnational relations has been broadened to include contentious international politics (Tarrow 2001, 4). Young (1997) predicts greater power for transnational regimes consisting of non-state actors in the global governance system, whereas several others view the new world of transnational politics in more contentious, social-movement terms (Guidry et al. 2001). O'Brien et al. (2000) foresee global social movements reaching across transnational space to challenge multilateral economic institutions, in so doing producing something akin to a 'global civil society' (Wapner 1996; Kaldor 2003; Kaldor, Selchow & Moore 2012) or a 'world polity' (Boli & Thomas 1999). Tarrow (2001) rejects all of the above for they fail to adequately distinguish the difference between transnational social movements, international NGOs, and activist networks, nor do they satisfactorily specify their relations with each other or with states and international institutions.

Within this context, the issue of 'scale-jumping' has to be addressed. It refers to a process whereby civil society groups bypass their respective national levels and directly petition or lobby international institutions for support. Tarrow (2001, 15–16) explains that international institutions serve as a magnet; they offer resources, opportunities, and incentives for actors in transnational politics. They serve as a kind of a 'coral reef,' helping to form horizontal connections amongst activists with similar claims across boundaries. Beneficial as such, this leads to an obvious paradox: international institutions are created by states, yet they can

be the very arenas in which transnational contention is most likely to form against states. As international institutions, the European Commission being a prime example, seek autonomy in order to mediate among the interests of competing states, they can provide political opportunities for weak domestic social actors (ibid.; Imig & Tarrow 2001). As internationalization proceeds, horizontal and vertical relations between state and non-state actors operating at international, national, and subnational levels generate networks of formal and informal institutions. They may pose threats to sovereignty, but more importantly they open up “an opportunity space into which domestic actors can move, encounter others like themselves, and form coalitions that transcend their borders” (Tarrow 2005, 25).

The determination to reject the old nation-bounded research perspective, which necessitated thinking in “clearly differentiated oppositions” has led to a new “both/and” logic of methodological cosmopolitanism (Beck & Sznaider 2006, 18). This allows simultaneous examination of similar phenomena from different analytical angles or levels (e.g., local, national, transnational, and global), and includes the idea of plurality of personal identities and social roles across nation state borders (ibid.). Even if undoubtedly applicable, one must, however, be aware of its flipside. Taking all in at once may easily lead research to become all-inclusive and decontextualized. Even though transnational flows discount a nationally separated border both from above and below, they concede a “more locally contextualized manner to the interconnections and asymmetries that are promoted by the multi-directional flow” (Iwabuchi 2002, 17).

Transnationalism is surely a process that is evolving within different societal levels and involving a diverse set of actors. Collectively, they produce a transnational operational space that is evidently more virtual than it is geographically bound. While such nonterritorial entities formed by transnational CSO networks have certainly weakened state sovereignty, we should, however, not jump from here directly to globalization and to what has been referred to as a global civil society. Tarrow (2005) makes an often-neglected argument that “even if globalization is commonly credited for inciting transnational activism, it is not the source of transnational activities.” Instead, Tarrow suggests, it is necessary to focus on internationalism as structures through which globalization is mediated, and its relation to transnational collective action: “while globalization provides incentives and themes for transnational activism, it is internationalism that offers a framework, a set of focal points, and a structure of opportunities for transnational activists” (Tarrow 2005, 3).

Tarrow (2005, 42) notifies that, for the most part, transnational actors remain ‘rooted’ in local conditions, concerns and the “social networks..., resources, experiences, and opportunities that place provides them.” They have the ability to “shift their activities among levels, taking advantage of the expanded nodes of opportunity of a complex international society,” but most are still committed to and embedded in their localities, particularly national or state-level

conditions, which ultimately shape their approaches to international opportunities (ibid., 43). Similarly, Prokkola (2011) has revealed that while programs, such as INTERREG (see subsection 4.4.1), emphasize the development of functional, harmonious cross-border regions, at the local level where these programs are implemented it is the state border which determines the norms and spatial organization of the CBC practices, whereby also cross-border networks are sparse compared with their national counterparts.

Tarrow (2005, 5, 9, 33) identifies “six processes of transnational contention”; i.e., ways in which activists approach internationalism in pursuit of their interests, that vary in their degree of local-global integration: 1) global framing, 2) internalization, 3) diffusion, 4) scale shift, 5) externalization, and 6) coalition forming. The first two, *global framing* and *internalization*, are the least integrated and denote the strategic co-optation of global themes or ideas in essentially domestic conflicts and the broader influence of international pressures on national arenas, respectively. In the middle, *diffusion* implies cross-border replication of claims and tactics, while *scale-shift* represents attempts to ‘move’ claims from one site or level to another. Finally, the greatest integration occurs in *externalization* and in *coalition forming*, which comprise the projection of claims vertically and horizontally, respectively, to international institutions and groups with common cause. (Ibid.)

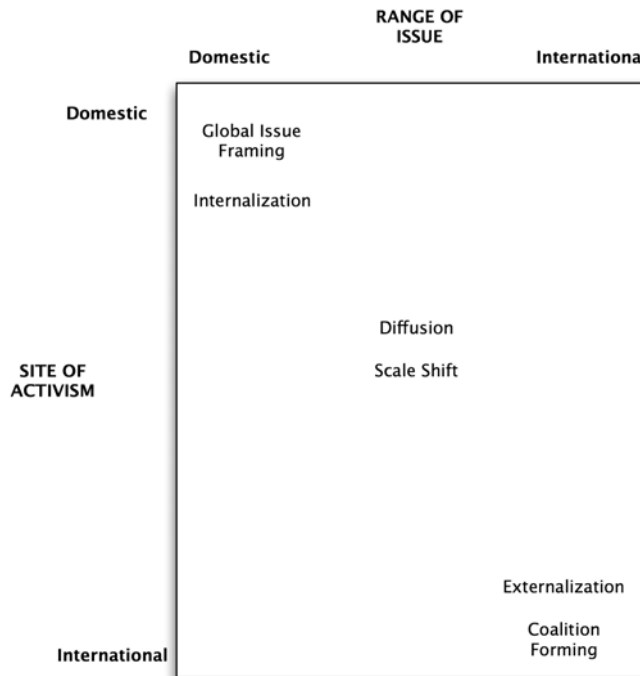


Figure 12. Six processes of transnational contention. Adopted from Tarrow (2005, 33)

Tarrow (2005, 33) offers a two-dimensional grid reproduced in Figure 12, whereby the x-axis “consists of the degree to which a particular issue is of primarily domestic or international importance” and the y-axis “the extent to which [an issue] brings activists out of their domestic context into transnational space.” These six processes are complex, and in practice they seldom occur alone or can be found in pure form. “Transnational activism,” he concludes, “... is more like a series of waves that lap on an international beach, retreating repeatedly into domestic seas but leaving incremental changes on the shore” (ibid., 219).

## **2.5 SYNOPSIS: BORDERS AS COMPLEX CONSTRUCTIONS**

To appreciate a how border can be eroded, we must first understand how they came to be. Scott (2012) has explained how the focus of border studies has developed in relation to more general discursive shifts and predominant geopolitical visions. According to Hegelian/Darwinian geodeterministic understanding, represented famously by Ratzel and Maull, borders were determined by the physical and cultural environment. A ‘Good’ border corresponded with physical conditions, and anti-structural borders were depicted as ‘bad’ borders. Bloch, Febvre, Vidal de la Blache, and Reclus among others, emphasized, in turn, historical geography and anthropology by arguing that borders had been willfully created by society. Whereas for Vidal de la Blache (1913) geography was “a science of places and not a science of men,” Reclus (1982) maintained that geography was “nothing but history in space”. It was, however, French Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre, who really expounded the concept of the (social) production of space. In his famous *La Production de L’Espace* (1974), Lefebvre’s argues that space is a social product, or a complex social construction, which affects spatial practices and perceptions. The argument can be seen as a major catalyst in shifting the research perspective from space, and its borders, to the processes of their production.

The more scientific take advanced, for instance, by Christaller, Lösch, and Hägerstrand saw borders as elements of the physics and geometry of social relations. The neo-Kantian functionalists, most notably Hartshorne, Kristof, and Jones, presented borders as functions of historical evolution and events that exhibited essential and necessary characteristics for the consolidation of the state. While Marxian/Critical understanding has depicted borders as systemic elements of capitalist accumulation and concomitant forms of stateness and territorial control, the most recent approach, put forth for example by Paasi, Balibar, and van Houtum has maintained that borders are complex social constructions in terms of socio-cultural contention, exercise of socio-political, and cultural power, as well as manifestations of irrational rationalities, fear, exclusion, or paranoia.

The idealistic linkage between the concepts of territory, citizenship, and identity has gone too long inherently unquestioned. Such linkage has been actively maintained by cartographic projections, in which bright colors are habitually used to help the user find the borders between different state territories – to create an illusion that social processes would unfold neatly within these borders. Instead of merely reflecting reality, these maps have been more successful in influencing the realities of people. In addition to the public at large, the arrangement of political maps has also led to very static and fixed studies of geography.

Multifaceted understanding of the political, social, and symbolic significance of borders is needed to interpret the broad socio-political transformations that are taking place in Europe. Even if the truth is absolute, perceptions of it are always relative. Therefore, alleged facts, which are nothing but perceptions of truth, are also relative. Thus, the manner in which the EU is being constituted as a political community, a model of regional cooperation, and a geopolitical actor is not only dependent on the ways in which state borders are framed politically and exploited pragmatically but above all on the ways they are perceived in cultural-geographical terms. In a complex globalized climate, such endeavors come, however, with challenges. They require balance between understandings of borders as symbolic representations of cultural affinity, familiarity, and ‘otherness,’ as well as familiarization with the ideational representations of Europe vis-à-vis its neighbors and political consequences of EU border regimes and CBC policies. They also require balancing between a more open regional economic space and securitization policies.

Borders are about power relations; the geopolitically weaker and stronger state see the border that separates them from different perspectives. But borders are also more than that. To follow Lösch’s (1954, 196–200) thinking, borders are like rivers that separate their banks out of proportion to their actual width. However, unlike rivers, borders are not located only at the very border (line) but have spread, if not everywhere then at least broadly in society. As Paasi (1996; 1999c, 84) maintains, borders are therefore one part of the ‘discursive landscape’ of social power that exists in social practices and relations. This is also why borders do not self-evidently disappear when some practices change.

A borderland is an area, where the impact of a border is being most profoundly felt. Notwithstanding their context specificity, the dynamics of between two parallel borderlands can be understood through illustrative models. These suggest, *inter alia*, that cross-border systems are complex, multilayered, and multilevel structures. The capacity of these structures to stretch across the border depends not only upon the border’s characteristics, but also upon the actors’ ability to successfully adapt to external stimuli. The social, legal, economic, political, and cultural aspects form their own layers, which

together produce a complex interaction-structure. The border may seem different for each of the layers, which explains the multiple simultaneous meanings of borders; i.e., why the border may seem open for some and closed to others.

Border change also has temporal aspect. As the geopolitical climate relaxes, borderlands evolve towards increased convergence. As the barrier effect of a border diminishes, a more intensive interaction across the border may take place. The process of integration remains, however, associated with the different roles that the border plays. While some borders (such as the internal EU borders) are being transcended and becoming zones of integration, others (such as the EU external border) get beefed up and are developing into zones of transition. Higher levels of integration may thus not automatically lead to greater overall convergence.

An unequal border setting, such as the Finnish-Russia border, is characterized not only by various asymmetries but also complementarities that, in turn, generate a variety of cross-border linkages. Increased linkages are not only a result of successful policies and practices, but also an essential prerequisite for future development. The less integrated a borderland is, the less need there is for government to integrate their policies. On the other hand, the more integrated the borderland is due to similar culture, strong cross-border clout and market forces, the more need there also is for the governments to integrate their policies.

The global era has altered the understanding of power and agency. The frame of a nation-state is too small for solving big problems and too large to solving the small ones (Touraine 2000). The state is not, however, disappearing but merely being organized differently. State sovereignty and authority has been weakened upwards, downwards, and sideways. There are increased negotiations not just among governments at several territorial tiers but also between the various sectors of society. The sub-state paradiplomacy has been fuelled by the EU's influence of blurring the distinction between what is 'international' and 'internal' politics. The world politics of today involve many non-state actors who interact with each other, with states, and with international organizations, at times skipping a level or two in between. When taken together, these revolutionary changes have led to a transition from international (border confirming) to transnational (border eroding) relations, implying, as a result, a clear shift away from state-centeredness.

During the last two decades, cross-border regionalism has been promoted as the means to manage increased cross-border interaction and support increased cross-border governance in the EU-Europe. The so formed transnational operational space is, however, evidently more virtual than it is geographically bound. Even so, most transnational actors remain 'rooted' in their local conditions and structures, which ultimately shape their approaches to international opportunities. In order to move beyond debate over the role of



various actors and sectors in international affair and better understand how they are interlinked and what is their mutual influence, we must understand and define what is meant by state and civil society. This is be explored in the following section.

# 3 Understanding Civil Society

In addition to understanding borders and their impact on CBC, it is also essential to scrutinize thoroughly the second key concept of this study, civil society, when exploring the potential for the new civic neighborhood. This must be done as what is understood by it defines largely what can be expected of it. The basic premise here is that what is meant by civil society remains open to diverse interpretations (Cohen & Arato 1992; Kaldor 2003; Wiarda 2003; Edwards 2004). Its definitions have changed over time, but even in its current use the concept has various connotations in different countries and languages (Kocka 2004, 65; Alapuro 2008, 72). Certainly, civil society is a product of the 'West,' but that tells us little as there are undoubtedly a number of civil society models in the West, the French differing from the British and the American conception being quite different from that of, say, Germany.

Because of the load, indeterminacy, and the context dependency of the concept, analyzing CSOs' role in a cross-border setting is quite a task. In order to get to the root of the issue, one is forced to deal with some of the major divisions in social and cultural studies, and trace how the utilization of different traditions and models have led to different manifestations of civil society. As the following aims to show, the frame of interpretation, and the related assumptions about civil society, varies greatly depending on the tradition that is followed and the conception or model that is applied.

CBC practices of CSOs are interesting to study from this perspective, as it is these very practices through which actors representing different traditions meet and face each other. At the Finnish-Russian border, the Nordic – to the extent that Finnish civil society can be seen to represent it – Russian, and the European interpretations meet and intermesh. Given the recent emphasis the EU has placed upon civil society also in CBC context, it is also important to ponder whose conception of civil society is being promoted in conjunction to the EU's neighborhood building. Even though in principle many would agree that civil society is needed and that it can make a difference in a cross-border context, in practice such a transnational, even binational, civil society often descends into difficulties because of the different expectations, resources, and abilities the partners from different societal contexts may have.

In the following, I first outline the historical premises for the formation of civil society as to show how much the understanding of the concept has evolved

during the last centuries. This is then followed by more detailed discussion on the current usage of the concept; i.e., the subject that this study focuses on. Before turning into the geographical variations of the current use of the civil society concept, section 3.3. briefly reviews the connection between civil society and nationalism. The cross-border setting reveals how different historical trajectories have led to different understandings of nationalism, which have led to different understandings of what is a nation, what is a society, and what is the relationship between the two. Different understandings of nationalism also influence how borders, and cross-border interaction and integration for that matter, are perceived. The chapter concludes with a synopsis about state-society relations in the Finnish context and my own interpretation of civil society as an arena.

### **3.1 DEBATING CIVIL SOCIETY: CONTESTED CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES**

#### **3.1.1 Classical Civil Society as Partnership of Individuals**

Even though the contemporary understanding of civil society refers commonly to the public sphere, as set apart from the state and the market, it has not always been so. Many of early European political thinkers saw civil society as a synonym for a type of political association whose members are subject to laws, which ensure peaceful order and good government (Keane 1989, xvi). The origins of the concept of civil society trace back to the communal life in the *polis*, the Greek city-state (as separate from the *oikos*, the household). Socrates (c. 469 BC–399 BC) proposed that ‘dialectic,’ a form of public argument to uncover truth, was imperative to ensure ‘civility,’ in contrast to barbarity, in the *polis* and ‘good life’ of the people (O’Brien 1999). This rational dialogue was to test the individual’s arguments against societal arguments in order to find the proper balance between the needs of the two (Setianto 2007). For Socrates’ prized student, Plato (c. 437 BC–347 BC), the ideal state was a society that was just and allowed people to dedicate themselves to the common good and practice civic virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice (Ehrenberg 1999, 5–6).

Aristotle’s (384 BC–322 BC) was the first to use the term *koinonía politiké*, a political association/community/society/partnership<sup>17</sup>. For him, *koinonía politiké* was an independent and self-sufficient association of free, equal, and like-minded persons united by an *ethos*, a common set of norms and values approved and honored by its members (Barker 1946, book 1; see Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, books VIII–IX & *Politics*, book 1). As Cohen and Arato (1992,

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<sup>17</sup> Numerous different words have been used in different translations. *Koinonía* (κοινωνία), a derivative of *koinos* (‘common’), means in the literal sense of a community of sharing in common.

84) bring forth, *koinonía politiké* was, however, only a *koinonía* among many; the term *koinonía* was used to designate all forms and sizes of human association, the members of which were held together by something they had in common and could share with each other. However, while all associations have an end, the political association has the highest: it channels the collective pursuits to serve the common goal of attaining a good society.

Whereas today a political association or a community is often understood as being a state, for Aristotle the state was a foreign concept. For him, *koinonía politiké* designated above all a politically united community, a city as a political 'partnership' of individuals coming together not for the sake of social life but rather for the sake of good actions and in order to attain self-sufficiency (Barker 1946, 5, 120 [1253a, 1280b, 1281a]). Aristotle thus saw that contiguity and consanguinity, as well as the social life arising from these ties, are the necessary basis but that the essence is cooperation in a common scheme of good life, and the ultimate form of such co-operating is the *polis*, of which individuals are dependent on. Individuals are, by nature, political animals (*zoon politicon*), which, when perfected, are "the best of animals" and political because we are "furnished" with capabilities such as speech, which allows for communication and the ability to perceive and determine what is just (Barker 1946, 7 [1253a]). Thanks to these capacities, human beings can be habituated to virtue, which can be best done through participation in the communal life in the *polis*, the civil society.

Cicero (106–43 BC) referred to a civilized political community, which was the equivalent of *res publica* (commonwealth), 'an assemblage (of men) associated by a common acknowledgment of right and by a community of interests' (Cicero 1966). It includes groups, institutions, and individuals united by laws and institutions, which organize their activities in such a way as to create a flexible equilibrium among them. For justice and reason are rooted in man's natural 'social spirit,' such organization induced individuals to forego a measure of self-interest in the interest of the common good (Ehrenberg 1999; Islamoglu 2001, 1891).

### 3.1.2 Community with Virtues Derived from Natural Laws

The first known translation of *koinonía politiké* was by Willem van Moerbeke who used *communicatio politica* and *civilis communitas* as translations of *koinonía politiké* in approximately 1260. It was not, however, until the fifteenth century that Leonardo Bruni, a Florentine humanist, challenged the earlier translation with *societas civilis*, a term that would famously enter into all European languages. (Colas 1997, 27–28; Hallberg & Wittrock 2006, 30.)

In the sixteenth century, Jean Bodin (1530–1596) built upon Aristotle by arguing that the state is a natural fact: "The state [*république* or *res publica*] is the civil society that can exist on its own without associations, and other bodies, but it cannot do so without family" (Bodin in Bobbio 1989, 35; see Bodin 1576, III, 7).

Bodin claimed that there are various forms of the political ethos (*mores*), which affect the shaping of various forms of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy (Butigan 1998). Bodin's main idea was to create an ethos of pacification, peaceful coexistence, and cooperation between citizens, which would secure the stability of public goods and institutions even in a society lacking consensus on its highest values. In Bodin's eyes, the best way to guarantee this was the absolute sovereignty of state power. (Rhonheimer 2005, 21.)

The Aristotelian logic of a society as a work of nature was not challenged until the seventeenth century, when most notably Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and John Locke (1632–1704) argued that societies are *formed* as the *result* of a social contract between human beings. Hobbes believed that in their original state of nature people lived in a society of “all against all” and had to compete for scarce resources. This, he argues in *Leviathan* (Chapter 14), creates a war in which every person is governed by his own reason and has a natural right to do anything to preserve his own liberty or safety (Hobbes 1909, 99). As constant war and insecurity allowed no development and made the life “solitary, poore [*sic*], nasty, brutish, and short,” Hobbes saw that people needed agreements based on the natural precepts and the general rules of reason<sup>18</sup> amongst each other in order to create peace and, hence, improve their lives (*ibid.*, 97, 100 [Chapter 14]).

Only through such mutual contracts between individuals, the state of nature could be left behind and the formation of a common power, the *Leviathan*, the civil government, the state that is, became possible. Whereas in the state of nature individuals fought against each other, in civil society the impartial state maintained peace in a community of people acting in a civic manner (Hobbes 1909, 105–109; Setianto 2007). The motive to come together was not that people were naturally inclined to do so, as Aristotle had asserted, but because they were driven by the fear of coercive common power (Hobbes 1909, 101, 105). The existence of such a power, the state, thus created a condition in which the state of nature gave way to civil society; i.e., it became rational for people to act in a civil manner and cooperate rather than fight for their vested interest.

More recently, in his reappraisal of Hobbes' political theory, Skinner (1996) suggests that Hobbes actually repudiated the entire classical theory of eloquence and its ideal of the *vir civilis*, the good citizen, the virtuous, wise, rational man. Instead, according to Skinner's (1996, 291) interpretation, Hobbes had claimed that reason unaided by eloquence would be sufficient to persuade others of the truths of civil science, that eloquent men would have not sustained but

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<sup>18</sup> That every man ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it, and secondly that a man be willing, when others are so too, to give up his right to all things in order to attain peace and security, and be contented with so much liberty against others as he would allow other to obtain against himself (Hobbes 1909, 100 [Chapter 14]).

destroyed civil life, and that the most important duties of citizenship are grounded in the private sphere.

In addition to the *vertical* relationship between the state and the people, Hobbes suggested there to be a various horizontal relationships among the people, which formed civil society. In the *societas civilis cum imperio*<sup>19</sup> typical to the Age of Absolutism, these horizontal links were, however, waved aside by competition among various bearers of authority and political power (nobility, church, estates, cities, etc.) dependent and marginalized by the state, which eventually led to the state to establish itself as the sole sovereign power over an increasingly disempowered *societas civilis sine imperio* (Holenstein 2009, 16).

Whereas Hobbes wanted all lawmaking, both judicial and executive powers, to be exercised in a single body (a parliament or ideally a monarch) and to have authority even over the individual's religious doctrines and beliefs, Locke made a separation between the legislative and executive powers in order to prevent the power of government from threatening the rights of the society (O'Brien 1999; see Locke 1965, §§ 143–144, 150, 159). Locke's ideas were grounded in the doctrine of a God-given Natural Law, which posits that individual citizens have certain natural rights as human beings that cannot be taken away from them (Locke 1965, §§ 86–87; see Laslett 1960, 341–342).

Locke promoted the civic virtue of tolerance, and advocated that individuals be allowed to meet together, form associations, and enter into relations of their choice – the government being a unitary outgrowth of the freedom to form an association. He saw that communities are formed when people unite in order to further their, and their community's, interests. By agreeing to form a legislature, people give their individual power up to the community. Even though Locke, just as Hobbes, did not generally hold that the state and civil society would be separate realms but rather to co-exist, in *Two Treaties of Government* (Chapter XIX) he does, however, inconsistently assert that the dissolution of legislative power does not necessarily mean the end of society, whereas if society is dissolved its government cannot remain (see Cohen & Arato 1992, 88).

### **3.1.3 Enlightenment Ideal and the Epistemological Centrality of Morality and Reason**

A number of thinkers contributed to the advancement of the concept of civil society during the Age of Enlightenment. Human beings began to be seen as rational and capable of shaping their own destiny without an absolute authority exerting control over them. Montesquieu (1689–1755) developed the distinction between a nonpolitical civil society (*l'état civile*) and the state (*l'état politique*) further. Largely under Bodin's influence, Montesquieu came to believe in the "rule of law" within a civil society. Whereas as governments use laws to

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<sup>19</sup> The distinction between *societas civilis sine imperio* and *societas civilis cum imperio* originates from German historian August Ludwig von Schloetzer (1735–1809).

influence and steer human conduct, civil society uses *moeurs* (nonlegal internalized restraints established by custom), *manières* (conduct not regulated by law or religion (Montesquieu 1949; Richter 1998, 39–40). Rousseau (1712–1778) contrasted Locke’s idea of expanding individual rights by arguing that it ignored common goods and would ultimately lead to a war among people. Instead he proposed<sup>20</sup> a new social order that would maintain harmony and provide equality and freedom for all: the State, as a supreme power, would govern, enact laws, and define the common good (Colás 2002), whereas civil liberty emerges when all people are willing to abide by the general will in their believe that it will lead to common good.

It was first and foremost the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers David Hume (1711–1776), Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), and Adam Smith (1723–1790), who began to refer to civil society clearly as a network of human relationships separate from, or even opposed to, the State. The distinction, according to Ferguson (1995), was necessitated by the rise of state despotism, i.e., by the state’s endeavor to ‘cover’ society by forcing its way through it ‘from above’ (Holenstein 2009, 16). Hume suggested that people set their goals on the basis of morality but use reason in achieving them<sup>21</sup>. By using reason to follow their self-interests in an enlightened manner, people would then eventually achieve the interests of society as a whole. While rejecting the social contract theory, Ferguson presented civil society as a developed and redefined society, whereby civil liberties were safeguarded by the government and a certain level of social, political, and particularly economic (commercial) advancement<sup>22</sup> has been reached. He saw civil society as opposed to a rude nation (Ferguson 1966; Pietrzyk 2001) and believed that through governmental policies, education, gradual knowledge, and development, rude society might be transformed into civil society (Setianto 2007).

Smith agrees with Ferguson that the binding principle of civil society is a private morality predicated on public recognition by one’s peers, joined through bonds of moral sentiment (Smith 1976). He laid the foundation for civil society as an economic society separate from, but protected by, the State and mediated by a social order constituted by private property, contracts, and ‘free’ exchanges of labor (Smith 1993, 36; Mclean 1997). For Smith, civil society was not only a refuge from the economic realm but also a wellspring of economic abilities. In Smith’s view, liberal commercial society both required and encouraged civic virtue (Setianto 2007). Inspiration by Ferguson and Smith, the firm distinction between the civil society, family, and the state became the key of the German conception of civil society later advanced by Hegel.

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<sup>20</sup> See *The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right* (1762).

<sup>21</sup> See *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739).

<sup>22</sup> See *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767).

Whereas Smith understood individuals to be mainly motivated by self-interest, for Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) this was an inadequate basis upon which to construct a moral order because it is not grounded in a sense of mutual obligation and respect (Calabrese 2004, 318). Instead, for Kant, civil society meant that the ends sought by one should not be won at the expense of the wellbeing of another (Kant 1997, 28). For him, the public sphere was the place where the private interests of members of civil society can be reconciled with the universal moral obligations, and that individuals need to accept a political authority (the State) in order to achieve a condition of justice and rights (Kant 1991, 54–55). Accordingly, the main purpose of civil society is to force human beings to respect one another's rights (Setianto 2007). Kant was ahead of his time by suggesting that civil society would not need to be nation-bound but rather universal. What he, however, found problematic was that establishing a "perfect civil constitution," which could administer justice universally is "subordinate to the problem of law-governed external relationship with other states, and cannot be solved unless the latter is also solved" (Kant 1991, 45–47).

### 3.1.4 Classical Modernity and the Distinction between State and Civil Society

Whereas the classical thinkers emphasized the identity of the state and society, during the modern era the two began to be seen as independent entities. G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831), the leading thinker of the Romanticism, saw human needs, the satisfaction of individual interests, and private property as the defining features of civil society. He treated civil society as a "system of needs" in which individuals reconcile their particular private interests with social demands and expectations, which are ultimately mediated by the universal state (Hegel 1991).

For Hegel, the significance of civil society is that individuals find satisfaction only in relation to other free individuals who are not family members but rather independent persons (Peddle 2000, 118–120). Hegel argued that civil society is well suited to balancing the diverse range of human needs and interests but that the state, as the highest form of ethical life, gives order to the system of needs by ensuring the stability of private property, social class, and the division of labor. Being the realm of capitalist interests, civil society was not always necessarily civil and without conflict. The state's task was thus to correct the faults of civil society. In short, a well functioning civil society cannot exist without the guidance of the state.

Hegel's modern understanding of civil society changed the meaning of civil society entirely: whereas as for Kant '*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*' and '*Staat*' had been synonyms, for Hegel they became antonyms (Zaleski 2008, 264)<sup>23</sup>. Hegel used the German term '*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*' (bourgeois society) to denote civil society as 'civilian society'; i.e., a sphere of economic and social arrangements

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<sup>23</sup> See Philosophy of Right (1821).



regulated by civil code rather than being directly dependent upon political state itself (Honderich 2005, 143, 367–368). In contrast to the two preceding *dyadic* models<sup>24</sup>, Hegel provided a *triadic* scheme, in which civil society as an intermediate moment of ethicity (i.e., being ethical) became situated between the macro-community of state and the micro-community of the family (Bobbio 1989, 31)<sup>25</sup>. Whereas both the family and state had their own well-defined categories, Hegel's civil society was a fuzzier concept including practically everything that was left outside the two.

Hegel's followers split based on their political leanings. To the right, Hegel's theory led to a liberal distinction between political society and civil society encompassing all non-state aspects of society, including culture, society, and politics (Zaleski 2008, 263–265). Alexis de Tocqueville followed Hegel's perception of social reality in general terms by distinguishing between political society and civil society but contested Hegel by putting weight on the system of civilian and political associations as a counterbalance to both liberal individualism and centralization of the state. According to his liberal stance, the effectiveness of civil society as an "independent eye of society" depends upon its organizational form (Tocqueville 1969). Building on Montesquieu's template, Tocqueville used the term *mores* to denote the totality of intellectual and moral state of a nation, the totality of customs, public opinion, and beliefs, which he saw as having a greater influence upon democracy than laws and the physical environment (ibid.).

On the left, Hegel's ideas became the foundation for Karl Marx's (1818–1883) civil society as an economic base in contrast to the 'superstructure' of the political society, the state (Marx 1977). Marx gave civil society a more politically charged name, 'bourgeois society,' as for him it was a product of an historical subject, the bourgeois, which legitimates its struggles against the absolutist state in the language of the rights of man and citizen, which in reality serves only the particular interests of the bourgeois (Richter 1998, 33; Hefner 2003, 153). He rejected the positive role of the state put forth by Hegel as he saw that, under capitalism, the state functions as a repressive apparatus, an instrument of class domination, and as subject to conditions from civil society (Bobbio 1989, 27–29; Marx 1970). He agreed with Hegel that civil society was where the real action is, yet he conceived it to be so robustly shaped by class antagonism that it could not ensure the common good among competing interests (Brown 2001, 74). In a bourgeois society, people treat one another as a means to their own ends and, in so doing, are isolated from other people (Anheier, Glasius & Kaldor 2001, 12–13).

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<sup>24</sup> The Aristotelian dichotomy between family and state and the Hobbesian natural law model based the dichotomy between state and nature/civil society.

<sup>25</sup> See Philosophy of Right §§ 182-256 (1820) and Outlines of the Philosophy of Law (1821).

Gramsci (1971) followed Hegel in distinguishing civil society from the State, but preferred the Marxian thought that the historical development of society occurred in civil society and not in the State. However, whereas Marx had considered civil society as being coterminous with the socio-economic base of the state, Gramsci located it in the political superstructure and made it the locus of the formation of ideological power. For him, civil society was a sphere wherein ideological apparatuses operate and whose task it was to exercise hegemony and through hegemony to obtain consensus (Bobbio 1989, 29). While in Marx's writings civil society is portrayed as the terrain of individual egotism, Gramsci described civil society as a sphere of both the individual and organizations with the potential of rational self-regulation and freedom (see Bottomore 1983).

Gramsci's interpretation of civil society consists of all sorts of social and cultural interactions (most notably the church, but also schools, associations, trade unions, and other cultural institutions) separate from economic interactions. It encompasses the set of ideological-cultural relations, which occupies the so-called ethic-political moment that confronts and dominates the economic moment. Even though Gramsci portrays civil society as the arena, separate from state and market, he specifies that the distinction between the state and civil society is only methodological for even a policy of non-intervention like *laissez faire* is established by the state itself (Gramsci 1971, 160).

He presents a fully developed civil society as a trench system able to resist the 'incursions' of economic crises and to protect the state (Gramsci 1971, 238). The state, narrowly conceived as government, is protected by hegemony organized in civil society while the coercive state apparatus fortifies the hegemony of the dominant class. However, while Gramsci accepts a role for the state in developing civil society and in shaping public opinion, he warns against perpetuating state worship (ibid. 268). Civil society, he came to believe, was the reason why a communist revolution had been much easier to have in Russia than in Italy. Whereas "[i]n Russia the state was everything..., in the West, there was a proper relationship between state and society and, and when the state trembled, a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed" (ibid., 238).

As Fleming (2000) notes, Gramsci's work fuelled twentieth-century analysts to add three crucial components to the understanding of civil society. Firstly, it was understood that civil society was more than a mere transmitter of established practices or beliefs; it formed a site of social contestation, in which collective identities, ethical values, action-orienting norms, meaning alliances were forged. Secondly, the dynamic, creative side of civil society became emphasized in the formation on informal networks, initiatives, and social movements, which transcended the framework of formal associations. Thirdly, largely thanks to Habermas (1991), civil society became seen as 'public sphere,' a coercion-free arena for discussion and mutual learning, detached from the systematizing effects of the state and the economy, where people come together

to form a common discourse, the public, and in doing so compel the state to legitimate itself before public opinion (ibid.). Habermas' stance assumes a democratic deficit, that the government is not fully representative of the people, whereby civil society takes on a dual function of ensuring that those who exercise power do not abuse it and of transforming the system to regenerate more democratic practices (Habermas 1996, 365–368).

### **3.1.5 Postmodern Civil Society as Basis of Democracy**

Just as the French revolution had fuelled an adjustment of the actual meaning of the concept of civil society in the early nineteenth century, so did the emergence of political opposition to the authoritarian regimes in the former Soviet bloc in the late 1980s. While civil society had been in limbo for decades, the concept was suddenly revived in the early 1990s as its role in democracy, democratization, and development became understood (Jensen & Miszlivetz 2005, 3). Since then, globalization and the related formation of a 'global civil society' (Kaldor 2003) have been the leading force behind the civil society development. The 1990s did not witness only a multiplication of NGOs but also a globalization of New Social Movements (NSMs). Kumar (2000) explains that even though the NSMs had linked people together to bring about a social change at the regional or national level already since the mid-1960s, with the help of global CSOs or international NGOs (INGOs), these movements were able to establish cross-border linkages and/or operate at international level, becoming thus mega-movements or trans-national social movements (TSMs).

Along with NSMs, postmodernism has brought along, *inter alia*, a heavy emphasis on transformation theory (Collard & Law 1989), organization theory (Greenwood & Hinings 1996), social capital (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1995), political opportunity structures (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995), and resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald 1987). Furthermore, New Public Management (Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Borins 1994; Hughes 1998) became an increasingly dominant paradigm for public sector reform. In Finland, the economic recession of the early 1990s hoisted CSOs to function as a partial substitute of threatened public services. In a broader context, the 'Washington Consensus,' which combined neo-liberal economic strategy with an emphasis on liberal representative democracy (Edwards & Hulme 1995), of the early 1990s portrayed the state more as a problem than a solution, which in turn had a significant influence on theoretical debate. The new conditionality presumed by the related funding mechanism, portrayed civil society as a sort of panacea, the 'magic bullet' (ibid.), replacing the state's service provision and social care (Zaleski 2006).

The Tocquevillean line of thought, which placed citizens' associations in the core of civil society and thus to democracy, was famously refreshed by Putnam (1993; 1995), who stressed the production and accumulation of social capital, which he saw as an essential element of good performance of any society, by

arguing that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. His basic thesis was not, however, altogether new as social capital had already been elaborated on by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), both of whom stressed the less normative aspect of civil society, the importance of civic participation and the various social benefits generated by it. Nevertheless, Putnam popularized its utilization and fuelled further interest on the topic. By forming association – the coming together of people for common purpose, the line of thought goes, teaches the “habits of the heart” (Bellah et al. 1996) of social behavior and binds individual citizens to an idea of unity larger than selfish desires, thus making both a self-conscious and active political society and a vibrant civil society functioning independently from the state. Social participation and networking, in turn, are ultimately grounded on the notion of social trust; a willingness to put one’s trust in others.

### **3.2 CURRENT UNDERSTANDING: DEFINING THE RESEARCH SUBJECT**

It is universally talked about in tones that suggest it is a Great Good, but for some people it presents a problem: what on earth is it? Unless you know, how can you tell if you would want to join it? (John Grimond, in *The Economist's 'The World in 2002'*)

While the twentieth century, in aggregate, was about the neglect and even the systematic destruction of civil society through statist ideologies, the twenty-first century has so far allowed its rediscovery and restoration. Such a civic renaissance was an outcome of fresh outpouring of social entrepreneurship and civic reinvention, lost faith in centralized systems of government, and increased efficiency and credibility of CSOs, as well as a renewed quest for values and interest in volunteerism (Eberly & Streeter 2002, 3). Also, increased new and inherited wealth has made unprecedented resources available for charitable investment (Walters 1997, 2; Havens & Schervish 1999, 1). As a result, civil society has become understood as to form an essential mediating structure not only because it stands as a buffer between the individual and the large impersonal structures of the state and the market but also because it plays a crucial role in cultivating citizenship as well as generating and maintaining values in society. Without civil society, “values become another function of the megastructures, most notably the state” (Berger & Neuhaus 1977, 2).

That being said, the growth of the anti-globalization movement and obvious bumps on road towards democracy, for instance in Russia, caused the universality and legitimacy of civil society to be questioned. The neo-liberal Washington Consensus became replaced by a ‘post-Washington Consensus’ that now acknowledged that the state does indeed play an important role in democratic development (Öniş & Şenses 2005). As apparent particularly in times

of challenging crisis, state-centered policies became again very en vogue and civil society relegated to the role of a supporting actor at best (Freise, Pyykkönen & Vaidelyte 2010).

### 3.2.1 Plurality of Civil Society

Civil society is equally traditional and modern (Tilmans 2008, 3; Kocka 2007, 85–86). As described above, its meaning has changed on a number of occasions (Khilnani 2001, 17). Despite its opposite origins, in everyday contemporary practice civil society is assumed to form the antithesis of the state. If civil society is defined in opposition to the state then it is difficult to provide a positive definition of ‘civil society’ because it is a question of listing everything that has been left over after limiting the sphere of state (Bobbio 1989, 22, 40). It is, however, even more important to acknowledge, as Giner (1995, 304) notes, that “[t]here is no such thing as *the* classical [conception of civil society]. There is a Lockean interpretation, but there is also a Hegelian one; and then there are Hobbesian, Marxian and Gramscian theories of it.”

Wiarda (2003, 137) makes the valid observation that in theory civil society sounds wonderful, yet in reality it is often less than that. Civil society cannot be seen as plainly a magic formula that will inevitably lead to democratic and socially just outcomes and save the world. It can be seen to include also less civil actors, operations and objectives of which are, for instance, disintegrative, clientelistic, unrepresentative or otherwise biased, divorced from power realities, or even illegal. It is beneficial where it works; yet it has also been conceived in statist and corporatist terms or as an arena of elitist competition rather than self-sustaining cooperation underpinned by a strong popular base. (Ibid.)

Civil society is a product whose origins are inherently and distinctly Western (Warkentin 2001, 11; Kocka 2004, 76). Western, particularly Western European and North American, urban societies are regarded to have been better suited to the development of a stable pluralist civil society than others, yet even there the development might have occurred as an ‘unintended outcome’ of the efforts of statemakers as argued by Tilly (1975, 633). Be it as it may, this type of ethnocentric account overlooks the great diversity of the concept of civil society, and fails to see its different manifestations in different (non-Westerns) societies (see Kaviraj & Khilnani 2001).

Being fundamentally Western ought not to be taken to suggest that civil society cannot exist elsewhere. Rather an analysis has to acknowledge and address this bias (Warkentin 2001). It has become palpable that transplanting a workable model from its original context to another with dissimilar history, economy, societal structure, and political culture is not an unproblematic task. Recognizing that civil society does indeed mean different things to different people provides us with the keys to move forward for it moves us beyond broad generalizations and normative thinking.

But as the concept is Western, we need to specify what, then, is actually meant by it. In general terms, 'Western' is used to refer to an emphasis on individualism, absence of feudal and semifeudal restraints, freedom of association, liberty, participatory and pluralist politics, along with middle-class, entrepreneurial, and free-market economics (Wiarda 2003, 13). Most frequently, it refers to the Montesquieuan understanding of civil society as a multitude of independent citizens' associations that mediate between the individual and the state and, if needed, defend the freedom of the individual against usurpation by the state. The logic stressing the civil society's associational core and the development of individual meaning and identity was then promoted and developed further by Tocqueville and fuelled the contemporary communitarian theorist, such as Etzioni, Bellah, Taylor, and Putnam, in their critique to the presentation of humans as atomistic individuals put forth by Locke, Hobbes, and more recently Rawls (1971).

Edwards (2004) suggests that in addition to civil society as 'associational life' or as 'the good society,' its function as the 'public sphere,' as the arena for argument and deliberation as well as institutional collaboration, ought not to be forgotten either. Acknowledging that all of these three schools of thought have something to offer, yet none of them provide complete and convincing picture of civil society by themselves, Edwards (2004) call for integrating these different perspectives into a mutually supportive framework. After all, in all three schools civil society is an essentially collective, creative, and value-based action, providing thus an essential counterweight to individualism, cynicism, and overbearing influence of state authority (ibid.).

### **3.2.2 A Sector of its Own?**

Civil society is not as clearly defined or a demarcated arena of its own as are those surrounding the state apparatus or business life (Ilmonen 2005, 8). In Finland, the term third sector has been broadly used in reference to the public sector and the private sector. For Etzioni (1973, 318), who is believed to have coined the term, the third sector was separate from and balancing the sectors of the state and the market. He defined the third sector to consist of private organizations that are efficient, societally effective, hold an entrepreneurial spirit of a business firm, and are able to combine all these with the common good orientation of the state and its public administration.

Such a flexible view, in which the boundaries of civil society are stretched to incorporate a range of activities under auspices of the state and market, has recently gained more prominence. It became popular among scholars focusing on public policy and administration, and particularly among those interested in understanding the trajectory of the development of welfare states. Evers (1995) explains that the third sector forms a kind of tension field, where organizations are simultaneously influenced by state policies and legislations, the values and practices of private business, the culture of civil society and by needs and

contributions that come from informal family and community life. While the sectors at the corners of the societal welfare triangle are defined by the prevalence of profit (market), redistribution (state), or personal responsibility (family and community), the third sector holds a constantly developing intermediary space at the cutting point of the three by representing and balancing a plural bundle of norms and values (Figure 13).

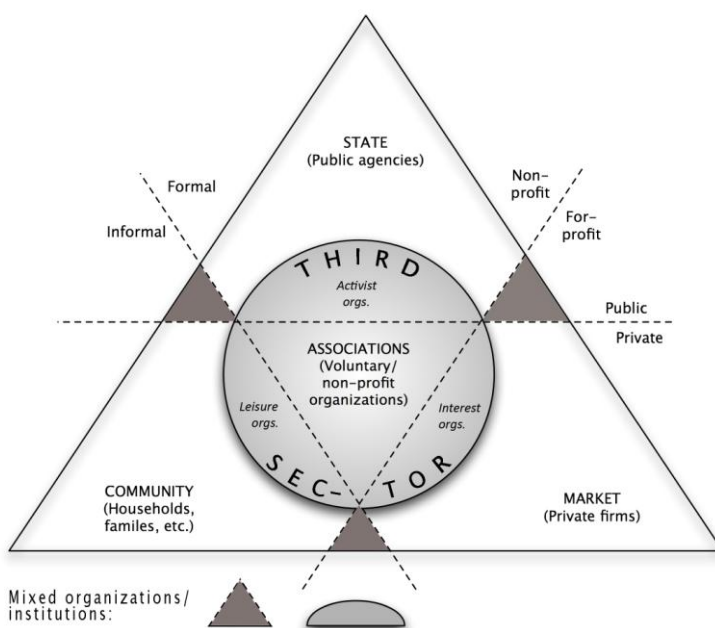


Figure 13. A conceptual diagram of the third sector. Modified from (Evers 1991; 1995); Pestoff (1991; 1998); Evers & Laville (2004) and van der Meer, te Grotenhuis & Scheepers (2009)

The institutions, organizations, and social spaces of the state, the economy and the community, respectively, constitute the borders and interfaces of the third sector (Jessop 2007). However, due to the extensive amount of convergence and blurring of sector boundaries, the sectoral arrangement has to, however, be understood as an artificial construct, not as an institutional reality (Kramer 2004). The shifts from government to governance, from national to sub-national, and from welfare to workfare are increasingly enacted in multi-sectoral partnerships (Skelcher et al. 2005) for local policy development and implementation.

Van Til (2000) rejects sectoral thinking and prefers the concept of 'third space.' Nevertheless, also he agrees that this social arena for networking and communication is not separate from society's major institutions but exists in

dynamic interdependence with them, linking individuals in their home bases of family and community to the larger governmental and economic structures within which all citizens, workers, and consumers learn to find their way in modern society. This requires an individual to have motivation for working together and the ability to interact and tolerate cultural diversities. He further underlines that the nature of the work and its results are more important than its form or structure; if an activity is based on voluntary spirit, it can occur in or between any types of organizations. (Ibid.)

### **3.2.3 Social Economy**

Social economy (SE) has become a major institution of civil society, contributing to the organization of its associative fabric and the development of participative democracy but also of a potent economic and societal actor. In Finland, the terms 'social economy' and 'social enterprise' have, however, remained fairly unknown and unused, even though the basic principles, as well as the range of organizations and activities associated with them are older than the Finnish nation itself.

Immonen (2006) has explained that in Finland the social economy is recognized mostly only by well-informed experts. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is real and it affects many people by offering alternative ways of enterprise and employment, generating social and economic welfare, and providing counterweight to the globalizing market economy. In the Finnish context, social economy is defined as economic activity carried out by cooperatives, mutual societies, associations or foundations in an effort to enhance socially and financially sustainable welfare among their members and the surrounding society through democratic cooperation. The problem with this definition, however, is that on conceptual terms, associations are more closely linked to the third sector and cooperatives to the private sector. (Ibid.)

Poutiainen (2009) argues that until recently Finnish academia has been more tightly connected to sociology and other social sciences than to economics – largely due to the reforms of the welfare state aimed at increasing cost efficiency of managing public resources. Unlike in other European countries where SE is defined as citizen-based economy, in Finland it has been long seen as economics of social policy (economics of the welfare state). This in turn has not only created discrepancies and delayed activities to develop social economic research at universities, but it has also had a negative impact on the development of the social economy as an area of social policy in practice. Be it as it may, it is clear that during the last 15 years, the position of all juridical forms of social economy have been strengthened and the economic activity carried on by associations, in particular, has increased (Immonen 2006). The Act on Social Enterprises that came into force on January 1, 2004 was, nevertheless, somewhat unclear in relation to the position of a social enterprise. Consequently, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy renewed the Act in May 2007.



The concept of social enterprise is new and relatively few companies have been registered so far. According to the statistics of the Employment and the Economy, there were 168 registered Social Enterprises in Finland in year 2012 (July). Recognition as a social enterprise is open to any company in the company register that can show that 30 per cent or more of its employees are disadvantaged and/or long-term unemployed. Generally at least 50 per cent of their revenue comes from business (Helanen 2003; Pättiniemi 2004; 2006).

As an activity, the SE is historically linked to grassroots associations and cooperatives, which make up its backbone (see European Economic and Social Committee 2007, 7). In general, the *social* economy refers to the part of the economy proper that is neither private nor public but consists of constituted organizations, with voluntary members, undertaking activities for the greater good of local communities and marginalized groups, a possible surplus of which is used for the good of the community of members or for society. (Social Economy Lisburn 2012.) It can be further broken down into three sub-sectors:

- 1) Community sector (usually small, local, modestly funded, dependent on voluntary effort)
- 2) Voluntary sector (formal, independent, not-for-profit and strong volunteer input),
- 3) Social enterprise sector (businesses with primarily social objectives, surpluses principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community)

In this view, the SE is interpreted in the broader sense of civil economy and constitutes a key component of the broader economy and not a parallel or niche market or a dependent sector (Restakis 2006, 10). According to the prominent definition of SE, it includes those organizations that are animated by the principle of reciprocity for the pursuit of mutual economic or social goals, often through social control of capital (ibid., 12).

What is noteworthy is that this definition includes also those for-profit businesses that share their surpluses and benefits with their members (and/or the wider community) in a collectively owned structure. However, the definition would exclude those non-profit and voluntary organizations that are entirely dependent on grants or donations (Restakis 2006, 12). Its applicability stems from the fact that it recognizes the central role of reciprocal (non-commercial and non-monetary) transactions as economic activities in their own right (Ninacs & Toye 2002). The various organization of the social economy can thus be seen as a sort of hybrid enterprises that perform a blend of commercial activities (sale of goods and services), non-commercial but monetary activities (public funding, donations), and non-monetary activities (volunteer work) to achieve their goals (Restakis 2006, 9).

The conceptual delimitation of SE has been presented in the Charter of Principles of the Social Economy promoted by the European Standing Conference of Co-operatives, Mutual Societies, Associations and Foundations (CEP-CMAF). The principles in question are 1) the primacy of the individual and the social objective over capital, 2) voluntary and open membership, 3) democratic control by the membership, 4) the combination of interests of members/users and/or the general interest, 5) the defense and application of the principle of solidarity and responsibility, 6) autonomous management and independence from public authorities, and 7) most of the surpluses have to be used in pursuit of sustainable development objectives, services of interest to members or the general interest.

In its review on the evolution of Social Economy in Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)<sup>26</sup>, which interestingly proclaims itself as a “bridge between Europe and *organized* civil society” [emphasis added], acknowledges that the concept of the SE is closely linked to the concepts of social cohesion, local and regional development, innovation, and employment, but also with the project of building Europe (European Economic and Social Committee 2007, 29–33). SE has demonstrated its capacity to increase the levels of social cohesion by complementing and, above all, paving the way for public action. The SE has contributed to the social and work integration of clearly disadvantaged people and geographical areas, but it has also increased the entire society’s democratic culture, boosted its degree of social participation, and managed to give a voice and negotiating capability to social groups previously excluded from the economic process and from the process of drafting and applying public policies.

The SE also constitutes a strategic motor for local and regional development by contributing to endogenous economic development, restoring competitiveness to extensive areas and facilitating their integration at the national and international level as well as rectifying significant spatial imbalances. The SE’s capacity for innovation stems from its direct contact with the broader society, which endows it with a special capacity for detecting new needs, channeling them into the public administration and traditional profit-making private enterprises, and, where appropriate, coming up with creative innovatory responses. Furthermore, as expressly recognized in the EU’s Lisbon Strategy itself the SE has a crucial role play in its employment policy.

“To reach the levels of welfare and progress that the ‘Western’ countries of the European Union enjoy,” the EESC (2007, 33) explains, “the European social and economic model has needed the contribution of the SE, which has proved capable of occupying a space that balances economic and social aspects, mediates between public institutions and civil society and evens out social and

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<sup>26</sup> The European Economic and Social Committee is a consultative body of the European Union. The report is available at: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.publications.83>

economic imbalances in a plural society and economy.” High hopes are also placed upon the development in the neighborhood countries, the economies and societies of which are going through lengthy processes of transition from Communist planning systems to regulated market economies. It is perceived that the institutions of SE are “experiencing a gradual rediscovery and expansion in tandem with the development of civil society, social movements and trade unions in these countries.” Developing this ‘third pillar’ is deemed as important for the post-socialist societies, “if they wish to follow the European model of development and achieve fast, adequate integration into the European social model” (European Economic and Social Committee 2007, 3).

These days, social economy enterprises and organizations are interlinked with the various bodies of the EU. At the European level, Social Economy Europe, the EU-level representative institution for the social economy, represents and promotes social economy in Europe since 2000<sup>27</sup>. The European Parliament’s ‘Social Economy Intergroup’ provides a forum for a dialogue between all social economy players and members of the European Parliament. The social economy is also represented in the European Economic and Social Committee through the ‘Social Economy Category’ that brings together members from cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, foundations, and NGOs with social aims. (Social Economy Europe 2012)

As Restakis (2006, 5) notes, there are two broad currents of thought in the debate on the defining elements of the social economy. The first is commonly traced back to the French sociologist Frédéric Le Play, who saw the social economy as functioning *apart* from the market, which he interpreted to mean the economic sector that was populated by capitalist firms and the state (Figure 14). For him, the social economy was a niche, a sort of a parallel market that was also dependent on the state for its survival. It was needed in order to create an institutional order to correct the undesired effects of the market. The objective that Le Play was pursuing was not welfare or wealth, but social peace, that is the reconciliation of morality and economics through the moralization of individual behavior (see Azam 2003). In practice, Le Play’s idea thus was not to guarantee welfare (top-down) but arrive to that by enforcing the fulfillment of employers’ obligations.

According to Restakis (2006, 6), the second current reaches back to the idea of the civil economy, which is conceptualized as a *dimension* of the market. In this view, the market is not identified exclusively with private enterprise but rather as an open domain in which the state, the commercial sector, and the social economy all play a role. Within this current, the recent neo-liberal attitudes that direct and restrict the social economy to utilitarian and economic purposes have brought the term into closer association with the operations of the conventional

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<sup>27</sup> Until January 2008, Social Economy Europe was called the European Standing Conference of Cooperatives, Mutual societies, Associations and Foundations.

market. The apparent outcome of this has been the equation of the social economy with ‘social enterprises’ understood as revenue generating, non-profit activities that are meant to serve social or community purposes. (Ibid., 8.)

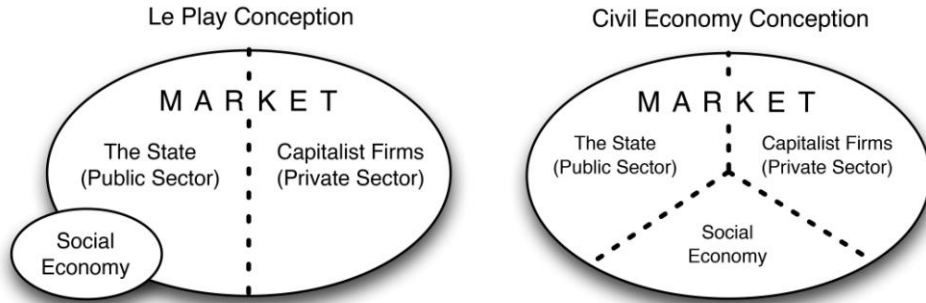


Figure 14. Two conceptions of social economy vis-à-vis market. Modified from Restakis (2006, 6)

As Restakis (2006, 12) and Lewis (2006, 3) emphasize, the three sectors of the overall market are distinct above all in that the institutions within them operate on different economic principles (Figure 15). The first sector is the domain of governments (local, regional, national, and bodies such as the EU and the UN) and as such its central economic goal of is greater equality. The economic principle central to the private sector is, in turn, efficiency, while social economists are working towards the reinsertion of social goals, reciprocity/solidarity into economic thinking and decision-making. Even though distinct, these sectors are not hermetically sealed off from each other; there are incalculable transfers and borrowings from one to the other. Moreover, certain organizations operate at the boundaries of these distinctions. (Restakis 2006, 12; Lewis 2006, 3.)

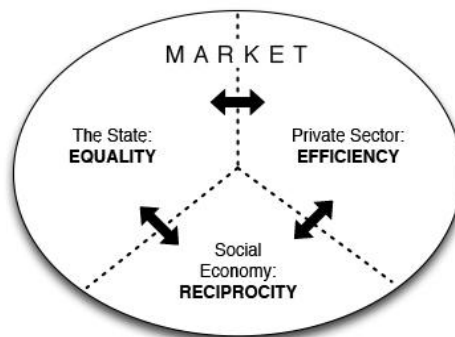


Figure 15. Three sectors of the overall economy and their respective economic principles

Pearce (2003) prefers to use the word 'system' instead of a 'sector,' as the latter implies to him a homogeneous economy that can be divided in to three parts. Otherwise his vision parallels closely with Restakis' ideas. He argues there to be three main ways of thinking about how to manage our economic life, each sector essentially stemming from a different way of managing the economy, from a different mode of production (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Three sectors of the overall economy and their respective way of managing the economy/ modes of production. Modified from Pearce (2003) & Lewis (2006)

The first sector/system is about redistribution and planning, whereby it has come to be viewed by many as bureaucratic, paternalistic, centralized, and inefficient, and as such counterproductive to profit-driven and competitive private sector seeking to maximize financial returns to individual owners. The third sector/system is about citizens taking action to meet and satisfy needs themselves and working together in some collaborative way to do this (Pearce 2003, 26). The values of mutuality, self-help, caring for people and the environment, are given higher priority than maximizing profits (Lewis 2006, 4).

### 3.2.4 Who's Making Who?

It is hard to define civil society without defining its relationship with state. The expansion of the EU into the East and the formulation of the new European Neighborhood Policy and the EU-Russia strategic partnership, has brought into focus a centuries-old interface between western notions of the autonomy of civil society from the state and Eastern traditions of absolutist states where 'civil society' is extremely weak and dominated by an all-powerful state (O'Dowd & Dimitrova 2006). The EU's borderland between Finland and Russia provides a fascinating context in which to study how the 'Western' and 'Eastern' understandings of state and civil society meet, overlap, and fuse. Chambers and Kopstein (2008) have made an important move beyond the binary traditional division by suggesting that civil society does not have to be either against or in

support of the state, but depending on the context it may also be apart, in dialogue or partnership with, or even beyond the state. As a result, civil societies, Miller et al. (2009) propose, can be depicted as being contentious, manipulated, disciplined, competitive and interest-oriented, repressed, or normative.

All that is certain is that civil society is not a stand-alone concept. As the discussion above shows, it is paired historically with the concept of the state – they are not just linked but help define each other. Bobbio (1989, 42) presents that the two processes of the state-making-society and society-making-state are contradictory. The completion of the former would lead to a state without society, i.e., the totalitarian state and the accomplishment of the latter to society without the state, i.e., the extinction of the state. As they are indeed contradictory, the two processes are unattainable. Society and state act as two necessary moments that are separate but contiguous, distinct but interdependent, internal articulations of the social system as a whole (Bobbio 1989, 44).

The weaker the layer of civic association, the stronger the vertical relationship of the individual and the state becomes – a relationship characterized not by voluntary action and cooperation but by power, authority, and dependence (Eberly & Streeter 2002, 8). The reciprocal, interdependent, and constantly realigning nature civil society-state interaction is well explained by Putnam's (1993) two-level game theory. It admits a reciprocal interaction between the domestic and the international arenas affecting the foreign policy construction in a given country. At the national level, the domestic groups pressure the government to adopt politics favorable to their interest and the politicians seek for power while constructing these coalitions. At the international level, the national government seeks to maximize its own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of the actions developed abroad. (Ibid., 436.)

Increased transnationalism on the one hand and international agreements and coalitions on the other can make the game more complex. In the EU context, for instance, the two-level game model can be inserted in the relation between the member states and their domestically organized civil society. As an example, when the Council of the EU discusses, say, environmental issues, the Finnish Minister for the Environment has to decide over certain issues on the behalf of the entire government of Finland. Because he is answerable to his national parliament, the decision he makes cannot be based only on high politics and has to be accepted internally by the Finnish Parliament. As the Parliament represents the citizens, it is under direct pressure from an organized civil society, which in turn must be empowered by knowledge and public support; the greater the public support, so too is the influence of CSOs (Eigen 1999, 5; Demidov & Panfilova 2001, 4). On the other hand, Putnam's (1993) model can be applied in the relation between the European level organized civil society and

the EU. Civil society no longer acts only at the national level but has become more transnational and asserted its role as an independent actor in the world society. As the EU increases its supranational mechanisms, it also increases the importance of organized civil society in the EU multi-level governance system.

The term 'civil society organization' is here used to refer to a wide range of citizens' associations or organizations that exists to provide benefits, services, or political influence to specific groups within society. Voluntary associations are the basic building blocks of the Western notions of civil society. As a consequence, civil society is a sphere of free public debate (Setianto 2007). Voluntary associations are a "special kind of social institution," Newton (2001, 206) sums up, "because they are neither family, nor work, nor state: we are born to families; we cannot avoid the state; and most of us have to work." NGOs are the most institutionalized, and thus hierarchical, groups of civil society (Costoya 2007, 15), but they are only one element among many that fall under the umbrella of civil society (Ghaus-Pasha 2004). In addition of constituting a vast array of associations, including trade unions, professional associations, religious groups, cultural and sports groups, and traditional associations, some of which are informal and not registered (Clayton, Oakley & Taylor 2000, 2), CSOs include, inter alia, also social movements, networks, and plateaus (Costoya 2007). The strength of the label 'civil society organization' is that it positions the sector as its own entity, without relying on language used for the government or business sectors (Zaleski 2006).

### **3.2.5 Strengths and Weaknesses of Civil Society**

CSO encompass a number of qualities, which emphasize their aptitude for CBC. In relative terms, CSOs are flexible, people-led, participatory, inherently cooperative, innovative, reformist, but nevertheless realist and, as a result, able to react local issues quickly and effectively. Ghaus-Pasha (2004, 3) as well as Batliwala and Brown (2006, 7) underline that CSOs play an important role filling the gaps and deficit created by inefficient governance and a market economy. They further good governance by ways of policy analysis and advocacy, by responding to new challenges through social innovation and as vehicles for identifying issues and articulating their value implications. The 'softer,' human capital related activities many CSOs are involved with are the least costly and are the easiest to launch in the beginning, and at the same time, these activities are the most suitable to open minds up, to increase intercultural competencies and defeat mental barriers – which are among the major obstacles for CBC in the Finnish-Russian case (Németh et al. 2012, 216).

CSOs' ability to organize into sprawling multi-organizational collaborative networks, Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2001, 1) suggest, is the main reason behind the migration of power from the traditional, hierarchical state actors to non-state actors. They have a capability to contribute to balancing power differences by mobilizing their constituencies and other concerned citizens, some of which

otherwise marginal, to participate in public affairs and enable them to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms, and democratic practices, improving, in so doing, the wellbeing of their own communities. Furthermore, CSOs use expertise and information to catalyze the setting of new standards and norms for powerful actors, the regulation and monitoring of state performance and the action, and the behavior and compliance of public officials, as well as the building of transnational social capital – in the form of bonds of trust and collaboration that can be used for subsequent initiatives. (Ghaus-Pasha 2004, 3; Batliwala & Brown 2006, 7.)

Especially their ability to work directly with their constituents, operate on and foster the grassroots level has been recognized. Given that many are locally based, they are better in tune with local needs than more formal, state-led entities. In their work with local communities, CSOs often utilize innovative strategies in identifying solutions that require fewer funds than state programs (Ghaus-Pasha 2004). Apart from being less costly, CSOs tend also to be less bureaucratic as well as less constrained by long-term strategies than are official governmental programs. Lastly, while the statist approach gives power to a few, CSOs empower and assign various tasks to great many (He 1999).

Due to these abilities, CSOs have taken up issues that have fallen off the public radar, from the delivery of social services and relief and rehabilitation work to education, training, and capacity building that empower community members to become active participants of their growth (Ghaus-Pasha 2004). Backer (2003) adds data collection and monitoring, representation and advocacy, facilitation and consultation, and acknowledgment and compensation, as well as, quite frankly, the formation of parallel or substitute authority to the primary roles taken by civil societies.

The EU provides a good example of how the questions of representational legitimacy have persistently challenged the authority of the global governance process. In this context, CSOs operating in multilateral arenas are often held up as the only legitimate institutional actors capable of representing and managing distributional inequalities of a highly fractured information society (Chakravartty 2007, 297–298). CSOs produce solutions where both markets and governments have failed (Hansmann 1987; Weisbrod 1988) and, in so doing, fill the gap in representational legitimacy left both by state actors and their corporate counterparts, both in theory and practice (Kaldor 2003, O'Brien et al. 2000). As the ideal of democratic participation and accountability in decision making proceeds, civil society will continue to increase their roles (Kim 2007, 68).

There are also a number of weaknesses that the civil society sector continues to share. Not all CSOs live up to democratic standards; competition for limited funds and other resources can generate a lack of openness, unhealthy competition or even conflict, and prevent coalitions. In some cases, organizations have been forced to expand their work outside of their mandate in



order to sustain themselves or modify their agenda to better fit with the funding priorities of the donors instead of answering to the local needs (Ghaus-Pasha 2004). As many organizations live from project to project, their sustainability can be weak, and their capacity to execute long-term projects compromised.

In addition of being poorly funded or over-dependent on (foreign) donors, at least the largest, and thus also the most influential, are often concentrated in the large centers of population and, in some cases, may become elitist and thus distant from the population. This is the most apparent in the ex-socialist countries where civil society is still, in particular through a Western prism, relatively weak. As Raik (2006, 11; see Henderson 2002, 142) argues, it is common in these cases that the membership base of the CSOs remains narrow, the general attitude towards them skeptical, and their ability to communicate with the public and to lobby and influence decision-making remains ineffective. The constant lack of resources refers not just to funds but skilled activists as well. Cooperation between the state and civil society is hampered by mutual distrust and by the lack of tradition and skills on both sides to work together (Raik 2006, 12).

### **3.3 GEOGRAPHY OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

The conceptualizations of civil society do not vary only historically but also geographically. The often used, yet oversimplified, binary division between the Western 'liberal' model and the Eastern 'statist' understandings of civil society may easily obscure more than it illuminates. It overlooks the undeniable fact that stark differences exist between different countries even within these traditions. Indeed, civil society is not one but many. It is a normative, loaded concept, which has to be understood in a context specific manner. Recognizing this provides us with the keys to move forward for it moves us beyond false universals and entrenched thinking (Edwards 2004).

The role of nationalism must also be addressed here. It is interesting to notice how different models of nationalism have led to very different outcomes. While nationalism tends to be particularly potent and problematic where diverse institutions of civil society are lacking (Calhoun 1993a), nationalism and civil society are not always mutually antagonistic. The post-Soviet countries provide an illuminating case in point. Here, the varying historical trajectories of state and nation-building have had a major impact on civil society development as some have supported the establishment of democratic regimes and civic mobilization, while others have fed the institutionalization of authoritarian systems and the regression of free civic action.

But nationalism relates to this study also more broadly. As was already mentioned, a failure to acknowledge the historical perspective on state and nation formation leads to a disfigured perspective on the present and to the

incapacity to recognize the distinctiveness and context specificity of contemporary state borders. There is, however, no single grand theorist of nationalism nor is it possible to create a single comprehensive theory of nationalism. Certainly, different understandings of nationalism lead to different understandings of not just what is a nation, and hence what is trans-, inter/ or supranational, but also question what, then, is a border and how, and by whom, can it be de- or reconstructed. Borders, and cross-border – *transnational* – interaction and integration for that matter, can be seen in very different lights depending on whether the premise is based on the traditional idea of an ethnic bond, the modernist vision of a state and a nation, or through the prism of either Western civic nationalism or Eastern ethnic nationalism (see Calhoun 2007). It is at the border where these different conceptions as well as actors who hail from them meet. In the following, I first discuss the different understandings of nationalism and then provide some examples on how the different understandings have allowed the formation of different civil society models.

### 3.3.1 State, Nation and Nationalisms

A nation is a society united by a delusion about its ancestry and by common hatred of its neighbours. (William Ralph Inge, English author & Anglican prelate (1860–1954))

The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and the subsequent system of sovereign states gave rise to a new type of a political ideology that dovetailed a group of individuals with a nation. These sovereign states formed the basis for nation-states, which soon became the principal way to divide the Earth's surface. The American and French Revolutions in the late eighteenth century fueled nationalistic thought further. Thus, the emergence of nation-states was associated with the breakthrough of democracy and the victory of popular sovereignty, grounded in the principle that the legitimacy of the state is created and sustained by the will or consent of its people. Borders were then needed to mark a particular nation separate from other nations (Edensor 2002, 37). The resultant bounded space became to be regarded as to enclose not just a definable population subject to a hegemonic administration, but also a particular and separate culture (*ibid.*), contributing thus to the overly popular supposition that 'nation' would be equivalent to 'society' (see Billig 1995, 53; Urry 2000, 6).

As an ideology, nationalism has been and remains controversial. Impartial accounts are rare as strong emotions are aroused when it is discussed. Most definitions are broad. Simply put, they purport that a particular national culture and interests are superior to any other. Even so, no single, universal theory can explain it all. As Calhoun (1997a, 123) notes, much of the contents and specific orientation of various nationalisms is determined by historically distinct cultural traditions, the creative actions of leaders, and contingent situations within the

international world order. As the historical record is diverse, Hall (1999, 1) argues, so too must our concepts be.

Early theories of nationalism were based on the “myth of national brotherhood and ethnic unity” (McNeill 1986, 56). The existence and boundaries of a nation were regarded as the natural derivative of ethnicity and geography. The ethnic nationalist ideal was, however, smeared in the course of two world wars, in particular due to Nazi totalitarianism (Smith 2001, 131). Instead of accepting that the nation has always been there, the theorists began to see the concept a nation as a socially constructed phenomenon.

In 1944, Hans Kohn (1944; see 1955) pioneered an influential articulation of the distinction between more “liberal, civic Western” and “illiberal, ethnic Eastern” nationalism. Kohn’s reference to geography has proven to be overly black-and-white; different conceptions of nationalism have competed for influence within particular countries in both the East and the West (Kymlicka 1996; Auer 1997; Smith 2000, 25; Kuzio 2002, 20). Yet, the other half of it – distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism – has remained present and been built upon within academic, governmental, and journalistic discourses (Plamenatz 1973; Ignatieff 1993; Brubaker 1995; 2004; Hutchinson 2004).

Civic nationalism was built on the self-government traditions of city bourgeoisie, the Enlightenment liberal values of reason, and universalist humanism. It aimed at liberating the individual and creating a more open, pluralistic, democratic, outward-looking society, whereby nationhood became defined by common citizenship. A nation consists of those subscribing to its political creed regardless of their ethnicity, race, color, religion, gender, or language; i.e., who feels they belong to the same community. In principle, a civic nation is a self-governing and democratic community of equal, rights-bearing citizens united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values. (Plamenatz 1973, Ignatieff 1993, 6.) In civic nationalism, the government respects the law, rather than exists above it. It derives political legitimacy from the active participation of its citizenry, the ‘will of the people,’ as theorized originally by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the eighteenth century. Simply put, “[t]he idea is that civic nationalism is exercised in those areas where there exists a civil society” (Nikolas 1999, 1).

Ethnic nationalism in turn has been commonly deemed to be an obstacle to genuinely democratic and civil society. It creates a more authoritarian, closed, inward-looking, particularistic, and xenophobic society, with more inclusive communal views of the self (Vincent 1997, 15). According to the ethnic nationalist reading, nationhood is defined by pre-existing ethnic characteristics: “an individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen,” because “it is the nationalist community that defines the individual; not the individual who defines the national community” (Ignatieff 1993, 7–8). It is thus not the state that creates the nation but the nation that creates the state.

It is crucial to keep in mind, as Nikolas (1999, 10) has justly pointed out, that even though a 'definitional antithesis' does exist, it should not lead to the "set of analytical clichés [*sic*]," which deny 'civic' nations of ethnic virtues and vice versa. Some reject the rationale of the dichotomy in the first place. According to Kuzio's (2002, 20) understanding, also "[a]ll civic states, whether in the West or East, are based on ethno-cultural core(s)" (see also Smith 1986; Brown 1999; Nieguth 1999). Others, in turn, purport that there has been a development from earlier forms of ethnic nationalism towards civic forms of nationalism (Kymlicka 2001, 282–283).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the discussion focused increasingly on nation-building and carried a strong conceptual link to modernization theories of development (Hippler 2004). In the context of the East-West conflict and the Cold War competition, nation-building constituted a western strategy for containing socialism and helping the newly independent countries acquire the institutions, infrastructure, economy, and social cohesion of more advanced nations (Atwood 1994, 11). As suggested by Ardrey's (1966) widely popularized thesis, humans were deemed as 'territorial animals' with an inherent tendency to form social groups<sup>28</sup>. With the aim of nation-building, social cohesion became increasingly associated with territoriality.

In his critical reaction to nation-building literature, Tilly (1975) came to develop a theory of state formation, which rejected the assumptions encoded in the teleological idea of nation-building and in the term 'nation' per se. Instead, he shifted the focus of analysis from nation to state, which for him was the primary reality, whereas the nation was a mere mystification (*ibid.*; Brubaker 2010, 375). It was not, however, until the early 1990s that Tilly created his actual theory of nationalism. He centered on the link between war-making and state-making and put forth that the resource-intensive warfare gave central rulers incentives to develop more intensive and direct forms of rule. This, in turn, caused the regional power-holders to feel threatened and gave them incentives to demand a state of their own. As a consequence, Tilly identified two forms of nationalism: the top-down, nation-shaping nationalism of central rulers and the bottom-up, state-seeking nationalism of threatened peripheral elites (Tilly 1991; 1996, 303–304). What remains unanswered is that why central rulers and those threatened by increasingly direct rule claim to speak and act in the name of a nation and why such claims-making elicited broad popular support (see Brubaker 2010).

Also other theorists have developed their own modernist visions of nation and state-building. In one of the most treasured books in the field, Gellner (1983) argues that nationalism is a thoroughly modern phenomenon. It appeared as societies became increasingly industrial and the rulers regarded the congruence

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<sup>28</sup> In his widely popularized book, Ardrey (1966) argues that only a minority of species maintains territories with well-defined boundaries, within which they live and find all the resources they need.

between the state and culture as needed for maintaining a grip on resources on a territorial level. Thus, nationalism invents nations where they do not exist. Both nations and states are not a universal necessity but a contingency. Even if the two were destined for each other, Gellner stresses, they emerged independently: “[t]he state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state” (ibid. 6–7).

Anderson (1983) underlines that various varieties of nationalism cannot be understood without reflecting on the older political forms (kingdoms, empires, etc.) out of which they emerged. He terms the concept of nation an ‘imagined community’ for unlike an actual community, the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Along similar lines, Eric Hobsbawm (1983, 1) argues that many of the traditions which we consider to be of ancient origins, have in fact been invented by national elites comparatively recently in an attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past and justify the existence and importance of their respective nation states (Hobsbawm 1990).

As a result, Billig (1995; cf. Edensor 2002) suggests, nations are reproduced on a daily basis “in a banally mundane way.” Building upon Gellner and Anderson, he argues that the complex set of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations, and practices are enacted daily to reproduce the nation-state, its citizenry as nationals, and its external face as a sovereign state in the international system. Nations continually ‘flag’ and remind their populations of nationhood in a fashion that is “so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding.” “The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion,” Billig (1995, 8) asserts, “it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building.”

While these theorists suggest such national-culture building and the resultant national identity being politically driven and state-led, Habermas’ (1989) concept of ‘public sphere’ brings in the domain of debate that exists outside of the state by engaging all who are concerned with matters of public interest. The public sphere forms the space whereby civil society may intervene in the political process. Being centered on the state’s activities, while locating outside of the state, the public sphere presupposes a nation-state in relation to which civil society can act. Habermas (2001) suggests that the EU in itself constitutes a complex supranational public sphere, where the historic nation-states articulate with an emergent federal state. Even though Habermas’ vision of the enlargement of the public sphere is still far from being realized, it assumes an interesting corollary that a European civil society must eventually emerge, the nucleus of which already exists in the policy communities clustered around the EU’s executive and legislative institutions (Schlesinger 1998).

Anthony Smith (1995; 1998; 2000) criticizes the modernist perspectives for overlooking the enduring passions generated by nationalism. According to his reading, nationalism cannot be regarded just as a mere tool used by the elites for the purpose of economic gain and cohesion. Instead, Smith takes the ever enduring will of the people to fight and die for their nations as a clear sign that nations are formed through the inclusion of the whole populace. Smith's (1986, ch. 2; 2009, cf. Hutchinson 2000) anthropological approach, which he calls ethnosymbolism, proposes a synthesis of modernist and traditional views on the subject. He argues that nationalism draws on the pre-existing historical accounts – whether true or flawed – of a particular group of people, which are fashioned into something common and shared. It is thus the bond of solidarity – socially constructed rather than natural – to the nation and other members of their nation that creates a sense of nationalism regardless of the dominant ideology that exists in a given locale (Smith 1998, 191).

Smith (2009, 28) uses the term 'ethno-history' to refer to the ethnic members' memories and understanding of their communal past(s) as opposed to any more objective and dispassionate historical analysis. From a comparative standpoint, Smith (2009, 19) clarifies, the incidence of ethno-history is, however, distinctly uneven; some communities have a rich and eventful past while some ethno-histories and cultural resources are sketchier and more poorly recorded. The unevenness often leads to competition, if not conflict, as the less well-endowed communities seek cultural parity with the better endowed. This, Smith suggests, explains for example the appeal of the Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, for Finns as they sought emancipation from Russian political and Swedish cultural dominations. Smith (2009, 95) further clarifies that 'our history' tends to be remembered by later generations through moments of heroism and glory, the 'golden ages' of the community. These moments, recorded in an epic such as *Kalevala* and/or represented in other forms of art, do not form a mere source of collective pride and confidence but inspire action and emulation as well. History is painted selectively, its high points writ large, and used as the image of *exempla virtutis*, as set of moral lessons or examples of virtue invited to be emulated.

The various movements of Romanticism, Smith (2009, 96) argues, 'returned' the European educated classes back to the 'primeval origins' of their nations to discover therein their ultimate 'essence' and their unique attributes; by seeking in the golden age of its heroes and geniuses the character and virtues of their community, the 'true' nature of the nation in its original state would be revealed. In Smith's panorama of a nation's ethno-history, such a distant golden age began to represent that period, or moment of pristine glory, when the creative energies of the nation were at their most vigorous and their virtues most apparent. This was, for example, very much the purpose and spirit in which Elias Lönnrot edited *Kalevala* (first edition published in 1835) thereby revealing to modern Finns who they had been and, as a result, who they 'really' were. (Ibid.)

Calhoun (1993b; 1997a/b) shares the idea of a nation with ethnic roots, yet finds the relationship between the two more complex. "While it is impossible to dissociate nationalism entirely from ethnicity," Calhoun (1993c, 235) notes, "it is equally impossible to explain it simply as a continuation of ethnicity." Nationalism remains the preeminent rhetoric for attempts to demarcate political communities and claim rights of self-determination by reference to 'the people' of a country. Ethnic solidarities and identities, in turn, are claimed most often where groups do not seek 'national' autonomy but rather recognition internal to or crosscutting national or state borders (ibid.)

Even though building on the classics, Calhoun (1993b; 1997a) provides an original contribution to the topic. Like Gellner, Calhoun stresses that nationalism is produced by central features of the modern world, but specifies that it has become only more important because of globalization (Calhoun 1993b). He rejects Hobsbawm's allegation that nationality is an invented illusion. Instead, he falls in with Anderson in emphasizing the constructedness of national identity. Calhoun (1997b) argues that the centrality of nationalism derives first of all from the need to identify the 'self' implied by the notion of political self-determination, which in turn ties nationalism to democracy and civil society.

As argued by Calhoun (1993c, 275–276), nationalism poses challenges to the basic theories of democracy and civil society, as it threatens not only bellicosity toward rivals but repression of internal difference. The most common discourses of nationalism treat the nation as unitary, in so doing denying the plurality crucial to the idea of democratic self-government through the public sphere of civil society. In his study about post-communist European transitions, Kuzio (2010, 285–286) has, however, discovered that different types of nationalism have different impacts. He argues that in post-communist societies four different models on nationalism can be found. While *ethnic*, *Soviet*, and *great power-imperial* nationalisms have fuelled ethnic conflict, chauvinistic xenophobia, the establishment of authoritarian regimes, and anti-European/Western attitudes, *civic* nationalism has in turn played a positive role in mobilizing societies and democratization.

Civic nationalism has been given credit for, most famously, the success of the civil society mobilization during the Ukrainian Orange Revolution in 2004 (Stepanenko 2006; Kuzio 2010). In Russia, however, the frail progression of civic nationalism has, since Putin came to power for the first time, been upstaged by democratic regression, an authoritarian regime, and related great power-imperial nationalism integrating Soviet, Tsarist, and Eurasian symbolism (Tsygankov 2005; Dimitrov 2009). This has narrowed the space for free civic action domestically and also routed many international actors out from the country.

### 3.3.2 European Civil Society?

The emergence of civil society in Western Europe is commonly traced back to the notion of autonomy. The autonomous legal system as well as the level of autonomy given to cities and the church formed a favorable environment for free thinking and pluralism to exist. Individuals were conceived as 'articulated wholes' rather than 'undifferentiated mass,' which led to the development of individual rights and representative institutions (Seligman 1992, 157). These significant autonomies limited the capacity of any monarchical authority to impose autocratic structures and control the development of society. Later on, the development of civil society was largely based on the emergence of a market economy as well as increased wealth, civil freedom, and private ownership, which together steered the formation of the moral infrastructure of Western political thought (Black 1984, 42).

This study proceeds on the fundamental postulation that there is no single European civil society but that civil society occupies various forms in different European counties; there are remarkable differences between the Anglo-Saxon, Romance, Slavic, Nordic, and Germanic civic cultures (Meyer 2009, 205). Civil activities do not occur in the same way and to the same levels across Europe (Anheier 2002, 6–7). The French *economie sociale* emphasizes economic aspects, mutualism, and the communal economy (Archambault 1996). Italian associationalism is seen as a countervailing force against both the church and state powers at the local level (Barbetta 1997). The German tradition of subsidiarity provides a comprehensive framework for the relationship between the state and third sector in the provision of social services (Anheier & Seibel 2001; Zimmer 2001) while the nationalized health care system with a decentralized systems of charities in social service provision is characteristic of the British model (Kendall & Knapp 1996). The Finnish model remains, for historical reasons, close to the Swedish model of democratic membership organizations in the form of broadly based social movements whose demands are picked up by the state and incorporated into social legislature (Lundström & Wijkström 1997).

Certainly, Crook (2002) notes, the civil society sphere is present in all European nations, but the characteristics of civil society vary from country to country. However, just as there are certain typical features of the general Western tradition of civil society, there are also a number of relevant features, which can be seen as quintessentially 'European' and thus also as the main footings of civil societies in Europe. According to Crook (2002), these include: 1) a belief in, and the practice of, democratic forms of government and governance, 2) an adherence to the rule of law, 3) a respect for human rights, including free communication and exchange of ideas, and 4) the separation of powers – most importantly, of the executive and the judiciary. Acknowledging the risk of controversy, Crook adds that 'European' is also 5) characteristically Christian, 6)



marked by a clear preference for free markets in economic matters, and 7) marked by a concern with human (social) 'solidarity' (ibid.).

Even if broad and normative, writing down these key characteristics helps to understand the perspective from which the EU views civil society and its role in CBC. Instead of meant as an all-encompassing description, the epithet 'European' is used to make a distinction to the US model characterized by a strong and positive link between social capital and civil society with minimalist state interference. In the 'European' model, the two are also linked but require more active state and 'good governance' to function for the greater public good.

Anheier (2008a/b) has provided four scenarios, which are certainly caricatures but also quite indicative in that they do build on the recent development trends in the field of civil society in Europe. According to Anheier's NPM-scenario, CSOs – especially NGOs – are developing into a set of well-organized, corporate entities that take on tasks and functions that previously belonged to national states and/or the EU and deliver them through competitive contractual arrangements that try to maximize the competitive advantages of non-profit providers under some form of EU oversight. The neo-Tocquevillian social capital scenario, in turn, paints CSOs as the self-organizing, Europeanized 'quasi-state' apparatus of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As part of a benign global civil society, this scenario relies on high levels of individualism, participation, and 'connectivity' and aims to detect and prevent or correct social ills before they become 'social problems' with and by a technocratic EU regime of minimalist national states.

The social accountability scenario posits CSOs as a reflection of the diversity, pluralism, and dynamism of modern, European, even global, society. As such, CSOs are seen as sources of dissent, challenge, and innovation, whereby they play a social, cultural, and political watchdog function in keeping both global market and state powers in check; i.e., form a counter-veiling force to some form of European government ('super state') and to TNCs. Lastly, Anheier's (2008a/b) corporate scenario is marked by a closer association between CSOs and businesses; corporations use an extended social responsibility program to provide, jointly with CSOs, services previously in the realm of government, such as health care, child care, pensions, and community services.

### **3.3.3 The Nordic Frame**

The Nordic countries provide the most illustrative frame for understanding the Finnish variation of civil society. In the Nordic countries, the civil society vis-à-vis state arrangement is exceptionally close (see Kettunen & Petersen 2011). The notion of society has been fixed to that of the nation-state and seen to form an integrated entity with its own subjectivity (Kettunen 2009, 1–2). A clear-cut distinction does not adequately catch the nature of civic activity in this part of the world for there is an "institutional balance between state and society" (Hernes 1988, 208) in which a strong state and a strong civil society play the

same game, supporting each other (Rainio-Niemi 2010, 243). Thus, in the 'Nordic model,' society can be conceived at the same time both as the national agent and a target of its politics (Kettunen 2009, 5).

While there are significant differences between the Nordic countries, different countries have assumed different national(istic) strategies for competitiveness (Kettunen 2011a/b); the welfare state has become an integral part of the national identities in all of them and the related policies have formed one of the most successful fields of Nordic cooperation (Petersen 2011, 41). This has tied these countries together institutionally.

It is also noteworthy that the typically Nordic practices of a government-funded welfare state, wide public sector, and corporatism (though the strong role of the labor unions and employers' organizations) have created major links between state and society (Knudsen & Rothstein 1994, 218). As Kettunen (2009, 7) argues, the Nordic political languages have conserved elements of political philosophy from when society was not yet separated conceptually from the state. The *societas civilis* was a way of conceptualizing the state, a sort of a civil state achieved on a contractual basis (Bobbio 1989). Hegel's ideas have thus been turned upside down: in terms of its "supposedly ethical essence," the state is called 'society'; i.e., the concept of 'state' is applied to those formal institutions which Hegel included in his *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (Kettunen 2009, 8).

In his attempt to put the Nordic countries in an internationally comparative perspective, Alapuro (2010a/b) builds on Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas' (2001) study of variations in voluntary association membership<sup>29</sup>. In their two dimensional diagram based on Jepperson's (2002) typology of four polity forms, Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas introduce a typology based on the organizational structures of the states (Figure 17). The degree of 'statism' seeks to capture variations in the organization of collective authority vis-à-vis the society. On this axis, the Nordic countries and the Anglo-Saxon countries rank low: civic engagement is actively promoted, associations often work in symbiosis with administrative institutions (Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001, 812), and the government is envisioned as intermediating the organized interests of society (Jepperson 2002, 73). In addition to a low degree of statism, the Nordic countries exemplify a high degree of 'corporateness'; i.e., a higher moral purpose is assigned to organized groups, as members of which individuals are empowered and obtain specific 'rights and functions' (Jepperson 2002, 73), which tends to foster high levels of associational membership (Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001, 813). This means that, "[i]ndividual citizens are thought to interact with the political system in the role of *association members*, not as *individuals*" (Siisiäinen 2009, 274, italics by the author).

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<sup>29</sup> See Alapuro and Stenius (eds) 2010 for a detailed examples of the Nordic Associational culture in a European Perspective.

The Nordic social-corporate model gets portrayed as a rational-functional form of social organization that is coordinated by the state, yet in which the associational organization of society has become ‘naturalized.’ The authority that dominates is not an imperative but rather relies on rule-based coordination. (Jepperson 2002, 73–74.) The associations play a central role in the representation of society or particular group-based interests, but that is done largely through broad, passive membership (Dekker & van der Broek 1998, 27–30; 2005; Alapuro 2010b) – church or trade union membership being prime examples. Even though mere membership does not by design equal engagement, the Nordic situation, in which passive ‘checkbook members’ consider their belonging and ‘participation by proxy’ important seems to contradict Putnam’s (1993) cry for active face-to-face engagement.

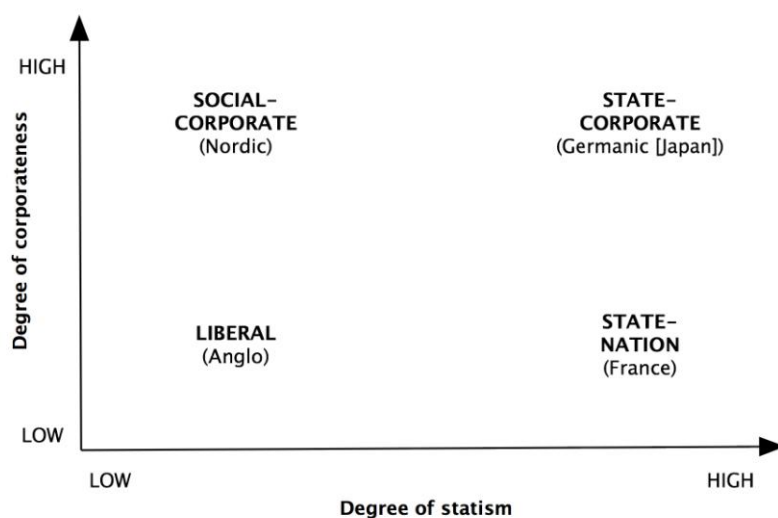


Figure 17. Four predominant modern polity models. Modified from Jepperson 2002, 64 and Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001, 817

Unlike in most other European countries where social inequality is mirrored in civil society, in Finland and in the Scandinavian countries education and socioeconomic status play a minor role in explaining differences in participation (Siisiäinen & Blom 2009). The combination of high corporateness and low statism translates to CSOs holding a strong position and being trusted while political participation remains relatively minimal. In corporate countries passive membership matters, Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001, 822) assert, as representation can be left more easily to organizations for they possess a strong and legitimate role in society. In this way, the role of association as mediating institutions between individuals and the state (Alapuro 2010b; Luhtakallio 2010;

Stenius 2010) gets emphasized. In the end, the representative function applies to both active and passive members alike (Wollebæk & Strømsnes 2008). Associations are representatives of their members, but they may also seek to represent their putative members, their constituency; i.e., those who are not even passive members, but rather members of a larger Jeppersonian 'functional community' (Alapuro 2010b, 313–314).

### **3.3.4 Civil Society in Finland**

In Finland the history of civil society is closely connected with the history of the Finnish nation. All the major events and the important stages of development in the nation's history are visible in the history of civil society. (Harju 2006) In order to understand what is taking place today, it is useful to look back and see how a series of punctuated events have all played a role in shaping the civil society development and left their own respective marks, some of which are clearly discernible still today. Taken together, they have created a civil society model that is not Western or Eastern but more of a hybrid.

#### **Roots and development**

As in the rest of Europe, the roots of established civic activity in what today is Finland goes back to the end of the eighteenth century. Inspired by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the bourgeoisie and the middle classes began to demand a redistribution of social rights and responsibilities more equally (Alapuro & Stenius 1987, 20–21; Tammilehto 1989, 21). While in the mid-eighteenth century, engagement in the association remained limited to a narrow circle of people of high social rank, around the turn of the century discussion concerning common issues became possible in less segregated forums (Stenius 1988, 347–348).

The year 1809 when Sweden lost its Eastern Province of Finland to Russia was significant also for the civil society formation. Even though Finland was granted a privileged autonomous status that enabled it to continue its Swedish constitutional heritage, Finland was nevertheless a part of the Russian Empire and, hence, the development of civic activities was no longer only linked to the overall political situation in Europe but also dependent on the Russian emperor's decisions. This restricted the development of civic activism and forestalled potential revolutionary movements. However, although the associational activities were still modest in their scope and form, their activities became increasingly autonomous (Finnish), whilst previously they had been a part of or a continuation of the Swedish system (Liikanen 1995, 87).

A new spirit of nationalistic patriotism and unification sprang to life in Finland between 1831 and 1860 (Alapuro & Stenius 1987, 26–27). It was fuelled by the pan-European wave of mobilization of the 1830s, which only increased in power in the 1840s. Instead of informal movements or societies, this time the principle of association assumed its definite form, broke through, and was put it

practice for the first time in Finland (Stenius 1980; Eliassen 1981, 613–614). While the rest of Europe was defeating bloody revolutionary revolts during the ‘crazy year’ of 1848, in the Grand Duchy of Finland radical tendencies were channeled for the positive glorification of the fatherland. The freer conditions, which followed Alexander II’s accession to the throne, enabled determined Finnish national awaking first in the 1860s and 1870s in the sphere of liberal intelligentsia and then in the 1880s among the masses. (Stenius 1988, 353; Alapuro & Stenius 1987, 30–31; Liikanen 1995, 77–78.)

The February Manifesto of 1899 by Emperor Nicholas II, which asserted the imperial government's right to rule Finland without the consent of local legislative bodies, marked the beginning of the policy of Russification of Finland. Various political factions opposing the autocratic Russian Empire soon joined the passive resistance movement led by the Young Finns. As a result, the entire wave of mass mobilization, which followed, became shaped by a ferocious aspiration to accentuate national unity. Ability to form associations, to organize on formally equal terms to promote a common purpose, irrespective of the social status of an individual, became crucial for the Finnish nation-building process.

As Alapuro and Stenius (1989, 18) have observed, a society separate from the state apparatus was in the making and it became manifested as its own sphere of action, as a civil society. On the other hand, as the non-governmental organizations and movements created new kinds of societal practices, they also expanded the operational space of the state, building simultaneously a new kind of state (*ibid.*). Powerful central leadership and a close relationship to the state became key characteristics of the Finnish civil society; the intermediate and intermediary organization in Finland was not set up in opposition to the state but rather in connection with the state-building and state-bearing intelligentsia (Stenius 1983, 112). Both civil servants and ordinary people participated jointly in the activities of these associations, which in turn were directly related to the official decision-making.

As analyzed by Apunen (1987, see also Tikka 2009) the Great Strike of 1905, which spread to Finland from Russia, can be deemed as a spiritual turning point, which served to question the previous power structures in society. It was partly a result of the common national revolt against Russian autocracy but also of the domestic power struggles among Finns. During this era, the concept of democracy was defined at the collective (in contrast to individual) level in reference to the emancipation of the Finnish nation (Arola 2003, 15–16). The unrests ended the first Russification period and compelled Nikolai II to comply with the November Manifesto, which overruled the oppressive February Manifesto and led to the abolition of the Estate-based Diet of Finland and, consequently, to the creation of the modern Parliament of Finland. In the societal sense, as Alapuro and Stenius (1989) suggest, the Finnish nation was largely created by civic popular movements, which played a crucial role in educating

Finns and provided the emerging nation with an intellectual or material maturity to declare independence in 1917.

### Civic or Civil Society?

The civil war between the socialist Red Guards and the non-socialist White Guards (or Civil Guards) in the spring of 1918 had also a major influence on the development of Finnish civil society. The civic, educational, cultural, and sports organizations, as well as the cooperative system polarized according to political lines hand in hand with rest of the nation (Harju 2006, 18). This was followed by the wave of right-wing radicalism experienced in Europe in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which radiated also into the civic milieu of Finland. Numerous new associations were created, some of which – the Lapua movement being a prime example – were extremely rightist (Siisiäinen 1992, 28), while altogether over 3,000 leftist organizations were closed down (Bergholm 2001; Siisiäinen 1996, 40).

After the two wars between Finland and the Soviet Union, a great nationalist spirit set the rebuilding of the nation in motion. According to Harju (2006, 20–21), the enthusiasm to take action had a lucid impact also on civic organizations; they offered a change from daily work and momentarily helped people take their minds of the traumatic experiences of those wars. The Karelians, who were forced to evacuate from the lost territory, joined actively the existing organizations but also brought their own associations with them. In the absence of competing activities, an exceptional amount of time and energy was put into associational activities.

On the other hand, the Moscow peace treaty of 1944 dictated severe restrictions on the freedom of association. Almost 3,000 associations, braded as rightists or otherwise antagonistic towards the Soviet Union, had to be closed down (Kokko & Rantatupa 2000, 13). Even then, the number of new associations multiplied almost fivefold in one year from 1944 to 1945 (Siisiäinen 1996, 40). A major share of the increase consisted of socialist and communist organizations; fuelled by the rise of the communist movement and the establishment of the Communist Party, a total of 2,500 organizations were established in 1944–1948. Another important faction consisted of numerous cooperative and international organizations, such as the Finland-Soviet Union Society and the Finnish Peace Committee. Even though short-lived, the left wing cycle of protest movements, supported by the presence of the Soviet Control Commission in Finland, managed to develop a network of voluntary associations to capitalize their people's front strategy (Siisiäinen 1991, 2; 1992, 23, 28; 1996, 40–41; Kokko & Rantatupa 2000, 13.)

Kokko and Rantatupa (2000, 13) put forward that associational foundation of the modern Finnish civil society was created at the turn of 1950s and 1960s, when both the social life and the democratic system strengthened as Finland managed to normalize its domestic situation and establish itself as a part of the

international community. Also numerous so-called new social movements were founded from the 1960s onwards. At this stage, Finland moved permanently from the epoch of popular movements to that of civic organization (Harju 2006, 23) – for instead of mobilizing the masses the foci of the new social movements were narrower. They created an alternate publicity in order to set up a discourse and an opportunity structure, which would allow previously ignored groups, such as youth, women, and minorities, to enter the political arena as collective actors (Siisiäinen 1996, 45–46; Ilmonen 1998).

The associational networks that had once been created to support the nation-building project became differentiated into a party-political associational culture during the decades that followed (Ylä-Anttila 2007, 46). Memberships in political parties rose to their highest and the competition between the political lines led to the establishment of hundreds of party-political associations (Harju 2006, 23). Organization replaced movements, verticality took over horizontality, and systematic planning replaced spontaneous creativity (*ibid.*). Also, the share and status of welfare organizations gained more strength as great many organizations were founded on the premise of dialogue between the welfare state and civil society. The civil society sector became integrated closely with public institutions through systematic cooperation, which in turn led to the increase in number of operational sectors and widening of the entire organizational domain.

The share of party-political associations began to implode during the 1980s. As many of the traditional, large organizations began to lose members, civic activities became more disintegrated. More and more small culture, sport, and other recreational or lifestyle associations with very specific agendas were formed (Siisiäinen 1996, 42; Itkonen 2000, 16–17). As a result, the already high level of social trust grew even higher, while the confidence in government and state authorities fell deeply (see Newton 2001, 209–210).

Increased apoliticalness did not, however, mean that active citizenship would have disappeared; it merely changed its shape and channeled differently than before. Instead of political action, civic activity became centered on individual development and the feeling of togetherness (Ylä-Anttila 2007, 46). This is in the core of what Stranius (2008a/b) calls light activism. The term is not meant to be belittling but refers to the everyday choices of an individual and action that does not fuse or commit to traditional structures. Light activism does not require associations or their leaders, and it is not interested in changing social structures, or public moral protest. As a result, civic activism becomes more about individuals' ability to act and to politicize of new issues to the public and less dependent of a particular association's resources. (*Ibid.*)

Siisiäinen & Kankainen (2009) have observed that specialization has meant that instead of devoting one's life to a certain cause on a daily basis, in many cases being a member of an association requires a much smaller investment. Unlike with the great popular movements of the past, to which many devoted

much of their daily life, more specialized association requires smaller investments of one's time and identity. This also makes it possible to belong to a number of associations simultaneously. As the average Finn belongs to approximately four different associations, there are around 20 million 'members' in the country. Even more importantly, new associations tend to interact less with the municipal and state authorities and institutions. Detachment from the large-scale popular movements, state-oriented activity and political life in general, breaks the traditional communicative channel to political decision-making. (Ibid.; Itkonen 2000, 16–17.)

### Development of the State-Civil Society Relations

When Finland finally emancipated firstly from the subordination of the Swedish monarchy and then from the Russian imperial rule, a conscious effort was made to create a strong state Hegelian-Snellmanian spirit in order to safeguard the security of the nation. Snellman adopted the Hegelian conception of societal order that made a distinction between state and civil society, but he did not see them as separate sectors of a society but rather as being different in their ethical orientations. For Snellman, civil society (*medborgerligt samhälle*) was a particular mode of moral action that comprised a "necessary moment in the state" (stat); i.e., in a particular society constituted by the state. An individual citizen (*medborgare*) was a member of civil society insofar as he tried to promote his own private interest as far as it did not hamper the freedom of the others, while a member of the state (*statsborgare*) oriented his actions to the common good and to the preservation of the state itself. (Snellman 1993, 333–335; Kettunen 2000, 173.) Whereas civil *medborgare* acted law-abidingly, a *statsborgare's* actions were based on deeper ethical values expressed in the national spirits (Pulkkinen 1989, 128–131). The action in the state was thus conceived as the higher mode and value than the action in the civil society.

For the Fennomans, in turn, there was more explicit identification of society with the state. They saw it was the will of the people that had legitimated the political power in the first place; the people had created the state, the powers of which were vested in the people. Accordingly, the society could not be defined through state-society distinctions but was rather seen as a sociological entity being self-evidently limited by the borders of the nation-state and the population within (Kettunen 2000, 163–164). However, for the very reason that the people were indeed free and so was their will, they needed governance and order that was established by the state (cf. Kettunen 2000, 173). A clearer controversy in the late nineteenth century could actually be found in the relations between the Fennomans and the Swedish-speaking Liberals, which may be seen to an extent as having concerned the relationship between the state and civil society (Pulkkinen 1989).

By turning the nation into the highest source of power, Liikanen (1995) explains, the Fennomans gave rise to the modern democratic idea of a



hegemonic struggle for the right to represent the nation. In this process, the modern conception of a nation-state provided the frame for democracy (in Finnish: *kansanvalta*, literally: 'nation's power') to be acted out based on the idea of 'Finnishness' as a bottom-up identity. The will of the people was not a mere celebration of ethno-cultural unity, but above all it gave an important impetus for the development of civil society and a political notion of citizenship. Civil society and the system of representation thus became the main stages of the political and cultural demarcation of an independent Finland; in building Finland as political and cultural entity, the popular movements of the era did not only build a nation but in so doing defined also its borders. (Ibid.)

Perhaps the notion of a 'civic state' put forth by Götz and Hackmann (2003) could be appropriate to characterize the Finnish context, in which the synergy between the state and civil society is quite profound. Because civil society was seen to complement rather than challenge the state, it was understood early on that it provided a useful means to channel the state interest. This was the most apparent in terms of the friendship policy that was largely put in practice through paradiplomatic links across the border. A particularly peculiar role in the highly regulated CBC was played by the Finnish voluntary associations, which cooperated with official Soviet organizations despite considerable state control. Both sides must have experienced the obvious mismatch and asymmetries implied by the setting, which revealed both the privileged status of CSOs in Finland and the weakness of Soviet civil society, handicapped by the authoritarian structures of the Soviet regime (Liikanen 2004a). It was primarily the Finnish organizations linked to the project of building Nordic-type welfare states that became an important driver of paradiplomatic CBC.

The relationship between CSOs and the state grew closer in the mid-1990s, when the state needed help in fighting against unemployment. Towards the end of the decade, civil society was invited to help in safeguarding the welfare services that the state had no resources to provide. In the beginning of the new millennium, civil society began to be seen in terms of consolidation of democracy and as a part of the broader European whole. The role of CSOs in CBC has reflected these trends. They were also trusted to deliver most of the aid work of the early 1990s. However, the opening of the border and the subsequently increased interaction revealed further differences between the two sides. Interaction exposed that there were major differences between the two countries not just in terms of the scales of problems to be tackled but also in the interpretative frames as well as in the assessment of problems and needs, in the leverage of civil society to have a say, and in the very operational spaces through which the work had to be carried out. All this made the basis for interaction asymmetrical and questioned the possibility for such different neighbors to have a compatible interpretative frame towards issues of common concern.

## Finnish Peculiarities

As a group, the Nordic countries rank high when it comes to social capital (Rothstein 2002), organizational participation (Dekker & van der Broek 1998), and civil society's vitality (Salamon et al., 2004). There are, however, discrepancies also within the Nordic tradition. Wollebæk, Ibsen, and Siisiäinen (2010) observe that these differences can be traced to disparities in the socio-political context during the early period of voluntary organization described above. In Finland, the first modern associations emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and towards the end of the nineteenth century, when wide social and political mobilization linked to the Finnish nation-building and state formation processes reached a significant segment of peasantry and the emerging rural and industrial working class (Stenius 1980; 1987; Alapuro 1988; Liikanen 1999).

The process was influenced greatly by popular movements, from labor groups, religious organizations, consumers associations, cooperative societies, temperance groups to adult education societies, whose ambitious agendas riveted large shares of the population to action, the endeavors and objectives of which mirrored largely the societal challenges of each respective era (Siisiäinen 1999a/b). Unlike the rest of the Nordic countries, Stenius (2010, 72) notes that Finland had a particular incentive to be obedient when under Russian rule, yet it is misleading to claim that the dutifulness of the Finnish voluntary associations would have been posed by tsarist rule. Quite the contrary, it was the Pax Russica of the nineteenth-century Grand Duchy of Finland that created a framework for the popular mobilization and organization (Alapuro 2010b, 309).

The strong and long-lasting social movements coupled with the strong role of the state as a provider and financier of social welfare services has led to distinctive patterns of civil society development in Finland. A great many new organizations were founded in close cooperation with the government in the building of the Nordic-type welfare state; consequently, the civil society sector became closely integrated to the public institutions through systematic cooperation. The economic crisis of the 1990s and the related problems in employment and financing of the welfare state highlighted the potential of voluntary and civic associations (Pättiniemi 2008, 15). The cause of these problems was not social or strongly related to a decay in social capital or a decline in social trust (Newton 2001, 210). On the contrary, the economic and social restructuring of the early 1990s, as well as Finland's eventual entry into the EU in 1995, paved the road to the civil society boom of the late 1990s. There were more associations established in Finland in the 1990s than ever before; more than 2000 per year (Siisiäinen 1999b, 139). Unlike Putnam's (1995) thesis would suggest, thanks to its unusually vibrant association life, civil society in Finland has continued to function soundly – at least if understood in terms of social capital.

In order to safeguard the future of welfare services, from early 1990s onwards the Finnish state contracted more and more CSOs to provide a significant share of these services (see Möttönen & Niemelä 2005, 3–5, 131–148; Matthies 2006, 82–88, 185). Such cooperation is typically centered on established activities of large-scale associations (Pättiniemi 2008) and predominant in the areas where private entrepreneurship did not prove profitable. Maukkonen (2005, 1) puts forward that this has made the CSOs more important socio-political actors but concurrently hauled them also closer to becoming a part of the public hand, as instruments to implicate state politics under contracts and deepened thus the discrepancy between the organizations' own interests and the expectations from the environment, where the government functions as the regulator of activities. In addition, through its economic modernization and increased competition with the other actors, the third sector has become incorporated also more closely into markets (Matthies 1999, 40–45.), which has put its underlying ethical aspect to the test (Pättiniemi 2008, 16–17).

The third sector in Finland is commonly understood by terms best describing the sector (general interest, ethical, social, voluntary, and non-profit) and the main principles of its organizations: solidarity, individual, freedom of choice, and flexibility (Harju 2000, 11–14.). Siisiäinen (2005, 244) notes that Finland may well be the only country in the world that has a comprehensive, virtually wall-to-wall, official register of associations. Registration allows the associations to manifest themselves as formal (well-established and well-organized), but it also makes them legal entities with full standing under the law; upon registering, associations become legal entities. As, added to this, many associations are portrayed as dovish, loyal, obedient, and legalistic (i.e., having a strong faith in power of edification and law), as well as by their acquiescence to cater to state and/or municipalities when directing their activities (*ibid.*; Stenius 2010, 51), it comes as no surprise that the registered associations, given the weakness of alternative form of collective action, have become preferred partners for the public sector in all subfields of civil society (Siisiäinen & Blom 2009).

As such, the CSOs have a good channel to get their voice heard in the decision-making bodies where the official agendas are developed. The state, in turn, trusts that the CSOs have the best knowledge of the local and regional level conditions and is therefore willing to hear what the CSOs have to say. Since the international relations are discussed and developed on the national level, CSOs need special lobbying structures to be able to influence national authorities. The coalitional structures allow CSOs to work on the Finnish national level and intermediate the opinions of the local level CSOs.

The Finnish civic culture is also characterized by its considerable high-level of volunteer input (Figure 18), while the share of the paid workforce is clearly lower than many other Western countries. This has been explained by the sector's general orientation in policy advocacy rather than direct service delivery (Helander et al. 1999, 65–66), or more profoundly, by a commonly felt

responsibility for contributing to the necessary division of labor (Stenius 2010, 51). Siisiäinen and Blom (2009) assert that in addition to a combination of active voluntary associations, Finnish civil society is characterized by individual actors with many association memberships as well as citizens who, on average, are unconcerned about political citizenship and disinterested in using alternative, less conventional repertoires of acting collectively (ibid.).

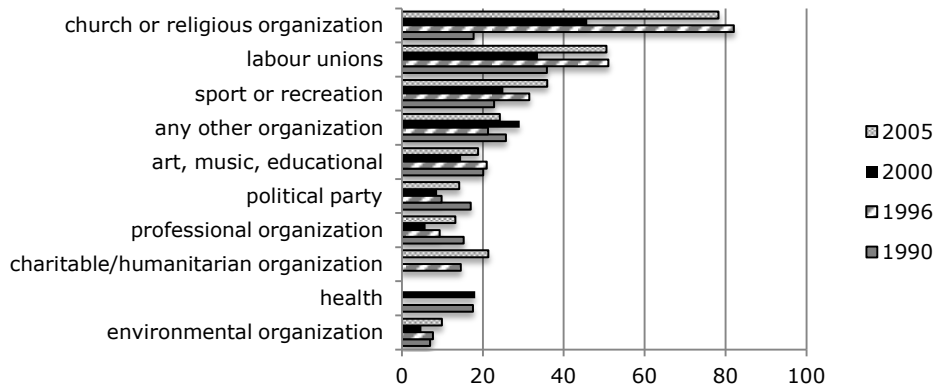


Figure 18. Memberships in voluntary organizations in Finland, per cent of total. Data source: World values survey 2005 file v.20090901, 2000 file v.20090914; 1995 file v.3; and 1990 file v.20090906<sup>30</sup>

According to the 2012 statistics of the National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland, the Finnish third sector totals some 133,000 organizations, of which associations represent by far the largest group at close to more than 15 million members<sup>31</sup> and 181,500 employees (Pättiniemi 2008; National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland 2012). The major source of income of third sector organizations is private donations (57.9 per cent of the total income), followed by public sector funding (36.2 per cent) (Kari & Markwort 2004). Thanks to the prevalence of the hierarchical associational model consisting of a three, four, or even five-tier model of the associational activity (consisting of village, municipal, district, national, and potentially international associations), the

<sup>30</sup> The membership figures in church or other religious organizations is misleading as according to the official statistics, 87.9 per cent of the Finnish population belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1990, and the same figure in year 200 was 85.1 per cent. In addition, 1.1 per cent of the population belonged to the Finnish Orthodox Church on both occasions. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of has a special legal position as a national church in the country alongside with the Finnish Orthodox Church. All the other denominations operate either as registered religious communities or associations.

<sup>31</sup> Many Finns, or persons residing in Finland, belong to more than one association during their lives.

decisions, ideas, and priorities, as well as funding tend to link even the most peripheral areas to the center (Siisiäinen & Kankainen 2009; Wollebæk, Ibsen & Siisiäinen 2010, 139–142). At its best, this hierarchical model functions in two directions, providing on the one hand the center with an opportunity to steer the provinces and the periphery but on the other hand creating a channel for the periphery to communicate with and have an impact on the center. (Ibid.)

### 3.3.5 Civil Society in Russia

Trust is good, control better. (Vladimir Lenin)

The history of civil society development in *Russia* differs greatly from that in Finland. The state-civil society relations have been incessantly tense due to such traditional Russian/Soviet political practices as the centralization of power, low levels of political representation and participation, and weak local government. The Soviet epoch was the most oppressive period for civil society and the civic culture demanded by it. Totalitarianism shoved its manifestations on the outskirts or outside of the public space; all forms of citizens' cooperation were under severe ideological control of the state, which exercised its power through local party organizations. However, this pseudo public sphere of action never genuinely attracted Soviet people. Dissatisfaction with the state manifested itself in the most positive cases as the emergence of alternative subcultures but more often as an increased cynicism, apathy, suicide, and alcoholism (Pursiainen 1998).

When access to public space was blocked, all self-motivated activities and expressions of opinion of the people took place instead within the family and among friends rather than at the societal level. Dense social networks and interpersonal relations were the primary form of social bonds among people. It has been suggested that these informal *blat*<sup>32</sup> networks did actually influence the civil society development negatively by contributing to the growth of conformism and political indifference due to their horizontal character and density (see McIntosh Sundstrom & Henry 2005). Network's clientelistic character and profusion of small-scale do-it-yourself services reflect the Soviet society's 'negative social capital' (Taylor & Wrenn 2003, 6–7), which largely barred informal networks from transforming into a 'genuine' civil society (cf. Ledeneva 1998; 1999; Alapuro & Lonkila 2000).

Not until the economic reforms of perestroika, introduced in 1985 by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, did the civil society begin come out from cellars and kitchens and began to obtain more public forms. The perestroika period

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<sup>32</sup> The concept of *blat* (блат) appeared during the Soviet era to denote the use of informal agreements, exchange of services, personal connections, Party contacts, or black market deals to advance one's own cause.

witnessed a mushrooming of grassroots movements – from about 30 registered organizations in 1987 (Struyk 2003, 11) to some 650,000 in 2000 (Rodriguez 2008) – and a sudden sense of euphoria and the belief that the transition to a market economy and democratic society would be simple and short (Skvortsova 2000). The upsurge was largely fuelled by the availability of Western funding, which was enthusiastically used to kick-start numerous CSOs, many of which then failed to maintain their activities much further. Despite that, in the midst of severe societal changes, the developing civil society played a crucial role as a social shock absorber and fostered much needed communal spirit. However, it played also a political role as the mobilization was fuelled by the need to seek representation of the people and to challenge Soviet authority.

The transition, which resulted in dramatic changes in all spheres of social, economic, and political life, took an enormous toll on the nation. As the public sector had not been able to tackle social problems and provide adequate basic services, a burgeoning civil society had to face the daunting task of addressing a multitude of issues, many which are typically sheltered under the umbrella of the state, the private sector, or political parties (Dzhibladze 2006). The more ideological and political aspirations were overshadowed by more practical work as the basic needs had to be secured before further political claims could be made. Also, involvement in old trade unions, sport associations, youth clubs, and political party organizations, all of which played crucial roles in the Soviet system, collapsed hand in hand with the Soviet state as a whole.

Proliferation and popularization of associational activities was visibly propped up by the hundreds of millions of dollars of Western assistance provided most notably by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Open Society Institute (OSI)<sup>33</sup> but also by the EU, most notably through Tacis funds. This massive financial support was directed towards the incipient civil society, which was seen as a potential vehicle for political change and consolidation of democracy. A number of writers (e.g., Sperling 1999; Mendelson & Glenn 2000; Henderson 2002; Bae 2005) have voiced opinions that Western assistance failed to contribute to the appearance of a strong civil society – at least not in the Western sense of the concept, but on the contrary, the funding resulted in an isolated community of civic activists who failed to build a dialogue with the authorities let alone establish effective networks amongst themselves. Whatever assessments of Western assistance are, the massive amount of money that was transferred to Russian CSOs played an important role in the proliferation of their number and in their professionalization as well as their institutional development. For many, accepting Western assistance was certainly a better option than accepting funding from the Russian authorities – if available – as in all likelihood the latter would have jeopardized their independence.

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<sup>33</sup> Since 2011, the network of Open Society Foundations (OSF).

The ideological control exercised by the communist party during the Soviet era discredited voluntary action in the eyes of many. The ghost of the Soviet Union is very real and apparent in the Russian imagination and the legacy of the bygone structures surrounding the church, social policy, *kolkhoz*, domestic ethos, and informal networks are in still strong in contemporary Russia. In contrast to many Western countries, particularly to Finland, the level of social trust within Russia is very low; according to a public survey carried out by the Leveda-Center in 2008, only 22 per cent of the Russian population thinks that it is possible to trust other people (Public Chamber 2007, 61). The absence of social trust is alarming as it is probably *the* main component of social capital, which in turn is a crucial condition of social integration, economic efficiency, and democratic stability (Newton 2001, 202). The statist conception of state-society relations has gained a firm foothold amongst the population largely due to its promise of stability and claim of reducing the risk of anarchy (Hale 2002). The general public is still fairly uninformed and suspicious of non-state actors or simply does not believe in the ability of CSOs to make a difference.

Only a fraction of Russians participate in civic activities (Figure 19). Many believe that by participating one has to give more than one gains and, given that the income level of most Russians is still relatively low and daily life demanding, ‘extra’ collective action and solidarity sounds unappealing. At the other end, the most highly paid members of Russian society seem detached from the “problems of others” as long as issues relevant to them are being actively solved (Public Chamber 2007, 77). It is thus individualism rather than solidarity that acts as the dominant *modus operandi* for many.

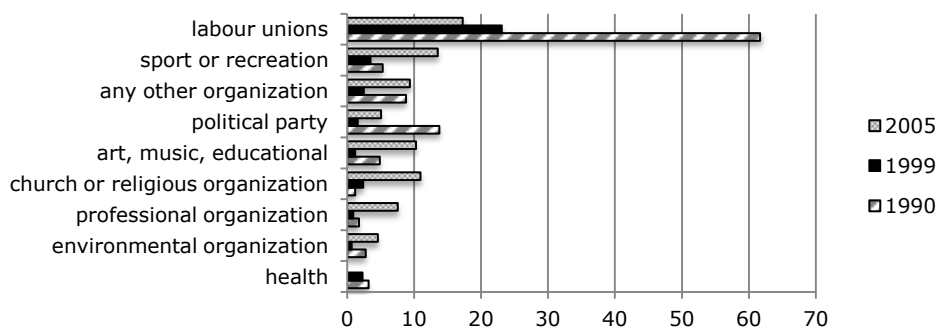


Figure 19. Memberships in voluntary organizations in Russia, per cent of total. Data source: World values survey 2005 data file v.20090901; 2000 data file v.20090914; and 1990 data file v.20090906

As Nikolai Berdyaev (1915), a Russian early twentieth-century philosopher, stated in his psychological assessment of the soul of Russia, the Russian people

"desires not so much a free state, freedom within a state, as rather freedom from the state, freedom from concerns about worldly arrangements." Different public opinion surveys have revealed that material wellbeing often ranks high on people's perception of the most important features of democracy. Borodkina and Smirnova (2007) argue that the same applies to CSOs, as many Russian organizations are "mainly interested only in their own problems and do not pay enough attention to the interests of different social groups." The situation is, however, getting better as the Russian middle class is becoming wealthier and also more and more concerned about the functioning of the society as a whole. In 2006, 10–15 per cent of Russian citizens were involved in civil initiatives, but according to the Public Chamber's (2007, 42) estimates the figure could reach to somewhere between 25 to 50 per cent by 2016.

The political system is manifested in particular in the relation between the state and society. Many of Russia's current difficulties arise out of the problematic nature of this very relationship. The state-civil society relations in contemporary Russia are far from true dialogue and cooperation. The relationship is far from a simple dichotomy of two opposed blocks, and it is only through a complicated network of mediating structures that the level of local voluntary association encounters federal-level state politics (Liikanen 2008, 9). The activities of CSOs are regulated by several ground laws and acts, which describe the legal types of associations and define what is meant by philanthropy and voluntary action. Although CSOs' sphere of action, according to the basic legal acts, is quite broad, there are, in fact, no legally fixed mechanisms for CSOs' participation in policy formulation or implementation.

Corruption and the unavailability of an effective court system to be used by the civil society in situations of unfair government actions or spending, poses serious impediments for the success of any influential civil society and the implementation of the rule of law. What also stands out is that the civil society's relations with the State and the authorities vary depending on the area and the nature of the activity in question. While Russia is often referred to in the singular, it is important not to forget its regional and local dimensions, as political and social development as well as the influence of CSOs on political processes or public policy can vary essentially from one region to another, from one locality to the next. These regional differences, Belokurova et al. (2004) assert, are mainly caused by variations in such factors as institutional design, electoral situation, or intensity of elite competition. All in all, whether or not public authorities see CSOs as a source of additional legitimacy or assistants in social problem solving makes a crucial difference in this process.

The Putin's presidency, particularly its last years, were marked by a considerable change in federal rhetoric regarding CSOs and their action towards civil society. Initiated in 2001, all-Russian Civic Forum can be considered as the first attempt of federal authorities to accept the existence of CSOs, yet it can simultaneously be taken to symbolize the return of the state as the main



constructor of civil society. In his State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly at the Kremlin on May 16, 2003, Putin spelled out his vision on what Russia should become:

Russia should be and will be a country with a developed civil society and sustainable democracy, where human rights, civil and political rights will be fully ensured. Russia should and will be a country with a competitive market economy, a country where property rights are securely protected, and economic freedoms allow people to work honestly and earn without fear or limit.

Following President Putin's suggestion in September 2004, the Russian State Duma approved the creation of a new institution, the Public Chamber (or Civic Chamber, in Russian: *Общественная палата*) according to the federal law on the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation # 32. Its creation was officially marketed as an additional opportunity for the development of civil society and strengthening democracy in the country. In practice, the Chamber was given the task of analyzing draft legislation and the activities of the parliament and the federal and regional administrative bodies. It received heavy criticism from the start for most of its members were selected by President Putin, who reserved the position of some sort of a collective ombudsman for himself.

Later on, federal authorities nonetheless displayed their suspicious attitude towards different forms of citizens' associational activity claiming that certain CSOs were purposefully undermining the Russian state with the help of Western funds. The federal center declared that the variety of citizens' efforts aimed at solving serious social problems would no longer remain unnoticed and unsupported and that the Russian state will not allow foreign political forces to use CSOs for their own narrow purposes.

The 2005 amendments to existing federal law regulating CSOs' operations provoked major public debate on whether the state was trying to restrict the freedom of civil society in the country. According to the new Federal Law # 18-FZ *On Introducing Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation*, all Russian NGOs, as well as all foreign NGOs operating in Russia, were required to undergo an additional procedure of re-registering with the authorities and to submit detailed reports on financial and other aspects of their routine work. The Law was signed by President Putin in January 2006 and came into effect in April that year. This development sparked, particularly in the West, an intense debate over President Putin's model of 'managed democracy.' A number of civil society activists feared that the authorities would use the new requirements as an instrument for getting rid of the organizations that criticize federal or regional policies.

Volk (2006), for example, immediately labeled the new law as an "attack on freedom and civil society" and argued that it embodies the ruling elite fears of the 'color revolutions' on post-Soviet space, where NGOs took the center stage.

The new requirements also restrict who may form an organization within Russia, which activities a particular organization may engage in, where it can operate, and threatens to impose severe penalties and sanctions on those failing to re-register and submit the required information. Furthermore, all foreign NGOs now have to notify the Federal Registration Service of their incoming funds as well as the way in which these funds are spent.

Even if intense for a period of time, the debate faded away surprisingly fast, as voices stressing the repressive character of the law indicated that the panic was, for the most part, exaggerated. Re-registration did not entail serious consequences apart from the closure of those CSOs that had been long inactive<sup>34</sup>. For many well-established CSOs, providing the requested information was not a major predicament. However, for the thousands of small grassroots organizations operating on shoestring budgets in the small villages and towns in the peripheral parts of the country already the mere imperative to travel to a major city in order to register not to mention the need to hire professional help to rewrite their charters to better comply with the new mandates, resulted in extra expenditures that left many organizations struggling to meet. This in turn widened the already existing gap between the well-organized CSOs in the large cities and the less proficient organizations located in smaller towns and more remote regions. Furthermore, as Struyk (2003, 11) notes, there are also sharp variations in sector development across Russia's 83 federal subjects.

Judging by the mere numbers, the transformation since Putin came to power (for the first time) has been quite drastic. Even though the number varies depending on the source, it seems to be safe to estimate that in year 2000 the number of registered Russian CSOs was upwards of half a million, while in 2012 there only about 220,000 registered organizations (ICNL 2012). While some this reduction is due to the removal of those numerous CSOs that existed only on paper, the rest is certainly a result of the 2006 law that allowed authorities to shut down CSOs perceived to be a threat to Russia's "sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, unity, cultural heritage, or national interests." As the formulation of the law was very ambiguous, it allowed the authorities to interpret and implement it arbitrary and close down organizations wantonly. If an organization could not be banned directly, the red tape in the form of all-out control, endless check-ups, and a stepped-up financial burden could be used to smother it (Volk 2006). Furthermore, simply the threat imposed by the law forced many organizations to self-sensor their own activities in order to avoid becoming a subject to excessive control or inspection by the authorities.

On the one hand, many have failed to acknowledge that the new law has in fact created also more and, above all, better structured cooperation at least among certain CSOs, as well as making federal funding more available for civil

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<sup>34</sup> It has been estimated that only about 15 to 20 per cent of the Russian CSOs before the 2006 law was actually active.

society – even if on very selective basis. Authorities do especially welcome organizations dedicated to social issues that take on the traditional welfare functions of the state, while those even remotely critical towards the state have had to endure the force of the state's repressive machine. Nevertheless, the law led to several important initiatives in the sphere of state-civil society relations, most notably the establishment of the Public Chamber (the initiative which was copied in the regions afterwards) and the launch of the program of president grants that are distributed every year to financially support the most effective and hard-working CSOs – again according to state definition.

The election of Dmitry Medvedev as President in 2008 gave hope that the legal framework for civil society would be improved. Indeed, the antagonistic rhetoric was toned down and some state grants became available also for critical organizations (such as the Moscow Helsinki group). President Medvedev also strengthened the role of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, an advisory panel established to assist the president in fulfilling his constitutional responsibilities and to help the development of civil society institutions in Russia, in so doing sidelining the Public Chamber. In June 2009, the State Duma adopted amendments to Russian Federal Law No. 7-FZ "On Non-Commercial Organizations" from 1996. These amendments made a number of changes, including easier reporting, audit, and registration procedures for small organizations (ICNL 2012).

Nevertheless, a new and concerning example about Russia's disregard for it international law commitments and attempts to restrict civil actions in that country was witnessed first in early June 2012, shortly after Vladimir Putin had regained the presidency. The bill "On Introducing Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Regarding the Regulation of the Activities of Non-commercial Organizations Performing the Function of Foreign Agents" was passed in the Russian Duma with overwhelming support – and with minimal public debate. According to the Duma website<sup>35</sup>, out of the 378 deputies who voted on the bill in the 450-seat lower house of parliament, only three voted against it and one abstained. The opposition boycotted the voting. The upper house of the Russian Parliament, the Federation Council, approved the bill one week later.

The law came into effect in November 2012 and now obligates civil society advocacy groups that receive foreign funding to register with the Justice Ministry as "foreign agents" or risk heavy fines and imprisonment. In rhetoric, such a label undoubtedly fuels suspicion and brings back the Cold War-era spy game. In practice, the new law is feared to increase the administrative burden for CSOs, to open CSOs up to excessive government oversight, to curtail citizens' rights to peaceful association and assembly, and impact negatively the broader international solidarity activities in the future. In their statement on the

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<sup>35</sup> [www.duma.gov.ru](http://www.duma.gov.ru)

new law, the Steering Committee of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum stated that the “[i]nternational donor community has channeled billions of Euros into Russia over the past decade, much of it directly to the Russian government” and asked that “[d]oes this mean that the government are foreign agents?” The statement on the amendments to the Russian NGO law by spokesperson of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, in turn, noted that the adoption of the NGO law came “amidst several developments that limit the space for a vibrant civil society in Russia.” It further stated that the EU follows also closely the initiative to limit certain types of the content on the internet, which risks infringing upon the freedom of expression.

In addition to the new law, a number of other restrictions have been enacted since Vladimir Putin’s return to the presidency. These included 150-fold and 300-fold increases to existing fines for violating the rules on the participation in and organization of public protests for individuals and organizations respectively and the reintroduction of libel as a criminal offence in Russia, as well as increased Internet censorship and curbed freedom of expression. Moreover, in September 2012, Russia ordered the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to halt its work in Russia, alleging that it had been meddling in domestic politics by providing grants for election monitoring and other programs. (ICNL 2012.)

### Post-Soviet Transformation and Civil Society<sup>36</sup>

As described above, civil society is a social construct often invoked in debates on democracy, governance, and intercultural understanding. As Mokre and Riekmann (2006) explain, in the West European context, the idea of civil society gives expression to the expectations of European citizens of more direct participation in Europe’s future and the collective choices it entails. With fiscal retrenchment, reduced redistributive outlays and the privatization of public services, the debate on civil society has increasingly focused on its role in economic life and in the support of social welfare policies. This debate suggests that as a political and increasingly economic force, CSOs are often seen as a mirror image of an increasing lack of confidence in the capacity of traditional governance modes to address problems of modern societies.

Within the context of post-socialist transformation, civil society is understood not only as a democratizing force but also as an actor that can compensate for state ‘dysfunctionality’ (Fritz 2004). Particularly in Russia, reforms have dismantled much of the state’s public social welfare systems, shifting the onus of responsibility to the local level and to families. At the same time, many aspects of care have been privatized, but as the market mechanisms in Russia are far from perfect they have been largely incapable to fill the myriad gaps left by the withdrawal of the Soviet state (Walker 2010, 647). As a result, CSOs have

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<sup>36</sup> This chapter is partly based on Scott and Laine (2012).

become deeply invested in providing basic services to those who have suffered the most from economic change. Since 1991, thousands of CSOs have emerged as self-help groups, support groups for disadvantaged and disabled persons, and partners of local governments in the management and delivery of social services (see Salmenniemi 2005; 2007). In addition to these vital services, CSOs have also been engaged in areas of local development that encompass cultural, educational, training, and business development activities – areas where the state has shown little presence, either for ideological or practical reasons.

Processes of political, social, and economic transformation have been the focus of considerable research activity since the collapse of state socialism. The apparent problem has, however, been that in most cases progress in Russia has been measured with a Western yardstick and according to criteria based on ‘international norms.’ As Salmenniemi (2008, 115) notes, the Western civil society theory and post-socialist reality tend not to match up. Caution should thus be exercised when applying ‘Western’ generalizations of case-specific empirical findings influenced by theories of democracy – and based on evolutionary transatlantic experience – rather than on abrupt systemic change (Alapuro 2008; Kocka 2004). Such ‘transformation studies’ have taken civil society as a democratizing and empowering force that is contributing to institutional change and the redefinition of state-society relations (Götz & Hackmann 2003; Raik 2006), yet its social welfare and economic roles are less well understood (see Chagin & Struyk 2004).

The assumption that post-Soviet transformation is, in effect, a process of transition to (Western) democracy in the sense evoked by Przeworski (2000) have been challenged by Alapuro’s (2008, 74) accurate observation that in post-socialist societies CSOs had to be created or revived more or less at the same time as the actors in state institutions were redefined and as the relations between the two were constituted; that is, both the rules of the game and the players who play the game had to be defined simultaneously. Thus, in order to comprehend Russian civil society’s role as an agent of social innovation and change, it is essential to understand the logics that inform its agendas as well as its embeddedness within more general societal contexts. After all, what matters is that civil society actors detect common social and political problems and are thereby of service to the citizens in their efforts to find common solutions (Stenius 2003, 17).

Struyk (2002), Chagin and Struyk (2004), and Anders (2010) have investigated the emergence of social economies within the context of Russia’s post-Soviet transformation. Their work confirms the increasing role of civil society involvement in the delivery of public goods and social welfare services. One of the specificities of the post-Soviet experience is the need to find new survival strategies based on informal networks, the grey economy, and/or new forms of group solidarity given the lack of state support (Round 2008; Walker 2010). At the same time, there are serious constraints that affect the participation

of CSO in Russia's developing social economy. Among the most significant of these is a frequent lack of local support and, at times, competition with local and regional authorities. Perhaps more important, however, is the question of organizational capacity to deliver public goods to large sections of the population.

Muñoz (2010) suggests that geographical research on social enterprise can uncover how the social economy creates local spaces of solidarity under conditions of state retrenchment but also reflects the social conditions that affect local development. In similar fashion, Ridley-Duff (2008) puts forward that behavioral aspects play a central role in understanding how legitimacy and social capital are generated for social enterprise activities. In his view, CSOs can be seen as "complex centres of community-building replete with economic and social goals" and that "social rationality" helps understand the legitimacy of social entrepreneurial activity and management practice (ibid., 301).

### **3.4 SYNOPSIS: WHICH CIVIL SOCIETY?**

Recognizing that civil society does indeed mean different things to different people is one of the keys to moving forward, because it moves us beyond false universals and entrenched thinking (Edwards 2004). This chapter has attempted to clarify this plurality. While it is impossible to arrive to a universally valid definition on what civil society is, the review presented above has sought to show it can be. The division between 'Western' and 'Eastern' conceptions obscures more than it illuminates. There are great variations with the 'West' – the French model is different from the English one and the German tradition differs from the American one. The Finnish model can be seen as a sort of a hybrid borrowing from various traditions.

Different conceptions are based on different interpretations of classical traditions. These interpretations lead to different outcomes and expectation on what can be expected from civil society. They provide a different framing also for this analysis, as the potential role of civil society in CBC is dependent on whether we are talking about a civil society as a community of virtues or as a sphere of particular interests. What also stands out is that the current use of civil society has been moving away from the field of politics and state building. It has become a sphere, an arena operating beyond the confines of national societies politics and economies. What hold it together are not the borders of a nation-state but rather ideas, values, networks, and social capital.

#### **3.4.1 State vis-à-vis Society**

An independent civil society forms the basis for the state, *yet* civil society also requires supportive, enabling legal environment to sustain itself and develop. The modern nation-state can be seen as a platform upon which citizenship is

expressed and where democracy is acted out from the bottom up. The political freedoms together with the system of representation, guarantees, in principle, that the state represents the will of the people – the government consists of the people, is elected by the people, and works for the people. Active civil society, in turn, is seen to have a modernizing and democratizing function within state-society relations (see Scott & Liikanen 2010, 424), though there is not necessarily causal relationship found between the two.

Despite in the increased cross-border and transnational links among CSOs, the respective Finnish and Russian state policies seem to be developing in opposite directions. As long as the concept of civil society remains dependent on the concept of state, this will have an enormous impact on the leverage of civil society. It is hard to influence the system from outside, whereas the closer the linkage between the state and civil society, the more government officials can have a say in the preconditions of civil society operations by way of state policies, regulations, and funding mechanisms. The state's influence may either encourage or hinder civil society development. As Weber (1978) once suggested, the first step towards civil society is a civil state; i.e., a state that creates a setting in which a person wants to become an active citizen. Civil society is different from a society of citizens. The mere number of associations mean little if they are not run by active citizens.

In Finland, a strong civil society has become an inherent part of Finnish participatory democracy. The fundamental provision on representative democracy is confirmed by the Constitution of Finland (1919/2000), section 2.1 of which states, “[t]he powers of the state in Finland are vested in the people, who are represented by the Parliament.” This is to say that the central government in itself does not have its own power but that political power in Finland is held by the people. As J. V. Snellman once said, no independent nation deserves a government other than the one it has, or in other words, that the quality of government of every state corresponds to the level of civilization of that nation (OE 12.5.2006). Consequently, even if the link between the state and civil society in Finland is unusually close, at least according to the liberal understanding, in this sense, at least in principle, it is civil society that steers the state and not vice versa.

Many Members of the Parliament are also active in civil society organizations, and there are legal means for interest and pressure groups to seek to influence and shape the legislation and budgetary decisions. The media in general, and the press in particular, plays a key role within civil society by providing an arena for political debate and representation and voice to citizens as well as by serving as a watchdog. This of course necessitates that there to be an enabling environment that allows them to do so; i.e., state power is not used to limit or control the media.

While in Finland CSOs are seen as serious partners for the public sector, in reality, there are also small hitches. While the decision in principle approved by

the Council of State in March on improving the operational preconditions of the civil society<sup>37</sup> must be taken as a positive signal, its application has been slow in practice. The first report on the realization of the decision in principle was provided to the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (KANE) in June 2010<sup>38</sup>. It was pointed out in the report that although various ministries have been developing processes and measures related to providing support in recent years, few concrete measures to improve the financial capacity of CSOs have been made. Similarly, the practices of consultation with CSOs have developed slowly or even worsened.

Very few Ministries have a valid strategy or action plan for consulting with CSOs, even though the first decision and related governmental policy definitions were made already a decade ago. It is important that the involvement civil society is taken into account in the ministries in strategy preparations and action planning, and this ought to be done already in the early phases of the preparatory work as to promote the participation of citizens and CSOs and to allow extensive and broad ranging consultation between them and the state structures.

As many CSOs interviewed for the purposes of this study confirmed, during the last few years the operating environment has actually changed for the worse and their prerequisites to operate have weakened. The economic recession certainly played a role here, yet on the other hand there has even stronger need for work carried out by CSOs during tough times. For non-profits, the line between working for the public good and encouraging business activities has become ever fuzzier. While this has had clear benefits, it has also meant that CSOs need to follow the at times the rules of the public sector and at times the rules of the business world.

In its 2010 report, the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy evaluated itself in very positive terms by stating that it has provided a forum for government and civil society interaction and for the common preparation of the themes brought up in the 2007 decision in principle. It was stated that the implementation of the decision has been made largely with the KANE's framework, whereas the ministries have launched only a few measures by themselves. In related further preparations, the Advisory Board has suggested ways to strengthen participation, to clarify the role of civil society, and improve their economic preconditions. On June 20, 2012, the Council of State nominated a new Civil Society Policy Advisory Board, the aim of which is to encourage inter-agency cooperation.

Even if one might argue that the respective state of Finland and Russia aspires to sway civil society, at least to a certain extent, based on its own

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<sup>37</sup> Government Decree on the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy 269/2007.

<sup>38</sup> Report available online (in Finnish) at <http://www.kansanvalta.fi/Etusivu/Jarjestotjayhteisot/Neuvottelukunta>.



respective interests the logic behind this desire to influence civil society differs greatly. In Finland, it is understood that a vigorous civil society has to arise from the people and cannot be built by the state, yet the state can act in different ways in steer its development. State-civil society relations are described by close cooperation, open dialogue, and consultation. This confirms the idealist vision according to which the interests of the state and the citizen should be more or less the same; hence they should both be working towards the same end. Finnish civil society actors that affirm close connections to the state do not bear the risk of deepening the discrepancy between the expectations of state agencies as the sponsor, organizer, or regulator of activities and the organizations' own interests:

The support is given because the state thinks the work that has been done is so great, even though it is sometimes critical and more radical but develops... but having radical views it develops a society, you need these kinds of organizations that's why the money is given... and we can continue to be critical even though we get the money. (F #22)

Nevertheless, state agencies have a strong impact on the development and promotion of cooperation, and it is clear that the more CSOs have alternative sources of funding for CBC activities, the more they can define their own strategies.

The situation is obviously more complex in contemporary Russia, a context within which state-civil society relations remain highly contested. The federal discourse has always dominated the state of affairs of state-civil society relations. Russian leadership has repeatedly stated that its aim is *modernization*, not *Europeanization*, and thus CSOs working on the former but not on the latter stand a better chance in the eyes of state authorities. The absence of strong CSOs coalitions and associations does not allow local CSOs to advocate their interests on the national level. As a consequence, they have little influence on CBC state strategies and the corresponding bilateral relationships. Both bottom-up and top-down processes exists, yet while the former process has not necessarily meant that the CSOs are actually being heard, the latter process can be taken merely a channel to tell the selected organization what to think.

### 3.4.2 Civil Society as an Arena

A number of conclusions can be drawn from what is described above. From civil dialogue come great ideas that can lead to important solutions. While not all civil society organizations are necessarily civil nor do they necessarily pursue the common good, the democratizing role of civil society as a whole cannot be denied. By virtue of their mere existence as *autonomous* actors, the various types of CSOs have pluralizing effect and consequently strengthen the institutional arena and the entire society. As Mercer (2002, 8) explains, "more civic actors

means more opportunities for a wider range of interest groups to have a 'voice,' more autonomous organizations to act in a 'watchdog' role vis-à-vis the state, and more opportunities for networking and creating alliances of civic actors to place pressure on the state." Given that many CSOs work at the grassroots level and include marginalized groups, they not only widen (in social and geographical terms) but also deepen (in terms of personal and organizational capacity) possibilities for citizen participation (ibid.).

This being said, civil society remains one of the most misunderstood and misused concepts there is. The reason for this is, however, obvious. What has been meant by the term has fluctuated considerably through time. In addition, the concept continues to mean very different things in different countries and languages. Using it in a global, transnational, or even cross-border context easily obscures more than is illuminated. As a concept, it remains normative, loaded, complex, and context dependent. The liberal democratic assumptions that often shine through Anglophone literature on civil society only restrict the exploration of this complexity and limit the extent to which these studies may actually engage with broader debates about the politics of development. A less value-laden and a more contextualized approach is needed to better understand the role, both political and societal, that various civil society organizations (not just NGOs) play in different contexts.

Looking back to the very beginning and going back to the basics, the concept of civil society is very revealing in this respect. The largely undisputed linkage to the concept of the state, which has formed the very basis of the Western (post-Hegelian) thought should be rethought or, at least, broadened as to allow for more innovative solutions to issues commonly restricted within the national frame. After all, civil society is a social construct invoked not just in debates on democracy and governance but also with respect to intercultural understanding, progress, and social cohesion.

Civil society preceded the state. Aristotle knew no concept of state as we know it today. His *koinonía politiké*, just as civil society today, was a coercion-free association that channeled the collective pursuits to serve the common goal of attaining a good society. Not until, most notably, the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, was a clearer distinction developed between a nonpolitical civil society and the state. No matter what the linkage – be it juxtaposition, symbiosis, or something in between – it restricts the concept of civil society within the frame of a particular nation state. In so doing, this limits civil society's characteristic intent of building an association of free, equal, and like-minded persons united not by a citizenship but by *ethos*.

Is society really comprised of sectors? The commonly used concept of the third sector is misleading in two crucial respects; it is not the third, and it is really not even a sector. Through recent years, the borders between the public, private, and the community sectors have become increasingly blurred. A substantial amount of practices and new organizational arrangements that blend

their own missions either with business practices or public service production have emerged, creating something that is now referred to as a ‘fourth sector.’

While the three-sector model presented above surely helps us to make sense of society, the borders it implies remain arbitrary. Civil society is not so much embedded in the third sector as it is linked to the processes that that produce social capital and common action. As Gilbert (2004, 116) rightly suggests, “[i]f state-supported nonprofit groups enlarge the social capital of civil society, then why not for-profit, company sponsored bowling teams.” The economist term ‘non-profit sector’ is misleading, as civil society has been and remains a political concept.

Inspired by the model put forth by CIVICUS, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, this study aims to conceptualize civil society rather as an arena, a public space or realm where diverse societal values and interests interact. The borders of this space are complex, fuzzy, blurred, negotiated and yet easily penetrable as people come together to discuss and seek to influence the broader society. As such, it does not belong to the distinct arenas of the market, state or family but exists where these amalgamate (Figure 20). There are clear overlaps and incalculable transfers between the different arenas. For some organizations located at or near the border, these distinctions form the very core of their existence. Social economy organizations that have both value and profit-based goals are good examples of this.

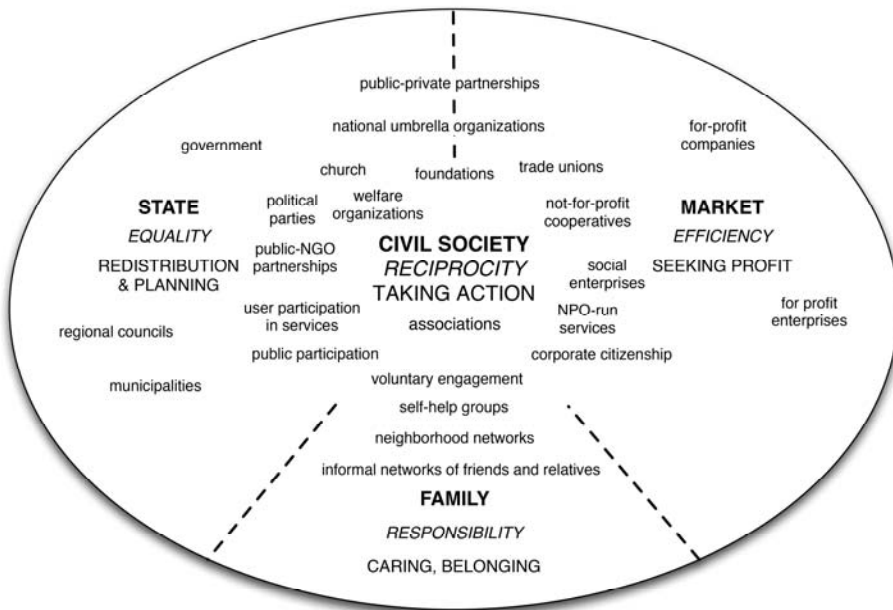


Figure 20. Civil society as an arena with fuzzy borders

Civil society is thus the arena that occupies the space where the other arenas of the society, namely the family, the state, and the market, interact and overlap and where people associate to advance common interests. To associate refers to uncoerced and self-generating collective action that is not part of the formal political decision-making process, controlled directly by state institutions, or dependent from the state interests. While it is true that voluntary associations form the basic building blocks of Western notions of civil society and the Putnamian idea of their ability to foster social capital is by now well established, one cannot but ponder whether participation in associations really makes individuals more 'civic' and active. Could it simply be that active citizens tend to join associations more often than their less engaged counterparts? The verb 'to associate' is used here to refer to the ability and the desire of people to bond and relate to one another, whether under the umbrella of a registered, formal organization or in the form of more spontaneous demonstration.

The civil society arena more generally is part of a complex dual transition from industrial to postindustrial society and from national state to transnational policy regimes (Anheier 2008a). The further it develops, the further it comes to comprise not just an increased number and range of groups and organizations but also increased linkages in between. This only amplifies the corrective voices of civil society as a partner in governance and the market (Connor 1999). Civil society should not be seen only passively, as a network of institutions, but also actively, as the context and product of self-constituting collective actors (Cohen & Arato 1992, xviii). It occupies the space reserved for the formation of demands (input) for the political system and to which the political system has the task of supplying answers (output) (Bobbio 1989, 25). In this context, individuals act collectively in a public sphere and form the public opinion, understood as the public expression or agreement or dissent concerning institutions, which circulates through the media. As Bobbio (1989, 26) exemplifies, a totalitarian state absorbs civil society in its entirety and is thus a state devoid of public opinion.

While the concept of civil society is heavily NGOalized, civil society is comprised also of various other types of organizational forms. These include but are not restricted to, activist groups, charities, clubs, community foundations and organizations, consumer organizations, cooperatives, free media, foundations, non-profit organizations (NPOs), policy institutions, political parties, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), professional associations, religious organizations, social enterprises, support groups, trade unions, and other voluntary associations. The term civil society organization (CSO) is used in this study to refer all of these forms.

A framework that places less emphasis on organizational forms and allows for a broader focus on the functions and roles of informal associations, movements, and instances of collective citizen action makes it more difficult to dictate strictly who is in and who is out. However, only such an action/function-

oriented definition is able to take into account the entire range of civil society actors. As Wollebæk and Strømsnes (2008) suggest, organizations institutionalize rather than generate social capital. The representation of one's interest may thus no longer need to take an associational form as the "specific activity is more important than the framework within which it is carried out" (Wollebæk & Selle 2005, 214). It is thus more important for civil society actors to detect common social and political problems and "thereby, perhaps be of service to the citizens in their efforts to find common solutions" (Stenius 2003, 17).

# 4 *Europeanization of Cooperation*

The two main concepts of this study, border and civil society, which are discussed above have become coupled in exemplary fashion within the European neighborhood-building project. The role of CSOs is crucial in bridging the gaps created by borders and bordering. They provide a powerful driver for building neighborly relations in terms of people-to-people contacts across borders even when under a tense political climate. The civic neighborhood they fashion challenges grand scale policy proposals by creating an alternative avenue for cooperation. Hence, by engaging the civil society, EU policies and programs acquire concrete and real-life content, helping to bring the 'ring of friends' closer to the EU also in mental terms. As it is commonly stated these days, the EU needs civil society in order for its own ambitious visions to succeed. With its Neighborhood Policy, the EU has put forth an attempt to extend its influence beyond its own borders and manage this transnational space under construction. What is less clear is to what extent CSOs are able to grasp the opportunities provided by the EU or to what extent they even need the EU to begin with.

This chapter focuses on this paradigm in the case of the Finnish-Russian border. It explains what is meant by Europeanization, how the frame of cooperation has actually changed since Finland joined the Union, and how civil society has been incorporated into EU structures and policies. As discussed in chapter two, the role that CSOs can be expected to play in cooperation across the external borders of the EU depends on how these borders are viewed and to what European integration and neighborhood-building is expected to lead. All this may appear in a very different light depending on what the EU and Europe are understood to be by nature. This is explored next.

## **4.1 UNDERSTANDING EUROPEAN UNION**

In order to discuss the actual and potential roles of civil society in the European Union, one is first required to understand the very unique nature of the Union per se; i.e., how the process of European integration has affected its borders and cooperation across them. Henry Kissinger famously asked whom he had to call to call Europe. Madeleine Albright proclaimed that to understand Europe, you

had to be a genius – or French. Jacques Delors used to call the EU an “unidentified political object”. It was not until July 2007 that the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso gave a more specific answer to the age-old question by characterizing the EU as the “first non-Imperial empire” (Barroso 2007a/b). But what does that mean?

#### 4.1.1 Are We Rome Yet?

Europe not synonymous with the European Union, but it is undeniable that all countries generally considered to be ‘European’ are still influenced by the EU no matter what their particular membership status might be (Walby 1999). The EU is the most developed and successful form of continental integration seen today. It provides a new cooperative framework, which transcends the nation state, and thus it can be regarded as the “most radical step since the Treaty of Westphalia,” which ushered in a world of modern nation-states (Jhappan 2008, 41). Even though various interpretations exist, few deny that the EU is a *sui generis* entity, a “unique experiment embedding the national in European, and the European in the national” (Laffan, O’Donnell & Smith 2000, 74). It is an economic and political union of, at present, 27 member states. This unquestionably translates to 27 different national interests and different points of view on how to run the Union, but on the other hand the diversity is also bound up by a certain consensus about the key values guiding its actions, *European* values.

If the primary purpose of the European project was to avoid war, then should it not be regarded as already completed? As NAFTA’s development – or lack of it – suggests, neoliberalism is also an inadequate impetus for continental integration. Neofunctionalism is more valid but also insufficient. Whereas the EU has (too) many supranational institutions, NAFTA, which has never set its sights on governance, has none. The difference in the success of these two regimes suggests that integration cannot be based only upon spillover but needs to be managed by institutions; deliberate action is needed for encouraging integration. And, most of all, there must be a vision, a grand idea, like that of Hugo and Monnet, of what is to be. The idea of Europe, the primary manifestation of which is the EU, and what it means today cannot be fully understood without looking back to history.

The EU straddles the accepted categories of a political organization. It is not an ordinary international organization and certainly not a state nor a confederation; it is more than merely a regime or a club but clearly far from being a *Gemeinschaft* (Peterson & Shackleton 2002, 2). Even its territory is not fixed; its geographical, administrative, economic, and cultural borders diverge (Zielonka 2008, 473). The EU is a supranational body, not a *de jure* federation. Even though it possesses some attributes of a federal state, its central government is far weaker and more distant from the populace than that of most federations (say, Russia or the United States). The individual members of the EU

are sovereign states under international law and retain thus the right to act independently in, for instance, foreign policy related matters. Accordingly, EU institutions are designed to concurrently both overcome national interest in favor of common European action and protect national sovereignty (Kuus 2011b, 1144).

The EU imbricates the national alongside the transnational and vice versa, thereby illustrating bureaucratic processes on scales and contexts other than the nation-state (Kuus 2011b, 1141). It presents a new form of multi-level governance within which sovereignty is pooled, loyalties mingle, civil society is scattered along the lines of the nation-states and regions, the common public sphere is largely absent, and political processes are characterized by peculiar temporality (Moisio 2007a, 538). It is a polity without a coherent demos, a power without identifiable purpose, a geopolitical entity without defined territorial limits (Zielonka 2008, 473–474). But as Kuus (2011b, 1144) notes, it is precisely the fact that the EU is a complex polycentric and transnational institution that does not fully fit into any of the models that makes it an illuminating example of transnational governmentalized geopolitics – it is exceptional not because it illustrates existing models but because it defies them.

The EU is discussed on daily basis, and many criticize its policies and actions, at times with little or no knowledge of what they really are. The EU, it is said, is a process, a project yet to be completed, not a ready-made product. It evolves with each passing day making the analysis of it a problematic task. However, many researchers have taken on this challenge. The EU has been and is one of the most elusive subjects to study and, hence, a topic of countless academic writings. Particularly the scholars of International Relations but also of regional planning and political geography have competed in analyzing the EU's potential geopolitical strategies and the developing spatial structure by providing diverse conceptualizations of the EU, both as a political space and as an actor in the world system (see, e.g., Browning & Joenniemi 2008; Bialasiewicz et al. 2009).

Garton Ash (2004) appropriately argues that for the reason that “the EU is called the *European Union*” [emphasis added] and not “the Freedom Union or the Peace Union or the democracy Union” the answer to questions on Europe's territory must be, in the first place, geographical. Granted that its borders to the North, West and South are relatively fixed, the question concerns the Eastern limits of Europe. This brings the role of Russia to the heart of the debate. The other dimension of the question is not geographical but political: What is the end point of the European project? That is to say, Garton Ash (2004) clarifies, the kind of political community one envisions for Europe determines how far one wants to go and how far one goes clearly determines the kind of political community Europe can aspire to.

Zielonka (2001) distinguishes two contrasting models for the course of European integration. The first – a ‘Westphalian Super-state’ encircled by hard and fixed external borders – entails the concentration of power (Brussels),



hierarchy, sovereignty, and clear-cut identity. The second and more likely model – a “Neo-medieval Empire, inspired by Wæver (1997) if not Bull (1977) with soft border zones in constant flux – involves overlapping authorities, divided sovereignty, diversified institutional arrangements, and multiple identities (ibid., 509–510).

In 2001, Zielonka deliberated that if the EU indeed wished to develop towards a modern state, the existing disjunction between the EU’s functional (administrative borders, military frontiers, cultural traits, market transaction fringes, etc.) and territorial boundaries ought to be fixed. Otherwise, following Weberian reasoning, it would perish (Zielonka 2001, 511). While super statism has been widely rejected, the neo-Westphalian fantasy has been visible in the debates concerning the future of the EU’s external borders as the modern image of territory seems to be a taken for granted as part of understanding on how politics should be organized spatially (Moisio 2007b, 90).

The mere border aside, Zielonka (2006; 2008) has later come to the conclusion that the Union looks and acts like an empire thanks to its attempts to assert political and economic control over peripheral actors through formal annexations or economic and political domination. The EU’s ‘imperial’ instruments, Zielonka (2008, 475) specifies, are predominantly economic and bureaucratic rather than military and political. Its territorial acquisitions take place “by invitation rather than conquest”; its main strategy of influence is to show by example and hope that its magnetism and assertiveness are enough to motivate others to follow. Accordingly, with their concept of ‘cosmopolitan empire’ Beck and Grande (2007, 53) underline that this process is not about national demarcation and conquest but rather about overcoming national borders, voluntarism, consensus, transnational interdependence, and the political added value accruing from cooperation.

Browning (2005; Browning & Joenniemi 2008) builds on Zielonka but adds a third option, which he calls ‘Imperial Europe.’ Unlike the Westphalian metaphor that depicts EU power and governance as relatively uniform throughout the entire area, the Imperial model depicts a series of concentric circles emanating out from Brussels and representing different ‘degrees’ of Europeanness (see, e.g., Moisio 2003a, 83–84; Aalto 2006; Kuus 2007). Power and subjectivity decrease with physical distance from the center, in consequence relegating the non-candidate countries to the very outer circles. Such logic, Browning & Joenniemi (2008, 524) explain, has been evident most notable in the EU’s ‘peace mission’ that has not been limited to bringing stability throughout Europe but extended beyond its external border in an attempt to spread ‘European values’ to those on the outside.

The idea of concentric circles is similar to what had been proposed earlier by Agnew (2001), who foresaw a threefold division emerging in Europe. Agnew’s ‘first Europe’ consisted of the core (old member states) seeking to deepen integration. ‘Second Europe’ included peripheral Europe (the then EU

applicants), and 'third Europe' was formed by the external Europe; i.e., the states excluded from the membership but serving both as a resource periphery and as an emerging market for the EU. It is important to notice, as Moisiso (2007b, 91) has done, that the three-tier structure led to the formation of two different kinds of borders within Europe: the loose yet significant border demarking the core from second Europe and a strict border setting apart the EU from third Europe.

The metaphor of a neomedieval mosaic of different territorial units, in turn, resonates well with Scott's (2005, 444) geopolitics of 'dimensionality,' which suggests that instead of the power being based on one dominant 'core' it is scattered among several different 'centers'. Such a regional organization of the European political space ('Europe of regions') has been conceptualized and visualized in terms of a 'Europe of Olympic Rings' (Emerson 1999; Joenniemi 2000, 129–131; Medvedev 2000, 100). Being 'regionalized,' governance, authority, and decision-making get dispersed and brought closer to the people, and in so doing better corresponding to the more issue-based rather than territorially oriented logic of transnationalism and network governance (Joenniemi 2000 129–31; Browning 2005; Browning & Joenniemi 2008, 525).

In northern Europe the model of neomedieval Europe has been in vogue and put actively in practice by the northern regional councils and the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI). The metaphor of Olympic rings is presented as a way to integrate Russia into Europe irreversibly. Within northern Europe, the Olympic rings metaphor would reflect the dissolution of the stubborn 'East-West' and 'we-them' divisions ingrained in people's minds during the Cold War era (Browning & Joenniemi 2008, 525; Laine 2011, 181). Whereas the concentric order of European integration, advocated *inter alia* by Aalto (2006, 36–37), grants Russia a position best described as a close outsider or semi-outsider, i.e., close enough to be affected by EU integration but not 'in' in any clearly conceivable manner. The Olympic ring approach "reaches out to Russia, engaging her in a non-discriminating manner, not as a periphery but as a full-fledged partner" (Medvedev 2000, 100). In such a vision Russia is seen to possess regulating and constituting power to engage in equal terms in defining new northernness as a neutral framework to which Russia itself could ultimately choose whether or not it wishes to become involved (Browning 2003, 51).

The different accounts derive from different integration theories, ranging from Coudenhove-Kalergi's constitutional federalist, Churchill's unionist, and Monnet's functionalist-federalist bases to Mitrany's functionalist, Haas' Neo-functional, Moravcsik's (liberal) intergovernmentalist, and lastly to the dysfunctionalist (securitization leading to disintegration) logic. These discussions could undoubtedly form topics of inquiry of their own. However, comprehending their multiplicity is crucial here as the conceptions of European borders are dependent on the perception of what the European integration is all about. Borders appear in very a different light depending on whether the EU is

expected to be, inter alia, a federalist project, an economic functionalistic necessity, a European state, or a community of values. Then again, the opposite is also true. As I aim to show in this study, the process of European integration, and even more so that of neighborhood building, is dependent on how these borders are defined – or perceived.

In order to conceptualize this, Walters (2004) has proposed a number of border discourses, ‘geostrategies,’ that correspond with a particular way of organizing the space of the border. A geostrategy, Walters (2004, 679) clarifies, is not intended to be a totalizing description of a particular reality but as a frame built on a particular logic and to be understood at the level of political aspirations, objectives, and ambitions. Understanding the multiplicity of geostrategies allows us to move away from seeing borders as expressions of a state power and analyze power from the ground up: “[g]eostrategies are irreducible; they are the conditions of possibility for the exercise of power, not merely its local manifestation” (ibid.).

Walters (2004, 697) calls his first geostrategy the *networked (non)border*. It resonates with ideas of deterritorialization, post-modernist debates about a borderless world, and the EU as an avant-garde network-state. This geostrategy, he notes, is driven by the imperative “to eliminate the barriers which divide Europe,” as once suggested by the Treaty of Rome; i.e., the neo-liberal imperative to remove obstacles to the ‘free movement’ of people, goods, and services. This geostrategy downplays the relevance of the spatial border and geographical borderlines, dispersing policing and systems of control throughout the territory. Instead of ‘us’ verses ‘them’ divides, it envisages sharing responsibility with outsiders through cooperation between state agencies on both sides of the border, and, in so doing, transcending traditional views of borders: “[r]ather than the edge or the wall, the border becomes a strategic node within a transnational network of control” (Walters 2004, 679–680).

The second geostrategy is named the *march*. According to Walters (2004, 683–694), a march can be understood as a neutral strip between entities, as a (inter-) zone of interaction and assimilation between peoples of different cultures. As elaborated by Browning and Joenniemi (2008, 528), the march may also be understood as a buffer zone, as a protective belt or a security zone keeping the disorder at a distance, separating the cosmos inside from the chaos outside.

Walters’ third geostrategy, the *colonial frontier*, is rooted in Turner’s (1920) famous frontier thesis. It conceives the border as “a dynamic space, a meeting point between a power, a culture and its outside” (Walters 2004, 687). The border gets thus represented as a mobile, expandable zone where an organized power meets its outside in a relationship of transformation and assimilation. It is the setting of an asymmetrical relationship in which the expanding power assumes the right to define what is appropriate and just and organize the political space according what it considers to be proper (ibid., 688). As a result,

the outside becomes transformed in line with the preferences of the inside, if not gradually incorporated by the inside (Browning & Joenniemi 2008, 529).

Lastly, Walters (2004, 690) introduces the geostrategy of the *limes*, which is like the colonial frontier, taking shape between a power and its outside: “un monde et son contraire” (Rufin 2001, 149), between the Empire and the barbarians, or cosmos and chaos (Tunander 1997) but more permanent. The *limes* are an edge, fringe, or limit. The strategy of *limes* does not envisage a progressive or eventual subsumption of the exterior territory and its inhabitants but draws a limit of expansion in an attempt to consolidate and preserve what the empire has achieved and incorporated. This has to be done to maintain peace and stability on the Empire fringes, “to insulate; to maintain a distinction between the stability and order within, and disorder, nomadism, barbarism outside” (Walters 2004, 691). A depiction well represented in the metaphor of ‘Fortress Europe’ or the gated community with selectively closed borders described by van Houtum and Pijpers (2007).

While it is crucial to understand is that the way in which the EU is understood also defines how its borders ought to be viewed, Browning and Joenniemi (2008, 528) make an important remark by noting that Walters’ four geostrategies ought not be associated directly with the particular geopolitical models (Westphalian, Imperial, and Neomedieval) noted above. Even though in some cases resonance is clear (e.g., the geostrategy of the colonial frontier matched well with the model of Imperial Europe), linking the models and geostrategies too closely precludes, first, that the different models and geostrategies will be present in different strengths at the same time and in different locations and, second, that the geostrategies and models might actually meld together over time (see Browning & Joenniemi 2008 for detailed examples).

#### **4.1.2 A Non-EU Europe?**

The fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union reopened the age-old geographical question about the eastern border of Europe (Moisio 2007b, 82). The slogan of “returning to Europe” was used in Eastern Europe both during the anti-communist insurgency in 1989 (Sakwa 2006, 21) and again during the EU accession negotiation leading to the 2004–2007 double enlargement (O’Loughlin 2000). The post-Communist candidates wished to distance their territories from the domination of Moscow and proclaimed that they belonged to the heart of Europe both culturally and geographically. According to them, the expansion was simply a matter of returning the borders of “natural Europe” (Moisio 2007b, 85).

As Moisio (2007b, 82–83) reminds us, Europe is “an ambiguous political geographical category the content of which reflects changing social, political and economic processes and contexts.” There has never been nor will there ever be a consensus on where Europe ‘begins’ or ‘ends’ or on what is and what is not European ‘identity’ (see Boedeltje & van Houtum 2008). Historically, its ‘real

content' has been constantly renegotiated and bound to multiple political discourses and practices (Murphy 2005). Thus the EU is nothing but the current phase of its development (Moisio 2007b, 83).

Sakwa (2006, 22) argues that there remain fundamental tensions between the dynamics of official European integration, processes of pan-European unity, and forms of cultural coherence that reflect continent-wide European civilization. Accordingly, he defines three competing concepts of "European solidarity, if not unity" which seek to challenge the post-Cold War order. Sakwa's 'Official Europe' refers to the integration of the EU. According to this frame, the definition of 'European-ness' became grounded in the Copenhagen Criteria: democracy, the rule of law, human rights, full citizenship rights for national minorities, and a functioning market economy. Sakwa explains that it was the process of EU enlargement itself that challenged the whole continent to rethink what it meant to be 'European.' As argued by Garton Ash (1996; see also 1999), the 'EU-rope' caught the wrong bus in the 1990s when deepening was allowed to take precedence over widening, leaving East Europeans in a lurch. While the official EU-based model is apparently by far the most important and visible form of European integration, it is not the only one.

By 'Pan-Europe' Sakwa (2006, 23–25) brings back the already longstanding intellectual idea of Greater Europe, the establishment of a European federation based on the principles of inclusivity and the universal applicability of human rights and democratic aspirations. Eloquenty advocated most famously by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi in 1923 and, more recently, by Mikhail Gorbachev's espousal of the 'Common European Home' from the Atlantic to the Pacific, is founded on its inter-governmental rather than supra-national, institutional structure (Council of Europe, European Convention on Human Rights, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe). However, while some pan-European institutions continue to develop, Sakwa notes, the ideal itself has been marginalized.

Thirdly, Sakwa's (2006, 24–25) 'Civilizational Europe' builds on the infamous Huntingtonian logic that culture, identity, and separateness would replace ideology as the primary source of conflict. Acknowledging appropriately the flaws of Huntington's (1993) thesis, Sakwa agrees with the view that as one set of conflicts faded with end of the Cold War, allowing all peoples of the continent to "argue that 'we are all Europeans now,'" a new set emerged. What Huntington failed to address, Sakwa argues, were those elements that, on the flipside, unite the peoples of Europe culturally as a single European people in a single cultural space.

It takes, however, two to tango. Albeit often ignored, the Russian side has its own approaches as well. Fuelled by the obvious stagnation, even decline, in the EU-Russia integrative project proposals have been made to shift the terms of discourse. An insufficiently reciprocal and overly EU-imposed nature of the EU-Russian 'partnership' on the one hand and reaffirmation of state sovereignty

that characterized the Putin presidency on the other have not lead to integration but rather to more conflict (Prozorov 2006, Chapters 3 & 6, see also Morozov 2009) and harmed thus also the overarching potential of others to influence Russian development through intergovernmental cooperation. The best way forward for the two, Prozorov (ibid.) suggests, would be to stop living in a constant state of conflict and “divorce”. This would allow Russia to self-exclude itself from Europe –neither join nor confront Europe but to simply “get over” it (Remizov 2002 in Prozorov 2006, 67), which in turn could have made it possible for Russia to interact with the EU without having to constantly consider the possibility of integration.

Following this logic, neo-revisionist ideas about ‘Greater Europe’ have been developed in Russia to challenge the West-centric representations of Europe. As introduced by Sakwa (2010, 5), the idea has not been to deny the EU but rather to look at the question of Europe from less of an institutional perspective; i.e., to “devise an alternative vision of the European idea... that has not been ‘privatized’ by the EU.” While the idea of Greater Europe comes close to Sakwa’s Pan-Europe, there is a crucial difference between them. While the former is focused on the expression of the abstract ideal of European commonality and unity, the latter is more of an institutions based project (Sakwa 2010, 16). As a positive and mutually advantageous post-enlargement agenda, the Greater Europe would provide Russia with “an escape from the burden of marginality” (ibid., 21) yet allow the EU to advance its interests on the international stage though economical and political interaction with Russia (Bordachev 2006). Building on Gorbachev’s vision of a common European home stretching from Limerick to Vladivostok, Bordachev (2006) proposes that one possible way to proceed could be a creation of a grand international regime, a ‘Pan-Eurasian Union’ based on intergovernmental cooperation that would provide Eurasia with structural stability.

#### **4.1.3 Historical Context: What Form for a Union?**

A day will come when your arms will fall even from your hands! A day will come when war will seem as absurd and impossible.... A day will come when... you all, nations of the continent, without losing your distinct qualities and your glorious individuality, will be merged closely within a superior unit and you will form the European brotherhood.... A day will come when the only fields of battle will be markets opening up to trade and minds opening up to ideas.... A day will come when we will display cannon in museums just as we display instruments of torture today, and are amazed that such things could ever have been possible. (Victor Hugo, Opening Address to the Peace Congress (Paris, August 21, 1849))

In Finland, the story of the EU is commonly told by beginning that Finland joined the Union in 1995, after which a number of developments have taken

place. While that cannot be denied, the alternative approach would be to argue that in 1995 Finland jumped aboard moving train and went for a ride. After all, the most crucial issue concerning Europe's future had already been decided. The grand idea had been completed and wars had become practically unimaginable. The day that Victor Hugo once talked about had already come and gone. Many things had become taken for granted. It is, however, crucial to understand that things could have gone differently.

When did the European integration process begin? Surely, the Roman Empire can be seen as the very first effort to integrate a part of the European continent together with the regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea (Pagden 2002). Subsequently, the Middle Ages unified Europe under the banner of Christendom and propped up the ideas about 'eurocentrism' and the supremacy of the European civilization (Jordan 2002). The Renaissance as well as the Enlightenment played crucial roles in shaping the ideas seen to constitute the ultimate foundation of the European project: tolerance, freedom, respect of human rights, and democracy.

For centuries, Europe was the backdrop of numerous bloody wars. The devastation elicited many philosophers and visionaries<sup>39</sup> to dream of a creation of unified Europe, a sort of a United States of Europe. The ideas about a unified Europe grew more popular during the years following World War I, but it was not until the overwhelming horrors of World War II that actual progress began to take place. As pointed out by Della Sala (2008, 116), two camps both having their own visions on how to build a more closely-knit Europe emerged right from the very beginning. The first group often referred to as the idealists, federalist, or supranationalists wished to create a new continental political union to supersede the nation-state and overpower its grounding force, nationalism – a major contributor to the horrors of the WW I and II. This camp believed in creating strong federal political institutions and, above all, a supranational government directly responsible to the European citizens (Harryvan & van der Harst 1997, 4).

The second group, which Della Sala (2008, 116) calls intergovernmentalists, voted for a looser form of integration, driven largely by economic goals, between independent nation-states. It soon emerged that the former camp had only a few supporters among leading politicians and also the public at large was unwilling to resign its allegiance to a particular member state. The idealist vision took yet another blow as the Cold War began in 1947 dividing Europe into two spheres of influence dominated by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, both of the camps came together in their shared desire to ensure that such devastation would never happen again. After the war was over, a

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<sup>39</sup> E.g., William Penn, Abbot Charles de Saint-Pierre, Victor Hugo, Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, and Giuseppe Mazzini.

number of European statesmen including Schuman of France, Adenauer of Germany, de Gasperi of Italy, and Churchill of United Kingdom began to persuade public opinion towards the creation of new European structures, which would be based on mutual interests and founded upon treaties guaranteeing the rule of law and equality between all countries. In 1949, the Council of Europe was established as the first international organization working towards European integration. To the disappointment of the idealists-federalist camp, the nation-states refused to give up their ascendancy and rejected the idea of creating a purely supranational organization. As a consequence, the Committee of Ministers was established as an inter-governmental counterweight to the potentially too pro-European Parliamentary Assembly under the Statute of the Council of Europe (Harryvan & van der Harst 1997, 5).

The following year, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman took up an idea originally conceived by Commissioner Jean Monnet and proposed establishing a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) with the idea of turning the raw materials of war into the instruments of reconciliation and peace. The ECSC was officially created in 1951, as France, Italy, the Benelux countries together with West Germany signed the Treaty of Paris. Even if a fairly technical measure to begin with, the ECSC had a clear political objective in initiating the process of interdependence that would make war a costly option (Della Sala 2008, 116). Even if alternate opinions exist, it has been argued that Monnet's idea was to achieve the federalist goal of the political unification of Europe with functional means; i.e., by a sectoral integration web from which the national government could not escape (Harryvan & van der Harst 1997, 6). The ECSC also gave birth to the supranational executive called a 'High Authority' (now the European Commission, formally the Commission of the European Communities), the parliamentary Common Assembly (now the European Parliament), a Court of Justice and the Special Council of Ministers (now the Council of the European Union).

After failed attempts at creating a European Defense Community (EDC) as well as a European Political Community (EPC), two other proposals for European integration were introduced in 1955. Monnet's plan was to bring the European nations closer to each other functionally by focusing on atomic energy, where as Jan Willem Beyen, Dutch foreign minister at the time, wanted to see a creation of a common market in Western Europe. After arduous negotiations, the 'original six' decided to embark upon cooperation on both atomic and economic matters. The conciliation led eventually to the signing of the Treaty of Rome on March 25, 1957. The treaty created both the common market, i.e., European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). Interestingly, the treaty also set up the European Social Fund (ESF), a financial instrument for supporting employment as well as promoting economic and social cohesion. In 1960, seven European states that



were either unable or unwilling to join the EEC founded an alternate trade bloc, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) with a loose intergovernmental structure.

The new situation forced also Finland to reassess its protectionist foreign-trade policies to safeguard its export interests (Paavonen 2001; 2008). After technical and, in particular, political barriers had been removed through negotiations with EFTA members, GATT signatories and the Soviet Union, Finland became an EFTA associate member in 1961 with the Finn-EFTA agreement (becoming a full member in 1986). The agreement has been rightfully projected as a turning point in Finnish foreign economic policy (Paavonen 1991), though since then its significance has been overshadowed by Finnish membership in the EU.

Contrary to the earlier expectations, the EEC, fuelled by the late 1950s and 1960s economic boom as well as its unique blend of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, had soon overshadowed Euratom as the engine of the European integration process (Harryvan & van der Harst 1997, 90). Still, the supranational design of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) proposed by the EEC triggered a crisis as France regarded it as an unacceptable renunciation of sovereignty. In protest, France began its 'empty chair' policy and refused to participate in the European institutions until its veto reinstated. The crisis was resolved by the Luxembourg compromise in 1966, which put forth a gentlemen's agreement permitting members to use a veto on areas of national interest – paralyzing, in so doing, the supranational side of the EEC altogether. In 1967, the Merger Treaty, which combined the institutions of the ECSC and Euratom into that of the EEC, came into operation. From there on, the combination of these three individual communities became to be referred to as the European Communities, with a common executive organ, the Commission of the European Communities, which now replaced its predecessor, the High Authority.

The first enlargement in 1973, when the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland entered the Community, was followed by an era of 'Europessimism' and 'Eurosclerosis.' The British saw themselves as contributing disproportionately to the Community's budget and the public at large saw the European labor markets stagnating in contrast to fast-moving markets particularly in North America (Armstrong, Lloyd & Redmond 1996). The enlargement gave also impetus for a creation of a Community-wide regional policy, which came to fruition in 1975 in the form of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aiming to diminish regional disparities – an idea that had existed in the Community rhetoric since the preamble of the Treaty of Rome.

As Greece joined the Community in 1981, as did Spain along with Portugal in 1986, the membership of the European Community had already doubled from the original six to 12. The Single European Act (SEA), signed in 1986 was the first major revision of the 1957 Treaty of Rome. It added new momentum to

European integration, set the European Community an objective of establishing a Common Market, reinforced the powers of the European Parliament, and codified European Political Cooperation, the predecessor of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

The Parliament's powers were further upgraded by the Treaty on European Union (TEU), i.e., the Maastricht Treaty, in 1992. The treaty represented a new stage in European integration since it opened the way to political integration. It created the 'three pillars' of the EU; the Community pillar, 2) the pillar devoted to the common foreign and security policy, and 3) the pillar devoted to justice and home affairs (JHA). It also gave rise to the Committee of the Regions (CoR), a consultative assembly providing regions direct representation in Brussels and act as a direct link between the EU and its citizens, introduced the concept of European citizenship, and launched the economic and monetary union (EMU).

The European Economic Area (EEA) was established in 1994 following an agreement between member states of the EFTA and the EU. It allowed EFTA countries to participate in the European single market without joining the EU. The EEA Agreement is concerned principally with the four fundamental pillars of the Internal Market, 'the four freedoms,' i.e., freedom of movement of goods, persons, services, and capital. The following year, it was Finland's turn to join the Union together with Austria and Sweden. Consequently, the number of external borders increased, and the EU got its first land border with Russia. The Schengen agreement, originally signed already in 1985, came into effect during the same year and created a territory without internal borders.

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), amending the Maastricht treaty, downplayed intergovernmental cooperation and pushed forward a model of a supranational Union by incorporating the Schengen convention into the EU legal framework, increasing the role of the EU in home affairs, and by expanding the number of decisions covered by Qualified Majority Voting (QMV). The treaty projected an image of a Europe united across the old Iron Curtain and aimed to make the EU more democratic in preparation for the imminent eastwards enlargement. The European project took another step when the idea of a single currency finally materialized as the Euro was launched on January 1, 2002.

In preparing for the Unions' enlargement to 25 Member States, the Treaty of Nice (2001) reformed the institutional structure of the EU to withstand eastward expansion and safeguard that the Union could continue to function efficiently. The acceptance of ten new countries, in May 2004 finally ended "the division of Europe decided by the Great Powers 60 years earlier at Yalta" (Commission of the European Communities 2007). Later that same year, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE) was famously rejected.

In 2007 Bulgaria and Romania joined the Union, after which the Treaty of Lisbon was created to replace the Constitutional Treaty and to end the pillar system. It sought to make the EU more democratic, efficient, open, transparent,

and participative, but it also expanded the post of a EU Foreign Minister (i.e., High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) with the purpose of making the EU's external actions more effective and coherent. Since December 2011, the High Representative has been also in charge of the European External Action Service (EEAS), which has been intended to be a common Foreign Office or Diplomatic Corps for the EU.

Despite its increased securitization emphasis, the CFSP must be taken as a major milestone for it largely sidelined the traditional juxtaposition of intergovernmentalism and supranationalism. Instead of a single and centrally designed policy, it introduced a very European form of foreign policy governance as a collective enterprise through which national actors conduct partly common, partly separate international actions (Diedrichs 2011, 149–150). It thus operates in a pragmatic and flexible though sometimes a rather mixed way by combining different instruments and creating opportunities for joint or common resources (ibid., 172) while at the same time making the EU look like a unitary actor – at least more than in most other cases.

## 4.2 EUROPEANIZATION – THEORY OR PRACTICE?

Though contributions to the Europeanization debate are abundant<sup>40</sup>, one cannot help but notice that the differing points of view tend not to add up and accumulate. Each of the writings provides rather yet another definition or standpoint with little effort to build upon earlier works. Accordingly, Olsen (2002) has suggested that despite being fashionable buzzword, the concept remains an “attention-directing device” with limited usability in capturing complex European dynamics. It has often failed to raise interpretations above the level of more or less politically inspired rhetoric. Even though Europeanization is far from being a theory, when understood properly and defined carefully, the concept of Europeanization can, however, provide an illuminating tool for analysis.

A central aspect of the European re-territorialization process is the definition of rules, norms, and practices that aim to ‘Europeanize’ national spaces in order to create a ‘common’ set of discourses in which various policy issues can be negotiated (Clark & Jones 2008). In the Finnish context, such Europeanization, i.e., European Unionization, began the day Finland joined the Union, if not before. Even though this became evident in the national and regional level administrative discussion concerning CBC policies, first and foremost, in the

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<sup>40</sup> See, e.g., Börzel (2002), Buller and Gamble (2002), Dyson (2002), Goetz and Hix (2000), Harmsen and Wilson (2000), Kendall (2005), Ladrech (2002), Olsen (2002; 2003), Radaelli (2000; 2003; 2004), Ruzza (2000; 2010), Warleigh (2001), Moisisio et al. (2013).

rhetoric used and word choices made, the turn signaled deeper and broader changes in political perspectives.

As state controlled bilateral relations had come to an end, the border became more open on a regional level and the CBC projects became streamlined to match with the policy frames defined by the EU and the new Europeanizing rhetoric (Liikanen et al. 2007). In addition to a diffusion of norms, values, procedures, and agendas (see, e.g., Harmsen & Wilson 2000; Diez, Agnantopoulos & Kaliber 2005) and institutional convergence (see Olsen 2002; Stone Sweet, Sandholtz & Fligstein 2001), Europeanization can be understood to take place in terms of new forms of 'external governance' (Lavenex 2004). The ENP, in particular, has been taken as an element through which the EU exercises political, social, and economic influence in the neighborhood (Bosse 2009; Gawrich, Melnykovska & Schweickert 2010; Lavenex & Wichmann 2009). This suggests that Europeanization, originally associated with European integration and enlargement, is expanding territorial notions of the political community beyond the EU's borders (Sasse 2008).

The nature of the EU's geopolitical influence has been captured, inter alia, in terms of 'soft power,' 'civilian power,' and 'conditionality' (Bachmann & Sidaway 2008; 2009; Kochenov 2008; Manners 2002; Telo 2005). This debate paints the EU as a 'normative power' (Tocci et al. 2008) but at the same time recognizes that this power is not only exercised through explicit policy reformulations (such as the ENP) but that the EU exerts its transformative power beyond its external borders also through more subtle and informal channels (Scott & Liikanen 2010, 424). The EU's 'normative power' does not depend on treaties, military presence, security doctrine, or even distinct policies (Bachmann & Sidaway 2009) but rather upon showing an example – influencing "...not by what it says or does, but by what it is" (Manners 2002, 252). Above and beyond ENP, the Europeanization of the Neighborhood is being promoted through other means, such as Euroregions, regional development, and spatial planning policies, as well as research funding schemes. Thus the 'idea' of the EU in itself has become a powerful force for change in interstate relations (Scott & van Houtum 2009).

Filtenborg, Gänzle and Johannson (2002) suggest that processes of decentralized horizontal political socialization ('network governance') are increasing the overall societal significance of the EU *acquis* beyond its borders, while Raik (2006) argues that civil society provides an increasingly important alternative channel to formal institutions through which these cross-border influences are transmitted and the EU-European values, norms, and policy concerns (e.g., the virtues of cooperation, social capital, democratic 'ownership,' sustainability, solidarity, and cohesion) are diffused. In order to bring Europe closer to the people and fight against the democratic deficit, the Commission has reached out to the national and sub-national levels and sought ways to incorporate them into policy formulation and implementation. Due to a lack of

success on the intergovernmental level, more emphasis was placed on the role of civil society and the people-to-people dimension also in building the Neighborhood. The strengthening of civil society is considered both as an end in itself and as a device to bring about political reform (Kohler-Koch 2008, 16). Nielsen, Berg and Roll (2009, 255) note that the CSOs in the neighboring countries may function as effective mediators of the EU's external policies. While the EU forms an attractive external stimulus for organizations working for change, the CSOs in turn function as agents of 'bottom-up' Europeanization working as they pursue visions of good governance, à la the EU, and in so doing contributing to the sort of milieu shaping that the EU typically favors as an external relations strategy.

Europeanization is a complex and misused concept. It is separate from plain internationalization. It is, originally, an adaptive process in relation to European integration, yet today it is better taken as a process of its own as there needs not to be a causal relationship between the two. It refers to patterns of change whereby, inter alia, rules, norms, values, and resources are denationalized and become directed towards and/or increasingly influenced by the European (more precisely, European Union) model. The dissemination and assimilation of 'European' administrative and institutional structures and policy practices contribute to the emergence of geopolitical, perhaps even identity political space of action, which is dominated by the EU (Radaelli 2004, 3). As Cram (2008, 116; 2009; cf. Billig 1995) asserts, instead of being a result from a "teaching exercise" or a corollary of the functionalistic logic of shifting loyalties, it rather comes about as a 'banal Europeanism' caused by the 'enhabitation' of the EU at an everyday level. It is the taken for granted rhetoric and practices that create and repeatedly reinforce not just the concept of Europe as a legitimate actor and an authority structure but also the notion of the European public and European as a legitimate category of identity (Cram 2001; 2006).

## **4.3 RUSSIA AS PARTNER AND GLOBAL PLAYER**

### **4.3.1 A Neighbor, a Partner or on its Own?**

The political, social, and economic development of Russia has a crucial impact on the manner in which it interacts with the outside world and on the stability of the entire international system. Its apparent and yet again increasing, political weight is felt abroad as well. Accordingly, it is in the interest of these countries to try to influence the course of Russian development. The problem has been that in many of these policies and instruments Russia has been regarded as an object rather than an equal partner. A number of studies have focused on what Russia lacks rather than on what it has to offer. The turmoil of the 1990s in Russia allowed the EU, in particular, to insist on building the relations based on

the principle of conditionality with an underlying objective to steer Russia gently yet forcefully on its path to a 'better,' i.e., European, future.

Russia of the 1990s and Russia of the 2000s were, however, two different places. Unlike with all other EU's immediate neighbors, which were willing to play the game and give integration with the EU a paramount priority on their national political agenda, Russia regarded the EU's offer of integration without joining (see Marin 2006) as insufficient for legitimizing the given conditions. The Russian view on the issue has been insightfully analyzed by Prozorov (2006) and more recently Morozov (2009), who both see that the logic of the interaction between the EU and Russia does not lead to integration but rather results in more conflict due to a lopsided, EU-imposed disposition. Prozorov (2006, 11–20) argues that this continuous conflict essentially derives from the two existing Western strands of theorizing, 'traditionalism' and 'transitionalism.'

Whereas the traditionalist approach regards Russia as forever bound to the different, Eastern heritage of authoritarian rule and thus posits Russia as the a priori 'other' of Europe, the transitionalist approach, in turn, espouses a linear teleology of liberal-democratic transformation, projecting that Russia would ascribe to Western norms and values on its way towards becoming a modern democratic society. The insufficiently reciprocal and intersubjective nature of the EU-Russian 'partnership' on the one hand and reaffirmation of state sovereignty that characterized the Putin presidency on the other increased the tendency towards Russia's 'self-exclusion' from integrative processes (Prozorov 2006, 67) and harmed thus also the overarching potential of others to influence Russian development through intergovernmental cooperation.

In contrast to a period of Russian weakness during the 1990's deconstruction of the Cold War international order, the pre-1990s great power era and related world model is often viewed as the good and thriving period in the Russian history. As the great power politics, and in particular the Cold War realism, was of course based on the on dominance of the modern state and the expectation of international anarchy, the EU preferred world order of a democratic community of states failed to resonate with the Russian reading. Based on such an understanding, it was hardly a surprise that Russia's political elite continued to perceive the EU not as what it had proclaimed to be but either as a neo-liberal institutionalist international regime or as a neo-realist international actor.

In order to re-gain Russia's great power status, President Putin worked vigorously to restore the country's unity, strengthen the authority of the state, and to bring the federal power closer to the regions. Fuelled by Russia's vast energy sources and the related economic growth, Putin's Russia grew ever more self-confident, assertive, and aware of its strategic global importance. Accordingly, Russia became evidently less willing to take advice on domestic issues from abroad, which created tensions in the EU-Russia relationship, as well as in Russia's relations with the United States.

Russia's energy and foreign policy developed largely hand in hand as energy security formed the core of Russia's increasingly charged relations with its neighbors. As Russian energy policy became increasingly securitized and simultaneously highly politicized – albeit according to the official Russian stance, its actions were and are dictated strictly by technical concerns and economic rationales. Motives aside, the Russian assertion suggested that it did not require any facilitators in its dialogue with Europe, which came as a major blow to its neighbors, who had been investing in their potential role as bridges between Russia and the major European powers (Makarychev 2006, 2). The development was greeted with particular alarm in Finland, as good relations with Russia had been strongest card Finland had had vis-à-vis the EU since its accession to the Union.

When Mr. Medvedev assumed the presidential office in May 2008, only a couple of months prior to the onset of the economic crisis in Russia, few knew what to expect. The guessing game came to an end in November 2008 when Mr. Medvedev held his first state-of-the-nation address and presented the key principles he would follow in carrying out Russia's foreign policy. His agenda, described fittingly by Matthews and Nemtsova (2008) as being “surprisingly liberal at home, and increasingly hawkish abroad” aimed both at fixing Russia's broken society and restoring Russia's place in the world. In his first address to the Federal Assembly, President Medvedev (2008) continued his defiance by painting a picture of a nationalistic Russia with its spheres of influence and special, privileged relations, looking out for its own interests, and protecting the lives and dignity of Russian citizens, wherever they may be. While it was understood that President Medvedev was referring, first and foremost, to Russian conflicts in Chechnya, Georgia, to some extent in the Baltic countries and, in terms of gas, to the conflict with Ukraine, there were increasing fears that a tougher time lay ahead of Finland as well. Direct parallels were drawn especially between the situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and the co-called Karelian question between Finland and Russia.

The address, along with the general rhetoric evident in a number of other statements by Russian foreign policy makers, most notably by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, revealed an unmistakable yearning for the nineteenth-century world mode in which international order was based on the role of states and, above all, on the balance of power between the great powers. What was essential in the Russian great power status was the aspiration to try to be one of the countries that could make decisions on behalf of others, to interfere in other countries' conflicts, and to maintain the international system, in particular, as a system of nation states (as opposed to initiatives that would challenge state sovereignty, such as integration à la the EU). Accordingly, if the Russian idea of its great power status was based on any historical period, this must be the era of the Concert of Europe, i.e., from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the outbreak of World War I.

Sometimes things have to get worse before they could get better. While prior to the recent financial crisis, the EU and Russia had, despite the rhetoric of strategic partnership, been growing apart; during 2009–2010 remarkable changes had been occurring in Russia's self-perception. The economic crisis shook Russia profoundly and revealed how deeply interconnected the global economy actually was. For both the EU and Russia, the crisis was a moment of realization that any nation is no longer self-sufficient. Bringing one's own house in order was no longer enough, but crises could only be overcome through coordinated, cooperative effort. Realization of this prodded Russia to reset and redefine its relations most notably with the United States, but the tone towards the new partnership agreement with the EU warmed up as well. Russia's new foreign policy guidelines, leaked to the media in May 2010, suggested that relations with the West would become friendlier and more cooperative in order to attract more foreign investment.

While these guidelines have not been fully implemented, there is no denying that the EU and Russia need each other. The EU needs Russia's oil, gas, and raw materials while Russia needs the EU to help with its own economic and technological modernization. The EU was a strong supporter of Russia's WTO membership, which finally materialized on August 22, 2012. While this is indisputable evidence of deeper integration, at the same time there has been a general lack of progress in areas beyond mere technical nature. The PCA, which came into force in 1997 for an initial duration of ten years, has been automatically renewed annually since 2007 because a new agreement has not been agreed upon. In terms of foreign policy and global issues, the EU and Russia find themselves on very divergent trajectories. The cause of the glitches lay not only in the different perceptions of the 'strategic partnership,' but also in a number of Russian domestic issues, such as the restrictions put on Russian civil society and the freedom of speech, which have been condemned by the EU.

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from this past. In order to be successful, a mutual understanding has to be found regarding the basic rules of the game; cooperation with Russia has to be based on the principle of equality and project ownership has to be bestowed on the Russian side as well. In this manner, the role of Russia transforms from being an object in cooperation initiatives to that of an actor, allowing relations to become shaped by dialog rather than confrontation. But that is not enough. In order to engage Russia in further cooperation, the EU has to renounce its attempts to change Russia politically. The way forward lies in more practical forms of cooperation. Mutual interests include, but are not limited to, energy security, financial stability, climate change, terrorism, migration, environmental issues, education, and social and health-related topics.



### **4.3.2 Framework for Engagement with Russia**

Cross-border cooperation with Russian regions is a major foreign policy priority for those EU Member States that border Russia. After joining the EU, the connotation of the Finnish 'long-common-border-syndrome' vis-à-vis Russia became actively transformed from burden to a possibility. Suffering from the trauma of being left alone, Finland did not settle for mere EU membership but aspired for a position among the key EU players by claiming to possess Russian expertise, or rather experience, that others did not or could not have that the EU as well as its Member States would benefit from.

Up until now, it has already become common practice to kick-off any meeting devoted to the topic by stating that it is in the EU's and its Member States' as well as Russia's common interest to work towards increasing the stability and prosperity of the border region. External border cooperation through the creation of a positive atmosphere for rapprochement, improvement of the general relations, increasing people-to-people contacts, and promotion of shared political and economic values are commonly put forth as the means to acquire this (see, e.g., Torstila 2011). While there is nothing new in these goals, the means to achieve them have broadened considerably.

In addition to Finland's cooperation with its neighboring areas, there are a variety of bilateral and multilateral programs and initiatives focusing on particularly Northwest Russia. These include the ENPI and its regional CBC programs, the Northern Dimension and its Partnerships, projects funded by the European Commission (such as infrastructure development), the Nordic Council of Ministers (civil service, education, entrepreneurship, civil society), and by international financing institutions, most notably the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, and the Nordic Investment Bank (environment and energy efficiency related investments). Also the Arctic Council (climate change, sustainable development), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (increasing stability, prosperity and security), and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (environment, economic development, education, culture), all now under the Northern Dimension umbrella, have established their roles as cooperative forums in the regions. In addition, other countries, such as Sweden and Norway, have their own bilateral programs focusing primarily on nuclear safety in Northwest Russia.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) offers a forum for political negotiations and decision-making in the field of security and has been long favored by Russia. The Finnish Committee for European Security (STETE) was established in 1970 in support of the OSCE. Its members consist of all leading Finnish political parties and other political organizations, the trade union movement, women's, youth, student, and peace organizations, as well as other NGOs. The underlying design of STETE is to facilitate networking and cooperation between politicians, officials, and civic society actors of all the Baltic Sea countries in order to create a fruitful base for addressing common future

challenges. STETE's idea is "to include decision makers in the dialogue, but still offer an unofficial platform for discussion and open the door for sensitive matters." As an example, STETE together with its Finnish NGO partners organized an international NGO-based forum in Helsinki December 2–3, 2008 in connection with the 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council hosted by the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship. The OSCE Civil Society Forum concentrated on the OSCE's human dimension issues and gave the participating civil society actors the possibility to bring their recommendations for the high-level discussions of the Ministerial Council.

#### **4.4 RECONTEXTUALIZING CIVIC CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION<sup>41</sup>**

When Finland joined the EU in 1995, conditions governing CBC faced a significant transformation. Finland's accession to the EU meant that the Union now extended physically all the way to the Russian border. Appropriately, previously bilaterally governed cooperation across the border became part of the broader dynamics of international politics and EU-Russia relations, but on the other hand, regional and local actors were offered completely new avenues for an active role in international affairs by cooperating directly across the previously closed border (Liikanen 2004b).

The new millennium brought along profound conceptual changes in the language of the EU documents addressing CBC (Liikanen 2010, 25). The new policy frames picturing a 'Wider Europe' and European 'Neighborhood' shifted the focus of CBC from the perspective of internal cohesion, regional development, and integration of border regions typical of the first INTERREG programs towards external relations and the political projects of preparing and accomplishing the enlargement of the Union and fostering interaction between the EU and its neighbors. Instead of, or alongside, the language and approaches typical of regional development and regional studies, the rhetoric of new policy documents tended to make use of the concepts and approaches of political science, especially the analyses of recent large changes in the global economy and politics, the end of the Cold War, the European integration, and ultimately globalization. (Ibid., 25–26.) Interestingly, this turn seems to have followed much the same patterns as discussions in the study of borders and international relations which likewise questioned the traditional geopolitical notions of borders as the clear-cut territorial lines and arenas of confrontation between national states (van Houtum 2005).

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<sup>41</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Ilkka Liikanen who has advised me greatly in developing this chapter. Many of the ideas presented here stem from our earlier work together.

As part of this conceptual sea change, the question of the role of regional actors and cross-border region building became key themes of discussion concerning the EU borders and border regions (Kolossoff 2005). Similarly, the new CBC program documents outlined border-spanning activities that were targeted to lay ground for a new type of cross-border regionalization – even at the external borders of the Union. Particularly in the European Neighborhood policy document (Commission of the European Communities 2004a), there are clear traces of a new political language seeking to overcome the traditional nation-state perspective to borders, which can be seen to promote a gradual Europeanization of the institutional and discursive practices connected to borders.

The question of the Europeanization of cross-border cooperation policies cannot, however, be analyzed strictly on the level of specific policy reformulations (such as the ENP) but ought to be examined by monitoring broader political, cultural, and socio-economic space where the EU exerts its transformative power beyond its external borders (Scott & Liikanen 2010, 424). In the academic discussion of the time, changes in CBC policies were often linked to broader visions of a historical turn towards a new Europe of post-national borders (Berezin & Schain 2003). In this process, state sovereignty was seen to be weakened not just upwards (by the EU, supranational organizations, globalization) or downwards (by subnational units, regionalization) but also sideways by transnational actors such as CSOs (see Rosenau 2004; 2005).

The notion of a new emerging 'post-national' concept of European identity and citizenship has, however, been severely questioned. It has been pointed out that in a broader European perspective it is both theoretically and empirically problematic to conceptualize European integration as a shift from nationally motivated identification and bordering towards a new supra-national understanding of Europe and its borders (Calhoun 2007). In order to approach this question in more concrete terms there is an obvious need to study in specific historical contexts the extent to which borders and cross-border interaction are perceived in new post-national terms.

#### **4.4.1 Technical Aid and Regional Cohesion**

During its first phase, the EU led CBC with Russia was developed chiefly along two tracks: as technical assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (Tacis) and according to the Community initiative INTERREG. The Tacis program was launched in 1991 to provide grant-financed technical assistance to 13 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in their transition to democratic market-oriented economies. Being originally an aid program, encouraging cross-border and cross-regional cooperation appeared later as a priority of the program. In 1996, a year after Finnish membership in the EU, the European Parliament proposed the need for the coordination of the Tacis and INTERREG programs as a cross-border instrument on the Finnish-Russian border (European

Parliament 1996). Consequently, the Tacis funds began to be allocated through the Tacis Cross-border cooperation Small Project Facility initiative to Northwest Russia (and later to Western Belarus and parts of Ukraine and Moldova) as a counterpart to the INTERREG funds that were used to carry out projects in the Finnish/EU side of the border (see Rouge-Oikarinen 2009).

Through this framework, Finnish-Russian civil society projects continued to target the improvement of public health and social welfare in the Republic of Karelia. The development of joint programs was based on joint workshops dealing with different development issues. These formed the basis for the formulation of joint projects that received funding from a variety of Finnish, European, and other international sources. The city of Sortavala was, for example, chosen as a pilot region for financial aid to supply local hospitals with modern equipment. The project also aimed at the elaboration of a strategic plan for the general improvement of the health system and supporting experiments with new models of public health institutions.

In January 2000, the European Council adopted a new Regulation, opening yet another phase of cooperation between the EU and the Tacis countries (Council of the European Union 2000). It was based on an understanding that cooperation is a reciprocal process and encouraged a move from 'demand-driven' towards 'dialogue-driven' programming (Frenz 2008, 6). The regulation formed the legal basis for the actual 'Tacis CBC program,' which hereby became a constitutive element in the formulation of European Union CBC policies with Russia (Prozorov 2004, 17–21).

From the perspective of border regions, by far the more important institutional origin for EU-Russia cooperation has been the regional development program INTERREG, which is financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), one of the so-called EU Structural Funds. The program was launched by the Commission in 1990 with the objective of safeguarding harmonious and balanced development within the EU by diminishing the influence of internal national borders and strengthening economic and social cohesion along them. This emphasis changed during the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and INTERREG became an important financial instrument even on the external borders of the EU.

Whereas the first INTERREG period (1990–1994) had a clear emphasis on integration and cohesion along its internal borders, the INTERREG II period (1994–1999) and particularly the INTERREG III period (2000–2006) signaled a clear shift towards the politics of pre-enlargement and promoting CBC on the external borders of the union<sup>42</sup>. INTERREG III placed a special emphasis on

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<sup>42</sup> The INTERREG IV period (2007–2013) program is officially known as the European Territorial Cooperation Objective. The budget for the objective includes the allocation for Member States to participate in EU external border cooperation programs supported by other instruments, The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and the ENPI. (Commission of the European Communities 2009).

integrating remote regions and those that share external borders with candidate countries. As the EU now shared a land border with Russia in the wake of Finland's membership, even Russia and Russian border regions were addressed in the frame of the pre-enlargement discourse of promoting integration and overcoming the old dividing lines within Europe. This meant that on the most general program level CBC with Russia was conceptualized as part of the same rhetoric of Europeanization and promotion of European values that was applied to candidate countries.

However, although INTERREG now involved also neighboring countries directly, Structural Funds of the EU could, in principle, be used only inside the Union. Thus, INTERREG programs at the EU's external border, e.g., at the Finnish-Russian border, required also an additional source of finance, such as Tacis, for activities taking place in the neighboring country. This formed a serious obstacle for successful execution of joint projects. Still, financing for networking, the exchange of delegations, and other means of supporting regional level interaction (excluding direct salaries) made INTERREG funding an important constitutive element in the search for new modes for Finnish-Russian CBC, and the cooperation rhetoric of the INTERREG program gave a major ideological boost for regional level actors involved in the process (see Cronberg 1999, 323–327).

While internally the EU attempted to manage heterogeneity with unity and erase borders – the products of past conflicts – in order to stimulate regional development in the often-peripheral border regions, this model did not fit the Finnish context in which the border was still seen to possess an important filtering function. Even though it was widely understood that cooperation between the regions of the EU and those on the other side of the Union's external borders was becoming increasingly important as well as more intensive, the EU framework for the relations with the CIS remained unchanged for several years. As neither of the programs had originally been designed for this particular context, the practical implementation of twofold programming proved to be problematic and arduous<sup>43</sup>. The drive to overcome it became an important goal for Finnish regional actors involved in CBC, which can be recognized as one of the background factors in the formulation of EU's new policy frame for CBC. (Cronberg 2000, 179–183.)

#### **4.4.2 European Neighborhood and Partnership**

In 2001 the European Commission finally made the first step towards easing the situation by issuing a Guide to Bringing INTERREG and Tacis Funding Together to facilitate CBC at the external borders of the EU (Commission of the

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<sup>43</sup> For an evaluation of Tacis, see European Court of Auditors' Special Report No. 2/2006 concerning the performance of projects financed under Tacis in the Russian Federation 2006/C 119/01 and the evaluation of Council Regulation 99/2000 (Tacis) and its implementation – ref. 728 of January 2006.

European Communities 2001a). Two years later, the new basic principles of EU policies for cooperation with its neighbors were introduced in the European Commission Communication “Wider Europe – Neighborhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors” (Commission of the European Communities 2003a). More pronounced than before, the new policy framework included also those neighboring countries that currently did not have the prospect of EU membership. The Union set as its task to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond its new borders. Secondly, the EU aimed to develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighborhood – a ‘ring of friends’ – with whom it enjoys close, peaceful, and cooperative relations (ibid.). In this connection, Russia, most of the countries comprising the Newly Independent States (NIS) as well as the southern Mediterranean were offered the prospect of a stake in the EU’s internal market and further integration to promote the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital; i.e., the ‘four freedoms’ (Commission of the European Communities 2003a, 4, 12).

In the subsequent European Commission Communication “Paving the Way for a New Neighborhood Instrument” (Commission of the European Communities 2003b), the Commission acknowledged that progress had been made in coordinating INTERREG and Tacis CBC, notably on the Finnish-Russian border, yet the impact of such coordination measures was still considered to be constrained by the existence of different legal and budgetary frameworks. Thus, the concept of a new Neighborhood Instrument was now envisioned to resolve the existing problems by offering an opportunity to develop a single approach to cooperation across the external borders of the Union in order to improve the implementation and delivery of CBC projects. Such an Instrument was envisioned to be “capable of operating on an identical footing on both sides of the EU’s external border” and would, in view of that, provide “a more complete approach, allowing for a mix of cross-border and regional cooperation activity to be developed around the external border” (ibid., 12).

As a consequence of these decisions, the European Neighborhood Policy was developed in 2004 with the official objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbors and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability, and security of all concerned. The rhetoric of the new policy documents followed much of the same patterns that had been used in borders studies and international relations that at the time questioned the traditional geopolitical notions of borders as clear-cut territorial lines and arenas of confrontation between national states (van Houtum 2005). Based on a very Kristofian idea of the frontier, the geopolitical vision of Europeanization promoted by the ENP can be deemed as a manifestation of a de-bordering discourse based on ideational projection of power and the notion

that principled partnership that is offered, in some cases, in place of more concrete perspectives of EU membership.

The initiation of the ENP was also the maximum expression of an emerging Common Foreign and Security Policy, the principal aim of which is to establish a wider security community in Europe. Illegal immigration, human trafficking, terrorism, and cross-border organized crime remain issues where intensified coordination between the EU and its neighbors is envisaged. However, the ENP's scope is complex and multilayered; it encompasses a wide range of economic, political, and socio-economic issues (Scott 2005). This is also due to the EU's broad definition of security as being environmental, economic, and social (and not only military) in nature, as well as a realization (not always translated in to practice) that security concerns must be shared rather than imposed externally. As a result, the EU suggests that cultural understanding and the recognition of mutual interdependence are means with which to establish a common political dialogue (Commission of the European Communities 2004a/b).

As Russia opted out from joining the ENP and thus from assuming a position of being just another neighbor, it became considered as a "key partner in the EU immediate neighborhood." The EU and Russia have jointly decided, as recognized repeatedly even in the original ENP strategy (Commission of the European Communities 2004a, 4, 6, 7; see also: 2004b), to further develop their strategic partnership through the creation of four Common Spaces, which were defined at the St. Petersburg Summit in May 2003. A set of more specific Road Maps was adopted at the Moscow summit in 2005 to act as the short and medium-term instruments for the implementation of the Common Spaces.

The EU's vision of 'Neighborhood' indicates a step "beyond cooperation to involve a significant measure of integration." Integration is expected to occur as a result of regional interaction and partnership, which in turn ought to bring "enormous gains to all involved in terms of increased stability, security and well-being." In attempting to strengthen its identity as a stabilizing element in the world, the EU has sought to create a community through shared values, common goals, and intensive cooperation on a broad range of EU internal policies (Emerson 2004). The ENP document (Commission of the European Communities 2004a), in particular, has clear traces of a new political language that seeks to overcome traditional nation-state perspective to borders by promoting a gradual Europeanization (Scott 2005).

By now, it seems clear that the EU has not been able to convince its significant other that it takes two to tango. Despite the important contractual milestones, there are also signs of a lack of mutual understanding. The Common Spaces and the related Road Maps, even if valuable achievements as such, have accomplished fairly little since their much-acclaimed introduction, and the 'strategic partnership' is becoming ever more distant from the reality. In

practice, the relations have arrived to a stalemate – and the longer it endures, the more difficult it will be to resolve.

A good example of this is the foundation and legal base of the Common Spaces, the now-expired 1997 EU-Russian Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which has remained automatically in force pending a new accord. The crux of the matter seems to be that the conditionality of promoting European values present in EU documents has collided with new Russian political discourse emphasizing sovereignty (Liikanen 2008, 3). Makarychev (2012), among others, has suggested that the main reason behind Russia's unwillingness to engage with the EU is due to the EU's tendency to seek apolitical management of the relations by means of externally projecting its norms and principles. The normative foundation of EU identity, he continues, actually prevents the EU from accepting Russia as a 'normal' great power. While this may be true, it cannot be interpreted to mean that Russia's action would not be grounded in values as well. This, of course, depends on how 'value' is defined, but, objectively, self-respect is not less of a value than the respect for, say, human rights.

CBC is an integral component of both the ENP and the EU-Russia strategic partnership. In order to develop an area of prosperity and good neighborliness, financial support for the cooperation with all the neighboring countries – the partner countries covered by the ENP and the Four Common Spaces agreed with Russia – is now provided through a single European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)<sup>44</sup>. ENPI, which was set up to replace the existing geographical and thematic programs covering the countries concerned, is the most important tool for accomplishing the goals set out in the Wider Europe document (Commission of the European Communities 2004b, 2). The EU has also insisted that its regional cooperation agendas are not only about 'high politics' in the traditional sense but also encompass social and cultural issues (Scott & Liikanen 2010, 242). This is due to the EU's broad definition of security as being not only military but also environmental, economic, and social in nature, as well as the realization that security concerns must, in principle, be shared rather than imposed externally (*ibid.*, 427). Another indication of this are the roles attributed to civil society and cross-border cooperation. In particular, the strengthening of a 'civil society dimension' within the ENP is promulgated by the Commission, the Council of Europe, and the Parliament (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 2006, 4–5; Commission of the European Communities 2007, 11).

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<sup>44</sup> The words "and Partnership" in the title of the instrument reflects that the instrument will also fund the implementation of the Strategic Partnership with Russia (previously funded through the Tacis program). See Commission of the European Communities (2006d). From 2014, the ENPI will be replaced by the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI), an increasingly policy-driven instrument, which will provide for increased differentiation, more flexibility, stricter conditionality, and incentives for best performers.



ENPI does, *inter alia*, seek to support cross-border contacts and cooperation between local and regional actors and civil society actors and aims to enhance democratization and the role of CSOs in the neighboring countries. It seeks to support democratization by fostering the development of civil society in the neighboring countries and promoting a dialogue in the partner countries between governments and the local civil society. In order to do so, ENPI seeks to support cross-border contacts and cooperation between local and regional actors and civil society actors, which is now understood as vital in order for the EU's policies to boost links with its 'ring of friends' and thus to deepen the integration between the Union and its neighbors. As set down in the Regulation No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>45</sup> of October 24, 2006, which lays down general provisions establishing ENPI, the following non-state actors are eligible for funding for the purposes of implementing action programs, joint CBC programs, and special measures:

- Non-governmental organizations;
- Organizations representing national and/or ethnic minorities;
- Local citizens' groups and traders' associations;
- Cooperatives, trade unions, organizations representing economic and social interests;
- Local organizations involved in decentralized regional cooperation and integration;
- Consumer organizations, women's and youth organizations, teaching, cultural research and scientific organizations;
- Universities;
- Churches and religious associations and communities;
- The media;
- Cross-border associations, non-governmental associations, and independent foundations.

According to the regulation, non-state actors are financed for projects aimed at promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and supporting democratization. The requirement of co-financing can be waived if adequately justified, which gives the EU the flexibility to contribute to the development of civil society without being tied down by the authorities of the receiving country (Cameron 2006).

Paradoxically, the logic of democracy clashes with the logic of spreading democracy (Garton Ash 2004), which set limitations to the EU's direct actions with regards to its Eastern enlargement. Civil society is understood not just as a political forum for the articulation of social agendas but also as a political force central to the development of a wider community of values and societal goals; it

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<sup>45</sup> OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 9.

is seen to have a modernizing and democratizing function within state-society relations. While the ENPI is a policy framework that is based on jointly agreed criteria and co-ownership, the requirement of co-financing can nevertheless be waived if adequately justified.

According to the Commissions original timetable, the development of the ENPI was a two-phased process. During the first period (2004–2006), the key objective was the coordination of the various existing instruments and fulfilling commitments and obligations regarding the programming period up to the end of 2006 (Commission of the European Communities 2003b, 8). The first transitional period was expected to improve cooperation between various financing instruments as well as legislative and financial frameworks on the external borders of the EU. From the beginning of 2007, the ENPI was to replace the current Tacis and Meda programs and evolve into a CBC programs covering both sides of the EU external border, even in the case of the Finnish-Russian border.

Regulation 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of October 24, 2006 provided the legal basis for establishing Joint Operational Programs (JOPs) for CBC, covering border regions of the EU and of the neighboring countries. The ENPI CBC Strategy Paper 2007–2013, adopted in March 2007, outlined the strategic framework for these programs. Building on the response strategy defined in the Strategy Paper, the CBC Indicative Program for 2007–2010 proposed the establishment of 15 regionally governed CBC programs covering the EU land borders and sea crossings of significant importance with neighboring countries. So far, 13 of these programs (9 land borders, 1 sea crossing, and 3 sea basin programs) have materialized.

Even though cross-border cooperation has been defined as a key priority of the ENPI, only some five per cent of the total ENPI budget for 2007–2013 has been specifically targeted at CBC programs. On a more positive note, a major new element of ENPI is that Russia provides its own financial contributions to the program to reflect the 'equal partnership.' The total budget of these programs is approx. EUR 437 million: € 267M by the Commission, € 67M by Member States and € 103.7M by Russia. To guarantee equal representation in the decision-making, most programs have established their own common management structures consisting of a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), Joint Management Authority (JMA), and a Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS). In all, Russia participates in five land border programs, three of which (Kolarctic, Karelia, and South-East Finland-Russia programs) extend across the Finnish-Russian border. The total budget for these programs for the current financial period is about EUR 189 million, of which EUR 87 million is EC funding.

In practice, relations between the EU and Russia have not, however, developed as expected during the time following the adoption of the EU's new policy frames. Negotiations over the renewal of the EU-Russia partnership agreement has been unsuccessful due to deteriorating relations and a lack of

mutual understanding between the EU and Russia concerning the substance of the agreement and the future of cooperation in general. It has been noted that today's Russia is increasingly more self-confident and less cooperative than the Russia of the 1990s. The EU-Russia relationship is tenuous, and Russia is less willing to take advice on domestic issues from abroad. Russia is also well aware of its strategic global importance. Based on its vast energy sources and the related economic growth, Russia is re-gaining its strength as a great power. Especially in the aftermath of the Georgian crises, it has become clear that the conditionality of promoting European values present in the EU documents of CBC has collided with new Russian political discourse emphasizing sovereignty and Russia's own way of building 'sovereign democracy' (Rytövuori-Apunen 2007, 56–58, 78–81).

As a result, the time to begin a Mid Term Review (MTR) of the ENPI program documents, as required by the article 7.1 of the ENPI Regulation, came before the ENPI regional level program frames were actually put into practice. The MTR's were carried out between December 2008 and October 2009, whereas the real implementation of the project commenced two years behind schedule in the latter half of 2009 – in some cases even later. In the case of the Karelia ENPI CBC, the first call for proposals was opened on February 1, 2010 under the theme cross-border solutions for sustainable spatial, economic, and environmental development<sup>46</sup>. The JMC confirmed the project selection in November 2010 and the first grant contracts were signed in February 2011.

In retrospect, it is evident that the 2004 and 2007 rounds of enlargement changed the nature of CBC over the external EU borders profoundly. Because of geographical proximity, long-standing economic, social and political interrelationships, and the deepening of mutual interdependencies, the EU sought to assume a stabilizing role in Post-Soviet, Eurasian, and Mediterranean regional contexts (Browning & Joenniemi 2008). The pre-integration aims no longer exist but rather, as Scott & Liikanen (2010, 426) put forth, the geopolitical vision that underlies such an ideational projection of power is grounded on a multifaceted and mutually beneficial 'privileged partnership'. Instead of lowering fences, the goal is to establish new cooperation forms across a more stable eastern border managed according to the regulations of Schengen (Commission of the European Communities 2004a, 20–21). Thus, the EU policy formulation seems rather contradictory for it seeks to promote cooperation and cross-border regionalization but it is done by means of conditional cooperation that reinforces European values and underlines security and more strictly controlled borders (van Houtum & Pijpers 2006, 59–61).

The post-Treaty of Lisbon development of the Common Security and Defense Policy illuminates this well. The treaty merged the post of High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Commissioner for

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<sup>46</sup> Altogether 59 concept notes were submitted, 51 of which passed the administrative check.

External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy (creating the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and consolidated the former pillar under the newly formed Common Foreign and Security Policy. The fact that the policy focuses mainly on security and defense diplomacy and actions – the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) is a major component of CFSP – indicates that the role of CBC at the external border has been downgraded from a core activity to a sidetrack for securitization.

The ENPI CBC programs at the Finnish-Russian border largely underscore the general ENPI-CBC objectives in the areas of economic development, sustainability, and social development issues. It is, however, also clear that projecting the EU's geopolitical objectives of securitization and social modernization onto the local and regional level of cooperation could be a considerable constraint. It is therefore not surprising that not all ENPI CBC programs with Finnish prioritize border security. Generally speaking, ENPI CBC, as a new support program, is as yet not suitably equipped to deal with the overall context within which Finnish-Russian cooperation takes place.

## **4.5 INITIATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT**

Civil society organizations are key players in the area of social development, intercultural dialogue, social welfare policy, capacity-building, and in the strengthening of community institutions (Laine & Demidov 2013). In order to understand how the current situation came to be, it is necessary to look back to how it all began. In the following, I explain how the former friendship policies and paradiplomatic city-twinning turned into Neighboring Area Cooperation, which then formed the foundation for the initiation of the Interreg/TACIS project and, most recently, the ENPI programs.

### **4.5.1 Civil Society Actors in Bilateral Cooperation**

The establishment of the Finnish-Russian civil society interaction dates back to the era when Finland was still, as an Autonomous Grand Duchy, a part of the Russian Empire. Science had reached a high level in Russia specifically in archeology, history, geography, and ethnographic and linguistic sciences, which opened up new possibilities also for Finnish scientists. The linguistic, ethnological, and archaeological research work of academics such as Elias Lönnrot and M.A. Castrén laid the foundation for modern research (Saksa 2010). Interaction diversified as Finland became increasingly familiar for a number of Russian officials, soldiers, and artists, whereas many Finns moved to Russia, particularly its capital at the time, Saint Petersburg, in search of not just higher education but also permanent work.

The heavily guarded military border, put up following the peace treaty between an independent Republic of Finland and Soviet Russia in 1920, halted all forms of interaction. Not until after World War II was the time ripe for the two countries to start building their neighborly relations and for interaction to begin to revive – even if somewhat compulsorily.

Dictated by the YYA treaty, post-WW II Finnish foreign policy towards the Soviet Union was based on the principle of ‘official friendship.’ The friendship was not limited to intergovernmental relations but was put in practice also through paradiplomatic links across the border. The task was taken up by various more or less official delegations consisting of politicians but also artists, teachers, athletes, various kinds of experts, trade union representatives, and friendship groups (Kostiainen 1998, 46–50). Many of the delegations were sent by Finnish state agencies, particularly the Ministry of Education, and they received special treatment in the Soviet Union (Kostiainen 1998). These cross-border trips, Kostiainen (1999) points out, have to be understood in the context of the Finnish-Soviet special relationships. Whereas the relationships between the two countries had been exceedingly tense prior to WW II, in the post-war world many regarded a closer relationship and increased cross-border interaction as needed.

Most of these trips were organized by the Finland-Soviet Union Society (now Finland-Russia Society), which had been established on October 15, 1944 – less than a month after the armistice ending the Continuation War had been signed. The society had been preceded by the Finnish-Soviet Peace and Friendship Society, a more radical and anti-governmental organization established already during the interim peace in May 1940 mainly by the supporters of the former Finnish Communist Party. In a few months the Peace and Friendship Society had gained some 35,000 members and established 115 local chapters. From the Finnish government’s perspective, the society was, however, deemed as dangerous as it was believed to be engaged in revolutionary activities and working in favor of the enemy. As a consequence, the society was eventually closed down by a court decision in October 1944 and immediately replaced by the Finland-Soviet Union Society.

The new society enjoyed strong state support and had considerably broader party-political basis than its predecessor had had as a number of key figures of the Finnish politics, Paasikivi and Kekkonen in the lead, among its founding members (Merivirta 1998, 29). Even though the society was established as *non-governmental* organization, it was a rather top-down project aiming to encourage the general public to support the government’s new friendship policy in the making and function along its lines. Its membership figures soared right after its establishment to 170,000 (Kinnunen 1998, 232, 249–150). However, as the initial excitement had worn off, many gave up their membership to the extent that there were only 85,000 registered members in 1946 (*ibid.*). Even though the society managed to raise its membership base again to over 100,000 by the 1970s,

it never gained acceptance from the majority of the public as it was seen as a stooge of communism, symbolizing thus their utmost fear rather than something they wished to be a part of (Merivirta 1998, 129–130).

Despite its non-governmental features, the creation and activities of the society did contribute remarkably to the formations of cross-border civil society ties. The society helped in organizing cross-border trips and provided information and services for those interested in seeing and experiencing how things actually were on the other side. In doing so, it provided thousands of ordinary Finns and Soviets with an opportunity to meet up and forge friendships (Kekkonen 1974). The society also had a great number of active local chapters in a number of towns all around Finland. It was largely these local chapters and particularly the municipal politicians active in the local chapters who initiated the friendship-towns system between Finland and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, which was to become the next phase of civic cooperation across the border.

After decades of trial and crisis, the situation began to return to normal in the 1970s. Particularly after the OSCE meeting in Helsinki in 1975, major economic projects materialized and connections between the twin cities were developed. Scientific cooperation recovered especially due to the Finnish-Soviet Committee for Scientific and Technical Cooperation. The twinning schemes formed a sizable part of the cross-border trips of the time, and despite their fundamentally politically driven agenda they did, in practice, provide Finns with a means to visit and become acquainted with the unfamiliar giant to the east, which remained otherwise relatively closed off to foreigners. The twin city concept serves as an example of how the principle of official friendship at the level of intergovernmental relations spread to the city, municipal, and eventually individual levels. The twinning activities grew more intensive, spread geographically, and expanded to cover various ceremonial events during the following decades.

The Soviet Union attracted also thousands of Finnish students. The first Finns went off to study in the Soviet Union soon after the death of Stalin in the mid 1950s, and the number increased steadily until the early 1970s. Finnish medical students studying in then Leningrad were the first to establish their own association, *Medisiinariseura Cortex* (later *Chiasma*), in 1970. The following year the association proposed that the Finnish-Soviet student exchange should be expanded by establishing independent and registered youth sections under the Finland-Soviet Society in the main Finnish cities. The proposal, however, failed to strike a chord as only one youth section in the Finnish city of Kuopio was established – only to be suspended in 1980 for organizing a rock concert deemed by the society leadership to have pilloried the friendship society's decorous name.

NOY ry, an association for students who had studied in the Soviet Union, was founded in Helsinki in 1979. Particularly in its beginning, the association

cooperated intensively with the Finland-Soviet Union society and the Finnish Ministry of Education in preparing and guiding new students heading to Soviet Universities. NOY participated also in law-drafting; a key achievement being the 1986 act concerning the equivalence of the higher education completed abroad, which improved the opportunities of the students who had studied in the Soviet Union to find jobs in Finland.

The Institute for Cultural Relations between Finland and the USSR (Neuvostoliittoinstituutti) was established after World War II for the purpose of coordinating and undertaking research related to the Soviet Union and advancing the Finno-Soviet scientific and educational cooperation in the spirit of good-neighborly relations. Authentic Sovietology was never in vogue in Finland, at least formally, as the Finland's official foreign policy stance was to not irritate its eastern neighbor (Vihavainen 1991; Pernaa 2002). While not everyone settled for the official line, Pernaa (2002) maintains that research on the Soviet Union consisted mainly of forwarding and interpreting information from Soviets sources. The Institute's most important interest groups were the Finland-Soviet Union Society and, particularly during the first years, the Ministry of Education in Finland and in the Soviet Union the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture together with several libraries. (Pernaa 2002.) Joint seminars were organized together with Soviet academics but such 'scientific tourism' (L 13.2.1997), provided little academic results.

The Finnish delegations to the Soviet Union included a number of what Kostianen (1998) has called 'Soviet sympathizers,' but the share of people crossing the border for the sake of simple curiosity increased steadily towards the 1970s and 1980s. Increased efforts to boost cross-border interaction reflected, essentially, Kekkonen's proclamation of an 'active' relationship with the Soviet Union and encouraged reciprocally people from the Soviet Union to travel to Finland. It has to be understood that all forms of cross-border interaction of the time, from trade to tourism, were organized as a kind of 'exchange' based on bilateral, centralized reciprocal agreements (ibid.).

The YYA treaty formed also the basis of a variety of complementary agreements, such as the agreement on scientific and technological cooperation in 1955 and a decree on economic cooperation in 1967 – both the first of their kind between a socialist and a capitalist country. An agreement on economic, technical, and industrial cooperation (the so-called TTT agreement) followed in 1971, and in 1973 Finland became the first capitalist country to cooperate closely with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, an economic organization comprised of the countries of the Eastern Bloc and other communist states.

The more profound contractual basis fuelled the links between the twin cities and scientific cooperation. A good example of this is nature conservation cooperation, which began in the 1970s. One of the main impetus for the cooperation, now possible due to the 1971 agreement, was to work together in order to conserve the dark green belt of old-growth forest along the Finnish-

Russian border, which had endured due to the highly restricted access to the border zone. Joint activities were organized on both sides of the border, and the work brought together ministries, civil service departments, research institutions, universities, and environmental NGOs. This initial cooperation eventually led Finland and the Soviet Union to conclude an agreement on environmental protection in 1985, on the basis of which a joint Finno-Soviet Working Group on Nature Conservation was established.

The great changes that began to shake the Soviet Union in the 1980s coagulated also the bilateral, concerted cooperation structures (Pernaa 2002). On the Finnish side, a clear shift away from bilateralism was taken by president Koivisto, who abandoned predecessor Kekkonen's logic by moving the Finnish Foreign Policy towards multilateral politics for the first time since the wars. The change of the border regime following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the termination of policies of official delegations and joint communiqués was greeted with positive anticipation (Liikanen 2008). After 1991, the border has gradually become more permeable, enabling more direct and local interaction between new emerging Russian voluntary associations and Finnish CSOs.

The Russian model of federalism was being tested as sharp political competition and institutional instability shook the country. The regions were provided with unprecedented room to maneuver, not only in exercising their internal politics but also regarding their external activities. Albeit still strictly guarded, the border was becoming more permeable, which actuated the development of paradiplomatic cross-border activities.

The dramatic changes in all spheres of social, economic, and political life took an enormous toll on the nation but had the greatest negative impact on those who occupied the most precarious positions in terms of social welfare and health. The burgeoning civil society in Russia played an important role as a shock absorber but was handicapped by the Soviet legacy, largely toothless when confronted with a multitude of issues previously sheltered under the Communist doctrine. Accordingly, the social welfare and public health sector began to dominate Finnish-Russian CBC, which in turn helped to alleviate the consequences of political transformation.

The easier border crossing procedures urged also the former residents, their descendants, and relatives to feed their curiosity and visit the areas that had been lost in war and that had since been practically inaccessible. Such 'nostalgic tourism' (see Izotov & Laine 2012) stimulated CBC and supported also the local economy on the Russian side. The increased openness also allowed the restoration of the Finnish-Karelian (and other kindred nations) ethno-cultural ties, providing simultaneously a further common ground and purpose for CBC (Németh et al., 248–249)

Given the nature of the situation, particularly in the early 1990s, interaction across the border was certainly closer to humanitarian work based on goodwill rather than cooperation between equal partners to the advance of both. At this



point in time, many Finnish CSOs focused their efforts on pragmatic problem solving, offering diverse financial and material assistance. The idea was to be present in the areas that once belonged to Finland, and this work took place largely heedless from what one thought about Russia and its actions. In practice, for the actors on the Russian side, CBC with Finland translated into an opportunity to get additional funding, which was certainly needed as other funding options were practically non-existent. However, as Russian civil society developed towards more institutional forms, Finnish CSOs began to engage also in the practical training of Russian actors that would help them develop their own organizational skills and increase their effectiveness in the new, internationalizing environment.

#### **4.5.2 Neighboring Area Cooperation and Civil Society**

In addition to the pure forms of humanitarian aid and relief work, the Finnish government initiated its 'neighboring area cooperation' program, which then became an integral part of Finland's foreign policy and served as a practical manifestation of the 1992 treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation. The cooperation is founded on the neighboring area cooperation strategy, adopted by the Government of Finland in 1993, 1996, 1999, 2000, and 2004 respectively. It is participated in by all Finnish government ministries and several government departments and agencies, yet the activities are coordinated and supervised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which is also in charge of elaborating, updating and implementing the strategy and prioritizing support.

A new, updated version of the strategy has been under preparation for years, but its release has been delayed. Instead, in 2008 an NAC Action Plan for 2009–2011 was adopted, which shifted the focus of cooperation more towards wide-ranging economic cooperation (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2008). The previously strong social and health sector, which allowed strong participation by NGOs, is now only one priority sector among nine others<sup>47</sup>. However, civil society has been brought up in connection with education as a priority sector of its own. The Action Plan also acknowledges that bilateral cooperation is now increasingly linked with a wider platform of cooperation within the framework of the ENP, the Northern Dimension in the external and cross-border policies of the EU, and the EU's policy on Russia. An intergovernmental neighboring area cooperation development group has been established to coordinate cooperation. The regional groups operate as permanent working bodies of the development group and are assigned with drawing up regional programs based on the Action Plan. An attempt is made to

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<sup>47</sup> The Action Plan priorities are: 1) Economic matters, 2) transportation and communications, 3) energy (including nuclear plant security), 4) agriculture and forestry, 5) environment, 6) social and health care, 7) education and civil society, 8) local government, 9) rescue services, and 10) matter of law and law enforcement (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2008).

avoid duplication of projects and to seek their coordination to achieve synergy benefits. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2008.)

From 1990 to 2012, a total of EUR 326 million has been allocated to cooperation with Russia (Figure 21). In 2011, a total of EUR 17.2 million, a clear reduction from the EUR 26.3 million in 2007, has been reserved for this purpose.<sup>48</sup> In the budget for 2012, the sum had been reduced already to EUR 6 million under the main title of expenditure of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (item 24.20.66; Neighboring area cooperation). Given the EUR 3.7 million allocated to NAC in other ministries' main titles of expenditure, the total amount of funds for NAC in 2012 amounts to EUR 9.7 million.

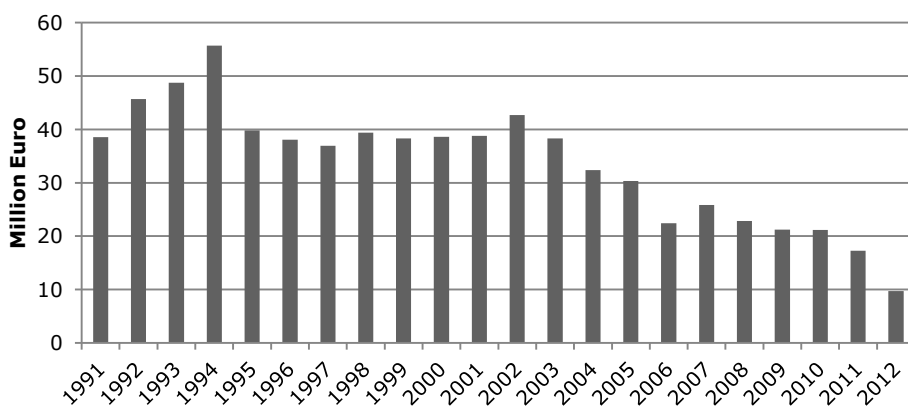


Figure 21. Gratuitous aid, so-called project funding, under the main title of expenditure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (item 24.20.66; Neighboring Area Cooperation) and funds allocated to NAC in other ministries' main titles of expenditure. Excludes loans and bonds. Data Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Unit for Regional Cooperation

Five per cent or EUR 320,000 was reserved of project carried out by NGOs: EUR 1.5 million in 2010 and EUR 1.2 million in 2012 (Figure 22). In addition to the diminished budget, the fact that there had been a wide spectrum of targets to be funded through the various spheres of authority of sectoral ministries, the budgets of individual projects had often been modest. By comparison, it is illustrative to point out that more than one billion euro had been reserved for development cooperation in 2011 alone; i.e., the NAC funds were only slightly over one per cent of that used for the development work.

<sup>48</sup> In 2007 approximately 70 per cent of the funds were targeted to projects carried out in Russia. In 2008, Russia's share was already 95 per cent and in 2011 practically 100 per cent.

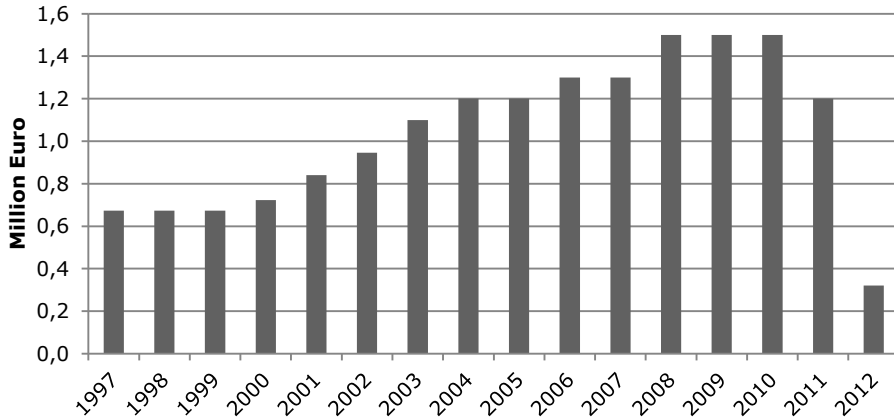


Figure 22. Gratuitous aid for NGOs. Data Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Unit for Regional Cooperation

The descending trend has been going on for years. At the Ministry of Finance, NAC has been regarded already for some time as an outmoded phenomenon, whereas the increased opportunities provided by the EU-Russia cross-border cooperation programs (now ENPI CBC) has been put forth as an alternative funding mechanism. For example, in the 2009 rules of procedure for the NAC clear efforts were made to connect EU funding and NAC to each other. Forms of CBC with Russia have been updated and developed towards more equal partnership. Granted that the present form of neighboring area cooperation was designed for a period of transition, it was also jointly agreed that the bilateral neighboring area cooperation would be terminated by the end of 2012. As of 2013, the Foreign Ministry's neighboring area cooperation funds will be targeted primarily to multilateral regional cooperation, such as the Northern Dimension, Arctic, Baltic Sea, and the Barents cooperation, that supports the objectives of the government program. The main source of financing for regional cross-border projects in the future will be the EU-Russia CBC programs.

While the 'neighboring areas' included earlier Russia and the Baltic countries as well as other CIS and CEE countries deemed important from the Finnish perspective, since the 2004 enlargement of the EU<sup>49</sup> it has gradually shifted to refer only to the northwestern region of the Russian Federation, particularly the Republic of Karelia, the Leningrad Oblast, the Murmansk Region, and the City of St Petersburg. The 2004 strategy acknowledges that the multiple social, health-related, administrative, and environmental problems of Russia make it a

<sup>49</sup> As the Baltic countries joined the EU in 2004, Finland's bilateral cooperation with them was concluded and the cooperation continued as normal relations among fellow EU members or as regional cooperation.

challenging partner for cooperation, which cannot be assessed using economic criteria only. However, northwest Russia is perceived as an important target region as its stable economic and social development contributes also to the attainment of Finland's national objectives and interests.

Since its initiation, the main objective of the neighboring area cooperation has been the promotion socio-economic development of the neighboring regions Russia and the strengthening of Russian civil society. The one-way nature of the premise has been prone to criticism. As the funding comes from Finnish sources and almost all the work is done on the Russian side of the border, for many the NAC is reminiscent a typical development work rather than cooperation. In 2000, the acknowledgement of the asymmetrical setting led then minister for external relations of the Republic of Karelia Valery Shlyamin (2000) to urge Finns to introduce more "genuine cooperation projects" as he envisioned that otherwise, after the approaching 2004 EU enlargement, it would become "difficult for us to reaffirm the others that the Finnish-Russian border would be somehow unique."

The benefits for Finland are explained in various ways. For neighboring area, cooperation is essentially a foreign policy strategy, the cooperation can be, to put it bluntly, seen as an attempt to solve some of the problems before they cross the border to Finland. While the short-term benefits are easier to see on the Russian side, the assumption is that this work will eventually pay off and be beneficial for Finland in the longer run. It is believed that the objectives of the social and economic reforms under way in Russia and the progress made in the national economy will gradually enable the country's participation in the development and implementation of cooperation based on an equal partnership. The idea is that the present forms of NAC will be developed step-by-step into ordinary collaboration between various authorities, organizations, and regional actors. An alternative way of seeing the situation is that the heavy raw material flow from Russia should be considered as off-setting Finland's efforts across the border (Shlyamin 2000).

The a recent NAC evaluation report ordered by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and conducted by independent Impact Consulting Oy Ltd concluded that neighboring area cooperation has been "exceptionally successful and effective" and "fulfilled the requirements set for it" by bright about "significant benefits with a relatively small investment." It has involved "a combination of promoting of [*sic*] good relations between neighboring countries on the one hand, and projects of a developmental nature on the other," most notably by fuelling the emergence of "well-functioning collaboration networks in almost all sectors." (Aarva 2011; cf. Venäläinen 2011)

Non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations have played an instrumental role in the neighboring area cooperation from the onset. While businesses have had difficulties adapting to the unpredictable and continuously changing conditions in Russia and as the jurisdiction of

governments stops at the political border, CSOs have been less restricted from moving back and forth across the border and entering into cooperative relationships. In practice, the cooperation developed through joint workshops focusing of specific issues. The workshops brought together different actors from both sides of the border and in so doing allowing organizations to create new contacts and networks crucial for CBC's success.

The NAC Funds have been crucial for the CSOs that engage in CBC with Russia as they are seen as easier and lighter in terms of applying procedures, reporting, and bureaucracy, as well as more flexible and less competitive than any other funding mechanisms that are available, most notably those provided by the EU. Projects carried out by Finnish NGOs have been allocated some EUR 1.5 million annually (6–8 per cent of total funds). In addition to NGO support, the Finnish embassies in St. Petersburg and Moscow have since 1997 been granted allowances for small cooperation projects, a large share of which has been carried out by Russian NGOs (Venäläinen 2011, 5). The Foreign Ministry, which has coordinated the program since 1997, receives on average 45 applications per year. The refusal rate has been around 20 per cent. Generally projects last 2–5 years, while the annual support has recently been approximately EUR 10,000–60,000. (Venäläinen 2011, 11.)

In selecting which projects to support, attention is paid to the scope of the organizations. The activities must be concrete measures, the results of which have to be visible at the grassroots level. Projects that span several years are encouraged yet remain project-based; long-term, enduring cooperation is not funded by NAC funds. According to the lists of past funded projects, NGOs' projects focus primarily on social welfare and health care and the strengthening of the civil society. They aim, as an example, to promote equality and improve of the position of women, children, and those with disabilities. Projects are also carried out to promote environmental education, to develop trade union activities, and to train persons active in NGOs.

The priorities of CBC are largely informed by this opportunity structure. Funding is available, first and foremost, for CSOs and projects that deal with issues brought up in the current strategy and the Action Plan. Thus, the national state agencies have a strong impact on the development and direction of cooperation. The more alternative sources of funding that CSOs have for CBC activities, the more they can define their own strategies. Having said that, the NAC funding is also given credit for following exceptionally well what is considered as acute and necessary by many CSOs themselves.

In her evaluation of the NGOs role in the neighboring area cooperation, Venäläinen (2011, 30) come to the conclusion that cooperation among NGOs is needed for it provides a channel to support civic and associational activity in Russia. Furthermore, the CBC actors indicate strongly that cooperation has increased the acquaintance between the countries and the development of good neighborly relations. While NAC as a whole was deemed to be "exceptionally

successful," Venäläinen (ibid.) asserts that the NGOs projects have produced only "moderately good results." While the result of this study support her main findings, it has to be borne in mind that the judgment of the usefulness of cooperation is always relative to the goals targeted by a certain activity. While the results may be moderate for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' expectations, keeping in mind the proclaimed goals of NAC as a foreign policy instrument, placing the cooperation in a wider frame – geographically, contextually, and contentually – opens a different perspective which allows also a different evaluation.

Particularly the social and health CSOs, closely tied the Finnish welfare state institution, have been well represented in the formation of transnational civil society links since the early 1990s. Cooperation in these areas began immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 in response to grave social problems. As a result of the social disorder that plagued post-Soviet Russia during the 1990s, a funding crisis in health and public services emerged. Schools, hospitals, and all manner of social institutions, especially those located in more peripheral regions of the Russian Federation faced collapse. The situation in Russian Karelia was dramatic. For example, after 1991 the Russian Karelian city of Sortavala (located about 60 kilometers from the Finnish border) was faced with a dramatically increased incidence of drug addiction and persons with HIV infections.<sup>50</sup> Here, CSO cooperation centered on joint projects which targeted drug abuse, AIDS treatment, and combating the traffic of illegal drugs (Izotov 2013). Much of the expertise was supplied by Finnish partners, and with their help a center for rehabilitation of drug addicts was opened and a series of public awareness campaigns inaugurated.

The cooperation in areas of social welfare and development has aimed at improving the quality of life of people on both sides of the border and the support for these activities has been informed by the notion that development in both border regions increases stability and security for both countries. In the short-term, CBC has done much to alleviate social problems and connect citizens groups across a border that was once hermetically sealed. CBC has also played a role in constructing a social economy in Russia under very difficult conditions of economic, political, and social change. As Venäläinen (2011) indicates, social sector projects have developed services, whereby NGOs have gained new skills and experience in project implementation as well as created cooperative networks both among themselves and with the authorities. Due to the acquirement of skills, the work has been continued beyond the individual project frames and has become more self-sustaining.

In retrospect, it appears evident that during the first half of the 1990s much of the civil society cooperation between Finland and Russia could be characterized as humanitarian aid and charity work. Help arrived to Russian Karelian towns

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<sup>50</sup> According to experts these official statistics should be increased 10 or even 25 times.

such as Sortavala on a regular basis. However, through the development of local civil society institutions and mechanisms of self-help, such as the Social Assistance Centre in Sortavala, joint projects through CSO networks emerged as an important driver of local development. By 1997, the Sortavala Center and other social security institutions in Sortavala had developed numerous projects with Finnish partners. So extensive was the aid provided by CSO networks during the 1990s that cross-border cooperation was seen to a certain extent to replace social programs and other services provided by the state during the Soviet era (Izotov 2013). Thanks to jobs exchanges organized by a training center located in the Finnish city of Joensuu in cooperation with the Sortavala's Employment Center, many Russian students found seasonal employment in Finland. CBC replaced to a certain extent educational state institutions of the Soviet era and provided young people with technical, informational, and practical assistance.

The 2004 strategy brought up a rhetorical shift "from support to partnership," i.e., from one-way aid work towards more balanced cooperation by directing more attention than had been previously made towards finding ways of integrating the Russian side into the cooperation as a more equal partner:

The time has changed. It goes without saying that nowadays we work with Finns differently. It's like in pedagogics, you know, subject-subject relations instead of subject-object ones. We are very thankful to our partners because we remember the time when we were immature, but nowadays they also can learn something and this is definitely good and CBC must develop in this direction. (R #66)

Even if the rhetoric has been transformed into practice slowly and at times with downright hesitation, the mentality among Finnish civil society actors seems to be changing as more and more Finns claim to reap benefits also for themselves. According to the Finnish CSOs, the Russian side has recently become more and more active in initiating cooperation.

Not all possibilities of cooperation have, however, been utilized effectively. Due to their strong role in the Finnish welfare working order, many social NGOs "are not really voluntary organizations but closer to having an authoritative status" (F #29). Becoming a part of the public hand has overshadowed their own areas of expertise and strengths deriving from their non-governmental nature. In the Republic of Karelia, many expert organizations are run by social sector and municipal officials. Several interviewees also brought up that the project-based NAC funding has not encouraged the CSOs to develop a more long-term cooperation strategy, which in principle is deemed as needed. The focus on service production and pragmatic problem solving has been the easiest way to get visible results, but it has done little to improve the

capability of Russia's developing civil society to have an impact and to make a difference in Russian society.

From the CSO actors' perspective, the neighboring area's cooperation funds are fairly easily accessible and, particularly in the past, there has been little competition among the CSOs for funding. In addition to the refusal rate being very low, this underlines also the fact the number of organizations applying for funding is quite low and that Finnish-Russian cooperation is largely upheld by a very limited number of key network actors while others may join in on an on-and-off basis.

On the other hand, the accessibility to NAC funding has, however, also its downsides for it discourages NGOs to seek more permanent funding and move beyond project-based activities. The Finnish-Russian Network of Social and Health NGOs, established in 1997, provides an illuminating example of being "too successful". The network received funding from the neighboring area cooperation of appropriations, but funding was discontinued in October 2007 for the Foreign Ministry considered the operation of the network to be no longer project-based and the upkeep of its daily operations out of the scope of the NAC funding scheme. Despite its apparent success, the network failed to acquire external funding. Prior to its termination, the network consisted of approximately 50 Finnish and almost 100 Russian NGOs, and it had offices in Helsinki, St. Petersburg, and Petrozavodsk. The termination of state funding to the network drew the operations of the entire network to a close, which meant that many of the participating NGOs lost the only key network actor through which they had had any contacts to Russia.

Many CSO actors are concerned about the general trend apparent in Finland that previously bilateral cooperation with Russia is becoming overly dependent on the EU as an actor. More responsibility, for good and for bad, is given to the EU, whereas as national funding has been simultaneously decreasing. This is not to say that the EU would not be seen as a positive force, on the contrary, but the nearby Russian regions are still seen primarily as Finland's neighbor and "backyard" due to physical proximity. "If Finland wishes to see regional and local cooperation to take place, the EU funding is hardly the only solution to this" (F #48).

In addition to the amount of available national funding being reduced, the themes or areas of cooperation that are being funded are also perceived to be narrowing and inching away from the typical NGOs strongholds, most notably towards economic matters. This, in turn, causes ever-heavier competition and enforces higher quality requirements, excluding as a consequence a number of small CSO that have been formerly very active in CBC. The current trend is viewed as alarming and unwise. For many, decreasing national funding and commitment were seen as indicators that the solid groundwork established during the 1990s to build up the basis for cooperation was for nothing as the



Finnish actors can no longer be active in Russia to reap the harvest of this work. It is understood that the idea behind the decision to cut state funding...

has, of course, been to direct people towards the EU funding sources and to give the EU more responsibility of the cooperation... but we should not resort only to this as the question is, after all, about Finnish interests, because the question is about our neighbors and about our... (F #48)

However, many CSOs pointed out that, at the moment, it is not the availability of state funding for CBC but the lack of personnel and financial assets for the running of the organization itself that restricts their involvement in CBC:

[T]he problem is that we get, in a way, earmarked money... the money cannot usually be used for maintaining our basic organization which we often have problems with... Broader, unmarked funding should be more available. (F #25)

Venäläinen (2011) rightly points out that Russian know-how and strengths have also not always been used effectively. However, her follow-up suggestion that “in the future, every NGO project should include a capacity-development component, and the projects must provide models of good practices in organizational activities, such as democratic decision-making [translation by author],” is more cumbersome. Certainly, a part of project management responsibilities and reporting should and must be shared with the Russian partners, but the fundamental yet tacit Western understanding that a strong civil society not only promotes public interests but serves as a crucial aspect of the transition to and consolidation of democracy come with a enormous ideological load.

Venäläinen's (2011, 31) proposition to consider ways to better apply Finnish know-how, inter alia, of democratic decision-making, communications, financial management, and fundraising to Russian conditions ignores the thin line between capacity building and the importation of the Western model. While the former is needed, experience has show that the latter is doomed to fail. From the CSO actors' perspective, the key to success has been that instead of focusing directly on the big goals of civil society building and enhancing democracy Finnish CSOs have worked on channeling their efforts and funds into strengthening the prerequisites for individual citizens in Russia in order for them to build better preconditions for their own well-being. Civil society cannot be imported, but capacity building through CBC can foster homegrown civic activism in Russia and in so doing building a model of civil society that works in Russia's particular context. In order to do this efficiently, Finnish organizations' cultural awareness of Russia should be strengthened. Lastly, Venäläinen's (ibid.) suggestion that more mid-term evaluations, performance audits, and inspections ought to be used in guiding these projects is grounded in the apparent fact that

strategic project planning has to be improved. However, it is precisely the moderation of these types of oversight that makes NAC feasible for CSOs, many of which cannot shoulder the bureaucracy necessitated, most famously, by the EU projects.

#### **4.5.3 Euregio Karelia – a Tool for What?**

The Euregio Karelia (EK) was founded in 2000 to in order to facilitate CBC between Finland and Russia and to provide a more coordinated financing mechanism. It was the first Euregio established along the land border between Russia and the EU. As proclaimed in the joint CBC program, signed by the Finnish and Russian authorities involved in the establishment of Euregio Karelia, the logic behind the initiative was to build a present-day cross-border region on the foundation of the historical experience (Euregio Karelia 2000). The development of a civil and information society was officially declared as an umbrella objective, which casted EK as a “tool of civil society”<sup>51</sup>.

As a consequence of the twists and turns in EU-Russia relations, EK later became a part of a manifold of identity politics – the construction and reconstruction of European, national, and regional identities. From its beginning, the key figures behind the initiative on both sides of the border promoted a new institutional structure specifically as a new *European* model. The idea was that as the EU enlarged eastwards, joint administrative structures with Russian regional authorities would gain broader European significance (Cronberg 2000; Cronberg & Shlyamin 1999, 326.) The argument was, however, not limited to the establishment of a new kind of border regime, but it was rather introduced in terms of a new kind of cross-border region building. In the planning phase of Euregio Karelia, Tarja Cronberg, the head of the Regional Council of Finnish North Karelia, anticipated that, “Common decision-making procedures and common funds [will] create a foundation for establishing new border region identities” (Cronberg & Shlyamin 1999, 325–326).

In their joint article, Ms. Cronberg and Mr. Shlyamin, the Minister for the External Relations of the Karelian Republic (a post subsequently closed down), marketed EK as a “model for cooperation at the EU external borders” and set the goals of the project in concrete terms. The coordination of INTERREG and Tacis programs on the regional level was presented as the core focus of the new administrative model. Furthermore, the need to ease the border crossing procedures and to increase economic, social, and cultural cooperation were put forward in connection with the questions of promoting security and lowering mental borders (Cronberg & Shlyamin 1999, 28–29). According to Shlyamin’s (2001) assessment, the establishment of Euregio Karelia gave “an impulse to develop joint social projects in the field of Health Care, Social Defense, Education, support to Finnish and Karelian culture in the Republic of Karelia”

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<sup>51</sup> See Bulletin no. 1 of the Tacis project “Euregio Karelia as a Tool of Civil Society.”

and provided also “an opportunity to study energetically European experience in the field of Regional Administration, Local Self-Government, Civil Society Building and to use this experience in carrying out reforms in the Republic.”

For the initiators of the Euregio model, the refashioning of mental borders in a common European frame was obviously a major aim behind the initiative – at least on the level of public declarations. In this respect, the obstacles have probably proven to be larger than initially expected. Even so, regional level CBC has developed rapidly, contributing, in fact, to a notion of Finnish-Russian borderlands in terms of economic, social, and cultural interaction (Kolossoff & Scott 2011). The political climate has in turn been strongly affected by the consolidation of the Russian nation-state. From the perspective of Russian nationalism, cross-border region building – in its ability to pose a “post-modern challenge to a nation-state” Cronberg (2003, 235–236) – has at times been seen in Russia as a source of discord or even as a threat to sovereignty and territorial integrity (Prozorov 2006, 128–136). This has consequently led to the paradox that while in Finland the concept of Euregio Karelia was promoted as an alternative to the marginal militant Karelia activism, in the Russian discussion, regional CBC has sometimes been connected precisely to revanchist ideas in regard to areas ceded to the Soviet Union after World War II (Rytövuori-Apunen 2007, 56–58).

Presently, the area of Euregio Karelia forms an ENPI CBC neighborhood program area, one of the three under the ENPI CBC between Finland and Russia. It provides a framework for continuing CBC, which in the past was pursued through the INTERREG II and III A Karelia Program and the Euregio Karelia Neighborhood Program<sup>52</sup>. The program is divided into four priorities; the first three fund project activities and the fourth priority, Technical Assistance, covers for instance the costs generated by the program’s administration and implementation. The Karelia ENPI CBC Program complements national cross-border activities, focusing on bilateral cooperation between Finland and Russia, which since 1991 has been predominantly funded by Finnish NAC funds.

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<sup>52</sup> The legal framework for the Program is set by the: Commission Regulation (EC) No 951/2007 of 9 August 2007 laying down implementing rules for cross-border cooperation program (CBC IR), Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI Regulation), Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

#### 4.5.4 Northern Dimension

The Northern Dimension (ND), a regional expression of the EU-Russia cooperative framework, constitutes a broader conceptual frame for both the ENPI CBC programs and bilateral cooperation. As a concept, the Northern Dimension is not new. The term surfaced already before the 1995 EU enlargement when the Union encountered post-Soviet Russia in the North along the Finnish-Russian border. The situation led Finland, the most directly affected EU member state, to introduce and initiate the Northern Dimension in order to strengthen the EU's standing in the North and, more importantly, to ensure that the interests of the North would be taken into account at the European core as well (Lipponen 1997; Henriksson 2006, 118–119). As a new EU member state, Finland was especially interested in providing the EU with a special agenda towards its Russian border, i.e., towards the “challenges and possibilities presented by having Russia as a neighbor” (Stubb 2009) and the entire wider European North.

The initiative was officially launched by then Finnish Prime Minister, Mr. Lipponen, in his 1997 speech in Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland. The ultimate goal of the Northern Dimension, Mr. Lipponen ambitiously proclaimed, is “peace and stability, with prosperity and security shared by all nations [in the region]” (Lipponen 1997). The initiative was then readily accepted as a part of the EU's common policy framework, and it became gradually a part of the EU agenda (Heininen & Langlais 1997; Heininen 2001, 29–30; Haglund-Morrissey 2008, 205). The decisive process towards the actual materialization of the ND came in 1999 when Finland held the EU Presidency; in December of the same year the initiative became officially a part of the EU's external and cross-border policies.

Within the EU there existed clear skepticism towards the relevance of the ND, not only by certain southern member states but also by the Commission. Also, other EU Northerners, namely Sweden and Denmark, were to a certain extent critical of Finland for taking the lead (Heurlin 1999; Haukkala 2001; Novack 2001). The Russian government, in turn, was fairly cautious of the initiative. It took nearly two years for Moscow to formulate its official strategy towards the initiative and to produce academic analyses of the issue (Leshukov 1999, 30–31; see also 2000). The crux of the matter was that the initiative's sub-regional approach challenged the traditional Russian ‘hard’ security policy, where all regions constitute an integral part of the federation and thereby possess equal status. Even though finally accepted, Russia's involvement and interest in the initiative was short-lived. As a result, the entire initiative came close to stalling as the Russian side began to feel that the ND was, after all, all about addressing the EU's concerns about Russia, i.e., as an effort to avoid the negative effects caused by Russia's geographical proximity rather than engaging Russia in a mutually beneficial cooperation in which the Russian side would also exert control.

In order to revitalize the ND, the policy became intergovernmentalized; i.e., transformed from being a part of EU external policy into a common regional policy of its partners: EU, Russia, Norway, and Iceland. The new basic documents of the Northern Dimension – namely the Policy Framework Document (Commission of the European Communities 2006a) stating the general objectives and the Northern Dimension Political Declaration (Commission of the European Communities 2006b) identifying the necessary structures for achieving them – were accepted at the EU-Russia Summit in Helsinki in November 2006. In the Policy Framework Document the partners recognize that in order to be successful their cooperation framework can only be driven by the spirit of equal partnership based on shared confidence. The ND has now become a dynamic framework for coordinating various cooperative structures in the region and a “key forum to discuss ways to get more synergy from cooperation between all the actors” (Barroso 2010).

The jointly negotiated documents transformed the status of Russia from an object to an actor, making the entire project considerably more attractive for Russia to engage in. Subsequently, the ND became increasingly identified with the EU’s Russia policy, as a regional aspect of the EU-Russia relations managed by the External Relations DG RELEX (Airoldi 2008, 22). However, in addition to the macro-level the Northern Dimension as a political concept and policy also exists on the micro-level, the concrete level, and on a practical level (Henriksson 2006, 118–119). The other main characteristic of the renewed policy was its strong linkage to the four EU-Russia Common Spaces and Road Maps (Commission of the European Communities 2007). As already mentioned in subsection 4.4.2, the current ENPI CBC programs cover all the Union’s external borders in the East and the South. Eight of these programs are being realized in the ND region. As the ND has several synergies with the ENPI CBC Programs, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has proposed that the five ENPI CBC programs should actually be called “the Northern Dimension CBC Programs” (Torstila 2011).

In light of the high level political tensions between Russia and the EU, and the West more generally, apparent during the renegotiations of the ND policy, their success cannot but be taken as an indication that something quite special is indeed underway in the North. As Busygina and Filippov (2008, 209) have noted, the development of the ND provides an excellent illustration of how the deteriorating relations and conflicts in the sphere of high politics do not automatically diminish the opportunities for practical cooperation on issues of low(-er) politics. As an example, whereas Russia rejected joining the ENP, albeit accepting the funds available through its funding instrument (ENPI), it has welcomed what the new ND policy has to offer.

Whether Russia’s interests in the ND are grounded in a “counter-intuitive trade-off” by which Russia “compensates” for the growing political tensions with the EU at large by cooperating on other institutional levels, as suggested by

Busygina & Filippov (2008, 205), or by more sincere motives is debatable. Still, there are signs that the new ND's promise of equality is indeed leading to more practical cooperation. For example, the Joint Statement of the first ministerial meeting of the renewed ND, held interestingly in St. Petersburg immediately after the Russia-Georgia war, recognizes that since its launch the ND policy has "witnessed considerable intensification" and "growing interest towards it" (Ministerial meeting 2008, 1). The Ministers also underlined the growing importance of the Arctic Region and the impact of sub-regional and sub-state cooperation, and concluded that the successful re-launching of the ND policy has shown that "through co-ownership constructive cooperation is possible in a range of projects producing benefit to the citizens of the Partners and that the ND retains much potential for future development" (ibid., 3).

The concrete and practical content of the ND has also been recognized in Russia. When evaluating the situation in the fall of 2010, Russian Prime Minister Lavrov recognized that the ND has reached impressive results in the fields of environmental protection, transportation, business, and culture over a brief period of time. In addition to providing a less EU-centric and more pragmatic yet flexible framework, the new ND does not operate on the basis of conditionality otherwise typical of the EU neighborhood and external policies (Aalto, Blakkisrud & Smith 2008, 9–10).

Its strength lies also in its multilevel and holistic approach; ND comprises not only cooperation at the governmental level but includes also regional and sub-regional organizations and commissions and sub-national and local authorities as well as non-governmental organizations, universities, research institutions, and business and trade union communities. While the ND remains generally unknown by the CSOs (see chapter 6) and few organizations have taken part directly in programs and projects related to it, its role as an administrative umbrella structure, especially through the synergies with the ENPI CBC Programs, must be recognized. Compared with the broader EU-Russia relations, the ND has created a more positive cooperative frame, which grants local and regional CBC more room and leverage than is the case elsewhere. Civil society is thus an important Northern Dimension actor as the role of CSOs in the implementation of the different projects that falls under its frame is essential.

As announced by Staffan Nilsson (2013), President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) 2010–2013, the European Union's only non-political advisory body, a special Action Plan for civil society involvement in the ND has been planned to stimulate civil society participation in more concrete terms. This action plan would, for example, create more direct, two-way linkages between the Northern Dimension Partnerships' Secretariats and CSOs. The motive behind the idea is based on the understanding that the people-to-people contacts form an important part of the success of the entire ND policy, creating new avenues to discuss different traditions, cultures, business practices,

labor relations, mobility, and employment that are important for the partners' action in the policy. (Ibid.)

The northern regional councils, the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM, est. 1971), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS, est. 1992), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC, est. 1993), and the Arctic Council (AC, est. 1996) play a particularly crucial role in the ND policy. These councils are now full participants and carry out highly important work by identifying the needs for development and cooperation in their respective areas and by supporting practical project implementation in various ways. Even though they are not subordinate to the ND, a strong and rational connection does exist between them. This, in turn, may do wonders in tackling and illuminating what has been called the 'institutional overkill' afflicted the region. The engagement of the regional councils of the North to the ND policy can be seen as an important contributor to the ND's perceived success. The councils' work broadens both the content and scope of the ND significantly by incorporating, for instance, indigenous peoples, provincial-level operations, and cooperation between northern universities in overall activities (Heikkilä 2006, 47). In fact, both ND Action Plans included several topics that originated in the regional councils. Therefore, the valuable work carried out by the councils, especially in the field of environmental protection and social welfare, has provided the ND with a longed-for element of pragmatism.

The ND, being a part of the broader EU-Russia cooperation framework, has its managerial role in providing the overall leverage, promoting and facilitating council-initiated projects, and engaging different actors in various fields, as well as in promoting networking, interregional cooperation, and the coherence of different sectoral policies. The regional councils, in turn, are in their element in identifying the needs for development and cooperation, bringing in practical experience and a strong people-to-people dimension, supporting practical project implementation and in fulfilling the important objectives and priorities of the ND.

The ND focuses on areas of cooperation for which a regional and sub-regional emphasis brings added value. The core activities are being coordinated around the model of 'partnerships' based on the defined priority sectors. Currently, there are four existing ND partnerships in place: the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP; est. 2001), which is by far the most important EU intervention in the actual Arctic; the Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS; est. 2003); the Partnership on Culture (NDPC; est. 2009); and the Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL; est. 2009). In addition the ND Senior Officials' Meeting held in autumn 2009 gave its support to the establishment of the Northern Dimension Institute (NDI), whose purpose is to act as a university network open to all interested higher-level educational institutions, researchers, and research institutes. The Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC), a platform for dialogue between

companies and the public authorities, was also established later that year as a result of an initiative made by the corporate world. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2010.)

These partnerships provide frameworks that in many instances build upon previously existing extensive collaboration with Russia within the northern regional councils and regional governments. Their strength lies in their capacity to bridge the region's actors, to organize the practical implementation of projects in an effective way, and thus they can be seen as a yet another expedient to strengthen the practical dimension of ND policy. Even if Henriksson's (2006, 119) claim that the "Northern Dimension covers all the practical activities in the region [emphasis added]" is an overstatement, the fact that the national funding mechanisms of the ND member countries are closely linked with the ND partnerships implies that many of them do result from it either directly or indirectly. Notwithstanding the myriad of other initiatives in the North, the prospects for the ND depend on finding a clear-cut niche in this complex picture. In order for the ND to be successful, it needs to avoid stepping on the toes of the other bodies dealing with Arctic matters and to build upon its ability to function as a coordination mechanism across all the regional councils.

The Northern Dimension can be seen as an example of pushing aside the hackneyed Huntingtonian "clash of civilizations" and in rejecting the age-old forms of ordering (Laine 2011). Despite the apparent challenges, it seems reasonable to argue that focus on the North (as opposed to the Arctic), instead of on the division between the East and the West may represent the best means to incorporate Russia into multilateral cooperation and fix the deteriorated EU-Russia relations. As the new ND represents a common regional policy of its partners rather than an EU tool to influence Russia, Russian engagement in it might no longer be seen as a 'backdoor approach' to Europe as opposed to directly addressing Brussels, a perception described by Joenniemi and Sergounin (2003, 110) before ND's renewal and before the recent decline of EU-Russian relations.

The bordering between East and West has left a very little room for northernness to be tapped into especially in Russia, yet it is exactly there where the common goals crucial for successful cooperation might just be the easiest to identify (Joenniemi & Sergounin 2003, 108). This comes precisely down to Medvedev's (1998, 8) proposal that, if utilized properly, northernness could stand out as "a post-modern solution in the form of a third"; i.e., it could function as a common element that both parties can recognize themselves in and thus transcend the binary division between the East and the West. Northernness could be favored because of its openness, the elements of partnership, and the fact that the representation has a rather apolitical, innocent, and more collaborative approach than other 'Western' initiatives (Joenniemi & Sergounin 2003, 107; Heininen 2004). The European North is a good example of debordering and region building, whereby peripheral thinking has become



replaced by a focus on local identity narratives' across national borders (Koivumaa 2009).

As a policy, the ND has certainly had its challenges, but more importantly it has been able to react to criticism and concerns and has actually aimed to implement the ideas that many others are only just discussing in principle (Laine 2011). As elaborated by Aalto, Blakkisrud & Smith (2008, 11–13), when mutual understanding has been ensured given Russia's re-emerging strength and ability to contribute to on an equal basis the potential and possibilities of the cooperation are greater than ever. It is, however, in the end up to Russia itself to decide to what extent to make use of its northernness in order to qualify the North. As of yet, Russian northernness still differs greatly from, e.g., Nordic northernness (see Joenniemi & Lehti 2003), which harms bridging relations to other northern states (Joenniemi & Sergounin 2003, 106). Northern cooperation has to adhere to the principle of equality and testify to the possibility of truly mutually beneficial cooperation. Otherwise, the North may still remain too marginal for this re-emerging great power and thus fail to resonate with the way Russia perceives itself and comprehends its location and position in today's world.

#### **4.6 ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EU**

Today, European policy-makers commonly turn to civil society organizations when seeking to identify, manage, or resolve a plethora of economic, social, and political problems (Kendall 2009). This is, however, a rather recent phenomenon. Even though few deny the role of CSOs in the safeguarding of democracy, their role in the legitimization of European governance has long remained vague. By the end of the 1990s, the discourse on the role of CSOs broadened, not just by content and visibility but also in terms of the variety of policy actors making recourse to it (Smismans 2003, 4, 6–7). As a result, CSOs became increasingly included, or at least consulted, in the drafting and implementation of initiatives particularly in the social policy field as social issues became prominent agenda items.

This led to the so-called discovery of civil society by the EU around the turn of the millennium. What had started out as more or less an ad hoc meetings between particular Directorate Generals and specific CSOs gradually developed into a more structured dialogue. The Commission's first clear response to the increased demand for the institutionalization of civil dialogue was the discussion paper "The Commission and non-governmental organizations: building a stronger partnership" of January 2000 (Commission of the European Communities 2000), which can be seen as the Commission's attempt to enhance the visibility of the civil society and move the dialogue from the DGs' sphere of operations under the auspices of Commission in order to fight the worsening

legitimacy crisis and to improve the Commission's overall reputation. It paved the road for the White Paper on European Governance, in which the Commission makes a comprehensive commitment to "involving civil society" and promises to "open up policy-making to make it more inclusive and accountable" (Commission of the European Communities 2001b).

The White Paper broadened the Commission's definition of civil society from voluntary organizations or NGOs to cover also trade unions and employers' organizations ('social partners'), professional associations, charities, grassroots organizations – organizations that involve citizens in local and municipal life with a particular contribution from churches and religious communities.<sup>53</sup> The Commission definition has continued to broaden even since. In its attempt to establish a coherent framework for consulting external interested parties, the Commission clarified that civil society forms the "principal structures of society outside of government and public administration" and that it includes also "economic operators not generally considered to be 'third sector' or NGOs" (Commission of the European Communities 2002). Given the legitimacy capital that the civil dialogue provides and the 'problem' that "there is no commonly accepted – let alone legal – definition of the term 'civil society organization'" (ibid.), the Commission has been eager to use civil society as a legitimizing discourse for all of its interactions outside government and public administration (ibid.)

The talks regarding the involvement of CSOs have not been only empty rhetoric (Kendall 2009). Despite missing the constitutional opportunity, the Treaty of Lisbon retained references to civil society and associations, which emerged as a result of the Constitutional Convention Treaty process that preceded it (Will & Kendall 2009). By stating that "[t]he [EU] institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action" and that they also "shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society," the treaty<sup>54</sup> provided civil society with a 'hard law' hook, which builds on a range of 'soft' precedents already represented in the EU process since the Treaty of Nice (Kendall 2009).

Also the European Parliament has been enthusiastic in promoting its pro-civil society stance. In 2008, the Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee adopted a Report on the perspectives for developing civil dialogue under the Treaty of Lisbon (2008/2067) calling for the establishment of a structured civil dialogue between the EU institutions and civil society. It stresses that civil

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<sup>53</sup> For "a more precise definition of organised civil society" the White Paper refers to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on "The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe," OJ C329, 17 Nov 1999, 30.

<sup>54</sup> Treaty of Lisbon, Article 8 B.

society “plays an important role in the European integration process since it communicates the positions and demands expressed by EU citizens to the European institutions. This “highlights the importance of the expertise that civil society makes available to the institutions.” It further underlines the importance of “providing information on and raising awareness about civil dialogue, in particular in connection with promoting the activities and objectives of the EU, building European cooperation networks and strengthening the European identity and identification with Europe within civil society.”

Even though the improvements are undeniable, a number of issues to be tackled remain. The number of CSOs that have managed to break in to EU circles is startlingly small. The policy community in Brussels has not been able to come to terms with the very different national civil society cultures, laws, and policies. Being institutionally incapable of acknowledging local nuances, the EU prefers to deal with “organized civil society,” which often translates to large, professional, and commonly Brussels-based CSO platforms, at least some of which may be regarded as somewhat elitist and therefore unrepresentative and detached from their constituents at local and regional levels.

The EU’s new rhetorical commitment to facilitating transnational civil society networks is certainly subordinated to the dictates of geopolitical realism but also clearly downplayed by the apparent gap between Brussels and the grassroots. The undeniable fact is that the EU is very selective regarding whom it talks and listens to. It is the EU who has the power to shape the discussion and dictate what kinds of CSOs are needed. This makes one ponder to what extent does the involvement of civil society, as it is today, really strengthen democracy? Who gets selected and on what basis? And, consequently, who in reality is represented?

It is apparent that the EU seems to have lost some of its faith in its ability to influence the transformation process in Russia, and to some extent also in capacity of CBC to serve as a means to this end. This tendency has only been fostered by the Eurozone crisis, which has the EU more introspective at the expense of the external relations. As a result, the EU has begun to retreat precisely where it should not be – at the level of sociology-cultural communication – and assumed a new realist stance in its EU foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia.

#### **4.6.1 Civil Society Organizations as Agents of Change**

The EU logic and involvement of civil society is grounded in a tacit Western understanding that a strong civil society not only promotes public interests but that it is a crucial aspect of the transition to and consolidation of democracy. Accordingly, Western governments, non-profit organizations, and various international organizations have provided funding for the support of civil society in Russia with the assumption that this is a crucial aspect of the transition to and consolidation of democracy. It has been estimated that

approximately half of Russian CSOs have received funding from international donors (Henderson 2003; Henry 2004; Sperling 2006). Given that, the impact of Soviet legacies and the nationalized political discourse surrounding Russian civil society have, however, narrowed the influence of international cooperation; the good intentions behind such straight-forward model-planting have often resulted in unintended outcomes; i.e., not in the broader outcomes that the Western donors intended – which were largely unrealistic to begin with (McIntosh Sundstrom 2006).

The ENP can then be seen as tool needed to extend the EU's transformative power beyond its external borders. It facilitates an ideational projection of power, marking – at least in theory – a decisive departure from traditional state-centered geopolitics. Strengthening civil society provides a means of spreading 'western' values of democracy, the rule of law, and the free market. CSOs are therefore needed not only for the enhancement of the EU's international influence but also for the strengthening of its identity as a stabilizing element in the world system with 'exportable' (i.e., universal) democratic values (see Emerson 2004; Guterres 2001). Thus, the EU clearly pursues the objective of achieving community through 'shared values,' common goals, and intensive cooperation on a broad range of internal EU policies.<sup>55</sup>

In this respect, civil society is seen as a tool for deeper European integration, democratization, and the promotion of liberal economic markets. CSOs are considered key actors in the promotion of good governance. In the ENP strategy paper, the role of civil society is noted with reference to a number of different spheres: youth work, science and education, culture and cross-border cooperation, the environment, the fight against corruption, and local administration. The Commission (2006c) has suggested that civil society participation should go beyond exchanges and cooperation programs:

We must encourage partner governments to allow appropriate participation by civil society representatives as stakeholders in the reform process, whether in preparation of legislation, the monitoring of its implementation or in developing national or regional initiatives related to the ENP (Commission of the European Communities 2006c, 7).

This aim is reiterated in the Commission's (2007, 11) attempts to strengthen the ENP:

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

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<sup>55</sup> As defined in Commission of the European Communities (2004a, 11–12).

#### **4.6.2 New Institutional and Discursive Practices in a Multi-level European Frame**

The relationship between Finnish CSOs and the EU is twofold. On the one hand, the EU and its initiatives and policies are fairly well known and evaluated, in general terms, positively. On the other hand, the EU is seen as a distant and unapproachable actor. This is not to say that the EU would not be an important actor but that its interest and focus was seen to be somewhere else than in the civil society dimension. The basic idea that the EU is advocating is seen as relevant and worthwhile, yet for many the role of CSOs in this work is vague. The EU is seen primarily as a political and economic force and, as a result, its programs tend to focus on these fields also regarding CBC.

In many successful cases, cooperation across the Finnish-Russian border commenced long before Finland joined the EU and in some cases already during the Soviet era and has been continued after that fairly, if not completely, separated from the policy frames and programs. That being said, it cannot go unnoticed that national level CSOs – in Finland but also increasingly in Russia – are often part of a larger European body through which the ‘European’ agenda, ideas, information, and also instruction gets transferred to the national level. In Finland, the information and knowledge gained in this manner is then often channeled to the regional and local levels. This multi-tier model of associational activity and the consequential information flow is seen as allowing communication to also travel upstream so that the voice of regional actors is audible at the decision-making level.

Instead to traditional bilateral links, more and more Finnish CSOs are connected with Russian CSOs through transnational networks. Being a part of the same network does not, however, necessary mean that the two cooperate directly with each other – or even if they do, cooperation does not always take place across the border physically but rather via an EU level, umbrella-type organizational structure. The transnational social space created by the networks must be, first and foremost, understood as a virtual space rather than geographically bound. Electronic communication enabled by the Internet connects different actors without regard to international borders and allows ideas to spread rapidly far and wide.

Even though now part of the broader EU frame, the practical work and its priorities at the Finnish-Russian border have changed only slightly. Social, especially health-related, CSOs continue to dominate Finnish-Russian CBC. The EU’s role in promoting cooperation agendas that address social needs and local development is viewed by Finnish CSOs as weak, especially in relation to the role of the Finnish state. The border is crossed more easily and frequently, yet the transnational space is still very much shaped by the nation-states and their rules. In Finland, the embeddedness in welfare state arrangements – in structural, normative, and financial terms – tone down the influence of Europeanization. However, as Conrad (2011, 218) notes, one cannot help but

notice that, in 'real life' the attention paid to border-crossing and international and global processes, which interact with nationally construed social problems, and their regulation has become more and more pronounced.

Civil society actors are glad that the EU has finally acknowledged the vitality of the civil society dimension for its policies to boost links with its 'ring of friends' and thus to deepen integration between the Union and its neighbors. However, from the perspective of CSO actors, top-down prepared proposals for deeper integration should pay more attention to the dynamics from below, as ignoring these dynamics would prove to be short-sighted and hardly socially sustainable. In the view of civil society actors, instead of trying to change Russian society or merely import EU-European values and hope for the best, emphasis should be placed on people-to-people contacts and on a more constructive dialogue between neighbors, which in turn is likely to result in more ground-level support for deeper integration. CSO actors are of the opinion that cooperation should focus more on providing help and support to local and regional organizations in Russia as they themselves build better preconditions to confront the specific conditions that have emerged as a result of Russia's own historical development.

The role of CBC in building social cohesion and convergence is also emphasized by many. Regardless of the public benefits to be realized by cross-border civil society cooperation, the most successful and enduring examples can be found when individual actors themselves feel that they benefit from cooperation. In this sense, it seems to be the positive experience of civil society actors rather than EU policies that have made cooperation worthwhile and beneficial.

Not all EU influence or links with the EU can, however, be simply lumped together under the title of Europeanization. In many cases, the question is rather about a continuation of European integration in terms of greater unity between countries and peoples. It is unclear for many whether or not a coherent European civil society really exists. More often than not, Russian CSOs had joint activities or other types of links with individual EU member states though not with the EU per se. Policy frameworks that endeavor to capture the entire picture are seen as destined to overlook country-specific issues and circumstances. Accordingly, it is often expressed that for CBC to be effective, projects receiving EU funds should be derived from practical issues that emerge locally. A majority of Finnish CSOs that have already managed to establish contacts with Russian CSOs work rather independently from EU initiatives and policies. According to many, cooperation has arisen from a general awareness of a common interest or problem, which has functioned as an impetus for cooperative initiatives. It is these bottom-up initiatives that have mobilized the people to take the first step across the border and engage in pragmatic and constructive forms of cooperation.

The common concern that the Russian side continues to be regarded as an object rather than an active subject is partly a result of the logic of EU programs, but also partly a result of the lack of capacity on the Russian side to act as an equal partner. Cooperation has so far been possible largely thanks to European or Finnish funds and as such it has, directly or not, been based on a European agenda and upon European values. Even if the enhancement of democracy, human rights, rule of law, and so on are certainly worthwhile goals, experience has shown that simply transplanting these goals from their 'original' setting to a rather different context is likely to create problems. Instead of focusing on the democratization of Russia or on building a Western-type civil society, the dynamics across the Finnish-Russian border can be characterized as more pragmatic. Indeed, the utmost aim of cooperation has been to solve practical problems, provide help, and support Russians as they confront the specific conditions that have emerged as a result of Russia's own historical development in a dynamic global context.

## **4.7 SYNOPSIS**

### **4.7.1 EUrope?**

Conceptions of European borders are dependent on the perception of what the European integration is all about, but they also affect the visions of what is Europe and where the process of European integration is expected to lead us. The Finnish-Russian border is not an exception as its role today is very much depended on the EU policies beyond it. Borders appear in a very different light depending on what the EU expected to be. Then again, also the opposite is true; the process of European integration, and even more so that of neighborhood building, is dependent on the perception of what the borders are – or are perceived to be. To form the big picture, we need to understand the nature of Europe and geopolitics, the enlargement of the European Union, and its relations with neighboring states, geopolitical discourses on the ground, social representations about border, the perceptions and images of the other, border-crossing processes, particularly across the external border, and the cast of CBC actors and their motives.

The EU is commonly criticized for lacking the capacity to understand how civil society works and act accordingly but also the opposite is true: few civil society actors understand how the EU works and what can be expected from it – but, then again, who does? A holistic perspective sheds some light on the matter. The EU should be studied not as one international regime but as a series of regimes (Stone Sweet & Sandholtz 1997). It looks different from different angles. The EU is a complicated organization, a mixture of the supranational and the intergovernmental, far from becoming a superstate even if at times it acts like one. Room is needed for various different definitions, interpretations,

and conceptualizations because different countries need to be able to project themselves through the EU for the European project to succeed; the EU must be one thing and another at the same time.

The EU of today seems federalist in that the supranational system of EU governance has taken its institutions further from simple intergovernmentalism towards a sort of a European Superstate. At the same time, the Mitranean functionalistic vision is valid in the sense that the collective governance between states has developed hand-on-hand with increased cooperation. The EU of today seems to be intergovernmental in that the states have maintained their central role in defining the speed of European integration. What we draw from the works of Putnam and Moravcsik is that states are rational actors in the sense that national interests are determined first of all at the domestic level and are then used as the basis for intergovernmental negotiations, while the role of supranational institutions is to fuel cooperation by reducing the negotiation transaction costs.

The EU of today is neofunctional insofar that the spillover effects are obvious and political integration has indeed followed economic integration. It is neofunctional not only because, in contrast to the state-centered and static intergovernmentalism theory, it takes integration as a dynamic process of constructive development but also because it recognizes the relevance of non-state and sub-state actors within intra-institutional decision-making processes and sees that this induces positive reactions to further integration and brings the citizens of the different nations closer to each other. Along with federalists, neofunctionalists reject the Tönnian *Gemeinschaft* model and replace it with the more pluralist *Gesellschaft* model within which cooperation and integration can be reached through a convergence of interests (Taylor 1983, 3–5). The neofunctionalist take is, however, inadequate in its assertion that integration would be a chain reaction of things occurring without active leadership.

The EU of today is neoinstitutionalist in that particular relevance is attributed to institutions, which now act with a certain level of autonomy. As such, the institutions have become the central mechanisms of providing context for positive-sum bargains, transforming in so doing a set of individuals into a community with the sense of the common good (March & Olsen 1984; 2006, 4). But the EU of today is also transactionalist in the sense that it is a 'political community' consisting of nation-states interlinked by a high level of communications and transactions across borders. It is transactionalist also in that it does not see states merely as integrated entities but considers also the underlying social fabric of non-state actors and interest groups. As Stone Sweet and Sandholtz (1997), following Deutsch's logic, once envisaged, a supranational society of relevant actors has emerged as transactions across national borders have increased. Transnational transactions are hindered by deviating nationally based rules and thus require the creation of rules that are applied supranationally at the EU level.



We have witnessed a change from hierarchical and centralized government structures towards more fragmented and collective governance arrangements, sharing of public power and increased reliance on partnerships, networks, and the new forms of consultation and dialogue that they imply. Thus, rather than a collection of states, in whichever arrangement, the EU can be approached as a complex web of interdependencies. Its territoriality is clearly more modern than that of a nation-state, whereby the distinction between internal and external becomes fuzzier. Focusing on the interdependencies would allow cooperation when and where it is necessary and sensible as opposed to being based on one status or mere location.

The devolution of power can be seen to foster democratization as it allows broader forms of participation and includes a wider share of the population into decision-making than the traditional voting process of the command and control model could ever manage. As the esteemed qualities of civic life get co-opted in the decision-making process, they build a better basis for good governance. While in the principle this sound doable enough, the practice is likely to be complicated. Achieving desired outcomes depends a lot on the quality and ability of civil society and of civic participation. Not all civil society organizations are necessarily civil and others lack the 'civic-ness.'

It is clear that the EU does not illustrate readily any of the proposed models. Rather it defines them or rather defies them (Kuus 2011b, 1144). It is a complex polycentric and transnational institution, a sort of avant-garde network-state that imbricates the national inside the transnational and vice versa in its attempt to overcome national interests without jeopardizing national sovereignty. It is equally important to understand that EUrope is still a work in progress rather than a finished product.

At present, it is hard not to see the EU, first and foremost, as regulatory state, which functions very differently from, say, the Nordic welfare state model into which many CSOs in this context are embedded. Some have taken this to indicate that due to its limited functional-regulatory mandate the EU should not even be judged in terms of democracy. On these grounds, Moravcik (2004), for example, questions the entire call for more democratic bottom-up involvement, and Føllesdal (2006) proposes that the EU as a *sui generis* project is not bound to the normative expectations of popular participation and accountability that have been established for member state governments.

While the European Union has certainly been very successful in its political making of space, i.e., monopolizing Europe, the meaning of 'Europe' remains heavily contested. The EU has been very successful not just in a political sense but also in territorializing all good things, from human rights to democracy, as 'European.' In so doing, the EU has marketed itself not just as a 'force for good in the world' (Barbé & Johansson-Nogués 2008) but also fed the notions of Europe as 'monotopia,' as a 'one space' currently mastered by Union (Jensen & Richardson 2004).

Sakwa's (2006) different Europes provide an illuminating illustration of how different the situation looks when based on different conceptions of Europe. In particular, the different conceptions diverge in their take on the role and position of Russia. Whereas the mainstream European story situates it within the Wider Europe, in the margins as a semi- or close outsider to use Aalto's (2006) categorization, the Pan-European dimension provides a 'half-way house' approach for integrating Russia by providing some sort of institutional framework but failing short of a fully-fledged supranational transformative agenda (Sakwa 2010, 18). Regarding the former in particular, the further away from Russia one is, the more likely one is to consider Russia to be European. Alternatively, those who share the common border with Russia tend to be more eager to evoke distinctions between themselves and Russia (cf. Kuus 2011b, 1150). If, in turn, the Civilizational approach is used, Russia must be counted in. As explained by Sakwa (2006, 24), "there can be no doubt that Russia, for example, is part of a broader European civilization" and that this "cultural unity transcends political divisions and geographical barriers."

In addition to the *internal* consolidation of a political community, EU geopolitics focuses on the development of regional partnerships with *external* states, i.e., the creation of a 'New Neighborhood.' Both of these processes are examples of 'bordering' whereby borders are constructed through geopolitical discourses and practices. The bordering practices establish and reinforce the rules, objectives, and attitudes that further promote a sense of community, but they also distinguish between 'us' and 'them.'

Within the EU frame, the dual movement of integration and securitization has made the situation increasingly complex. The apparent juggle between cooperation and security-oriented agendas has led to contradictory bordering practices whereby a considerable gap exists between the projected geopolitical vision and its translation into action. A telling indicator of this is the obvious imbalance in resources allotted to CBC. While the EU's Cohesion and Regional Policy for 2007–2013 has an operating budget of EUR 347 billion (35.7% of the total EU budget for that period), the budget for the ENPI for the same period amounts to some EUR 11 billion, the vast majority of which is for national and multi-country programs and only some five per cent for CBC programs. Ironically, this is less than what the EU is investing in security research under its wider R&D budget for 2007–2013. Accordingly, the EU's promise of a 'privileged partnership' is downplayed by the fact that while the ENPI does provide limited co-funding also for non-EU members, the sums are much less than what was available than through previously programs.

Acknowledging the undefined nature of the concept of Europeanization or rather the lack of uniformed definition, this study approaches Europeanization without any intention to paint it as an all-encompassing grand theory of the complexity of European transformation. Firstly, it is employed here in rather practical terms as a characterization of the phase in the development of Finnish-

Russian relations during which new supra-national administrative structures, policy frames, and instruments were put in place and influenced the public policies in both countries. Secondly, emphasis is put on its subtle yet resolute identity political aspect targeted to promote European values, common identity, and models of European social and political organization (see Harmsen & Wilson 2000). Thirdly, Europeanization is analyzed as the adaptation to new institutional and discursive practices within a supranational, European frame of action (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz & Fligstein 2001). Taken together, Europeanization here is understood as a process away from state-centeredness and used as a context where border and civil society CBC is studied.

#### **4.7.1 EU as a New Frame for Cooperation**

In order to manage its transnational space, which the EU would like to see extend beyond its external borders, during the last decade a previously unseen premium was placed on the role of civil society cooperation across the external EU border. EU documents and position statements praised the role of CSOs one after another and the perceived value of civil society rose in the eyes of decision-makers. In particular, CSOs were increasingly trusted in the EU's attempts to bring its neighbors closer to the union by mitigating the effects of both the old and new dividing lines. As a result, CSOs have begun to play a key role in cross-border relations also at the external EU border.

Civil society fits well into a governance-beyond-the-state system. Instead of focusing on trying to change policies of the state, more energy has been put into making changes at the local level while continuing to think if not globally at least transnationally. In fact, one of the main reasons why the traditional, hierarchical government structures have been losing their power to various civil society actors lies in the aptitude of the latter to organize themselves into sprawling cooperative networks. Networked borders have given state borders spatial mobility; due to their multi-tier organizational structures and cross-sectoral partnerships, CSOs have also been able to navigate between EU, the state, and regional/local levels. The restructuring of the nation-state has now made it possible not just to disaggregate the state and the border but also to question the sacred link between civil society and the state. In other words, as the state has been redefined, and so too can be done to the civil society.

The role CSOs can or could play is also utterly dependent on the understanding and future development of the EU itself. Different conceptions of the EU allow different roles for civil society. As both the EU and the civil society sector itself are undergoing far-reaching changes, the relationship between the two is hard to predict. Before we can even start talking about a European civil society, we need to have an idea of what the EU is. The role of civil society looks very different depending on whether the EU we talk about is understood as a society, a welfare regime, a political system, a mode of government, a state-like structure, or something else entirely.

By incorporating civil society into EU policy and decision-making, the EU has attempted to use its transformative power and EUropanize the various European civil societies closer to what may one day be a European civil society. Given that in many countries civil society structures remain embedded in their respective national frames, the goal sounds somewhat far-fetched, but on the other hand, to expect anything less would be even more ungrounded as in the other arenas of society, in the spheres of political institutions and the market, cooperation across borders and joint decision making have already become a reality.

The EU's motivation to engage with civil society organizations is not only based on the CSOs input (such as lobbying and providing information and knowledge) or on their throughput in the Parliament's Committees, Commission's consultations, or DG's working groups but rather increasingly on the output channels they provide in terms of mediating all things EU to the local level, i.e., their ability to import Europeanness. Due to their transnational networks and multi-tier organizational structures, the CSOs are, at least in principle, suitable for transporting and even exporting ideas and practices from the EU level to their constituents at the local level and again further to their partners.

The mediating role of CSOs has now been understood also in the cross-border context in the European neighborhood, particularly regarding Russia. Due to Russia's increased self-confidence and its restrictive influence on the EU's attempts to street Russian development through conventional governmental relations, CSOs have become deemed as providing an alternate avenue to have a say and channel assistance to Russia. In so doing, the EU – furtively yet purposefully – bypasses the Russian state and acts in the absence of consent building on the underlying assumption that small non-political changes will eventually lead to larger political changes. The situation is certainly far from that simple; the Kremlin has made it more than clear that it is displeased also with foreign CSOs becoming excessively involved in the promotion of democracy and civil society in Russia, especially so after the so-called color revolutions of Ukraine and Georgia that caused much angst in Moscow.

From the EU perspective, support to the CSOs engaged in CBC with Russia has commonly been, and for the most part still is, seen within the rubric of democracy promotion. In the Tacis instrument, EU support for the work of CSOs came under the priority sector for institutional, legal, and administrative reform (education and training and the development of civil society), whereas over 80 per cent of funds under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) were channeled through CSOs (Cameron 2006). In addition, the Link Inter-European NGOs (LIEN) program supported small projects, which aimed to stimulate citizens' initiatives and strengthen the capacity of NGOs working in the social sector in favor of disadvantaged groups

of the population<sup>56</sup>. CSOs were also eligible to apply for funding in the Small Project Facility of the CBC aspect of Tacis regarding projects on the borders of NIS states and EU states.

In order to succeed in democracy promotions, a more holistic approach was in order. As stated in the Non-Paper expanding on the proposals contained in the Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on 'Strengthening the ENP': "[t]he civil society dimension is vital for the overall success of the ENP," yet "[t]he role of the Commission and the Member States in the civil society dimension is primarily as facilitators, because public bodies cannot set the agenda for civil society" (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 2006, 1). Moreover, from the Commission perspective, the most important dialogue is that between the government and civil society in the respective partner countries. The ENPI CBC Programs fund cooperation projects "for socio-economic development, to meet jointly defined common challenges, for border issues as well as people-to-people cooperation" and underline that the "involvement of locally-based actors is important to contribute to the establishment of good neighborly relations" (ibid.).

Cross-border cooperation, a long-standing tradition within the EU, is a key priority both in the European Neighborhood Policy and in the EU's Strategic Partnership with Russia. As the Commission's (2006e, 8) Strategy Paper 2007–2013 on CBC states:

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

Regarding the EU relations specifically with Russia, for example in the 2005 EU-Russia Common Economic Space Road Map<sup>57</sup> the partners promised to "[e]ncourage the involvement of local and regional key actors such as authorities and civil society, in all aspects of cross-border cooperation," to "cooperate with relevant elements of civil society" to fight concerns such as corruption and trafficking and to "strengthen and enhance the European identity on the basis of common values... as a basis of vitality of civil society in Europe without dividing lines." The idea was that these principles would be put into practice through the ENPI CBC programs, the priorities of which are established by local and regional actors on both sides of the borders (Commission of the European Communities 2006c, 5–6).

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<sup>56</sup> LIEN program was approved by the European Commission in 1997 and it was completed in December 2000.

<sup>57</sup> Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/pdf/road\\_map\\_ces.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/pdf/road_map_ces.pdf).

A number of CSOs, nevertheless, soon raised concerns of the ENPI by calling for more meaningful and systematic involvement of civil society in the actual policymaking, programming, and implementation. As a practical example of this, already on October 8, 2007, 20 CSO leaders wrote an open letter<sup>58</sup> to European Commission President Barosso and External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner insisting on the need to involve civil society as a true partner in the ENP/ENPI. In their second letter in 2008<sup>59</sup>, the CSOs asked for the establishment of clear mechanisms for consultation with civil society and more open communication and transparency in the EU Neighborhood with an overall objective of ensuring that EU policies towards the neighborhood are reflective of people's aspiration in the region; i.e., to work "towards a people's partnership".

It seems that the CSO message touched a chord in the Commission as while identifying priorities for EC funding to neighboring countries for the next years, the Commission stated that CSOs "have a crucial role to play in providing input and ensuring that the final decisions that are made are the right ones for these countries" (EEPA 2009). In addition to consulting CSOs, the EC Delegations were required to post the initial concept note for the new indicative program on their websites in April 2009.

Even though the ENPI Mid Term Review had little to review due to the fact that the implementation of the CBC program was severely delayed (see subsection 4.4.2), the process itself enabled the Commission to take into account the civil society perspective in preparing the new Indicative CBC Programs for the period 2011–2013. During the review, the consultation of external stakeholders was organized in the context of the programming missions of the desk officers to the partner country and via a web-based consultation. Interested organizations were invited to provide their suggestions on: 1) the cooperation priorities to be supported through the ENPI and 2) the role of CSOs in achieving the cooperation objectives. The CSOs were asked to be pragmatic and coordinate their input with their fellow organizations, taking the constraints of the Commission into account. These constraints included the given policy framework within which the programming documents had to be developed; the need to agree the cooperation priorities with the government of the partner countries; the need for focus/a limited number of intervention priorities in view of aid effectiveness; and the limited resources (both human and financial) at the Commission's disposal.

The actual review report provided by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament called on the Commission, together with the partner governments, to further develop mechanisms for consultation with civil society and local authorities in order to better involve them in the design and monitoring of the implementation of the ENPI and of the national reform

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<sup>58</sup> The letter and Ferrero-Waldner's reply available at: [www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments](http://www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments).

<sup>59</sup> Available at: [www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/Letter\\_Commissioner\\_260508a.pdf](http://www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/Letter_Commissioner_260508a.pdf).

programs. It also acknowledged that despite the increased flexibility and simplicity of the Community assistance instruments the procedures and timeframes under the ENPI remain burdensome for CSOs and local authorities. (European Parliament 2009, 5.)

The new ENPI Indicative Program for 2011–2013 built upon the key elements established in the basic reference documents, including the ENPI Regulation itself, the CBC Strategy Paper 2007–2013, and the Indicative Program 2007–2010, as well as the associated ENPI CBC Implementing Rules. It also made reference to the MTR outcomes, yet in practice the program offered nothing new. It confirmed that the CBC programs already adopted will be continued and that they will remain based upon the same the four key objectives already defined in the 2007 CBC Strategy Paper:

- promote economic and social development in regions on both sides of common border;
- work together to address common challenges, in fields such as environment, public health and the prevention of and the fight against organized crime;
- ensure efficient and secure borders;
- promote local cross border ‘people-to-people’ actions.

In all, it seems that the gaps between rhetoric and practice as well as contradictory bordering practices have begun to shake the Union as a whole. The EU is struggling with a severe identity crisis that not only reflects internal divisions and tensions but also an ambiguous geopolitical role vis-à-vis neighboring states. This is worrying, as the EU has promoted a regional space that could potentially intensify and improve relations with neighboring states such as Russia. Furthermore, through the process of enlargement and the development of new political relations with the neighboring states, the EU has exerted considerable influence on political institution building and socio-cultural processes in the former ‘Soviet Bloc’ (Scott & Liikanen 2010). The uneven conditions and disjointed policy environments help, however, produce diverse patterns of inclusion and exclusion of cooperation partners in neighboring states.

# *5 Discursive Practices: Reconstructing the Image of a Neighbor*

While debates on Europeanization and post-national borders have become increasingly prominent at the rhetorical level, it is necessary to examine to what extent the change has been reflected on the practices of civil society cooperation. This chapter addresses this question by examining the discursive practices of civil society and tracing the development of the portrayed image of Russia in the context of cross-border cooperation. As the media is an integral force of civil society and civil society plays a vital role as a field of discursive practices, the analysis here focuses on the opinion writings featured in Helsingin Sanomat from 1990 to 2010. The opinion writings are taken here as an aspect of the public sphere within which the actors of civil society themselves construct the image of Russia as a neighbor. Public discussion also provides the context within which CBC has evolved.

The opinion writings are, by definition, more opinionated than actual, some might say 'factual,' news articles. This study, however, rejects the traditional juxtaposition of the 'real' and the 'imagined' and instead proposes in a more Cartesian manner by which an image or a belief is considered to be real precisely because it is imagined. Newspapers not only provide a forum for public debate, but they also effectively transmit an imagined reality – even if the picture that emerges would work at cross-purposes to what might be deemed desirable from a more official point of view.

Be it as it may, the communication channels that newspapers provide are vital to society. In many circles, the media has been acclaimed to act as the fourth power, pillar, estate, or branch of democracy – as society's 'watchdog.' It has the ability to strengthen the civil society structure by helping to put civil society principles into action, reinforcing accountable behavior in society, providing timely information, and influencing, at times even creating, the direction of social change (e.g., Galaty 2003; Lemon 2007, 3). What is even more relevant for this study is that newspapers in particular provide a valuable arena for people to enter into the public debate. Enabling more effective participation is an important function of civil society and substantiates the stand that the concept of civil society should not only be viewed through associations but also



more broadly as a coercion-free arena for discussion and mutual learning, a 'public sphere' as Habermas (1995) has suggested (see subsection 5.3.1). Such an arena is crucial for a healthy and vibrant civil society; it empowers people to participate in societal activities and creates a channel for people to connect with those with whom they work in decisions that affect their lives.

What is also relevant for this study is that media has the ability to sway public opinion and drive public perception. This cannot be ignored even though this study focuses only on opinion writings. Particularly letters to the editors tend to be more emotional than factual, but earlier academic research has shown emotion can influence public opinion more than facts. The narratives and imagery (chosen to be) published can thus shape the broader public perceptions and thus either create or erode support for something and form a positive or negative image of something. After addressing these concerns and introducing the newspaper material and its use in this study, this chapter reviews the public perceptions and images acquired from the material in order to illuminate the discursive practices within which CBC has been enacted during the different time periods.

## **5.1. ANALYTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The image of and attitudes toward the Eastern Neighbor has, of course, been studied on numerous occasions. Most of these studies have, however, been conducted by Finns, for Finns, and in the Finnish language. Most of these have also consisted of analyses of a written source or based on expert interviews (see Klinge 1972, Immonen 1987; 1990; Luostarinen 1986; Vihavainen 2004; Seppänen 2010). While important as such, the downside of these has been that history seems quite clear when it is written or told afterwards. Newspapers, however, provide us with an exceptional historical record, which details everyday life on a day-to-day basis and in the context that the text was originally written. This allows us follow the development of particular topics and discussions through different time periods without losing sight of what Garton Ash (2009a) describes as the real alternatives that were there at the time but which get often disregarded in the later analysis due to the Bergsonian 'retrospective determinism' and the 'hindsight bias' (see Garton Ash 2009b).

### **5.1.1 Temporal Changes in the Image of Russia**

The Finnish image of Russians during the Grand Duchy period was generally favorable (Paasi 1996, 159). The early Finnish identity was constructed primarily on the opposition to the dominant Swedish culture while at least the public attitudes towards Russia and Russians were controlled during the period of autonomy under Russia (Paasi 1992; 1996). It was not until the 'years of oppression' in the early twentieth century that the anti-Russian feelings were

raised largely as a response to the Russification policy aiming to restrict Finnish freedoms. Antagonistic attitudes turned into hatred after Finland had gained its independence in 1917 when the former mother country (was) turned into an enemy. The newly formed international border became a manifestation of difference, crucial to the Finnish national identity and pride and, as Hakovirta (1975) and Luostarinen (1989) have argued, strong anti-Russia feelings were instilled into the Finns' public consciousness in the form of a myth of an eternal struggle between Good and Evil. In practice, this manifested itself in disparaging descriptions written openly about the Soviet system and its inhabitants (Paasi 1996, 162).

Harle and Moisio (2000, 64–72) see a clear link between the “hatred of the Russkies” and Finnish identity politics. The hatred was at its peak during the interwar period 1918–1944 when the otherness of Russians was consciously overemphasized for political reasons. According to them, the Finnish national identity project was based on two underlying objectives: 1) to find the correct place of Finland among other nations and 2) to unify a nation against a common threat (ibid., 82). By arriving to a conclusion that Finland was located and positioned on the border between East and West and that the Soviet Union could serve as the common enemy, both of the objectives were fulfilled.

As a result, as Browning and Lehti (2007) have described, the eastern border came to dominate Finnish national imagination and was depicted not only as a state border but also as a border separating different cultures and political systems and that even stood as the dividing line between Europe and Asia – the East from the West, pagans from Christians, progress from depression, if not a civilization from another (Paasi 1996; Huntington 1993; 1996; Vihavainen 2004, 8–14). Given its bulked up position, the mental border became etched ever deeper and Finland was described as a ‘vanguard state’ and as an outpost of the West standing alone against the East (Immonen 1987; Harle & Moisio 2000, 10–12). Such a setting allowed for the juxtaposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’ whereby ‘our’ own identity became perceived not simply as different but also in more normative terms as inherently better. Due to the lack of personal experiences, such an imaginary on which the Finnish identity was built was largely based on myths and stereotypes (Vihavainen 2004, 8–14).

The fear stemming from the apparently asymmetrical setting pitting a small Finland against the all-powerful Soviet Union has been seen as the root cause of Finns attitude toward Russians (Vihavainen 2004, 435). This is well exemplified in Voionmaa's (1919, 322–323) elaborate description:

The Finnish-Russian relationship has first and foremost been a disproportion, an uneven relationship between small and large, poor and rich, sparsely populated and mighty. ...The second main feature of the Finnish-Russian relations has been the animosity, the geographical and historical polarity, general and stark disparities between everything – the lands, races, religions, civilizations, habits, the state

agencies. From the entire Europe, the entire world, can hardly be found a gap between the two neighbors that has been dug deeper than the one which separates Finland from Russia. If it is possible to talk about archenemies, it is here if anywhere.

After the wars, the Finnish public image of Russia became more neutral – largely as a result of the censoring of the anti-Soviet content (Raittila 1988). School textbooks and newspapers alike had to comply with the Finnish security policy solution depicting the relations between the former enemies now as friendly. This meant that the Soviet Union was not treated as a dictatorship, but the socialist countries were described as progressive welfare states; Kekkonen-era children got to know what “peaceful coexistence” meant and in which country “the grain grew the quickest” (Tuomisalo 2009).

While derogatory stereotyping with reference to individual nations and peoples had largely vanished from textbooks by now (Paasi 1992), in relation to the Soviet Union and Russians as a people, the convention was continued due to lack of room for more objective accounts. As an example, a primary school geography textbook (Aro, Rosberg & Poijärvi 1947) from 1947 described that “Russians are good-natured, happy and lively people, who love singing, playing and dancing. Their favorite drink is tea and even the poorest cottage has a tea kettle (*samovar*).” Dictated by the YVA treaty, the peaceful co-existence (Raittila 1988, Luostarinen 1989) maintained by the forced friendship and the related censorship continued until the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

In contrast to the earlier Finlandization apparent *inter alia* in the schoolbooks, the portrayal of Russia in the 1990s became not only increasingly critical (Holmén 2006) but emphasized the juxtaposition and depicted it in broader terms than before (Suutarinen 2000). Such a critical image of Russia together with the criticism and negative reporting presented in the media largely explain why even the younger generation with no personal experience steaming from tragic historical events, share the older generations’ conception of Russia in negative terms. Jukarainen’s (2001) study, for example, has shown that young people living close to the border perceive Russia as an ‘other’ about whom they had very little positive to say.

### Image for What and for Whom?

The Finnish image of Russia has been commonly tied to internal political motives of the Finnish state and the political security decisions made by it. This was the most obvious in terms of the Friendship policy that was not restricted to intergovernmental relations but was actively put in practice through the citizenry as well. Compared to relations with any other country, Finnish-Soviet/Russian relations stood and still stand out clearly as more politically and ideologically oriented. What also stands out is that the image of Russia seems to have always been, at least to some extent, constructed for certain purpose. On the one hand, the image had to be built to match with the restrictions of the

post-war era in order to satisfy the all-mighty Eastern Neighbor. This was particularly obvious in the media, as newspapers, in particular, under heavy censorship had no other option than to portray a positive picture of the Soviet Union and the *Homo Sovieticus*.

On the other hand, however, the image had to support Finnish decision-making and serve to convince the public about the rightness of the decisions made. As Linnéll (2009) aptly argues, the idea of security can be constructed in relation to the threats perceived. The threat perceptions presented in public are often deliberately constructed in specific, politically determined ways as to allow them to be used to gain backing from the populace and to support the national interest. As time went by and people found alternative channels to gain information, the gap between rhetoric (the constructed image) and practice (personal experienced and perceptions) grew wider.

When the forced friendship policy finally faded away, it was revealed that the historical hatred had been simmering underneath the surface for years. During the 1990s and 2000, various attitude studies and opinion polls suggested that Finns continue to be disapproving towards, or at least apprehensive about, Russia and Russians (e.g., Helakorpi, Juuti & Niemi 1996). As an example, in 2004, Finns stood out from an international survey of 60 countries in by having very negative attitudes towards Russia – only people in Kosovo were more negative (Aittokoski & Kovanen 2004.) In all fairness, there have also been other polls with quite contrasting results.

According to Haikonen and Kiljunen (2003), negative attitudes stem from the negative characteristics, such as dangerousness and unpredictability, commonly attached to Russians. Raittila (2011) in turn argues that the ghost of the Soviet Union is still very much alive, as the Finns' image of Russia is labeled by characterization attached to the former Soviet Union and communism as mystery, peculiarity, and uncanniness. According to Seppänen (2010, 311–314), these negative attitudes stem from historical events (e.g., the Winter and Continuation wars) and the instability of the Russian internal situation. Other factors influencing the image of Russia are written sources, both academic and popular, as well as the media. However, these days the image is influenced more directly by personal travel experiences, general interest in the neighbor, business relations and the contacts made through them.

Raittila (2002) notes that negative attitude towards Russians are apparent also in the media; out of all the minority groups in Finland, Russians are the most common nationality mentioned in writings about crimes and criminality. Pietiläinen (2011, 188) concurs that the peculiarity and exoticism of Russia get highlighted in Finnish articles on problems in Russia while its ordinariness gets downplayed. A scandal that takes place in Russia is generalized as a problem of the entire Russian society and the way it works while it would be seen as an isolated event had the same incident occurred in any other country. It has to also be kept in mind, however, that the situation also works the other way around; a

person with no personal experience may easily assume negative attitudes from the media. This is emphasized by the tendency that newspaper editors in Finland often assume that their audience is prejudiced, if not hostile, toward Russia and, as a result, may choose accordingly as to what gets reported and how (Ojajärvi & Valtonen 2011, 49). Lounasmeri (2011b, 124) sums up that a relative consensus about what could be said and had to be left unsaid prevailed. Reporting on the Soviet Union remained pragmatic, and journalistic ideals were pushed to the background in the name of national interest.

The image of Russia has also been analyzed from different angles and based on different material – yet the conclusions have been largely the same. For instance, Hallikainen (2003) has examined the image of Russia in the program documents of Regional Councils using newspapers as comparison material and arrives to the conclusion that the optimistic images of the mid-1990s soon turned more cautious. Nokkala (2009) in turn has studied the perspective of the Finnish Defense Forces and the Ministry of Defense and learned that the establishment attaches a permanent uncertainty to Russia, which is seen as a different society and a great power that a much smaller Finland has only limited means to influence.

As Harle and Moisio (2000, 56–57) explain, for the Finnish national identity Russia has been something that Finns have wished to step back from. Finnish perceptions of Russia and Russians are, however, going through times of change. Russians are no longer mere neighbors but also cohabitants, colleagues, fellow students, customers, employees, and practitioners in Finland (Lounasmeri 2011a, 8). Accordingly, as Ojajärvi and Valtonen (2011) sum up, there is no single way to determine and understand Russia, but the impressions of it are contradictory, competing, manifold, and local.

### 5.1.2 Newspapers as a Source

The intrinsically ephemeral nature of newspapers necessitates caution be exercised when they are used for detailed historical research (Reah 1998, 13; Jones 2006, 2). Newspapers are good in generalities, but they may contain distortions or even factual errors. They are also cultural artifacts; i.e., a newspaper is a product of the culture from which it comes. As the message is transmitted through the medium of language and printed on the page, culture specific values are almost unavoidably encoded into the message (Reah 1998, 55; Fowler 1991, 10–12). As a consequence, language becomes ‘loaded’ in a sense that it carries with it more or less obvious connotations that makes the message either limited or biased; the language used in the printed media is not neutral but an exceedingly constructive mediator. Accordingly, newspapers, Bell (1991, 147), argues are mainly comprised of *stories* rather than *articles*. A story, he argues, has a structure, direction, point, and a viewpoint whereas an article may simply aim to report.

The load that a newspaper carries with it is the result of a screening process. It is reasonable to assume that every aspect of the content and every word used in the text is the result of a choice. As a consequence of this, the reader of a newspaper becomes a recipient of *selected* information (Reah 1998, 9; Richardson 2007, 38). Selection is obviously needed for not all events are intrinsically newsworthy; the selection process enables the transformation of a particular event into a piece of news. What is finally reported is not a reflection of the mere importance of the events in question but rather reveals a complex and artificial set of criteria for selection (Fowler 1991, 2).

Being an industry with its own commercial self-interests, an important factor that influences what actually appears in the newspaper is its ownership (Soderlund & Hildebrandt 2001; Miljan & Howorun 2003). The owners hold a *theoretical* power to influence not only what the public knows, but also what they consider to be of importance. However, it cannot be forgotten that the choices that are made, depends on the specific culture and context. There exist also two-way interplay between the society and the newspaper. Being a cultural artifact, a newspaper has its target audience to which the given newspaper has to cater, to a certain extent, in order to stay in business. Without a target audience in mind, the selection and composition of news becomes difficult. This is mainly due to the fact that a particular culture or society often has little respect for certain issues and much more respect for others (Reah 1998, 55). When these issues are reported on or presented in the newspaper, the language that is used tends to reflect and thus reinforce these attitudes. Given its contextuality and the need to meet the needs of the target group, language, as an imposing semiotic code, can inhibit people from critically evaluating the opinions and views they hold.

### **5.1.3 Opinion(-ated) Journalism**

The opinion pages are the only place in the newspaper where members of the public can contribute as writers (Wahl-Jorgensen 2004a, 60). The pages play an essential role within the self-understanding of the quality of journalism. Even though editors need their product to succeed within a market driven system, they are also obliged to allow democracy to do its work on the opinion pages in order to safeguard the newspaper's credibility in the eyes of its readers and thus the paper's circulation success (Wahl-Jorgensen 1999, 56–57; Page 1996, 21; Mayes 2001). Through the features of opinion journalism, newspapers can contribute to shaping and articulation public opinion (Wahl-Jorgensen 2008, 70). Whereas most of a newspaper's content is reserved, in principle, for objective and unbiased reporting, the clearly defined opinion pieces (editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editor) make no claim of objectivity but feature a subjective viewpoint and is typically written for some social or political purpose. In these opinion pieces, personalized perspectives overshadow detailed facts. They are a newspaper's means to have a say and listen to what its readers have to say.

Many opinion pieces develop a stark black-and-white dichotomy pitting 'us' against 'them' (Mautner 2009, 134–137). In a binational context, these groups tend to collide with the respective national groups, in so doing socially constructing national identities into much more mundane settings than the conventional accounts of national identity would inculcate. Edensor (2004) reconceptualizes national identity as being enmeshed within a complex matrix where signifying practices and cultural scraps are drawn together to consolidate belonging. The nation, he asserts, thus continues to act as a force field for collective and subjective experience. These collective and individual understandings, as well as the practices which they inform, merge in the national to reproduce its obviousness, inscribing subjective experience onto the communality of the nation (ibid., 102).

The editorial and opposite-editorial (op-ed) pages are central to a newspaper's identity (Wahl-Jorgensen 2008, 70). They are the only the place in a paper where a journalist is allowed to express opinion, even if guided by the political leanings of the newspaper in question (Wahl-Jorgensen 2004a, 59). An editorial is an opinion piece written by the senior editorial staff or publisher of a newspaper, but they habitually go unsigned as they are supposed to reflect the opinion of the paper. In an editorial, a newspaper speaks both for and to its audience creating a distinctive voice for the newspaper by evaluating which issues are important for their readership to know the newspaper's opinion on (Fowler 1991, 209).

Editorials have an ideological role and semantic content (van Dijk 1995). They are often written with polarized vocabulary to describe political actors and events. Also specific rhetorical structures (imagery, over- and understatement, hyperbole, euphemism, and mitigation) of discourse are regularly used to write off and downplay information unfavorable to 'us' and to emphasize negative information about 'them' (van Dijk 1995, 148). To what extent the difference between the groups is emphasized, depends on the political orientation of the newspaper (van Dijk 1992, 245). The main function of editorials, van Dijk (1996, 13) notes, is "the expression and persuasive communication of opinions," for which reason they make up a relevant body of text for the examination of predominant ideological assumptions in a society (van Dijk 1992). An op-ed in turn is an article that expresses the opinions of a pundit or a named writer who is usually unaffiliated with the newspaper's actual editorial board. Yet, the selection of invited and accepted writers is made in the end by the editorial board and must thus be taken as expedient course of action.

A letter to the editor is a letter sent to a publication about issues of concern to its readers and intended for publication. The letters section forms one of the most popular and thus one of the most important sections in a newspaper. In the case of *Helsingin Sanomat*, approximately 80 per cent of its readers read the opinion pages on a daily basis. Inclusion of the letters from regular members of the public ensures that the discussion on the opinion pages is not limited to the

narrow insider culture (Wahl-Jorgensen 2003, 11–12). The selection of accepted letters tells a great deal about the newspaper's news values and its editorial and political position (Richardson 2007, 67). As space is limited, the letters are usually short, yet their argumentation is straightforward, even if at times limited in scope. Letters are critical or praising, negative or positive, but seldom neutral.

A review of the research from the last two decades suggests that face-to-face deliberation and participation in civic affairs has been declining steadily. Putnam (2000), for instance, found out that citizens have less and less connections to communities and to various civic organizations, while Eliasoph (1997), Boltanski (1999) and Moeller (1999) discovered that people perceive issues of public importance as being increasingly 'distant' and beyond their reach. Perrin (2006; also Perrin & Vaisey 2008, 782–783) suggests that an important reason for this decline is the absence of fora for political discourse; people became more active in civic affairs when they have access to vibrant, deliberative public spaces, where they encounter and are forced to consider opposing viewpoints.

The letters to the editor section can be seen as one solution to this. In many papers the letters section continue to receive a large number of letters (Wahl-Jorgensen 1999, 53). Reasons for this remain largely unchanged; the public is generally more interested in the views of other readers than in what professionals have to say (Rosenthal 1969, 114). In addition to providing a good read, Singletary (1976, 37) asserts, readers see these letters as "effective, influential expression of opinion," which is why Romanow et al. (1981, 57) stress their ability to hold the attention of readers and stimulate debate.

The letters to the editor are a documentary byproduct of everyday civic life and a forum in which citizens choose to participate (Hart 2001; Page 1996; Perrin & Vaisey 2008). The section is widely celebrated as one of a few arenas for voicing opinion and public discussion by regular citizens and, as a result, as a key institution of a public sphere (Nagel 1974; Kapoor & Botan 1992, 5; Reader 2001; Wahl-Jorgensen 2001, 47; 2004a). The line of thought championed by Habermas' (1968a/b; 1989) depicted the public sphere as the discursive, deliberative space wherein individuals from various backgrounds engage in rational critical debate about issues of common concern and made valuable contributions to social and political thought. He believed that all "arguments deserve equal consideration regardless of their origin, hence, also regardless of who voices them" (Habermas 1993, 33). Such a just, coercion-free and civil discussion, the argument goes, is essential for the effective operation of the democratic system (Habermas 1989; Hynds 1991, 124; Benhabib 1996, 68; Dryzek 2000, 1); in the public sphere individuals come together to form a public, compelling in doing so the holders of authority to legitimize themselves before the public opinion.

Rather than being an aggregate of individual opinions, Habermas (1995) puts forth, public opinion is something people arrive at together. It is only through



communicative public action that “it is possible... for civic virtue and self-interest to intermesh”; discussing and debating in public “we transcend our individual desires and interest” and “attain the rationality that comes about when we have to submit, and make acceptable, our reasons to others” (ibid.). Through deliberation, an intersubjective process of reaching understanding, the public produce an agreement based on which an articulation of a shared conception of the common good, the public opinion, is possible (Habermas 1995, 67). Consistent with deliberative democratic theory, getting together to rationally discuss matters of common concern is not merely an intrinsically valuable act but also improves the quality of decisions and outcomes (Christiano 1997, 255).

Perrin and Vaisey (2008) suggest there to be two parallel public spheres “imagined” (cf. Warner 2002) through the letters section. They assert that letters addressing local issues tend to use more reasoned and conciliatory tones while issues beyond the local context evoke more emotional, confrontational, even inflammatory, tones and language. The so formed two public spheres both foster their own standards for engagement; the local public sphere more closely approximates the idealized, Habermasian deliberative public sphere while larger publics promote more polarized, emotional dialogue. (Perrin & Vaisey 2008.)

Wahl-Jorgensen (2001, 304; 2004b) urges that more attention be paid to the editors’ role as “gatekeepers of the public sphere”. She builds on Grey and Brown’s (1970; cf. Renfro 1979) findings that the gatekeeping function of editors significantly biases the contents of the letters published and thus the composition of voices in the public debate. The letters section as a forum is severely limited by an editorial agenda which results in boosterish letters dominating small market papers and conflict letters in larger market papers (Ciofalo & Traverso 1994, 53). In choosing which contributions to publish, editors tend to prefer the emotionally charged, personal stories of individuals, search for an aesthetic authenticity that shows the writer’s words “come from the heart” and invite the forging of emotional bonds between readers and writers (Wahl-Jorgensen 2001, 304). The letters section ought to be considered as neither as a “public opinion barometer” (Sigelman & Walkosz 1992, 938) nor a “microcosm of diverse society” (Wahl-Jorgensen 2004b, 91) but rather as a “hazy reflection of public opinion” (Grey & Brown 1970, 450) for the reason that the letter writers are demographically and politically unrepresentative of the general public (Sigelman & Walkosz 1992, 944) – typically middle-aged or older, male, well educated, well occupied, and conservative (Singletary & Cowling 1979, 165).

#### **5.1.4 *Helsingin Sanomat* – Voice of truth within the Finnish society?**

*Helsingin Sanomat* (HS), owned by Sanoma Oyj (formerly SanomaWSOY), is the largest subscription newspaper and the only national daily broadsheet

newspaper in Finland. The paper was founded as *Päivälehti* in 1889 when Finland was still a Grand Duchy under the Tsar of Russia to serve as an organ of the Young Finnish Party. Opposed the Russification policies and advocating for greater Finnish freedoms, even outright independence, the paper was often forced to temporarily suspend publication (Sanoma News 2008). Political censorship by the Russian authorities became tighter, particularly after ferocious Nikolay Bobrikov was appointed as the Governor-General of Finland in 1898. In June 1904, after *Päivälehti* had referred approvingly, even if indirectly, to the Governor-General Bobrikov's assassination, the paper was finally closed down permanently. However, its proprietors re-opened the paper under its current name already the following year (Perälä 2006) when the preventive censorship was abolished.

While the period of autonomy was characterized by struggle against restriction of the freedom of speech, the enactment of the Act on the Freedom of the Press (1/1919 of January 4, 1919) was one of the first legislative actions of the newly independent Republic. Thanks to Anders Chydenius, the world's first freedom of information legislation<sup>60</sup> had been adopted by the Swedish parliament already in 1766 when Finland was a fully consolidated part of the Swedish kingdom. Consequently, freedom of expression became a basic tenet in the Finnish Constitution (94/1919 of July 17, 1919). Since the 1930s, the paper has been politically independent and non-aligned. The relationship between HS and the government of Finland has often been close. For instance, during the run-up to the Winter War, Eljas Erkko was at the same time the paper's publisher and Finland's foreign minister (Perälä 2006).

A shadow to the freedom of press was cast by the penal code amendment of 1948<sup>61</sup>, which in the spirit of the YYA treaty criminalized jeopardizing Finnish foreign relations and made journalistic defamation of foreign states punishable. President Kekkonen (1958) saw that the 1948 Pact had initiated "a time of trustful collaboration" between Finland and the Soviet Union and that this ought to be seen as "a good example to the rest of the world" about the "skill," "wisdom and good nerves of Finland in her Eastern policy." While, officially, relations had begun to flourish and mutual trust and understanding had been strengthened, Kekkonen admitted to following "with considerable disquiet" the "curious and most unexpected reaction" that had emerged in Finland and indicated that this tendency could harm the progress made elsewhere. Instead, he maintained, Finns should:

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<sup>60</sup> His Majesty's Gracious Ordinance Relating to Freedom of Writing and of the Press.

<sup>61</sup> A corresponding code [*kiihotuslaki*] was in force 14.4.1934 – 31.12.1936.

take up a neutral, objective position in conflicts between great powers, or to abstain from adopting any attitude. Responsible leaders cannot pursue the foreign policy postulated by the 1948 agreement unless it is backed by public opinion....<sup>62</sup>

Even though the penal code was never actually invoked, it functioned as an effective reminder of the delicate balance to be maintained with the USSR (Stoddard 1974, 94) and fed the practice of telling predominantly what was positive about the Soviet Union (Piper 1978) – though also news originating from international news agencies was published throughout the Cold War. This logic was further confirmed by a joint Soviet-Finnish declaration signed on April 6, 1973, which stated pointblank that “the mass media should refrain from harming the friendly relations between Finland and the Soviet Union” (ibid.).

The USSR’s proximate military might, led to a preconditioned prudence not to offend Moscow. In journalism such a Finlandization became manifested in conscious and unconscious self-censorship, excessively responsible journalism, which although not liked by most was undertaken to avoid unpleasant repercussions for, as Piper (1978) put it, “[t]here is no future in antagonizing the Soviet Union.” As a consequence, investigative and controversial reporting regarding the USSR was not done, and Finnish journalists assimilated with Kekkonen’s interpretation of neutrality and the style of the relationship to be maintained with the Soviet Union (Kaufmann & Broms 1988, 38). It was not until 1992 that the treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation, now with Russia, retired the 1948 pact and the special relations between the countries dictated by it.

The late Aatos Erkko, who served as Editor-in-Chief of *Helsingin Sanomat* 1961–1970 and then became the main owner of the Sanoma Corporation and the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper, considered relations with Russia and earlier with the Soviet Union to be of high importance. As Janne Virkkunen, who held the post of Editor-in-chief from 1991 until his retirement at the end of March 2010; i.e., almost the entire period of this study, wrote in Erkko’s obituary that he had understood the simple fact that neighborly relations were always more important for the smaller country.

Aatos Erkko was of course the son of Eljas Erkko, who was Editor-in-chief 1927–1938 and also the foreign minister of Finland and largely in charge of the negotiations with the Soviet Union before the Winter War started. Eljas Erkko’s father, in turn, was Eero Erkko, who is best remembered as the founder of *Helsingin Sanomat (Päivälehti)*. From this background, Aatos Erkko also wished to look after the international position of Finland, towards which he worked particularly actively in the early 1990s when major decisions had to be made. As Virkkunen explains, Erkko cringed at the idea that Finland would lose the

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<sup>62</sup> The English language version of the Finnish original [*Yöpakkasten alettua*] provided by Doria, a multi-institutional repository maintained by National Library of Finland ([www.doria.fi](http://www.doria.fi)).

golden opportunity to adhere more strongly to the Western world and to accede to the EU. As result, *Helsingin Sanomat* diverted from its neutral stance and strategically proclaimed its support for EU membership just before for the decisive referendum took place. According to Virkkunen, this was “a project that was not appreciated among the editorial staff as it tested the integrity and reliability of the editorial board.” For Erkko, it had been “difficult to break away from his role as the main shareholder of *Helsingin Sanomat*, and in some inexplicable way, he [had] felt himself to be tied to the magazine’s journalistic line.”

Even so, *Helsingin Sanomat* has established itself as a significant factor in Finnish society during the years. It has been referred even to as a state authority, an institution with its own independent social and political will (Klemola 1981, 13) and been seen to play a “role as an official, expert, and knowledge/truth voice within Finnish society” (Kaufmann & Broms 1988, 42). Due to its prominence, it has been even seen to possess a monopoly over the freedom of speech (Klemola 1981). Heikki Tikkanen was succeeded as Editor-in-Chief of *Helsingin Sanomat* by Janne Virkkunen in 1991, who was himself then succeeded by Mikael Pentikäinen in 2010. In his valedictory editorial column, Virkkunen clarified how the function of journalistic content had remained the same despite the fact that the world around us had gone through major changes:

A good, high-quality journalism watches the ruling power and listens there where it is quiet. There is the power. We need to keep the power elite on their toes. We need to have a continuous discussion on relevant issues and to act as a gatekeeper. We need to be a critical voice in society and to provide space for other critical voices. We also need to take care of our core tasks: readers must be provided with enough information so that they realize what in kind of world they live. (OE 31.3.2010)

Virkkunen also stressed that what quality journalism needed was the ability and skill to realize, to make connections, analyze, present well-reasoned opinions, to deepen, and to question. A good newspaper answered also to the questions that even the readers could not ask. In so doing, Virkkunen explained, journalism enabled the citizens to be up-to-date and become more critical, which was something that the paper had to accept (OE 31.3.2010).

With a penetration of approximately 75 per cent of the households of the Greater Helsinki region, *Helsingin Sanomat* also functions as the local paper of the area. In addition to the capital region, it is mostly read in the other large Finnish cities. Unless the issue at stake happens to be clearly of national focus, residents from other parts of the country understandably direct their letter to the regional papers. Still, HS has been increasingly picking up reporting that it has considered as noteworthy from regional papers and publishes a review of them in its own printed version. While this broadens the scope of the newspaper, it also takes a particular piece of news from its original context and impedes the

interpretation of the coding used. This is particularly obvious in border and Russian-related reporting. Borderland dwellers know that a particular newspaper or other form of media is lopsided and caters, to an extent, to its well-defined audience; the wording and framing used in regional papers is clearly more colorful when compared to the more neutral and factual style of the national media. While borderlanders may thus understand that what is reported is not necessarily the whole truth, when the same report gets picked up by the national media and is read by people further away from the border who do not have the same personal knowledge, and its content may be interpreted differently.

*Helsingin Sanomat* began to publish its opinion page on November 30, 1977. The share of published letters has fluctuated over the years. During its first year, the editor received 11,400 letters, of which 3,727 (or 32.7 per cent) were published (HS 10.1.1993). The number of letters received by the editor of *Helsingin Sanomat* increased noticeably when spurred by the upheavals of the early 1990s before stagnating at around 14,000 letters per year (Figure 23). The number of letters received began to rise again around the turn of the millennium, confirming that despite the general decline in participation in civic affairs the letters section remained as one the most popular and thus one of the most important sections in the newspaper. The all time record was broken in 2010 with 24,317 letters to the editor. The publication/acceptance rate has recently hovered on average at around 25 per cent.

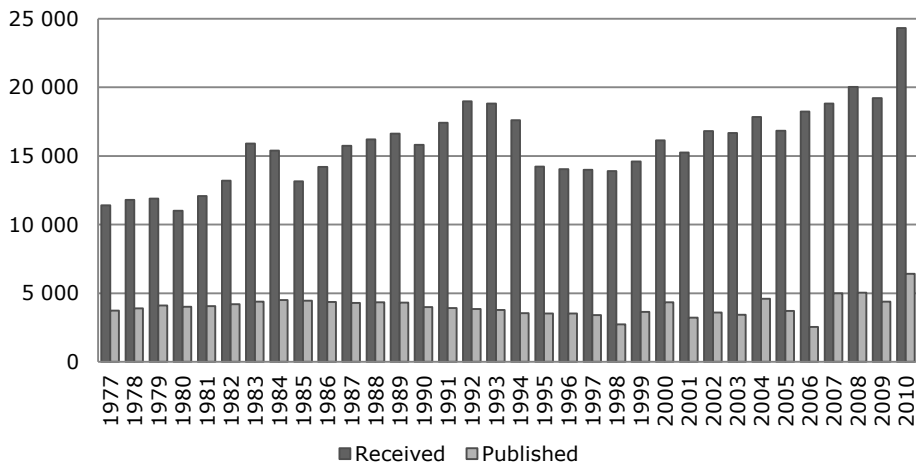


Figure 23. Total number of letters received and published by *Helsingin Sanomat* 1977–2010

Even though the editors of the HS opinion pages maintain that the main purpose of the opinion pages is to “reflect the entire spectrum of the Finnish opinion climate as closely as possible” and that efforts are made so that the

chosen sampling would reflect the variety of the received letters and the different angles on the topic at hand (HS 10.1.1993; 31.12.2010), it has to be acknowledged that this Habermasian vision is idealistic. In reality, editorial agenda impacts heavily what gets published. This is definitely the case also with *Helsingin Sanomat*, a paper that Finnish journalist and scholar Pertti Klemola (1981, 13) once called a state authority, an institution with its own independent social and political will. For example, *Helsingin Sanomat* strongly advocated for Finnish EU membership prior to the referendum in 1994. In practice this meant that significantly more pro-EU letters were accepted for publication, despite the fact that a clear majority of the letters the paper received were actually against the EU membership. In 2006 it also, most notably, openly expressed its support for Finland's membership in NATO. Its stance towards Russia is less clear, although the Soviet-era self-censorship that kept on popping up well into the 1990s has changed to more critical voices. The share of Russia-related letters published in the paper reflects quite well the general trends described above.

The opinion pages of *Helsingin Sanomat* consist of several different types of writings, the categorization and number of which has evolved during the years. In brief, the main types<sup>63</sup> are:

1. Editorial (*pääkirjoitus*): An opinion piece written by the senior editorial staff or publisher of the newspaper. Editorials are usually unsigned and are supposed to reflect the opinion of the paper.
2. Column (*kolumni*): An opinion piece in which the author raises the issue / problem and presents a viewpoint and gives reasoning from that viewpoint. The writing style is usually formal although may include sarcasm or be waspish. The author is affiliated with the paper.
3. Notes (*merkintöjä*): A 'light version' of a column. The writer can be more humorous, personal, lighter, and shorter. The author is affiliated with the paper.
4. Viewpoint (*näkökulma*): Editorial columns about politics and other topical issues. The author is affiliated with the paper.
5. Guest Column (*vieraskynä*): A piece by an unaffiliated expert. In principle not an opinion piece but rather an expert comment on a topical issue.
6. Letter to Editor (*mielipide*): A letter (max. 4,000 characters) to the editor of the paper about issues of concern to its readers and intended for publication. Also short letters (max. 750 characters) are published with a special heading 'Short Letter' (*mielipide – lyhyt*).
7. Other Papers (*muut lehdet*): Interesting writings from other newspapers selected by the editorial Staff.

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<sup>63</sup> Descriptions based on personal communications with Antti Blåfield, senior editorial writer and the head of *Helsingin Sanomat* editorial team, on November 17, 2010 and Reetta Meriläinen, Editor-in-Chief of *Helsingin Sanomat*, on November 28, 2010.

8. Online discussion (*keskustelua verkossa*) and Said on the net (*verkossa sanottua*): Comment/viewpoints posted by readers to the HS web page that the editorial board has decided to print in the paper version of the paper as well.

Using the categorization typical to the Anglo-American tradition, these may be regrouped into:

- 1: Editorials (E): The official opinion of the paper;
- 2–5: Op-Eds (OE); i.e., Columns, Notes, Viewpoints, and Guest Columns: Opinions/comments made by an individual expert – either affiliated or unaffiliated with the paper;
- 6: Letters (L): Opinions of the general public.

Even though important and interesting as such, I have chosen to exclude categories 7 and 8 as including them would go beyond the scope and limitations of this study.

### 5.1.5 Russia – a Neighbor among Many?

The importance of Russia, not just at the governmental level but also in the worldview of the citizens, is well illustrated in its prominence in the leading Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*. During the two decades from 1990 to 2010, Russia, its actions and the lack thereof, has been one of the most popular topics in the newspaper. Certainly, its prominence has declined since the upheavals of the early 1990s, but a simple word frequency analysis suggest that even today Russia is referred to more often than, say, the European Union (Figure 24). During the last twenty years, it has only dropped one spot, from ranking number one in 1990 to ranking number two in 2010. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world has become increasingly unilateral and the United States increasingly dominant on the world stage – receiving twice the number of entries than the EU.

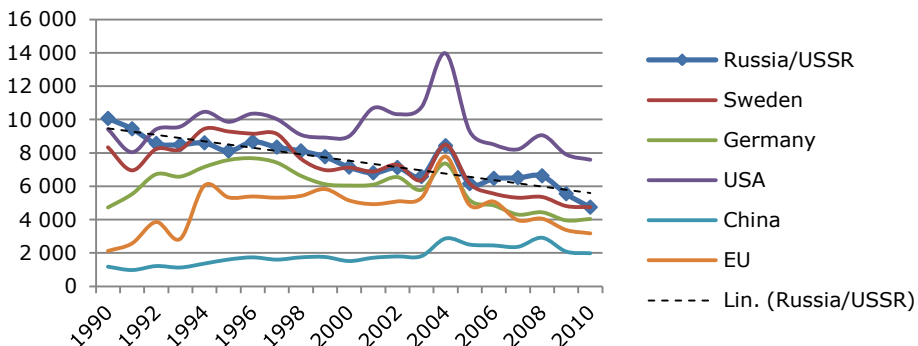


Figure 24. Russia in Helsingin Sanomat (Sport pages excluded) 1990–2010

In the opinion articles (editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editor), the prominence of Russia (or the Soviet Union) has remained more stable, around 500 entries per year (Figure 25). However, while in the early 1990s the Soviet Union was clearly the foreign country people talked about, during the years that followed its successor, Russia, has been developing into just another country among many. It is still often talked and written about, but the motives for doing so have undoubtedly altered. Instead of its military might or overwhelming dominance, it is now the geographical proximity, the long common border, and the issues related and deriving from these that cause concern. The USA seems clearly more distant for the daily concerns of many, whereas the EU became the most prominent topic during the EU Referendum in 1994 – a status that it has been maintained ever since.

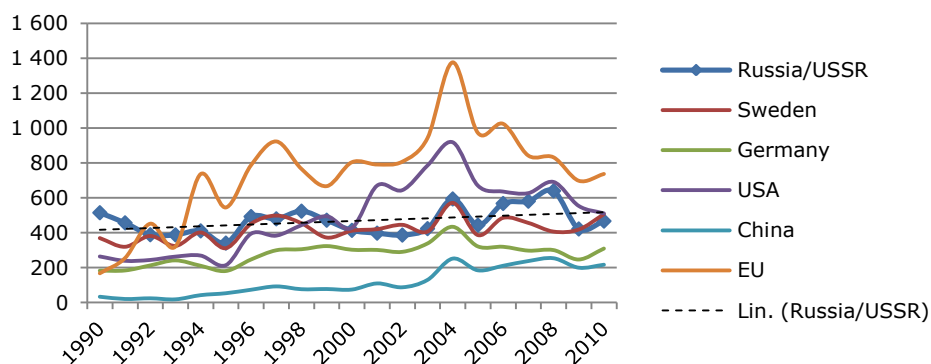


Figure 25. Russia in Helsingin Sanomat opinion pieces 1990–2010

When the letters to the editor are singled out, it becomes even clearer that the most common topics are those that impact the daily lives of the people the most. Both Russia and Sweden have remained their almost equal positions in the minds of Finns. In addition to the immediate neighbors, the EU and the USA rank high as they are seen as the dominant powers in the world (Figure 26).

While the key word analysis was an illuminating exercise as it revealed the broad trends of the last two decades, the mere numbers fail to capture the entire picture. Merely reading of a text word for word is not enough to understand what is really meant by it or what or whom it is really about. While all other countries are in most cases referred to by their real names, in the Finnish lingo there are still various euphemisms that allow one to refer to Russia without mentioning the word ‘Russia’ at all. Such texts are coded in such a context specific manner that allows the reader to interpret the text appropriately (i.e., what is meant by the words used) by mobilizing his or her general socio-cultural knowledge. Most commonly, Russia is referred to as the ‘Eastern neighbor,’



which of course leaves little rooms for interpretation. However, in some cases Russia was simply referred to as ‘our neighbor,’ at times ‘our beloved neighbor’ or the ‘bear,’ the understanding of which requires already some cultural understanding. Similarly, mentions of problems at or behind the border seldom suggested that something had gone wrong in Sweden or Norway. As understanding such codes and cues is part of what it means to be member of a particular culture, a more semiotic analysis was in order to delve deeper into what the text were actually about.

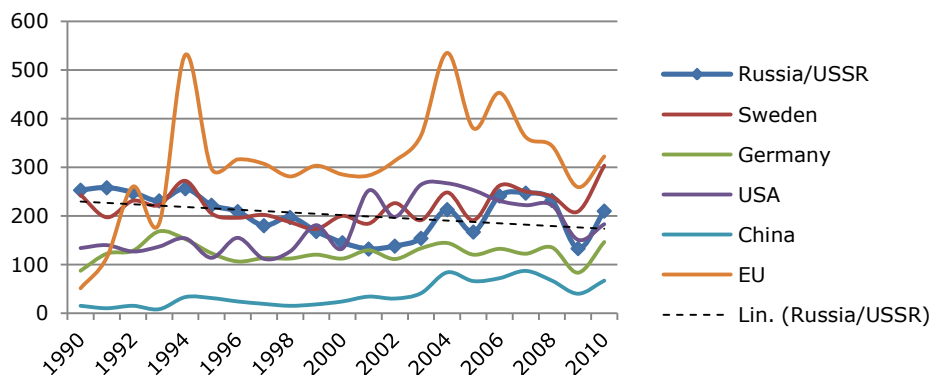


Figure 26. Russia in Helsingin Sanomat letters section 1990–2010

A total of 4,708 articles were collected from the years 1990–2010 to analyze the context in which CBC has developed and how perceptions of Russia have been altered. The collected empirical material consists of opinion pieces: editorials, op-eds, and the letters to the editor (Figure 27). During the study period, the number of opinion articles devoted to Russia (or the Soviet Union) ranged from 134 (in 2002) to 306 (in 1991) annually. Letters to the editor forms approximately half (2,383; 51 %) of the collected articles, while the rest consists of editorials (1,434; 30 %) and op-eds (891; 19 %). A large database was needed in order to see the full scope of topics at hand. For further scrutiny and semiotic analysis, the dataset was then compiled in two year intervals, whereby by total number of articles was reduced to 2,688.

As the letters form the main part of the dataset, their role gets also emphasized in the analysis. Despite the fact that they cannot be taken as a public opinion barometer, they undoubtedly do form a coercion free, almost Habermasian, public sphere in which individual citizens choose to participate and in doing so compelling the public authority to legitimate itself before the public opinion. The existence of such an equal forum for discussion, a deliberative public space, allows people not only to voice their opinions but also encourage them to become more active in civic affairs and the operation of the

entire democratic system. Editorials and op-eds are included as many letters are written to comment on, correct, or criticize them, for which reason they have to be read and analyzed concomitantly.

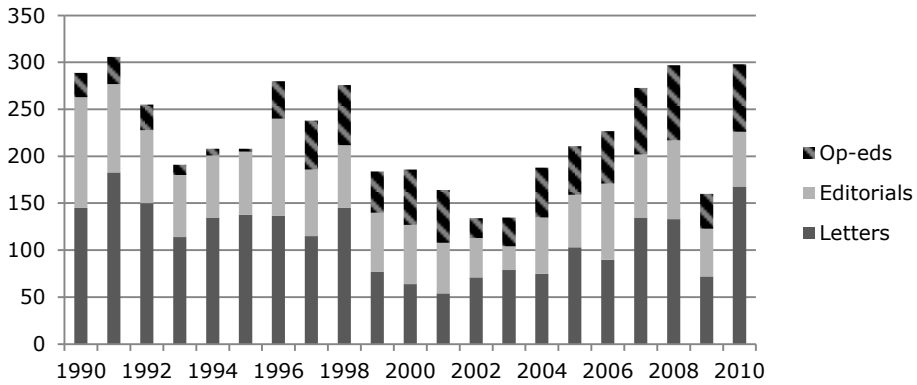


Figure 27. Distribution of collected articles per year by type

### 5.1.6 Semiotic Meaning-Making

Social semiotics builds on the founding work of Ferdinand de Saussure but takes a step further by emphasizing the socially contextualized nature of signs and meaning-making (signifying) processes and practices. The approach is expected to provide a more in depth knowledge on border making (bordering) as well as on how the images of Russia and Russian as the ‘other’ are being produced and reproduced (othering). For Saussure, the term signification referred to the dyadic relationship between the signifier (*signifiant*) and the signified (*signifié*), which put together constitute a sign (Saussure 1983, 67; see Peirce 1931–58, 2.228 for an alternative triadic model and Kangas 2007 for its application). After all, it is not, Saussure (1983, 117) purports, the metal of which a coin is made that fixes its value.

Signs are not stable, but constantly made afresh; the relationship between the signifier and signified is in a constant state of flux as people connect form and meaning in ways deemed apt to the particular need and occasion (Kress 1997). The same signifier can stand for a different signified (constituting a different sign) and, on the other hand, many signifiers can also stand for the signified (forming again a different sign). Furthermore, this relationship between the signified and signifier, i.e., between language and reality, Saussure (1983, 67–78) radically asserts, is arbitrary. The language thus does not ‘reflect’ reality but rather constructs it (Chandler 2002, 28).

While understanding Saussure’s ideas provide a solid foundation for the purposes of this study, they are overly structural and too heavily based on linguistic concepts. Instead, this study seeks to explore the use of signs in this

specific the socio-cultural context. The writings of Charles S. Peirce provide a more pragmatist means for analyzing not the *structure*, as Saussure had done, but rather the *process* of resignification which proceeds on the basis of old knowledge and experience and remains always embedded in a real historical context. What we learn from Peirce (1931–58, 2.172) is that a sign can be anything as long as someone interprets it as signifying something; i.e., referring to or standing for something other than itself.

Peirce asserted that all modes of thinking depend on the use of signs; every thought is a sign and every act of reasoning consists of the interpretation of signs. He highlighted the process of 'semiosis'; suggesting that the meaning of a sign was not contained within the sign itself, but it arose in its interpretation. Signs function as mediators between the external world of objects and the internal world of ideas. They may be mental representations of objects, and objects may be known by means of perception of their signs. Semiosis is a process of cooperation between signs, their objects, and their 'interpretants,' i.e., their mental representations. (Peirce 1931–58; 1960, 79.)

Focusing on the 'grammar' of narrative, Barthes utilizes Saussure's structuralist logic, yet transforms it into a tool, which allows for the improved and more critical interpretation of the signs. Adopting largely from Hjelmslev's (1961) work, Barthes (1987) formulated a theory based on two orders of signification. He called the first of these a *denotation* (the literal meaning and reference of a sign) and the second a *connotation* (the meanings that are suggested or implied by the sign). For instance, 'Russia' denotes the largest country in the world, covering North Eurasia and bordering on the Pacific and Arctic Oceans and the Baltic, Black, and Caspian Seas, and so on. Meanwhile, Russia has various connotations, socio-cultural and personal (such as ideological and emotional) associations, which came to mind when the word is mentioned: big, interesting, rich in history, old, oil and gas, vodka, cold, communism – just to mention a few.

When the two orders amalgamate, they produce an ideology in the form of myth – a process that Fiske and Hartley (1978, 43) have described as a third order of signification. A myth, Barthes explains, has a tri-dimensional pattern (signifier, signified, and sign), yet it is constructed from a semiological chain, which existed prior to it. It is thus a second-order semiological system by which a sign (the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system becomes a mere signifier in the second and an additional signifier to it. A myth is not an object, a concept, or an idea, but a mode of signification, a system of communication, a message (Barthes 1987).

For Barthes, semiology is mythology, a "study of manmade (and thus manipulated) sensory cues presented to us for popular consumption" (Morine 2009). While Saussure asserted that a signifier without signified has no meaning and that the relationship between the two is arbitrary, for Barthes the signifiers are not arbitrarily chosen but they are in themselves already loaded with

meaning. Sign and codes are produced by myths, but they also serve to maintain them. They express and serve to organize shared ways of conceptualizing something in a culture. They have an ideological function, which Barthes calls *naturalization*: their function is to convey ideological norms of a culture, naturalize the cultural, that is, to make the dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes, and beliefs seem entirely 'natural,' 'normal,' self-evident, timeless, obvious 'commonsense' and, as a result, objective and 'true' reflection of the 'way things are.' (Barthes 1977, 45–46.)

While a linguistic analysis of newspaper material is clearly beyond the scope of this research, a semiotic take on the material is assumed in order to see beyond the mere words and numbers. The statistical figures serve a purpose in creating a general picture of the material and projecting trends in it, yet the analysis focuses primarily the distinction between communication and signification (see Saussure 1983; Peirce 1976, 8; Barthes 1988, 180). While communication is understood as a mere transfer of knowledge from sender to receiver, signification refers to communicative meaning-making, whereby a particular text evokes a process of interpretation in the receiver. In order for a sensible interpretation to be possible, both the sender and receiver of the text (the message) should share a common rule of interpretation, a code. Signification thus includes both interpretation and expression: figuring out the meanings made by others from the material signifiers they produce and selecting and combining semiotic (sign-making) resources from those made available socially and culturally in the realization of meaning (Mavers 2009).

Newspapers are a form of communication, which evince a set of codes that are meant to provide the reader with information of the world. A 'text' in a newspaper is already in itself a complex sign containing other signs (Chandler 2002). Following the Saussurean tradition and the example of Chandler (2002), the task here is to look beyond the specific texts to the systems of functional distinctions operating within them and to identify the underlying conventions and differences. The analytical task is to identify the signifiers within the text and the codes within which the signs they create have meaning as well as to explain what sort of reality the text constructs.

The concept of the 'code' is fundamental in semiotics (Jakobson 1971, Chandler 2002, 147). Since the meaning of a sign depends on the code within which it is situated, codes provide a framework within which signs make sense; reading a text involves relating it to relevant codes (Chandler 2002, 147). Producers of text use codes to limit the range of possibilities of meaning they are likely to generate when read by others (Turner 1992, 17), while to interpret texts appropriately, the receiver has to read signs with reference to appropriate codes; i.e., the ones used by the producer. As Hall (1980, 131) puts forth, there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code. The codes employed are usually obvious and 'overdetermined' by contextual cues: signs within texts can be seen as embodying cues to the codes that are appropriate for interpreting

them by contextual cues provided in the texts and the environment in which they operate (Chandler 2002, 158).

Understanding codes is part of what it means to be member of a particular culture. We learn to read the world in terms of codes that are dominant within our specific socio-cultural context. In the process of adopting a way of seeing, we also adopt an 'identity.' (Chandler 2002, 148; 157–158.) Danesi has defined a culture as a kind of 'macro-code' consisting of the numerous codes which a group of individuals habitually use to interpret reality' (Danesi 1994, 18; see also Danesi 1999, 29). Mere reading a text a word for word is not enough to understand what is meant by it, but one needs to mobilize his or her general social knowledge in order to recognize that these words belong to a particular 'code of reference' – that the text is written in reference to something (Eagleton 1983, 78).

Texts connote cultural meaning. A piece of text, such as a newspaper story, is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms, all of which are factors of connotation. The question in this respect is whether or not the reader is able to deconstruct what the author is trying to convey. A reader of a newspaper has its own set of codes with which to decode the text. As this may vary from individual to individual based on his or her social knowledge and ideological standpoint, for those unfamiliar with the newspaper and the codes it employs to deliver its message, the intended message may get lost; i.e., the reader interprets it 'wrongly.'

The most persuasive code in any society is its natural language (Eco 1979, 263). However, because codes are not just socio-culturally but also historically situated, the interpretation of a text changes as interpretative codes evolve. This is to suggest, firstly, that a foreigner, even if able to read a Finnish newspaper, might interpret a particularly text differently than a Finn and, secondly, that a piece of text published, say, in 1991 might have been interpreted differently back then as the very same text is interpreted now two decades later. Thus the aim here is to seek to identify the codes within which the production and interpretation of meaning in any text is achieved; i.e., to situate what has been reported in the context in which it has occurred by describing the changes in the foci of the debates and interlinking them with the broader changes that have occurred at the border.

## **5.2 IMAGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF COOPERATION**

During the study period significant changes occurred at the Finnish-Russian border – Finland changed; Russia changed; and Europe changed. In 1990, the world was still divided into two camps and the 1948 YVA pact between Finland and USSR was still effective. However, already in 1995, Finland became a EU

member and discussions concerning such previously unvoiced topics as the potential NATO membership as well as the restitution of the ceded territories were raised repeatedly in the media. As I aim to show below, these shifts are very clearly reflected in the newspaper writings. The shifts also influenced the way in which Russia was perceived as a neighbor and a partner in CBC.

### **5.2.1 Post-Soviet Euphoria: Russia as a Neighbor in Need**

In 1990 the Soviet Union was already falling apart at its seams and great changes were already in the air. These admissions were not, however, talked about directly in the Finnish public debate. Many things went formally unsaid, but due to the inherently coded writing the intended message could be read between the lines. Three broad topics stood out. The first was related to developments in the Soviet Union, which some authors considered a threat while others had faith in peaceful development. The second subplot consisted more particularly of writings about the Karelian question and the future of the Baltic countries and pondered especially what the government of Finland should do in these respects. Thirdly, a subplot about Finnish-Soviet relations arose with sharp opinions for and against Finland's possible accession plans to the EU as well as to NATO.

A more pointed debate was focused on the usefulness, or the lack thereof, of the YYA treaty, which was due to expire, or more likely to be renewed once again, in 1993. A Gallup poll suggested that Finns had gained the courage to diverge from the official political line, but in practice the official foreign policy and the general public opinion still went largely hand-in-hand. It revealed that 80 per cent of Finns believed that the YYA treaty had been necessary over the last few decades (E 23.12.1990). According to another poll, no fewer than 75 per cent believed that the treaty would remain in force in 2000 (HS 10.12.1990). The alternative, even if less prominent, thread suggested that the treaty had become a burden for Finland's international status. The concern was that Europe was undeniably amidst great political changes and Finland could be left behind should it continue to remain faithful to the treaty Stalin had created to protect the Soviet Union's western frontier following World War II while the rest of Europe moved on.

Finland's political leadership rejected the need to jump aboard the *European* integration process and continued to swear by the YYA treaty as a way to continue. It was not until the unification of Germany provided concrete proof that something was indeed happening that the government was forced to reassess the situation and consider a new contract that would nullify the pact. Nevertheless, Finland's official position that "the consolidation of EU membership and Finland's neutrality policy is just as difficult as it is to square the circle" (E 23.12.1990) remained and fuelled a yearning for more open and broader discussion among the populace. It was seen as:

tragicomic that in a democratic country, politicians are criticizing people for criticizing the government. Equally unfortunate is that our common issues can only be discussed by the parties and politicians. A complete absurdism is approached, when in newspaper interviews the leading politicians scold citizens who take the EU question for open for discussion... The Finnish tradition of keeping one's mouth shut is stronger and more tenacious than the Berlin Wall. (L 3.12.1990.)

Also the Finnish policy of neutrality was discussed. Because, it was argued, the policy had always been linked to the Finnish national interests, i.e., to the economic benefits (L 10.12.1990, E 23.12.1990), it could also be diverged from on the condition that these interests would not be jeopardized. The EU was taken in this sense as an alternative avenue that would lead Finland out from the Soviet Union's shadow. Only eight per cent rejected the potential EU membership completely, and a third viewed it with skepticism (E 23.12.1990). A common reason for a critical stance was the argument that after being a part of Sweden and then Russia now would be a good time for Finland to try to manage on its own. It was feared that the EU would be yet another '*kolkhoz*,' and that Brussels would become the '*New Moskva*,' providing Finland with guidelines and regulations. (L 18.12.1990.)

Regarding the Karelia question, nearly 70 per cent of Finns went along with the government stance that that question has been settled and it is better not to take any act in the matter (HS 10.12.1990). Some could not even comprehend why Finns were still volunteering to restore and repair "the cities raped by the conqueror" (L 4.10.1990). Surprisingly, given the emotionalism surrounding the issue, only one in four wished for the government to take the initiative to restore Karelia. The percentages can be deemed as strikingly high because in 1990 these answers could no longer be necessarily interpreted as a mere parallel of official liturgy.

The ever-worsening situation in the Soviet Union also fuelled discussion over what Finland should do to ease the situation. A majority of Finns considered both the assistance to the Kola Peninsula to fight against pollutant emissions and actual development assistance as important, yet the former commonly ranked first among concerns as the pollution from Kola directly threatened the nature on the Finnish side as well (E 23.12.1990). On the other hand, concerns were also raised that the "value vacuum" created as the old ways of thinking were proven to be unsustainable was being "ruthlessly exploited" by offering Western alternatives as replacements (L 28.10.1990).

The motivation behind the assistance was grounded both in practical considerations and compassion, yet the way it was requested raised anger. The Soviet telegrams requesting aid that were received by a number of Finnish cities were regarded as disgraceful as they were deemed to be as out of sync with Soviet spending levels – particularly in light of the fact that the Soviet army had

reportedly continued to spend heavily on new armament. As described in the op-ed of February 7, 1991:

Meat, butter, margarine, milk powder, baby food and infant formula are needed in Murmansk. The request is official. It is similar to that request of FIM 300 million in medical aid, which Leningrad sent to its twin city Turku. Neither telegram seems to promise gifts in return, apart from the friendship already given. Murmansk is home to about 12 times more people than in Rovaniemi. Leningrad is 40 times Turku... Leningrad is amongst the largest military centers of the Soviet Union, whereas Murmansk is one of the world's largest military ports. Request for assistance telegrams evoke compassion for the sick and the hungry poor little mite. Only addresses of the telegrams seem incorrect. They should have been sent to Moscow...

The increasing control vacuum in the Soviet Union and the assumed relaxation of travel restrictions and border control was seen as a direct threat but also necessitating cooperation. The fall of borders was seen to come with surprises, as "people oppressed one generation after another" could now behave more freely (E 22.5.1991). It was reported that there were tens of millions of people in the Soviet Union who wanted to see other countries and that this would spread Soviet criminality also to Finland (E 1.3.1991). It was seen that in order to fight back, the authorities in both countries should build a practical working relationship as soon as possible. (Ibid.)

It was projected that a record breaking 300,000 trips from the Soviet Union to Finland would be made in 1991. The possibility of abandoning the visa practice completely, as was suggested by the Soviets – albeit in very general terms, was rejected out of hand because "[f]or Finns, such a vision of the future, in which fully unencumbered tourist flows... spill to Finland" was, "to put it mildly, terrible" (E 8.8.1991). The current events were described in rather scornful tone:

...there are now more people willing to come than there is time to stamp visas... Authorities and ordinary citizens alike have raised their eyebrows when they see Soviet tourists shopping at Finnish town squares. ... the rhetoric about people's free movement in Europe and the practice are still very different things. Soviets' travels to Finland are not normal tourism, because usually they are far from having enough money to required to travel. (E 8.8.1991).

The Soviet citizens were frankly held in contempt and put on a category of their own, while the proclamations about the superiority of Finland were not spared:

The allure of prosperous Finland is irresistible. The old Soviet practice of tourism, which allowed only tightly controlled group tours to the west for the privileged few, has unfortunately now transformed almost to its opposite. The Soviets are pariah class tourists in Finland, for due to the shortage of foreign currency they have no opportunities for enjoyable tourism in the Western sense of the word. (E 8.8.1991)



In the letters, the same concerns were often stated in an even more straightforward manner:

Already now too much booze/drugs, and too many women, which are a burden to our society, even to our street scene, are pouring here. How is it possible that hundreds of thousands of Russians and Estonians have acquaintances willing to support them for weeks in here? It's weird. (L 15.5.1991)

Despite the assumed detriment for Finland, the principle of open borders was deemed approvingly. It was seen as a "guarantee against the dictatorships" and to foster respect for human rights as had been required by the Western countries (E 22.5.1991). As a result, the West had no other option but to "prepare in time for a flood of Soviet citizens" and "get used to the idea of a million day tourist from Leningrad in the streets and shops of Hamina, Kotka, and Helsinki" (ibid.)

The only way to constrain the depicted damage for Finland was seen as to trying to ease the situation on the Soviet side and diminish the urge to flee to Finland. If Finland was to send humanitarian aid to combat the shortages and the social collapse in the Soviet Union, "[t]he national interest and humanitarian goals would merge in an exceptional manner" (E 8.12.1991). In this way, cross-border interaction began, more than anything else, out of need – if not fear: "If there is any reason to fear that the alternative for delivering aid on-site is uncontrolled human flood to the Finnish borders, it is in everyone's interest, of course, to hasten ahead of the flood" (E 8.12.1991).

In the letters, first proposals for taking more of a paradiplomatic approach were posed. The positive experiences received from Nordic cooperation with free civic action enabled by successful links between the states was seen as model that could be used also with the Soviet Union (L 29.6.1991). The debate on the opinion pages intensified further following the announcement by the official Soviet news agency TASS that then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev had become "ill" on August 19, 1991. The big upheavals that followed prompted many Finns to put pen to paper. A total of 108 letters related to the attempted coup in the Soviet Union was sent to the editor. The main motivation to write to the paper was to comment on the actions, or lack thereof, of Finnish politicians during the siege; 53 writers expressed their indignation at the acts of the government and the major parties. (HS 16.9.1991.) The government's wishes for the return to "normal conditions" in the Soviet Union were, in particular, regarded as duplicitous tinkering. The statements of party representatives were criticized for kowtowing to the kidnapers and lack of courage (L 25.8.1991), while the political system at large was blamed for its incompetence and lack of knowledge:

We have developed a foreign policy culture, the knowledge base of which is weak. Only the pro-Finnish fringe of the history of Finland has been learned. The modern

history of Russia and the Soviet Union is largely unknown. Publishers have not published any of the main foreign works dealing with the modern history... Cliquish cabinet policy seasoned with Soviet connections has produced a series of mentally down-and-out apparatchiks in our political leadership. Equally sad is the poor knowledge of Russian culture and the contemporary reality among our political leadership, which is a consequence of the lack of an effective Russian policy research. (L 6.9.1991)

Attention was also drawn to the behavior and activities of ordinary citizens and civil society as no large demonstrations were organized in support of the democratic forces in the Soviet Union (L 11.9.1991). Out of all of the letters received, only four writers defended the Finnish leadership's low profile (HS 16.9.1991). A more common avenue was to ponder the new outlook opening up as a consequence of the collapse of Communist rule. Most notably, this was seen to allow a chance to bring up the Karelian question once again. It was proposed that the areas that Finland lost in the war should be recovered as only then true interaction between people could occur (L 6.9.1991). A number of these writings openly revealed strong resentment and somewhat normative thinking:

The conquest of these areas was an integral part of the Bolsheviks' policy of violence... Peace treaties of Moscow and Paris were done at gunpoint. The Winter War and Continuation War were part of the one and the same Stalin's war of conquest. In Europe of cooperation and democracy, it is difficult to accept colonies in the middle of the continent... It is true that the questions about respect and friendship in the relations between nations and states are even more important than borders. But it is not possible to ignore reality. The Finnish-Russian spectacle of suffering, but also the cooperation modes of the future has to be approached with the clinician's skill and the ethos of the priest in order to achieve a solution that would be enduring and reasonable for both parties. (L 6.9.1991)

Be the Eastern neighbor "a new kind of Soviet Union or Russia" (E 30.4.1991), the relations with it were seen to remain as crucial for the "destiny of Finland" (L 9.9.1991). There was no time or reason to wait and see which direction the development behind the border would take, but it was rather "necessary to act on the basis of the current situation and avoid falling into short-sighted solutions." This meant that discussions had to be undertaken with "the strong men of our neighboring country," Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. The geographical location of Finland and the long common border with the Soviet Union continued to necessitate good relations, for after all, "even though we would not feel fear at all, who would benefit from the rupture, or perhaps even complete severance, of the relations?" (L 1.9.1991).

The discussion about Karelia turned into criticism directed towards the Finnish political elite when President Koivisto flattened the hopes of those yearning for the area to be returned back by reminding them that Finland had

lost Karelia in two wars (HS 23.9.1991). The editorial of September 30, 1991 fanned the flames by stating that it to be “amusing and mind-broadening to calculate the economic strain that Finland would face as a consequence of the restitution of the Karelia.” Russians, in turn, were reported to be vexed about the entire issue and regard the related discussion as ill-founded (L 5.11.1991). The *vox populi*, to the extent it could be read from these letters, leaned more towards the opinion that continuing to live pursuant to the old and introverted political formulas of “sneaking around and lacking initiative” (L 9.10.1991) would help neither Finland nor its neighbor. The new situation rather required both an open mind and willingness to act fast now “that mending the old communist-era errors” was at its peak in the Soviet Union and all the problems had become revealed as they were (L 9.10.1991).

Understanding that reclaiming Karelia may indeed be point-blank an unfeasible goal, it was suggested that “[w]hen the time is ripe and we get an opportunity, let us create a normal neighborhood’s through cooperation across the eastern border” for “[t]his is certainly what the masses wish for (L 9.10.1991). Accordingly, the Finnish Karelian League (Karjalan Liitto) suggested by letter to President Koivisto that instead of making claims to the ceded area, when the time is ripe Finland should aim to broaden the negotiation contacts “with the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation in order to develop the ceded areas in a mutually satisfactory manner.”

Politics were also blamed for the “non-existence of Finnish Sovietology”. Professor Tauno Tiusanen concluded in an HS interview that, “if we would have conducted the kind of critical research as was carried out elsewhere in the West, it would have attracted bothersome attention in the neighborhood” (HS 1.11.1991). In the discussion that followed, it was clarified that “the ‘neighborhood,’ of course, by no means referred here to the Nordic countries but to the Soviet Union, and we understand that the ‘bothersome attention’ equals ‘quite a rumpus,’ if not more” (L 9.11.1991). The author of the letter drew attention to the continuation of deep-rooted and automated equivocate speech and used euphemisms when referring to the Soviet Union: “How long will it take before the Finlandized soul consents to realize that a bear has indeed already been defeated and things can certainly be spoken freely with their real names? It seems to be difficult to get used to” (L 9.11.1991).

Even though the demise of the Soviet Union had been predicted, the speed at which the actual collapse occurred was largely unseen in Finland. In December, Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Republics signed the Declaration of the Commonwealth of Independent States. On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev was forced to resign from a post that no longer existed. The next day, the Soviet Union ceased to exist – and more direct opinions about it followed immediately:

The Soviet Union was not a positive part of the international community; when active this ideological superpower generated fear, and even when amicable it generated, at

the very least, irritation. It was surrounded by distrust every time. ...hardly anyone even within the country mourn for the Soviet Union apart from those, whose standard of living, career, or self-esteem was directly tied to its fates. (E 27.12.1991)

On the other hand, it was assumed that many things would go unchanged:

We now have a great power neighbor, who is at the same time new and very old. Our long border is the same as it has been in the past. And so is also the nationality, with whom the neighborly relations as a daily practice are managed. ...the most noticeable new factor is not so much the replacement of the Soviet Union with Russia than the state of change, in which Russia in itself has already been for a few years, and still is. (E 31.12.1991)

Also the benefits of having Russia as a neighbor were depicted as remaining "identical" to what they had been when Finland shared its border with the Soviet Union. The only major difference was seen to stem from the reasoning that, unlike its predecessor, Russia was not an ideological state. Thus, special factors such as the relationship between the Finnish and the Soviet Communist Parties no longer complicated cooperation (E 31.12.1991).

While Finland's ability to influence the development in Russia was underrated to be "of course limited and relate mainly to the nearby areas," it was considered that there was an obvious need use these slender opportunities "in the name of good-neighborliness" as also Finland had strong interest in the fact that the circumstances remained calm and democracy took root in Russia (E 31.12.1991). In contrast, others could not believe that a "small Finnish nation" grappling with recession was feeding "her predator," the "great and mighty Russia" out of pocket (L 9.1.1992).

In all, the year 1991 stood out in terms of the number of letters received. A record-breaking 17,409 letters were sent to the editor. Of these, 3,914 letters or about 22.5 per cent, were published. The previous record of 16,633 letters had been amassed in 1989 with an average publication rate of 26 per cent. The debate about the Karelia question in particular stood out due to its intensity. During the two-month period from mid-September to mid-November, no fewer than 225 letters regarding the Karelia question were sent to the editor of *Helsingin Sanomat* (149 in favor of repatriation, 38 against it, and 38 with no clear stance). Fifty-three of these (23.6 per cent) were published in the paper. Out of those that were published, 31 were in favor of repatriation and 10 against.

### New Beginning with New Russia

The collapse of the Soviet Union immediately sparked intense debate about the position of Finland. A post-war foreign political realism based on the teachings of history and hypothetical considerations on the alternative options assumed was put yet again into practice. HS Editor-in-Chief Erkki Pennanen argued that

it was difficult to envision Finland as having an economically and politically natural role outside the EU. Should Finland not join, it would be exposed to an unflattering association with wrong types of countries, in a "B team of riffraff" consisting mainly of former Eastern European socialist states (OE 5.1.1992). The same idea resonated in the letters. The EU was seen as a necessity for Finland; Finland does not "belong to the CIS" and "does not want to be Albania" (L 15.1.1992).

Not everyone though was convinced that Russia had indeed been defeated. For some, the geopolitical U-turn implied by the potential for EU membership sounded overly precarious. Finland's destiny, it was argued, remained strongly tied to the East and "the worst possible scenario for Finland" would be "if behind the eastern border – no matter who is in power over there – a conclusion is reached that we – as a result of the EU decision – have moved or are moving to "the wrong side" (L 11.1.1992).

An alternative way of approaching the issue was to ponder whether EU membership would increase or reduce Finland's dependence on other countries (L 15.1.1992) or have implications for its sovereignty. Most (published) writings considered the weakness of Russia and the CIS as a historical opportunity of limited duration to seek security from the EU. It was also hypothesized that the EU could lead to NATO membership. The development of Russia was deemed unpredictable, and, in the worst-case scenario, Finland might soon be at war against the great power on its own. Thus, many maintained "Finland must content itself with fostering peaceful, strong relationships with its neighbors and to maintain an adequate defense on its own" (E 15.10.1992).

The ongoing preparations of the new treaty to be signed with a relatively weak Russia were also seen to provide an eleventh hour to bring the matter of Karelia back onto the table. It was seen that the new agreement would seal the Karelia question indefinitely, because this time it would be signed of our own free will (L 26.1.1992). It was suggested directly that Karelia should be returned to Finland as it had been "disposed by violence" through "barbarian injustice" and as the invasion had also been considered as illegal by the League of Nations (L 2.6.1992). A real friendship could hardly arise before the borders of the Tartu Peace Treaty, which were "supposed to form the 'immovable foundation' for the relations between our countries," had been restored (L 12.1.1992). It was foretold that the return of Karelia would even "uplift the people out of spiritual recession" (L 28.6.1992) and thus become a part of "our spiritual, and perhaps eventually even financial, capital" (L 13.10.1993).

Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev's statement confirmed what many had feared: by signing the new treaty, the contracting states' "ambiguous border issue has now been resolved" (L 9.4.1992). President Koivisto contented himself by stating that the wishes for mutually satisfactory development of Karelia, expressed earlier by the Finnish Karelian League, might indeed be possible if relations between the two countries will continue to develop in the spirit of

good-neighborliness and mutual trust as had been the hitherto the case (E 5.3.1992). Russian ambassador to Finland Yuri Derjabin, also known in Finland by the belligerent pseudonym Yuri Komissarov, gave a similar assessment “the alteration of borders must not be treated as an end in itself” but should be approached “without getting emotional” (HS 4.3.1992). Instead to redrawing the border, the two countries “could talk about open borders, a fully free movement of people and the common uses of the border areas” (ibid.).

On the other hand, the new treaty was believed to “grant Finland the inside tract at least for a short time” (E 21.1.1992). Even though things were no longer treated in a centralized manner, the steps needed to arrive at a market economy were nevertheless regarded as being too many to be taken all at once. First, as assured by Deputy Prime Minister Burbulis, Russia had to work hard “to regain the confidence the Soviet Union lost during the recent years” through economic relations with Finland. In between the western border of the former Soviet Union and the western border of Russia, a number of national borders had now been (re)drawn, and Russia now found itself located even further away from Western Europe on the map. Consequentially, the importance of Finland as Russia’s only Western neighbor (apart from the very northern part of Norway) was seen to only increase further. Burbulis stressed that Russia wished for Finland to serve as Russia’s bridge to the west, in which case Finland’s possible accession to the EU would be seen in Russia merely as an advantage (E 21.1.1992.)

The idea of Finland as a bridge was also supported in the West. It was suggested that Finland would take charge in brainstorming and coordinating Western aid to Russia and other CIS member countries, which was deemed in Finland to be a “rarely offered opportunity to provide leadership in the international community” (OE 16.1.1992). The goal was proclaimed to be the creation of an organization able to manage both the practical aspects and the political questions related to aid and, in so doing, to prevent the emergence of a new opposition based on economic factors between East and West. Such action, it was seen, would serve the interests of the whole of Europe but more clearly those of Finland, which would locate at the very border of the described opposition. The smaller the welfare gap was, the better it would be for Finland. (OE 16.1.1992.)

The reasoning for offering Finland the possibility to act as a bridgehead of international assistance and reconstruction was seen to stem from the “fact that the Western world thinks that Finland knows the Russian situation particularly well.” Finns should not admit that they were “not as great experts as they think” but instead to take measures to “develop the necessary knowledge and skills” (OE 16.1.1992). Finland’s bridge position was deemed debatable for despite its geographical proximity, Finns possessed “a lot of fragmented knowledge of, disconnected experiences from, opinions about and prejudices towards the neighbor to the east,” but were seen not to form a clear, coherent picture of the

complicated whole complex of issues (E 5.1.1992). The enormous proportions of the former Soviet Union, the peculiarity of the Soviet system, and the limited availability of well-balanced information about the local practices was put forth as reasons for the lack of applicable knowledge.

Those with more personal experiences about the life and people behind the border blamed the “Finnish national, and almost genetic resentment against Russia and the Russians” for Finland having lost its position as a key trading partner of Russia. Paasikivi and Kekkonen, it was explained, had kept the resentment in control, Koivisto balanced somewhere in the middle yet leaned towards the West, but after Gorbachev had broken “all hell loose by scrapping the Soviet Union,” Finland had “wanted to see Russia on her knees” (L 18.6.1992). A distinction was, however, made between the common people and particularly those who had at one time been forced to “give in to the geopolitical realism in the hard hands of the hard presidents,” i.e., the politicians and the media:

Resentment by the ordinary people is dead and buried. People have travelled... friends and acquaintances have been made. The people no longer bear a grudge against the East. But the formers of public opinion and decision makers do. They have created for us an image of Russia, where people die of hunger, seniors are dying on the streets and there is a fight all against all... (L 18.6.1992)

The reason for resentment was seen to derive from a way of thinking shaped in “the blue and white school system, in the aftermath of the war reparations, and the miracle of the Winter War....” Unlike “what the decision makers and opinion formers seem still to believe,” “[o]ne Finn is not equivalent to ten Russkies [*ryssä*]... Not anymore.” Finns should thus open their eyes and see that “the private Russian trade partners are first of all reliable and, secondly, relentlessly eager to try.” (L 18.6.1992.)

Given that “[w]e need Russia and the Russians, Russia and the Russians do not need us,” the eagerness with which Finland had been diving towards the West was regarded as “downright grotesque.” This was firstly because during the Soviet era, Finns had learnt to get along by selling the Soviet Union “indefinitely size forty-five left foot shoes, very poorly made” and could thus not make it on extremely quality and cost aware Western markets (L 18.6.1992). Secondly, it was argued, Finland was geographically “clearly more like part of Russia, rather than a piece of Scandinavia or Western Europe.” Accordingly, the fact that the roots of Finns were understood to be far away in Russia was offered as the main reason for the national resentment in the first place. After all, “[w]ho would hate farmers more than the farm boy who moved to the city” (*ibid.*)

Now that the Soviet Union had disintegrated, the FCA-treaty ceased to exist, and Finland had applied for membership in the European Union, the foreign policy of Finland had unavoidably run into a completely new situation. As a

consequence of Russia's economic plight, a deep gap in the standard of living was cleaving at the border. As stated by then Prime Minister of Finland Esko Aho, "[t]he increase risk of chaos in Russia highlights in a new way the openness of the geographical location of Finland" (E 6.5.1992). He saw the leaks from the Sosnovy Bor nuclear power plant as a frightening warning about the dangers of the "front line". The same cause for concern was riotously depicted also in the letters:

If a power plant accident occurs... The only direction to which they can escape, is to Finland. First there will be gangs of robbers armed in paramilitary or military manner. They'll have nothing to lose, so they behave totally ruthlessly.... [They] are followed by a migration of peoples such as has been seen in the history before. (L 24.4.1992)

The editorial of May 6, 1992 suggested that Aho could have chosen to continue his front line theme even further. As Finland was joining the EU, its eastern border would also receive a new kind of political significance. It would become the EU's and Russia's lengthy and sole common border. The overall significance of the Finnish-Russian border was thus considered to ultimately depend on the development of the relationship between Europe, especially the EU, and Russia.

An op-ed of April 23, 1992 built upon the statements of Defense Minister Elisabeth Rehn and Armed Forces Commander Jan Klenberg. According to them, threats to Finnish security had become much more dangerous since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Ms. Rehn was "extremely concerned" about Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's populist spouts on the return of the Grand Duchy and major armaments being located in the Finnish neighboring areas. She considered it naïve to consider Zhirinovskiy, who still dreamt of conquering Finland, as a "harmless nonsense speaker". Finland's independence, she postulated, had not been threatened to this extent since 1939. Admiral Klenberg, in turn, saw the difficulties of the CIS as "insurmountable". He depicted that as a consequence of Finnish EU membership the border between rich and poor Europe would move to Finland's eastern border. He further envisioned that the defense of the St. Petersburg area would once again become problematic from the Russian perspective, especially when coupled with the increased military equipment transferred from Central Europe close to the border with Finland. (OE 23.4.1992.)

While ideally the Finnish-Russian border would "shrink to be in the same way European border as is the practice, for example, between the Nordic countries or within the EU," for the moment there were no signs that this goal could one day be realized (HS 29.6.1992). President Yeltsin's proposal on making the border of ceded Karelia "transparent" was reacted upon for it was seen as a potential basis for solving the Karelia question (L 22.7.1992). According to the proposal, Karelia would continue to belong to Russia, but a transparent border



would allow more intense forms of interaction. In Finland, the proposal was interpreted to mean the facilitation of border crossings and even visa-free travel, the latter of which was rejected forthright by President Koivisto (L 22.7.1992).

As it stood, many agreed that the “open border between Finland and Russia... would be roughly the same as the cession of Finnish territory” (L 8.7.1992). Already so far, the opening had revealed also the very different scales of problems at stake and depicted St. Petersburg as a dangerous time bomb:

The metropolitan area of St. Petersburg, four to five times greater than the Helsinki region, is an undeniable reality.... There is also an immeasurable demand for consumer goods and the people have... almost too good picture about the job opportunities in Finland... In international terms there is a record-breakingly sharp gap in living standards at Finnish-Russian border. Those aspiring to the better side of it cannot always be refused without problems piling up. (E 16.3.1992)

Almost every evening television screens show images of the gigantic waste pipes of the metropolis of St. Petersburg spewing untreated crud directly to the water system. At the same time, the Finns – a few hundred kilometers away – try to choose the detergent to wash their carpets with so that the beaches and water of the very same Baltic Sea would not get polluted. (E 31.7.1992)

Another more low profile storyline was told by a minority with faith in or at least patience towards Russia. It was acknowledged that Russia was now only beginning to build its economy and its policies again, and had expressed its intention to strive towards Western democracy and a market economy. Therefore, there was hope that Russia would start “moving away from unilateralism” that violated the self-determination of the peoples and begin a new era of cooperation. Thus, it was justified to “expect new types of behavior and a convergence to the Western European way of life” (L 17.5.1992).

The major changes taking place in Russia and also throughout Europe were seen to “blow a whole new pan-European spirit” particularly into the cooperation and to incorporating Russia into the “Europe of regions”. It was seen that engaging Russia deeply into the European structures would open new opportunities, as the whole of Europe would benefit from a democratic, capitalist Russia. The North especially was seen to offer a good starting ground for cooperation in light of the fact that when the Soviet Union collapsed Russia was cut off from the southern harbors of Ukraine and or those of the Baltic states, something which emphasized the role of the Russian arctic sea cities of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk for merchant shipping. While Norway had initiated the project, the security policy considerations attached to it were also seen to match with Finnish interests. (E 5.10.1992.)

### 5.2.2 EUphoria: Russia as *our* Neighbor

The debate about Russia turned into a debate about the EU and what significance it would have for the Finnish-Russian relationship. Even though some kind of a conclusion had been reached as to where Finland was coming from, confusion over which way to proceed still remained. The entire nation was diagnosed as ailing from a severe type of stagnation. The editorial of January 3, 1994 brought up the need look back in planning for the future and to take cue from the ideological heritage of the reformist Constitutional-Fennoman movement, then celebrating its centenary journey, in order to mobilize the Finnish society as was done 100 years ago. As the threatening Soviet Union had become an unpredictable Russia and Western Europe looked for a new thrust from integration, it was seen as important for Finland to take care of its neighborly relations in the west, east, and south (E 3.1.1994).

Finland had begun its accession negotiations with the EU in February 1993 and was preparing for the consultative referendum to be held in October 1994. Writings about the EU were not, however, anymore dominated by security questions but had become more diversified. The recession, which followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, fuelled in particular the debate on economic matters; 37 per cent of EU supporters and 34 per cent of its opponents argued their opinion primarily on economic factors (HS 14.10.1994). The most popular reason for supporting EU membership was simply the understanding that "Finland is a country in Western Europe and its natural place is in the own union of the Western European countries" (L 8.9.1994). It was also argued that the EU would fuel economic growth, increase employment, reduce debt (L 22.9.1994), and provide work and study opportunities aboard.

Out of the opponents, 34 per cent dreaded the loss of independence and supra-national, anti-democratic decision-making. The "unionists' strange daydreams" were shot down by stating on the contrary that membership would "not open any new market areas" nor would it "create a single new job in this country" (L 1.10.1994). Instead, Finnish products and services would be discriminated against and Finland would have to wait in vain for EU investments (L 18.9.1994). The EU-pessimism was explained to derive from the perspective that the EEA treaty had already implemented the economic mechanisms that the EU membership would bring about (HS 28.9.1994). The discussion also surfaced about the fate of Finnish social security that the EU was seen to threaten.

Only about 19 per cent of the supporters and 9 per cent of the opponents used security policy issues (fear of Russia) to back up their EU stance (HS 14.10.1994). In particular, concerns were raised because Paasikivi's old and often used advice that one must "look at the map" was seen to be totally forgotten in the debate on Finland's security political position as a potential member of the EU: "[c]onditions have now changed, but the map remains, and the crises are lurking. Is Finland now handing over its eastern border for common use and

exposing itself to solutions, to which it may only marginally influence? (L 9.1.1994).”

The opponents saw that EU membership would also force Finland to join NATO before long (L 19.9.1992). NATO was seen in a negative light for it was believed to compromise the “key issue of our security,” i.e., a confidential relationship with Russia. On the other hand, the map card was also played by those in favor of EU membership. It was argued that because the geographical location of Finland was what it was and because its superpower neighbor was going through “times of great turmoil” Finns should join the EU for the sake of its security (L 7.9.1994)

From the perspective of the HS opinion pages’ editorial staff, the writings about the EU “were generally serious trumpeting and dryish quarrel about directives – joy and imagination was hard to find in them” (HS 14.10.1994). Be it as it may, in September and October alone, i.e., right before the referendum, the HS received 935 letters about the EU, of which 149 (16 per cent) were published, which in turn suggests the matter was deemed as important and/or emotive. A majority of 475 letters were against EU membership while 294 letters were in favor of it. (HS 14.10.1994.) Given that the HS Gallup published on October 6, 1994 implied that 48 per cent of Finns were in favor and only 28 against membership, this suggests that the opponents of the EU were more eager to voice their opinions. The editorial board’s own take on the issue can be interpreted from the fact that the numbers of arguments for and against were reversed as the paper chose to publish only 48 letters against but no fewer than 64 letters in favor of EU membership. Appropriately, the editorial policy of *Helsingin Sanomat* received its own fair share of criticism for force-feeding positive messages on EU-membership to the public.

A letter on February 26, 1994 made an important suggestion by arguing that the East-West discussion should not be done at the expense of the North. It asserted that Finland had acted already for more than a decade determinedly in the Arctic in favor of increased cooperation. The author based his argument on Finland’s track record in the field. For example, the so-called Arctic Project had been founded with the then Soviet Union at Finland’s instigation in 1980 to create broad-based cooperation regarding the utilization of oil and gas resources in the Barents Sea. As the potential for international cooperation had opened up in the Arctic after the Cold War, it had been Finland to first propose in 1989 an initiative focusing on the protection of the Arctic environment.

### Bowing to the West

In October 1994, Finland held a consultative referendum in which 56.9 per cent voted in favor of Finland’s membership in the Union with a voter turnout of 74 per cent. In the letters, it was postulated that the real reasons for voting favorably had to do with “irrational fear” preventing Finns from thinking straight, i.e., “the fact that we want to belong to the free and democratic Western

community" and the "frame of reference" as long as the alternative would have been the "identification with the Eastern bloc and Russia" (L 4.7.1995).

Finland's litigation role vis-à-vis Russia in all things Europe was heavily pushed by Russia who, in the words of Yeltsin, wished that Finland would conduct itself within the EU as a mediator understanding of Russian problems and interests as well as a proponent of closer cooperation and even Russia's membership in the EU. In his surprisingly straightforward statement to Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho, President Yeltsin said he hoped "that henceforth our relations, especially trade relations, would develop trilaterally three-way medium – between the European Union, Finland, and Russia" and even more bluntly that Finland "would do its own part and advance Russia's accession to the European Union" (E 21.1.1995). Finland was seen to obtain a twofold role. For Russia, it would offer a window to the West by facilitating its prerequisites for closer economic cooperation with the EU. For the West, it would function as a "gate to the Russian markets" (L 13.4.1995). Finland had great interest in cooperation with Russia, and EU membership was seen to kick-start the possibilities that the close proximity to Russia offered. Certainly, the editorial of January 21, 1995 admitted that Finland's EU membership was bound to bring about some new problems, but they were judged to be "undoubtedly outweighed by advantages and new opportunities."

The problems referred to in the editorial were named to be the "continuous instability in Russia's conditions with all of its side effects" and the seven billion Finnish mark debt that Russia owed to Finland. The letters paid particular attention to Russia's belligerent actions, especially in Chechnya (L 6.1.1995, 15.1.1995, 19.1.1995, 28.1.1995, 30.1.1995). Some went as far as to depict the situation as "another Winter War" (E 6.1.1995). Should Russia one day direct its aggressions towards Finland, the EU was taken to be of little use as "at the border we stand alone" (L 15.3.1995).

"Diplomacy, not fighter jets" was put forth as plan A for maintaining peaceful neighborly relations, for "[e]ven if we were to obtain a multifold number of these machines, even if we were to arm ourselves to the teeth, a Russia-Finland match fought with weapons would always end in Finland's defeat" (L 25.3.1995). Instead, good diplomatic ties seasoned with incomparable expertise and EU backing was recommended as a recipe for success. For "we Finns know Russia and Russians better than other nations" and now that Finland had become a plenipotentiary member of the EU it should take determined and result-seeking action to fully exploit its membership (L 9.4.1995).

The EU was seen to offer its members many advantages, possibilities, and perspectives of which Finland too could benefit significantly. However, these opportunities were understood as something Finns would not get for free but would have to themselves uncover and make use. Accordingly, a particular East Institute of the EU was proposed to be established in Finland to secure the

Finnish primacy vis-à-vis Russia (L 9.4.1995, L 11.4.1995). Finland was deemed to benefit from freer forms of cross-border traffic (L 11.5.1995) to the extent that the need for better and faster cross-border connections would become obvious (L 31.7.1995). Without the necessary infrastructure, interaction was doomed to fizzle out even before it could get up and running.

The first five years of the bilateral neighboring area cooperation received a mixed review. While many collaborative projects, such as those focusing on infectious diseases or maternal and child health reform, were considered as “sensible and practical” in many respects the various aid projects had been “overlapping, poorly engineered, and even against the wishes of the recipients” (E 18.12.1995). In order to fix the situation, it was incited that more attention should be paid to the follow-up phase. It was understood that instead of providing material aid, it would be more effective to educate employees and support structural reforms in cooperation with the local residents. Given that the neighboring area cooperation program was not a pure humanitarian program and more a kin to an investment for the future, the demand for increased effectiveness translated into a desire to get one’s money’s worth. After all, “in addition to the human and ethical reasons” Finland was seen to support its neighborhood also for its own sake (E 18.12.1995). The more efficiently the work was done, the better chances there were for the threats to stand aside.

The debate about Karelia resurfaced yet again but provided little new to the arguments already presented before. Prime Minister Lipponen’s “inadvertently cynical” announcement that Finland would not be interested to take back the ceded areas even if they were offered because Finland could not afford them was taken as an “unfortunate example of our ever-secularizing world” (L 27.8.1995). It was seen that the economic factors overshadowed everything else to the extent that “the concept of a sacred fatherland” could only be seen “in the old movies or in some extremist movements’ pamphlets.” Even though trade flowed well across the border and provided opportunities for economic growth, other forms of interaction remained impeded by the attitudes of the ordinary people. The grudge against Russia and Russians was often depicted almost as a national, if not ethnic, characteristic that held Finns together but could neither “be encountered anywhere else” nor “explained to an outsider” (L 27.8.1995).

It was viewed that such a national grudge could only be tackled by erasing its root cause. Sustainable interaction between the countries was regarded as unattainable until the injustice felt by the Finns had been corrected:

As long as infants in Finland receive their first drops of Russophobia already from breast milk, and as long as our politicians refuse to publicly acknowledge the commonly known and felt mistrust towards the Russian people, without even attempting to rectify the situation, the foundation of our good-neighborliness and entire security policy is as if built on a swamp... Distrust between the Finns and our neighbor in the east should be permanently removed by rectifying, in together, the

wrongdoings of history. This must be done, it is a necessity, even if would be painful.  
(L 27.8.1995)

The Finnish political elite had, however, already decided that it is better to look ahead and prepare for the future rather than look back and regret. The EU was now the new frame of reference for Finland, and it was felt that actions had to be taken immediately to safeguard Finland's position in the Union. The resentment became thus repressed and covered up with a rhetoric that fitted better the European integrative spirit and allowed Finland to pursue its proclaimed bridge function and thus enhance its standing in the Union.

In the wake of Finland's membership, the EU now encountered post-Soviet Russia in the North. Finland was likewise keen to ensure that the interests of the North, especially vis-à-vis Russia, would be taken into consideration at the European level. The Northern Dimension was preferred over the narrower Baltic Sea strategy for showcasing Finnish know-how. To promote solely the Baltic Sea was seen to mean that Finland would "remain permanently as the EU's remote fringe." If, however, the North would earn a significant position within EU policy, Finland could become a member of key importance in the EU. In order to tap into "the real Finnish geographical special status in the EU, and the opportunities brought by it," Finland should acknowledge what it had to offer the EU: "[w]e have a northern location close to the Northwest Russia's great natural wealth, we have Russia, we have the expertise about the Arctic. These combine into the EU's northern policy." (L 19.10.1995.)

### **5.2.3 Tables Turned: Crisis and the Redefinition of Relations**

Under the leadership of president Ahtisaari, Finland learned to look at Russia more and more from a EU perspective. With EU backing, Finland became also more confident in assessing the situation in Russia more critically. Russian society, Ahtisaari stated, was in deep crisis, which could only be escaped through long-term work (E 26.9.1998). The areas behind the border were deemed to possess "all the development opportunities," but it was also understood that the development would "call for both peace and time" (L 1.8.1998).

Peaceful developments necessitated the border to be gradually demystified and freed from its historical burden. The editorial board of *Helsingin Sanomat* agreed with the official Finnish stance that a new EU-era had begun at the "border of peace" (E 12.7.1998) and that the image of Russia ought to be readjusted accordingly. While in the past an exciting visit to the almost impenetrable border with the intimidating Soviet Union formed one of the main tourist attractions Finland had to offer, now the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the editorial described, "whisk spontaneously foreign journalists and dignitaries to the eastern border in order to showcase exemplary cooperation of border guards."

However, it was warned that everything had its limits. This has been experienced, to give an example, by Finnish nature activists, who had in large numbers mapped and made inventories of the natural forests of Karelia during that year. Even though the times had indeed changed, it was considered “naïve to imagine that the Russian authorities would regard such activity benevolently, unless it is mutually agreed upon with them.” The fact that Finnish government money was used to fund the mapping was deemed “even more embarrassing.” (E 12.7.1998.)

A particularly fitting example of this was an old-growth forest inventory project carried out by the Finnish Nature League (Luonto-liitto) and various Russian environmental organizations. The Nature League had organized joint seminars with Russian NGOs in order to develop and integrate inventory methods. The project ran, however, into troubles when the chairman of the new government of Karelia, Sergey Katanandov, stated that inventories of Russian and Finnish NGOs were no longer needed. (OE 23.7.1998.) In Finland, the statement was analyzed in the context of the state-civil society relations. The cause for the statement was seen to stem from the fact that the tradition of consultation with civil society is lacking in Russia and the authorities are not accustomed to listen to what NGOs have to say (ibid.).

Despite the changed frame of reference, the discussion in the letters remained focused on bilateral issues. Here it was the teachings of history rather than any abstract theoretical model of International Relations that formed the basis of decisions made and attitudes held. Russia had indeed opened up in a way that could not have been even imagined heretofore, yet the citizenry, as far as can be argued based upon the letters, maintained that if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. The official rhetoric of Finland as a bridge builder resonated thus weakly with the local level perceptions. While most its partners, it was assessed, had either stepped back or began to capitalize on Russia’s weakness, Finland had not had the courage to abandon its old ‘friend’:

Former ‘friends’ have disappeared, new partners, such as the IMF, set requirements, schedules, and criticize the usual Russian way of life. There is only one exception: Finland. Out of all the Russia’s neighbors only the Finns, those Chukhnas, slightly simple and sluggish, have continued along the former friendship policy line. When all the other bordering countries began to step back, in Finland talks about gateways and regaining lost markets began. And the presidents went to sauna. (L 23.1.1998)

It was, yet again, the Karelia question, which dominated the debate. Heretofore, the pro-EU stance of the editorial board had been brought up quite openly, yet the paper had previously avoided direct statements about the Karelia question. In 1998 the situation, however, changed following Ilmari Susiluoto’s, at the time a senior researcher at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, colorful comments in which he praised President Ahtisaari’s open way of discussing the Karelian

question while calling the official Finnish stance in other respects as well as the Finnish media cowardly (E 20.1.1998).

In his response to Susiluoto's remarks, editorial reporter Erkki Pennanen defended the media by stating that to jump aboard the revanchist spirit, which had strengthened in certain circles in response to Russia's perceived weakness would only lead to "daydream journalism and a Karelia debate in a 'who's-afraid-of-the-big-bad-wolf style'" (E 20.1.1998). For Pennanen, Susiluoto's ideas sounded "too much like a psychiatrist's or a charlatan's advice." While admitting that the Karelians who had lost their homes had "a natural right to moon over the divested Karelia in their thoughts and consider what happened a great injustice," Pennanen attacked back by arguing that Susiluoto's revanchist attempts to raise hopes about the return of Karelia were beyond what could be defended as "national therapy" and should thus be condemned harshly. The EU-Europe, the new frame of reference for Finland, was not the right place for such a debate. After all, post-war Europe was full of ill-taken areas and arbitrary borders, but the new European order was based on the fact that borders between countries are confirmed as unchangeable by common agreements. (Ibid.)

If the aim of the editorial was to de-escalate the debate, it failed terribly. The statements it contained formed an easy target for criticism. The writing sparked an intense debate not just about reasoning against and in favor of the return of Karelia to Finland but also about how the topic should be discussed. Pennanen was blamed for siding with Russia – for using "variants of the expressions used by Russians" and making a distinction between Karelians and Finns "in an orthodox Russian manner" (L 29.1.1998). After all, the Karelian question "should be a matter of Finns and not Karelians" (L 2.6.1999). It was argued that Pennanen – and by extension *Helsingin Sanomat* – and the Russians were bound together in that they both saw the restoration of Karelia not as an issue of importance to the Finnish people as a whole but one that concerned only the Karelians, making it easier to trivialize. On the other hand, referring to those "who think they are highly intelligent in refusing the return of Karelia" as "non-people" (L 5.7.1998) by a proponent of recession, hardly helped the disunion either.

Also the premise of Pennanen's reference to a wider European frame came under criticism. It was corrected that the fact that Finns now lived indeed in a EU-Europe did not dash all hopes of restoring Karelia but rather opened up a new opportunity as the borders could now "be returned under bilateral peaceful agreements" (L 9.7.1998). It was also corrected that one could not speak about revanchism with regards to Karelia for "after all Finland was the target of aggression, not its cause" (L 3.2.1998). Others argued that some of Stalin's legacy was already "repaired by the good that has sprung up in the interaction between" the people of the two countries (L 29.5.1998). It was nevertheless



considered important that also difficult issues could be talked about as otherwise the welfare gap at the border might turn into a normative gap as well.

In response to this debate, Russians were assumed to respond by revisiting their own value system. The conclusions that Russians drew from this debate were taken to be a measure of their own value system. Finns wished not to “threaten Russians” but only to “appeal to their sense of justice, so that true friendship could be born between the neighboring nations” (L 29.5.1998). The proposal about returning the divested areas should not be taken as an intimidation but as “an invitation to the Russians to join the human population respecting justice and truth” and to “wash the shame from their faces” (L 30.7.1998). Only then Russians could finally “experience what it means to have a Finn as a friend” (ibid.).

For the most part, the public debate about Karelia remained focused on whether the ceded areas should be returned back to Finland or not. What is more important here is that the debate escalated to the point that Editor-in-Chief Janne Virkkunen felt it necessary to step in and reveal the HS stance on the Karelia question but also on Russia more in general terms:

A visit [to Karelia] is advisable for every romanticist. Today's Russia is in many ways a developing country that has a nuclear weapon. Although one would have braced oneself for the matters, a surprise still awaits on the Isthmus. The Isthmus, along with Vyborg, is – to put it very mildly – in a deplorable condition. Flourishing agricultural areas are as meadows and the villages and unfinished buildings are deteriorating right in front of your eyes. Forests are untreated. Beautiful Vyborg is broken... The transfer of Karelian back to Finland would mean that we would get a large Russian minority, which should be granted equal conditions with the Finns. It is a huge financial burden that cannot be compensated by the Karelian forest resources... the region of Karelia does no longer have such a strategic importance as it had had for hundreds of years. (OE 23.8.1998)

While Virkkunen's column was regarded as “an important and welcome event,” it was also criticized heavily not just for downplaying the issue but also quite justifiably for feeding Finns' “well-known dread of foreigners” (L 30.8.1998). Nevertheless, the provided description resonated among its audience. Similar suggestive and purposeful wording and framing were used in the letters:

In the villages the self-sufficiency economy secures the food supply far to the winter. Sauna sustains purity and logs create warmth. The Tiiksa village shop had one piece of bread for sale on Monday. The health situation in Karelia has worsened throughout the 1990s. Now the decline is likely to steepen... Hospitals are for constant want of even the simplest equipment, such as surgical gloves and medical syringes. There is a chronic shortage of medicines, and hospitals cannot afford to purchase them... (L 12.9.1998)

The worsening situation behind the border was deemed to make Russia weaker and, hence, provide a rare opportunity to start negotiations (L 17.9.1998). Others took a more moderate stand. It was pointed out that Finns “should not underestimate the importance of the reassessment of the history” which was deemed as already ongoing in Russia (L 15.9.1998). However, given that Finland had “well-established borders – in every direction” (L 31.7.1998), it should not push the envelope but seek to “build close and cooperative relations across the border” (OE 23.8.1998).

The debate on Karelia eventually turned into a debate about the debate itself. The younger generations “with no physical or even psychological bonds to the lost areas” saw that even patriotism had its limits and that it was useless to develop unnecessary threats (L 22.7.1998). While the older generations’ vigor was fuelled largely by emotions, the young tended to prefer reason. A further tension between the two was caused by the sentiment that “the younger generation – for example, a substantial part of the journalists – do not even know which area is talked about,” whereby the “debate gets impeded by a lack of factual knowledge” (L 21.11.1998). All in all, the debate often became personal. There were “too many seers of real truth” and even those presenting realistic estimates got often “branded too easily” (OE 10.12.1998). Any degree of consensus was clearly difficult to reach as the various arguments seldom accumulated making the whole debate a fitting example of the hot stove principle whereby having gotten quickly burned, most learned not to touch upon the topic again.

### The Weaker Russia, the Stronger Finland

By 1999, Russia’s weight in international politics had fallen sharply from the superpower era of the Soviet Union. The editorial on January 26, 1999 suggested that due to Russia’s weakness and Finland’s increased political leverage thanks to the EU the tables were now turned, and it was Finland that had taken the upper hand. The fact that Russia had been investing heavily in its embassy in Helsinki, making it its largest embassy in Europe, was taken as an indication of a reassessment in regard to a concentration of resources. As the “normal management” of Finnish-Russian relations now required a lot less people than it did in the past, Russia was interpreted to be especially interested in Helsinki because of its new position as the capital city of the easternmost member of the European Union, providing Russia with “an important observation point.” This was deemed necessary as Finland had strongly promoted the Northern Dimension policy, which was to affect Russia directly.

Russia’s internal problems were easy targets for Finns wishing to point out all that was wrong in Russia. “Already for the sake of our own security,” it was instructed, Finland should pay more attention to the “bloodless genocide going on in our great neighbor” (L 4.1.1999). Because the “production of a truly rich Russia” had been shut down and the people had been “impoverished,” Russians

were now “running around the world begging – the government for billions of credit and the others for medicines, clothes, food, etc., in order to slow down the rapid and complete destruction” (ibid.).

Things in Russia had gone from bad to worse. The situation was assessed to be even worse than what it had been in the early 1990s before the launch of the market reforms because “[w]hat was done encouraged by the West, was often done wrong, and the flaws only escalated.” The former super-power had been degraded to such an extent that many regarded it to be no longer able to “meet its international commitments” or to “get the country back on its feet under its own steam.” (OE 16.2.1999.) The national economy was down-and-out and the government was wavering on the brink of bankruptcy. The country was seen as groping helplessly without a clear direction. It was suggested that in order bring such a development to a halt Russia needed a new beginning (OE 16.2.1999) and a powerful president who could bring the nation together (E 6.3.1999).

The situation behind the border had deteriorated to the point that the Republic of Karelia renewed its request for food aid from Finland. Among Finns there were, however, very conflicting views on how to approach the issue. Indignation welled forth largely due to the fact that there were, after all, plenty of people in need also in Finland (L 14.11.1999). *Helsingin Sanomat's* Moscow correspondent, Kalle Koponen (OE 20.2.1999), labeled the EU and US projects to provide food assistance to Russia as “one of the most irrational operations of recent times,” as “sheer nonsense.” The starting point of his criticism was the “small technical detail” that in Russia there was “no shortage of food,” there was a “shortage of money.” This shortage stemmed from the reason that the state’s affairs were being “managed by one of the most corrupt and incapable administrative apparatuses on the planet,” which could not be trusted to distribute aid to those in need (OE 20.2.1999).

Aid work was also criticized for its “humanitarian façade,” while its true motive was argued to stem from “enlightened selfishness” (L 14.11.1999) and the Western self-interest to support its own agricultural production by keeping the export channels to Russia open. What Russia needed, Koponen stated, was not humanitarian assistance but “salvation from the corruption and the mire of political screw-ups” (OE 20.2.1999). After letting out his frustration, he arrived to a more important aspect of his argument: as neither the EU or the US were “humanitarian aid organizations,” the relief work ought to be left to dedicated and experienced voluntary organizations through whose the channels assistance could be delivered where needed most:

It is dead certain that when the EU’s food aid has come and gone, the refrigerators of the Russian babushkas are still almost empty. They also remain empty, if it is up to the bureaucrats in Brussels and Moscow. The former live in abundance and take no notice of the realities in Russia. The latter wears bad shoes with every intention to acquire a better pair at their earliest convenience. (OE 20.2.1999)

The editorial board (E 24.2.1999) refined Koponen's assessment into more politically correct terms, in so doing revealing the actual argument from its emotional load. In principle, it was suggested, one could curbing corruption and the abuse of assistance by refraining from delivering it altogether, but as the severity of the situation necessitated aid to be given immediately it had to be delivered directly to those in most immediate need through aid organizations, such as the Red Cross, that had proven their ability get things done. Such organization was desperately needed as otherwise the aid worth billions provided by the EU and other major stakeholders would continue to flow into the wrong hands causing more harm than good as intermediaries and shadowy men try roll up their own profits (E 1.10.1999). The EU's lack of attachment and ability to monitor its aid became well demonstrated by the fact that it had delivered grain to Russia only for Russian brokers sell it abroad.

It was also brought up that instead of pure aid work, Finns should engage in practical forms cooperation, whereby the Russian side could develop organizationally stronger and operationally more efficient. For example, Finnish trade unions had sought to assist their Russian counterparts in different ways and at different levels by emphasizing training and learning right advocacy (interest supervision) practices and the related associational work (L 28.4.1999). The mere aid work or direct money provision were assessed as insufficient and blamed for not necessarily leading anywhere. Instead, "Russian workers and their organizations themselves must be able to defend their interests; behind the border this cannot be done" (ibid.).

It was also brought up that instead of pure aid work, Finns should engage in practical forms cooperation, whereby the Russian side could develop organizationally stronger and operationally more efficient. "The hungry should not be given a fish, but a fishing rod"; i.e., the aid had to be given in a way that would bring "jobs and money, consolidate the conditions, and create a new life of faith" (HS L 14.11.1999). It was explained that, for instance, Finnish trade unions had moved on to assist their Russian counterparts by telling them about better advocacy practices and the related associational work, as merely directing monetary provisions had been insufficient and led to nowhere. "Russian workers and their organizations themselves must be able to defend their interests," it was asserted, because this was impossible do from behind the border (L 28.4.1999).

Cooperation was perceived to be hindered by the fact that the availability of Russian visas had remained stringent and complicated (L 29.4.1999) but also due to cultural differences, misunderstandings stemming from bureaucracy, and the Russian "*militiya's* arbitrary and criminal activities" which for many had wrecked all confidence in the authorities and society as a whole (L 26.10.1999). The Finnish side was blamed for failing to prioritize which project to fund (L 14.11.1999) and for not utilizing the language skills of the ever-increasing number of Russian immigrants (ibid. cf. E 27.7.1999).

A cascade of responses flooded in to HS after Ivan P. Aboimov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Finland, criticized NATO action in Yugoslavia in his own writing (L 11.4.1999). While the topic had little to do with Finland, many were downright irritated by the picture Mr. Aboimov painted of Russia's place in world affairs. A number of letters address the issue by reflecting upon the Finnish experience. The teachings of history were used as valid grounds for predicting the future, as Russians' ability to change was deemed to be negligible. It was argued that Russia had not obtained "such a moral or ethical level" that it could "afford to advise, teach, and to criticize anyone, anything and anywhere" (L 15.4.1999), but it still had a long way to go before it could "teach the truth" (L 15.4.1999; L 18.4.1999). HS Moscow correspondent, Kalle Koponen (OE 21.11.1999), responded by drawing attention to Russian action in Chechnya. According to his vernacular description:

Russia is ominously retreating into its shell. It feels that the outside world do not understand it. ... Russia's political life is a continuous chaos; the economy is a mess and corroded by corruption. ... As its engines, Russia has three demons, which have weakened the discernment of its political leadership: thirst for revenge, racism and the bitter need to direct its frustration about its own incompetence at somewhere... [t]he Russians [bear a] huge disappointment and fatigue in constant bardak, chaos. Perpetual inferiority complex in front of the West, the loss of superpower status, the collapse of living standards and public health, the whole fiasco of liberal reforms has now been given an emotional lightning rod by the nasty Chechens terrorist.

While the public praised Koponen for sharing this information and the editorial board for giving it the exposure it deserved (L 23.11.1999), the Russian Embassy was less pleased. In his letter, addressed not to Koponen but to Editor-in-Chief Igor Andryushchenko, the press secretary of the Russian Embassy blamed the paper for forgetting the basic task of objective media (L 28.11.1999). Instead of giving readers enough information for them to determine by themselves what is essential and important in the world, Mr. Andryushchenko accused HS for "slandering all Russians, without exceptions, as racists and idlers suffering from paranoia." Koponen's use of language, Mr. Andryushchenko noted, immediately brought to mind "the notorious Cold War vocabulary." What he had found equally pathetic was that the "omissions" of Koponen's story may have misled the readership of the otherwise "prestigious paper" (ibid.).

The Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension organized in Helsinki on November 11, 1999 was greeted with great expectations, as the idea of the concept had remained somewhat vague for many. For Finland, this was an opportunity to safeguard and strengthen the continuity of its own neighborhood policy in the EU and to prepare for the presumable fact that, unless tied to northern issues, EU focus would shift towards Central Europe as a consequence of the next enlargement (OE 11.11.1999). The atmosphere of the

meeting was, however, clearly overshadowed by Russia's simultaneous actions in Chechnya. The remarkably low level of participation – out of the fifteen EU countries of the time, only the Foreign Minister of Finland participated in the meeting – could not but be taken as a sign that the topic had failed to arouse any significant political passion.

For Finland, the situation was different not at least because of geographical proximity and the long common border with Russia. Finns were regarded as having the advantage in that they “understand the Russian mentality better than other Westerners” (OE 10.12.1999). Russia, it was heralded, was “an indispensable partner for the EU, a permanent discrimination of which out of the question” (E 13.11.1999). Even though Russia fought in the south, its effect was seen to radiate also to its western border (OE 18.11.1999). This was taken to imply there to be an increased need to search for European security architecture and to bring the NATO question, yet again, back onto the table. Nevertheless, the editorial of November 13, 1999 argued that the war should be regarded as a reason to strengthen the Northern Dimension and not as a justification to restrict it.

The conference met the expectations in as far as the common desire towards the actual materialization of the policy. While this was largely taken to suggest that the meeting had been by and large a success, it was equally true that:

...at the same time a funeral was held in Helsinki. ...the EU's strict declaration to Russia following the events in Chechnya... buried the dream or a wish that Russia would in the near future – during the next few decades – be transforming into a democratic market economy as had been wished during the initial post-Soviet euphoria. At the same time it was confirmed that the Western policy has not worked. (OE 16.12.1999)

The EU statement to Russia was seen to reflect the powerlessness and hopelessness of the Union. It was taken as a sign that the EU itself knew very well that its words had little significance in the turmoil of Russia. The West had, it was summarized, tried three different paths: Russia was given financial assistance, attempts had been made to engage it cooperation through agreements and arrangements, and it had been persuaded towards parliamentary democracy through the synergy of these two, but all three fronts had failed (OE 16.12.1999).

The both parties were blamed for their hypocrisy. The Russian authorities had not complied with any of the “beautiful agreements” that it had signed while the EU had “turned a blind eye to everything in order to smear Russia's hard hit superpower soul” and instead re-declared its desire to keep Russia as a partner (OE 16.12.1999; OE 18.11.1999). However, the reform and transition expectations, previously included in most statements, were no longer observable. Accordingly, while on September 15, 1998 an editorial column had suggested that the relations between the West and Russia had been based at

least on a mutual pretense – Russia pretended to be a democracy and the West pretended to believe in it – now, a bit more than a year later, the pretense was deemed to be simply over (OE 1.12.1999). In reality, it had become questionable whether it was at all possible for Russia and the major Western countries to arrive at real partnership or whether the intense competitive position would continue as inevitable also in the future (OE 16.12.1999)

On the other hand, it was reminded that Russian history was “a terrible burden,” and it should thus be given a lot of time (OE 18.12.1999). Contemporary analyses were blamed for lacking a historical perspective. It was seen that the Russian case was not primarily about a transition from a command to a market economy but more fundamentally a transition from despotism to a lawful civil society, democracy, and parliamentarism. The problems apparent at the moment were believed to derive from the fact that when the Soviet Union collapsed the reforms had been initiated in a wrong order. Unlike when the rationing of mercantilism was demolished in the 1860s in Finland, in Russia the market forces were liberated before despotism was dismantled and replaced by with a lawful democracy and a legal framework that would have supported the birth of a functioning market economy (OE 18.12.1999).

The other major issued hindering the rapprochement between the EU and Russia was seen to derive from their very different logics. While the EU’s spreading to the east is “sincerely intended as a friendly embrace” (OE 22.12.1999), Russian thinking was still dominated by the traditional nineteenth-century world model, in which international order was based on the role of states, an ongoing merciless battle between the states for the strategic and economic interests and, above all, on the balance of power between the great powers. Even though Russia’s contemporary elite represented the perspective of the superpower-era generation, the future of Russia’s relations with Europe was reckoned to depend largely on the new generation that had grown up under changed conditions and exposed to strong cross-national trends.

Regarding bilateral issues, it was proposed that moving the border to its pre-war location would open up an opportunity to extend the neighboring area cooperation also to the northern areas, the home of various Finnic peoples (L 2.6.1999). For some, such talks about Karelia indicated rather that the teachings of history had been forgotten. Russia’s dubious actions, for example in Chechnya, were put forth as evident proof that Russia of today behaved much like its Cold War persona (L 18.12.1999). The populist rhetoric about repatriating Karelia was deemed as worrisome for it could be regarded as “defiant in the Russian eyes” (ibid.). After all, Russia was still deemed to be “a great power, a nuclear power,” where instability had only increased. “Applying for revenge,” it was argued, would thus not “even patch up the bruises of self-esteem.” Instead a true self-esteem should enable “wise diplomacy to be used in managing the relations between the peoples.” (L 18.12.1999.)

The editorial of November 1, 1999 reported that Russian government daily newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* had blamed the Finns for bringing the Karelian economy to its knees. It accused Finnish forestry companies of “macerating Karelia” by defining logging ban areas, but it had also attacked environmental organizations, the actions of which were seen to be driven by “big money” and the “desire for revenge.” The HS editorial section rightly ignored the article as an “excess related to Russia’s internal power struggle.” While there certainly were risks associated with the wood trade, it maintained that trade per se should be promoted for it raised the standard of living in Karelia and planted the principles of sustainable development (E 1.11.1999).

#### **5.2.4 To Transform or not to Transform?**

With Vladimir Putin in power, a “new era of intense interaction” had begun in Finnish-Russian relations (E 2.3.2002). President Putin’s reform policies and his earlier connections to Finland were seen to open up new possibilities for interaction. The publicly announced intention of a weakened Russia to promote its own national interests was interpreted to indicate that the country was seeking to create good economic relations with EU countries and aim to attract foreign investments to Russia in order to boost the country’s economic growth. The leading idea of President Putin’s foreign policy thinking was interpreted to be to show the West that Russia wants to be a part of Europe and to establish the closest possible economic and political cooperation with the European Union and preferably also with the United States (OE 16.4.2002).

While the first years of the Putin era could be assessed quite differently in retrospect, at the time the assessment was that President Putin had been very successful in his most important task: stabilizing the political conditions that had wavered on the verge of turmoil during the Yeltsin era – and even without “any dictatorial or illegal strokes” (OE 16.4.2002). The imminence relating to Russia’s instability or military threat had thus given way. It was seen necessary to seize upon the situation by increasing investment in Russia “already for the sake of the Finnish interests” (E 7.3.2002). The “investment,” however, was only used as a fancier word for neighboring area assistance, which according to this reading ought to be seen as investing in the future by attempting to fix some of the existing problems before they would reach and cross the border to Finland.

However, the euphoria over Putin evaporated swiftly. Whereas the events in Russia had been central to the international news flow throughout the last 10–15 years, now, all of a sudden, Russia had become almost forgotten. “Nothing of special interest” seemed to take place in Russia; the weight of the country was judged as having clearly fallen also in international politics, and few seemed to know what was actually happening in Russia (OE 16.4.2002). No news was not, however, good news from Russia’s own perspective or from that of its Western partners.



In his op-ed of June 12, 2002, Finnish diplomat and former minister Max Jacobson must have articulated the thoughts of many by proposing that the Finns' strong historical distrust and reservation towards Russia stems from the strong and enduring belief that even if the world is changing and the Finns with it, Russia still remained unchanged. Finland, according to this perception, occupied a position of an outpost of Western civilization. This crux of the Finnish realpolitik had also penetrated into the Finns' consciousness so deeply that it prevented many from seeing the apparent transformation set in motion in Russia. Due to the strong westward trend embarked on by President Putin, Jacobson corrected that Russia has indeed become increasingly European (OE 12.6.2002).

The statement could not be swept under the rug. Rather it pulled the entire rug out from under the feet of a large share Finns, who had learned to see Russia as the 'other.' By now it had become ever clearer that while god may have indeed failed (see Grossman 1949), history had not come to an end (see Fukuyama 1992) and that civilization might not after all clash (see Huntington 1993; 1996). The East and the West as most used to know them no longer existed, and the acknowledgement of that shook the very pillars upon which a major part of Finnishness had been built.

Accordingly now at the very latest it had become time to realize, as president Kekkonen had already once noted, that while shifting the border was not a realistic goal, cooperation and interaction were the new words on the streets. The border readjustment, Jacobson (OE 12.6.2002) explained, was not realistic not only because of Russia's negative stance regarding the matter but also for the current state of affairs was now "a part of a pan-European reality" and the Finnish-Russian border only one among many that had been "drawn with the sword after the Second World War." Thus, if one were to begin to modify them, "the whole European order would start to rock." Essentially, there was thus no reason to seek the readjustment of the border for the role of the borders per se in Europe had fundamentally changed: in an united Europe, [b]orders were no longer insurmountable crevasses, which insulate countries from each other" but "open" (OE 12.6.2002).

Russia's borders were not yet quite as open, but the fact that Russia had begun to integrate into Europe was seen to provide opportunities to prevent the looming humanitarian catastrophe in Karelia and to revive its economy through cooperation. This, Jacobson specified, would not be merely a humanitarian operation but of significant benefit to both parties as new economic opportunities would open up to those living on the Finnish side as well. On the Russian side, the services created in the Karelian Isthmus could be of benefit to the city of St. Petersburg, which was developing into the center of Russian foreign trade (OE 12.6.2002). In order to encourage CBC, the Imatra-Svetogorsk border crossing point was finally opened to international traffic. This was largely thanks to the EU as practically all of the border crossing facilities on the

Russian side were funded by the EU's Tacis funds. An open border, it was expected, would boost the trade and tourism industry of the border region and diversify the economic life of the entire province (E 8.7.2002).

The long borne grudge could not, however, be suppressed under the new top-level rhetoric. In particular, the idea to set up an environmental fund for Northwest Russia evoked strong resistance. "Russia," it was demanded, "ought to clean up its own mess," the vast majority of which was seen to derive from its navy that had been recklessly spreading its pollutants and warfare debris all over the place (L 17.7.2002). The author found it incomprehensible that both Finland and the EU were pledging immense amounts of money as a "poor relief for this irresponsible 'superpower'" although it was already in hock to Finland.

An op-ed of September 29, 2002 made a valid effort to explain the vernacular terminology. Neighborhood, it was clarified, was a more intimate and intensive form of relationship than partnership. While "[p]artnership can sometimes become passive, sometimes even forgotten" it was righteously argued, neighborhood [geographical proximity] was in effect day and night. Despite being referred to as a "partnership," the author saw that almost all of the key questions of EU-Russia cooperation relate to the neighborhood. Cooperation on environmental problems is, above all, in the interests of the neighbor, and the neighbors are also at the forefront when it comes to the Northwest Russia's social and health problems, criminality, and migration (OE 29.9.2002).

Geographical proximity and the long common border were also the reasons why the border control had to be maintained in order. "Finns' fears are now coming true," it was declared when Russia began to move its troops from the Finnish border to Central Asia and the Caucasus (E 20.11.2002). Even though one might have considered this as a positive development, the relaxation of the border control on the Russian side, however, resulted in a serious problem: the border, particularly its remote areas, had begun to leak. This was worrisome for drugs; "millions of illegal immigrants" and "prostitution and other forms of eastern criminality" could thus easily spill over to Finland (ibid.). Geography thus spoke for itself. Whereas Sweden and Ireland, the other "non-aligned" members, had EU or NATO allies on all sides, Finland had a 1,300-kilometer border with Russia. Even though the Cold War-era threat had receded, there were no guarantees that Russia's development towards a democratic constitutional state would be an unavoidable fact (E 12.1.2003).

### Concerns in Cooperation

Russia was seen to be developing in a positive direction, but many had grown exasperated with the slow pace of change. In principle, there was a desire to help Russia integrate into the international cooperation, but in practice the "bureaucratic heaviness and inertia of the Russian decision-making, as well as the different working culture in general" were seen to throw a spanner in the works and, if anything, nourish the Finns' own prejudices quite effectively.

Cultures logically collided at the border, where truck traffic and customs clearance problems culminated frequently in situations defused only by lengthy negotiations at the higher levels.

Particularly in the field of environmental protection the chasm between the countries was gaping. Unlike Finns, it was assessed, Russians were not taking the “risks seriously”; Russians’ “negligence and outright disregard” for environmental risks could and did not deserve understanding (OE 9.2.2003). Such rhetoric was cut out for fostering an impression among the public that instead of protecting actively the environment and being responsible for its actions, Russia was trying to make others, most notably Finland, take care of, i.e., pay for, the actions required. While the consequently emerged “unpleasant features” in the Finns’ attitudes towards Russians were painted formally as pity, the language and individual word choices used in the editorials, and especially in the op-eds by HS staff, only added fuel to the fire and fed a negative view towards Russia.

Perhaps the greatest strain arose from the fact that in the perceptions of Finns, Russia had evolved from a *threat* to a *risk*, the latter of which being in no way better. Russia was as country of contradictions, the development of which could not be predicted. During its “young democracy,” it had prospered noticeably, largely due to its immense oil and gas reserves, yet its social problems were immense. The “new Russia” was already in operation in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but there were tens of millions of people living in poverty and misery, especially in rural areas; wealth was still a special right of a small but growing minority. (OE 13.4.2003.)

President Putin was taking Russia towards the West but at the same time tightening the internal conditions (E 31.8.2003). While the increased control was disquieting, on the flipside it meant that the “state, which as recently as in 1998 was feared to fall toward economic disaster and chaos” was now “internally stable” (OE 2.6.2003) and thus a more manageable neighbor. The stability came, however, with a horrid price tag. In practice, Russia was approaching a one-party system: the president had “a downright frighteningly free hand” within the limits that “the unreliable Russian bureaucratic machinery and its relative weakness” had granted to him (E 9.12.2003).

### Friends with Benefits?

Cooperation with Russia was deemed as necessary, yet due to the fact that it had “not been able to create a social order that would be capable for cooperation” in North-West Russia, which was in serious need of foreign investment, the “countless possible areas of progress” could not be materialized. It was seen that problems (criminality, spread of drugs) could not be stopped with restrictions or at borders but would necessitate “favorable social development in countries of origin and transit” (OE 17.4.2003). Cooperation would, however, allow Europe to “do a lot to shape Russia’s, and thus also its own, future” (OE 2.6.2003). This

did not mean that the EU should have promised Russia membership but that Russia should rather be tied to a European wide integrative region now that it has shown interest in cooperation. Those shaping European policy-making, it was suggested, should not just wait for the Russian move but answer the strategic question of what they want from Russia – and act accordingly:

Europe could, of course, suppress the interaction with Russia to a minimum: to buy "gas with sausages" and try to protect the "Fortress Europe" from the soft security threats sprouting from the Russian soil. Nice looking little cooperation projects can still provide the basis for a diplomatic rhetoric. Superficially, the strategy looks right. The problem is that it follows largely the line of unsuccessful attempts of the 1990s. Much more promising solution would be to try to help Russia to complete its transformation and elevate this as the most important goal of EU policy.... The European project is not complete without a renewed and united Russia. (OE 2.6.2003)

Such assurance spread also to the letters, which had typically been more reserved towards Russia and preferred to see it as a threat. An exceptionally large number of letters highlighted the positive aspects of having Russia as a neighbor. The remigration of Finns from the former Soviet Union, which began in 1990, had so far already brought more than 30,000 people with their families to Finland. The negative publicity that this group, often stigmatized as '*ryssä*,' received was seen as having been unreasonable. Instead, the fact of the matter was "there has never been such a large number of well-educated crowd of experts who know Russia thoroughly" in the country, and Finland would do itself a favor should the skills of these remigrants be utilized effectively. (L 27.4.2003.) It was also asserted that there were "countless reasons to recognize the Russian language and culture as part of the past and the present reality in our country" and that "exercising anti-Russian propaganda fits poorly in the world situation and the state of affairs" (HS 24.5.2003).

Although there were opinions also to the contrary, some suggested that a united and strong Europe, including Russia, would in principle be "the only hope for peaceful development in the world" (L 18.7.2003). The "irreversible process" of European integration was depicted as being necessary to prevent the "accelerating cycle of violence" caused by the United States' "neoconservative leadership." It was seen that *when* the EU evolved into a "political, economic and cultural community covering the entire Europe, including Russia," it would be strong enough to stop US domination (ibid.)

In addition, Europe was seen to need Russia because of its "fundamentally European culture, the vast natural resources and educated population." "Europe enriched with Russia" could thus "lead the world into a peaceful and prosperous future." (L 18.7.2003.) In contrast, according to an alternative way of thought the world political situation could change quickly and Finns should be prepare themselves and rethink the NATO option for "one day in the future

Russia will again become a superpower, which exerts self-conscious policies towards its neighbors" (L 7.11.2003). It was maintained that the security threat had not disappeared, and even though relations with Russia were decent for now, no one could guarantee that they would remain so indefinitely. The bottom line was that Finns ought not to forget the "miracle of the Winter War" and subsequent constant Soviet pressure (L 28.11.2003) but they should instead know better and join NATO when it was still possible – after all, geography had still not changed (HS 29.12.2003).

According to an expert analysis, the debate on Finnish security policy had run aground on outdated threat scenarios (HS 22.12.2003). It was seen that Finland continued to position itself as if the East-West division was still in effect by adhering to strict border policy and being reclusive vis-à-vis Russia. The West no longer existed in the sense that Finland presumed it did (ibid.). Instead, it was advised, Finland – and Europe as whole – should view Russia in the frame of the North-South axis, as a potential source of security and a part of the transatlantic cooperation structure (OE 2.6.2003).

The EU-Russia Summit held in St Petersburg, Russia in May 2003 was regarded as President Putin's opportunity to show the leaders of the West and the whole world that Russia wished to be part of Europe. The fact that Putin had indeed managed to gather such a large group of heads of state and prime ministers to St. Petersburg indicated that the feelings were mutual. In an interview already prior to the presidential elections, President Putin had stressed that despite its multifacetedness Russia belonged mentally to the scope of the Western European culture and would continue to strive to remain in that frame (OE 3.6.2003). Accordingly, in his annual State-of-the-Nation address to the Federal Assembly in the Kremlin on May 16, 2003, Putin declared one of the major elements of Russia's foreign policy to be "the broad rapprochement and real integration with Europe" and while this was bound to be "a complicated and long process," it was Russia's "historical choice."

In Finland, the declared objectives were deemed to be correct but unrealistic as Putin was seen as lacking either "the means or the courage to implement them" (OE 3.6.2003). It was underlined that Russia was still "dominated by the Post-Soviet declaration culture" in which the adoption of a program was more important than its implementation (OE 2.6.2003). The same, however, could have been said about the EU, at least on the grounds of President of the European Commission Romano Prodi's assurance that Russia and Europe belong together like vodka and caviar. In this spirit, the EU and Russia agreed to reinforce their cooperation by creating four "common spaces" on the basis of common values and shared interests as means to integrate Russia into Wider Europe. This was a clear sign that, on the general level, the EU wished to understand Russia's convergence efforts and saw also obvious benefits in the process.

On a practical level, the EU saw a lot more obstacles than what Russia was able to appreciate. The same applied to Finnish-Russian bilateral relations. As explained by Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja in his address at the Finnish Embassy in Moscow in February 2003, the relations were:

...better today than what they have ever been. The birth of a new Russia has opened our long border, which had been closed for over 70 years. There are no political problems between our countries, but all the more practical difficulties.

Some of these were fairly harmless, but not all. EU membership had given Finland firm backing in its relations with Russia, but it was also seen to create problems (OE 9.2.2003). Being at the time the only EU neighbor of Russia, Finland was afraid of ending up stuck between a rock and a hard place if the other EU countries wished to give in to Russia's call for the abolition of the visa regime. Finland and many other EU countries considered the visa freedom advocated by Putin to be very premature, even though this had to be read between the lines of the polite statements of statespersons. In the Summit's press conference, Finnish President Halonen rejected Putin's proposal firmly but in a rather embellished manner by explaining that Finland's official view on visa-free travel between the two states was "cautiously optimistic" and that "visa-free travel would require a huge number of measures from Russia and also the EU should define its opinion before such an arrangement could be formally discussed" (HS Int. Edit. 2.6.2003). Not everyone, however, supported the visa requirements, for it was seen to not only prevent impulsive forms of interaction, obstruct cross-border interaction among ordinary people, and stall "the birth of a normal civil society" in the neighboring areas but also reduce the revenue that Finland could gain from tourism (L 22.9.2003).

Whereas on the governmental level Finnish-Russian relations were excellent and both sides had expressed a willingness to continue developing the relations favorably, behind the "diplomatic façade of Moscow" glimpses of the official circles' informal irritation with Finnish foreign policy could, however, be caught (E 12.6.2003). Finland was criticized for its "worsened attitude" towards Russia and for being the most steadfast of the EU countries in rejecting Russia's hopes of visa-free travel by interpreting the Schengen Agreement "arbitrarily" at its own borders. Finland, however, had a "natural explanation" to these accusations. Being an immediate neighbor and the only EU country with a common border with Russia, Finland was understood as being familiar with the problems that would ensue by renouncing the visa requirement in "a completely different way than someone like Greece or Italy" (E 12.6.2003). This was to suggest that the geographical proximity continued to matter and that Russia simply tended to seem more European the further away one located from it.

## Mixed Signals: Rhetoric vs. Practice

By 2005, relations with Russia had turned colder, and the blame for this was put mainly on Russia's shoulders. The earlier positive efforts of Russia's foreign policy had turned negative (OE 3.3.2005). Its actions in particular towards the Baltic countries were deemed as inconsistent with the EU-Russian strategic partnership and its objectives. The reason for this was sought in the essence of Russia. Western values, it was suggested, make Russians feel anxiety, and the belief that the Western civilization would be a threat to the Russian civilization had rooted deep. It was further seen that Russia's current government had sought to actively maintain the belief that Russia was entitled to an Empire with a security buffer created by obedient neighboring countries (OE 6.1.2005).

Internally, the 2004 enlargement of the EU ignited a fight between political camps about the future of the Northern Dimension. A group of social-democratic europarlamentarians (MEPs) was of the opinion that EU-Russian relations had moved from the donor-recipient relationship of the last decade to real and equal partnership (L 8.3.2005). They saw that the ND had served as a useful cage for regional cooperation between citizens and various communities across the EU's external border. It provided well-needed glue that held the numerous individual projects, actors, and targets together. It had thus become of significant importance to regional security, prosperity, and stability (ibid.).

A group of MEPs from the National Coalition Party, in turn, saw that the powder of ND had not ignited. Rather the initiative had remained small-scale business when compared, say, to the EU's Mediterranean strategy <sup>64</sup> (L 14.3.2005). They reminded the public that the ND had been born into a very confusing and institutionally overlapping post-Cold War environment and that it had ever since then been merely "synonymous with environmental partnership with Russia." In practice, they claimed, it had neither succeeded in engaging the EU's attention to the north nor had it created added value to the other projects and forums with their own arrangements in the region. Instead, the "jumble of Northern European cooperation" was still as much all over the place as it had been in 1999. A new concept, Baltic Sea strategy, could move things along by engaging actors in pragmatic forms of cooperation around "the most natural unifying factor" there was, the Baltic Sea. (Ibid.)

Following the fifteenth EU-Russia Summit, which took place in Moscow on May 10, 2005, the debate turned even more to EU-Russia relations. At the Summit, the EU and Russia reached an understanding that they would improve their cooperation. In order to give more concrete content to the long term Common Spaces agreed upon at the earlier Summit in 2003, the leaders of the EU and Russia now adopted a single package of medium-term road maps as a

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<sup>64</sup> Reportedly, there had been about 200 million, less than four per cent of the Mediterranean financing, in use.

sort of outline of the areas which needed to be intensified as well as how to make these objectives a reality.

The editorial of May 12, 2005 was, however, quick to point out the obvious. By its tone, it was assessed, a 'roadmap' was a too specific a word to describe the agreement, which was little more than a list of common interests. Even though the agreement was critiqued as lacking any concrete advances, it was acknowledged that it presented a step in the right direction: it was seen as recognition of the fact that Russia and the EU needed each other and that they had many common interests that could be promoted only by way of closer collaboration. Furthermore, the agreements were taken as an indication that the EU was attempting to "speak with one voice with Russia" and that Russia would have to discuss with the Union per se instead of picking out only those member states that were "the most complaisant to its own pursuits." (E 12.5.2005.)

Paavo Väyrynen, a veteran politician of the Centre Party and then Member of European Parliament, was more pessimistic and put forth that EU-Russia relations have plenty of problems to which the new arrangement was not going to have any noticeable effect (OE 14.5.2005). In his view, the core of the problems lay in the fact that both parties were at a crossroads, looking for their identity and lacking a clear vision of the future of Europe:

Russia does not know whether it belongs clearly in Europe or whether it should it be an emphatically Eurasian country. It has not yet internalized the very essence of democracy. In turn, the EU does not know whether to develop into a pan-European union of countries or to strive towards a small-European federal state. Both Russia and the EU behave like a superpower. (OE 14.5.2005)

Based on his experience, Väyrynen noted that in International politics great powers tend to prefer bilateral solutions; multilateral cooperation is favored only if they are able to manage and control it. This, Väyrynen suggested, was also the reason why Russia did not want to be part of the ENP but preferred the special common areas; instead of accepting the EU as a legitimate geopolitical player, it had become apparent that Russia wanted to maintain close bilateral cooperation between individual EU member states, especially the major ones. (OE 14.5.2005.)

Väyrynen criticized the EU for scolding Russia, for attempting to maintain its own spheres of influence in the territory of the former Soviet Union while at the same time the Union itself strove as a superpower to expand its influence in all directions. The EU, Väyrynen maintained, was characterized by a desire for bilateralism, which had become apparent in that multilateral European organizations are, on the one hand, downplayed but, on the other hand, also considered to be competitors that should not extend their operations into EU territory. (OE 14.5.2005.)



For these reasons, Väyrynen argued, it was clear that Russia had no interest in becoming a part of the EU, and more attention would have to be paid to alternative interpretations of Europe. Väyrynen saw that Russia was a part of Europe and, hence, further integration was natural, the democratization and Europeanization of Russia being proof of its willingness to integrate with the rest of Europe. Väyrynen suggested appropriately that integration did not require Russia to be a member of the EU, but that integration could also be promoted outside the EU. Instead of developing common bilateral areas of cooperation, Väyrynen proposed that the EU and Russia should make an effort to build a wider Europe through multilateral pan-European cooperation areas based on already existing and well functioning institutional structures: the Council of Europe and the OSCE:

We should develop the European Council into a European confederation, which would provide the main advantages of the integration immediately to all European countries. Russia would get a short cut to democratization and Europeanization, and it could affect the European development more than with its current policy. The whole of Europe would gain stability and strength, allowing the continent's position to be strengthened worldwide. (OE 14.5.2005)

Harry Helenius, the Finnish Ambassador in Moscow (cited in OE 1.6.2005), informed that Russia had only now begun to really understand what the EU actually was. Russia's leadership, he clarified, did not really even have an EU-strategy, it was just waiting to see what the EU would do. The EU surely knew how to set forth standards and criteria to Russia, but the time had come for it to realize that Russia was not seeking for EU membership and could thus not be subjected to the EU's pre-conditions and requirements the same way as the candidate countries could (OE 1.6.2005).

Ilkka Kanerva, Member and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament (National Coalition Party), in turn saw that Finland should renew its own Russian policy; being a small country, Finland could not wait for what the EU or the large EU member states would like to do with Russia (L 23.5.2005). He saw that the jointly drafted and recently signed Road Maps confirmed both the Russian desire to be part of Europe and the EU's ambition to keep Russia connected to Europe. The Road Maps were expected to give new momentum for the practical cooperation, but, as Kanerva assessed, their great principled importance lay in the fact that through them Russia would return to its long-term course: to "the desire to be a European state," which had been broken by the October Revolution (L 23.5.2005). However, given that the implementation of the Road Maps would take some time, Finland should not sit and wait but ought to formulate its own road map, a new Russia-strategy (L 23.5.2005).

Despite the changed circumstances and increased cooperation, it was maintained that the Finnish-Russian border must be carefully controlled also in

the future. As a borderland of the EU, Finland had great responsibility in controlling illegal immigration and transit flows (E 3.4.2005). The liturgy and modesty of the past had disappeared almost altogether from the manner in which Finnish-Russian relations are handled in public. Matters were reported, somewhat disconcertedly, as being discussed with their real names to an extent that it was necessary to ask, in which state relations between the countries actually were (OE 1.6.2005). On the other hand, this new realism meant that there were no more reasons to build barriers out of political tensions, but politician and CSOs alike should focus their efforts on the development of cooperation both at the level of people's everyday life and in the "larger circles" (E 22.8.2005).

For instance, Karelianism was deemed to be "alive and well," even if the state border would remain at its present location; after all it was claimed that Finns owned Karelia "spiritually" even if it would not be "a part of the Finnish state" (HS 23.8.2005). Also Pentti Hyttinen, Mayor of the Regional Council of North Karelia, attempted to go beyond the customary Karelia question and advocated that instead of painting threats, attention should be paid to raking the benefits of globalization, i.e., enlarged market-areas, reduction in the importance of borders, and growing importance of knowledge, as well as cultural enrichment and diversification (L 23.10.2005). According to Mr. Hyttinen, it was not irrelevant how Finns acted "in our own sandbox," the Republic of Karelia. After all, he saw that it was only "natural to begin eradicating poverty from our own yard." This, he saw, would lead to increased travel, exchange of ideas and knowledge, and make both sides more prosperous. (L 23.10.2005.)

Mr. Hyttinen was referring to Euregio Karelia, which had sought to build "spiritual bridges" between the regions as well as activate economic development on both sides of the border. Russia's lively economic growth had increased Finnish companies' interest in the neighboring areas, and some had already located their production or extended subcontracting beyond the border in search of competitive advantages. But as Hyttinen concluded, there was still plenty to discuss and develop. Interest in Russia had been slowed down in particular by uncertainty over the treatment of foreign investments. Also, many other operational preconditions for business were still very fragile. Customs and border formalities continued to cause extra friction and logistics, as a key prerequisite for business growth, also posed a major development challenge. Likewise, data connections lagged behind. All in all, Hyttinen summarized, it was particularly unfortunate that more open borders did not only enable positive cross-border innovations but also invited unwanted interaction, such as systematic criminality and drug trafficking. (L 23.10.2005.)

Despite these practical problems, the Finnish-Russian "special relations" formed a better basis for interaction than working through Brussels would (OE 24.8.2005). Even though talks about good neighboring relations with Russia sounded like the liturgy of bygone days, it was argued that with the exception of

Finland and Norway there were “almost nothing but bad news for Russia from the Western Front.” Thus, out of Russia’s western neighbors, Finland had once again become the one with whom relations were in order with every respect; Finland had never caused problems for Russia and had been trying to understand it even when it had been difficult. For this reason, it was deduced that President Putin must understand that “Finland could not be classified in any ‘russophobic bloc’ of the new EU member states,” but that it belonged among the old member states, which had a genuine interest to promote the EU-Russia relations in every way. The perceived reason why Russia had failed to show this trust and instead had kept on causing problems continually (such as repeatedly violating Finnish air space) had to do with the fact that “[u]nfortunately, in Russia, the left hand often does not seem to know what the right hand is doing” (OE 24.8.2005).

In either case, Russia was once again emerging as Finland's largest trading partner and it was seen to offer immense opportunities not just for trade but also for other forms of cooperation (OE 25.9.2005). However, the problem of seizing them, it was admitted, derived from the Finnish side. While for the younger generation Russia was “no longer that superpower neighbor, with whom one had to try to get by” and older generations’ image was often “colored by attitudinal stereotypes” (OE 25.9.2005). While it was acknowledged that these attitudes had their understandable history, it was seen that they should be let go for they were often out of date or simply incorrect and served only to whitewash the fact that the Finnish understanding of today’s Russia was lacking. Granted that the inter-state relations were managed well, tepid personal interest was blamed for having caused Finns to lose a part of their privileged vantage point onto Russia. The lack of interest was regarded as particularly vexing because one of Finland’s assets had traditionally been the “ability to understand the ‘Russian soul’ better than many other countries” (OE 25.9.2005). The experience gained during the past decades was thus seen to be slipping into the sand as a blind eye was being turned to these new possibilities.

In all, it was largely agreed that EU membership had brought a new impetus for Finland to take care of its external economic relations but that this should not be done at the expense of bilateral relations with Russia. Faith in Russia’s ability and willingness to adhere to EU requirements and nurture the model Western democracy lived on (L 16.12.2005), but the manner in which Russia was addressed began to show maturation. More (neo-) realist arguments could be used in public without fear of being labeled as Russophobic. It was suggested that the current columnists, “these prisoners of the past,” should be changed and “replaced by young Finnish and Russian columnists” (L 19.1.2006) who did not necessarily share the emotional load which would have prevented them from writing about this with their real names. In addition to having credible national military forces, it was suggested, the best preventive defense work

would be to increase inter-cultural exchange and free movement of citizens in every possible way (L 30.12.2005).

This was, however, easier said than done as “the Soviet-era queuing culture” was going through a renaissance at the border (L 27.4.2006). The “age-old play” at the crossing points continued (L 24.4.2006) because the Russian government came constantly up with a variety of unfounded fees or unnecessary regulations and bureaucracy that tangled border traffic and involved additional costs (E 23.4.2006). This manifested itself as a frustration in the writings:

Reportedly we are good friends. The unbroken flow of assistance still continues from Finland to Russian Karelia. With the help of huge financial support from Finland and the EU, new, modern buildings and facilities have been built for the Russian customs. Apparently, we have also significantly funded the training of the customs staff at the eastern border. It is paradoxical to have to be subjugated to constant tyrannization after such a friendly gesture. (L 1.5.2006)

As the truck queues at the border grew only longer and chaos worsened (E 11.11.2006), it was seen that the border had become a chaotic place, exposing the people close to the border to danger (L 15.11.2006.). It was argued that the wanton border management was the Russian authorities’ deliberate attempt to wag Finnish internal security (ibid.).

Russia’s intimidating actions over natural gas might against Ukraine were taken as an indication that Russia was trying to maximize its influence in *all* surrounding areas (OE 10.1.2006). In contrast, the “growing and stabilizing” markets behind the border had made Russia more tempting for Finnish entrepreneurs and companies (E 7.1.2006) and the market's optimism was so strong that as long as Russia was sufficiently stable and its economy growing, its internal political developments remained secondary. While investing in Russia came with “many real and imaginary disincentives” (E 20.4.2006), from the lack of legislation to corruption (E 7.1.2006), it was seen that with patience and hard work the related risk could, however, pay off. Finland could hardly afford to miss such an opportunity and should now at last start to make use of its advantageous geographical location.

If, however, Europe really wished to create a genuine strategic partnership with Russia, those difficult topics could not be ignored (OE 12.1.2006). Even though the roadmaps had been agreed upon, they were also seen to present a major problem. It was suggested that they had gone unrealized not because solutions to key issues had not been found but rather because in practice the EU had “moved the most difficult puzzles to the distant future, or even swept them under the carpet altogether.” Instead, it was argued, the once broad and diverse EU-Russian agenda now focused only on one aspect: energy. Such a development was seen to be detrimental to Russia because it only maintained the illusion that, as an “energy superpower,” Russia could respond to the

economic and security challenges of the 2000s alone and boosted the temptation to invoke energy superiority to its favor in Russia's relations with its neighbors. (Ibid.) This only confirmed that Finland should not hide behind Brussels but rather nurture its bilateral relations with Russia as well.

In order to do so, it was, however, necessary to speak openly about the nature of these relations. Admiral Juhani Kaskeala, the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Armed Forces, was the first one to assess the situation. During his visit to the United States, Admiral Kaskeala took an unusually outspoken political stance by commenting on the state of democracy in Russia. He saw that the situation could change "overnight" because all the strings were now in the hands of President Putin. Hence, there was more reason to be concerned about political developments in Russia than over reports that Russia had been increasing its military presence near the Finnish border. (HS 7.3.2006.)

Either way, what was most illuminating was the nature of the reactions to Kaskeala's statements. For instance, Defense Minister Seppo Kääriäinen (Centre Party) first rushed to distance himself from these statements by saying that, at least according to his knowledge, there was nothing that would raise concerns about developments in Russia but then readjusted his stance by emphasizing in a traditional manner that the relations between Finland and Russia were in good shape and should be kept that way. He also rectified that Kaskeala's statement had been "well in line" with the 2004 security policy report and reminded that Finland affords freedom of speech (HS Int. Edit. 27.2.2006; L 18.3.2006). In the letters, the discussion focused on the position of Kaskeala, that of Finland, and on the nature and quality of the Finnish debate on Russia in more general terms. *Helsingin Sanomat* itself took Kaskeala's side by stating that he had set a good example on how important it was to follow the developments in Russia with open eyes, discuss it openly, and rectify false information and conclusions (E 9.3.2006).

Some saw that the whole debate sparked by Kaskeala's statement resembled a farce and served only to indicate that Finns in general did not have a terribly realistic view of contemporary Russia (L 18.3.2006). The problem was not the debate on Russia taking place in Finland but rather the lack thereof. Given the general consensus that the future of Russia would be of vital importance to Finland, "[w]e should have the right to express our concern about the Russian development without the irrational fear that the sky will fall on us" (L 18.3.2006). After all, the pragmatism, even sympathy, of the Finnish approach to Russia, it was believed, might open up the opportunity for Finns to do their part to influence the development of Russia's in a constructive way:

The best Russia policy would to be an honest partner: not to claim black to be white or not open one's mouth about problems, but at the same time be ready to cooperate with the Russians... Russians do not need the Finns' kowtowing and trepidation, but a reliable partner with broad understanding of Russia. (L 18.3.2006)

Others, however, questioned whether Finland would really be able to help Russia. The problem, it was corrected, stemmed not from a lack realist debate but rather from the lack of a coherent message and Finns' tendency to "reconfirm the elements in the neighbor, which should be let go" (L 26.3.2006).

From an IR perspective, Russia's main problem was seen to be that it had gotten stuck in the classical concepts of political power. Instead of advancing from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, it had rather returned to the nineteenth century. According to this view, Russia must have felt that it had to continue to tussle for power with other counterparts that were trying to weaken it by destabilizing the 'balance' and by narrowing its 'sphere of influence.' As the Russian way to 'real Europe' was blocked, its only choice was to anchor itself in the past, to classical Europe and return to the conception that in fact it was Russia that represented genuine Europe. (L 26.3.2006.)

It was seen that Finland was more sympathetic than most, but as a small state it still had to face all the dangers of the power political world. From the Russian angle, Finnish talks about security guarantees, EU packing, NATO options, territorial defense, and the inviolability of borders, as well as the need to maintain conscription and to preserve land mines were completely rational and understandable as this was exactly the kind of speech Russia needed to hear in order to convince itself that it was also on the right track. As a consequence, from the Russian point of view, Finland was a European country much like Russia and "not European in such a 'wrong' way as the Baltic countries, characterized as half-fascist and as having sold their souls to Americanness." Finland could thus be regarded as a country that respected power in a healthy manner and could be considered an important partner of Russia's in nurturing the lessons of the past. This, it was deduced, could actually explain why Finland possessed trust capital and a good discussion relationship vis-à-vis Russia. (L 26.3.2006.)

### Tightening the Screws

In Finland it was seen that the "managed" or "Eastern" democracy policy of the Putin administration had led democratic development in Russia into a corner (OE 30.5.2005). The Kremlin had built a centralized system that had neither place for competing views nor for free public debate. The whole society in Russia had become more tightly controlled by the central government, which had forced civil society into a difficult position. The war in Chechnya and the "war on terror" were seen to narrow the scope of civil liberties and crumble democracy even further.

It was also seen that Putin's government could not, however, eliminate NGOs completely, even though it clearly relegated them to the sidelines. This was seen to be because Russia's political system had to, at least to some extent, give some semblance of a democracy if the country wished to maintain its place as part of the international community. Putin was seen to seek to use civil

society to his own benefit in pursuing his own political ends and in maintaining his support. (OE 30.5.2005.)

The plight of Russian NGOs was only increased by the fact that foreign aid had begun to decline rapidly as Western donors flinched in response to change in Russian state policy and were disappointed by the fact that the process of democratization had not progressed as hoped. The experts behind the writing saw that right now the Russian NGOs needed support more than ever before because the shutdown of international cooperation meant that the results gained so far in the democratization process of Russia would disappear into the sand. (OE 30.5.2005.)

Especially a lot had been gained through cooperation with grassroots NGOs. A good example of was the cooperation between Finnish and Russian NGOs that had already been going on for almost ten years with the support of the Russia-network of health and social welfare organizations. Through the network, corresponding organizations working on both sides of had entered into direct contact with each other and formed agreement on the objectives and practices of their work, in so doing producing a number of "success stories":

The organizations' partnership is not only about the fact that Finland "exports" or "teaches," but the process is a clearly two-way by its nature. Cooperation with Russian organizations has also helped the Finns to reflect in a new way upon their own actions and to see how things can be done differently. (OE 30.5.2005)

Thus, it was suggested, Finland should continue to support a practical partnership with the neighboring area cooperation funds. After all, "the organizations and activists participating in cooperation are often the best experts in creating and promoting the democratic rules of the game" (OE 30.5.2005). It was also understood that creating a democratic civic culture would take time and patience and that it was unrealistic to expect that the attitudes and practices would change overnight throughout entire Russia. Although the Russian civil society had developed greatly since the early 1990s, the number of NGOs could already be counted in hundreds of thousands, and the organizations had succeeded in building broader coalitions to drive their goals, their influence on the federal level was still regarded as still weak (OE 30.5.2005; E 26.7.2005; E 28.11.2005).

While there were apparent problems on the grand scale of things, locally the NGOs was seen to have an important role, for example in promoting the welfare of their own communities, in providing employment, producing services, and in helping the socially vulnerable groups. In some areas, such as southern Russia, human rights organizations especially had, however, become "the authorities' eyesore, even targets of downright persecution" (OE 30.5.2005).

In addition to mere civil society links, the Finnish experts called for cooperation between the government and NGOs. However, they were also

forced to admit that equal dialogue was difficult to create when the balance of power between the state and the civil society was evidently disproportionate and those in power had quite prejudiced attitudes toward NGOs. For these reasons, international cooperation, it was proposed, should aspire to:

...strengthen the position of Russian non-governmental organizations by helping them to promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for human development. Support to organizations in the current political situation is also particularly important because we must not leave alone those people who are building the basis of democracy and civil society in their own country at the level of everyday life. (OE 30.5.2005)

Things started to go from bad to worse in July 2005 when President Putin dictated strict rules of the game for the work of NGOs during a large roundtable with NGO representatives organized at the Kremlin (E 26.7.2005). Putin declared his willingness to encourage the NGO activities and admitted that the development of civil society was an integral part of a modern, democratic state. However, Putin specified that foreign funding of any political activity in the country should be placed under state control. "No self-respecting state will allow this, and we will not allow it," Putin asserted firmly.

The credibility of the statement was immediately questioned by the editorial of August 26, 2005, which reminded that in the past the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had funded the operations of more than one party in Finland with large sums of money, though not in public (E 26.7.2005). Putin's statement caused considerable confusion also in Russia, as the current law prohibited political parties from taking foreign election money but allowed support for operational expenses. The latter had indeed been done explicitly and openly. For example, the United States alone was reported as having channeled tens of millions of dollars (\$ 85 million in 2005) of assistance annually for the burgeoning civil society in Russia (E 26.7.2005; E 28.11.2005).

What was not reported in the HS was that during the roundtable, the idea of establishing a Civil G8 forum<sup>65</sup> and coordinating its activities with Russia's G8 presidency received Putin's backing. Given Putin's stand on foreign monetary and other forms of aid, his endorsement of the Civil G8 and, in particular, the involvement of Western organizations in its preparation phase was unexpected but could be interpreted to reflected Putin's pragmatic approach to relations with the West as well as his awareness of consultative mechanisms with civil society tied to intergovernmental organizations; i.e., to "show that Russia is a democratic country that treats NGOs with respect" (Lokshina 2006).

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<sup>65</sup> Civil G8-2006 forum was officially announced at a press conference on December 20, 2005 by Ella Pamfilova, who had been appointed by President Putin in early November as the chair of his Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights Council (formerly called the Commission of Human Rights).



In November 2005, the Duma began consideration of a draft NGO bill requiring everyone, including current NGOs, to register with the Ministry of Justice, banning the presence of branches departments or representative offices of foreign NGOs in Russia, e.g., Greenpeace or Amnesty International (forcing them to register as Russian organizations), forbidding foreigners from belonging to Russian-based NGOs and strengthening the auditing functions of the government to monitor, control, and restrict domestic and particularly foreign funding of NGOs (E 28.11.2005; Nichol 2006, 11). In the West, the bill was commonly interpreted to reflect the Putin administration's perception that foreign-based or funded NGOs had helped trigger "color revolutions" in Georgia and Ukraine and that NGOs could similarly try to subvert the government in Russia (Bigg 2005).

President Putin and State Duma officials said the proposed amendments to the NGO law were designed to counteract terrorism and money laundering. The most important reason seemed, however, to be foreign financial support, which was directed on supporting political activity – thought Putin had not made clear what he included in "political activity." In *Helsingin Sanomat* it was pointed out that this would not be limited to political parties as Putin had also taken, for example, environmental groups as his eyesore (E 28.11.2005). Environmental NGOs, according to him, had taken a stand against important projects for Russia's national interests, such as the construction of oil ports in the Baltic Sea or the Eastern Siberian oil pipeline and that this had been done with foreign financial support. Such statements, the editorial stated, show that Russia still has a long way to go towards a civil society, where free civic action with its international linkages is a matter of course. Accordingly, it was characteristic of the current state of democracy in Russia that although the bill was seen from Western perspectives as most dubious, it passed by an overwhelming majority (370 to 18) in its first reading in the Duma (E 28.11.2005; EurActiv 2005).

Harsh criticism of the draft NGO bill followed from both Russian and international NGOs but also by some U.S. officials, the Council of Europe, the EU Civil Society Contact Group, and EU politicians, as well as the media. President Putin, with the backing of numerous Public Chamber members, then suggested some changes to soften the draft (EurActiv 2005; Nichol 2006, 11). The new version of the bill "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation" permitted foreign NGOs to operate in Russia under the condition that they submitted regular reports of their funding and programs, which could then be reviewed against Russian interests. In the second reading in the Duma, the bill was approved and signed into law in December 2005 and scheduled to enter into force in April 2006.

The fact that the new NGO law was so easily passed in the Duma was taken as a clear indication of the Kremlin's phobia of revolution (OE 5.2.2006). The color revolution had put the decision makers on their toes, which – despite the concession made in the revised law – in turn put the Russian non-governmental

organizations in a tight spot. It was appropriately stipulated that such a development of strangulation should also cause concerns in Finland (OE 5.2.2006).

It was put forth that the 'managed democracy' and the 'vertical of power' pursued by President Putin clashed with the philosophy of Russian NGOs. Many NGO representatives emphasized that they had no interest in revolution but that they rather worked to the benefit of the most vulnerable groups of people seeking, in so doing, solutions to painful problems related to social security, health care and education, which were not taken care of by the government. It was reminded that the economic importance of associational activity was well understood in the Russian Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, which was also the only government sector to take issue against the new law (OE 5.2.2006).

Russian NGOs stressed that the realization of the law would require significant financial investments and more administrative staff from the state. Furthermore, the law was also in conflict with the Russian Constitution, international law, and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. For many, the most disturbing aspect of the law was, however, its vagueness (OE 5.2.2006). The criteria had been left so vague that in practice civil servants – or the Kremlin – was free to decide who was authorized and who was not (OE 5.3.2006). The apparent room for interpretation subjected the NGOs to authorities' arbitrariness by allowing them to terminate any organization, or deny its registration, if it threatened, in their view, the Russian "national interests" with its "political activities" (OE 5.2.2006).

The new NGO Law was feared to impede cooperation between Russian and Western NGOs, as in addition to human rights and environmental organizations also many socially oriented organizations were heavily dependent on Western funding. In some cases, a Russia organization had been almost solely relying on foreign funds, the termination of which thus threatened to close down the organization altogether. Even though NGOs were forced into a tight spot, a glimpse of hope was seen in the situation (OE 5.2.2006). It was explained that in some Russian regions, such as in St. Petersburg and Perm, successful cooperation had developed between the government and NGOs in the last ten years. It was, however, feared that the enforcement of the law could compromise also this cooperation. As a result, it was depicted, some NGOs were doomed to close down, whereas some could be forced underground, similar to the Soviet era, in order to avoid regulatory control – putting independent and voluntary civil action was thus at risk. (OE 5.2.2006; cf. OE 5.3.2006.)

Pettiness and paranoia had become Putin's trademarks and the present atmosphere in Russia recalled the stagnation of the Leonid Brezhnev era (OE 5.3.2006). The Kremlin had already taken control over radio and television stations as well as the Parliament and provincial governors; only the oligarchs and the judiciary were on the loose for the time being. Now Putin was attacking

NGOs, even though they were weak and he himself in his prime. The reason for this was seen to be that the NGOs could be seen as the last islands of independence – and that Putin seemed confident the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was exploiting them to threaten his power. For some, however, the situation provided to be an awkward transition to economic matters:

...the development that is taking place in Russia regarding civic organization and human rights issues, and that we are so horrified about, is probably only good for Finland. The Russians' rapidly increased prosperity may well bring well-being to us as well. When it appears to fall upon areas which do not appear to develop on their own, what is the harm in that, if the Russians come and do it? (L 12.2.2006)

The argument that the author was going after was that the “direction of the neighboring area cooperation is changing,” because due to the proximity of Russia and the attractiveness of Finland as a safe and incorrupt country could bring more entrepreneurs and capital not just to Russian border areas but also to the Finnish side. Nevertheless, it was clear that the “managed” democracy policy of the Putin's administration had forced the democratic development in Russia into a corner:

History is unlikely to remember Putin for being a catalyst of Russia's democratic development, a builder of a constitutional state and civil society, even though those were the goals he set for himself at the beginning of his term. Putin has neither been able to do anything about the eternal scourge, corruption.... The list of major disadvantages of the country could be continued for long. (OE 2.4.2006)

### **5.2.5 New Realism: Russia as a Contradictory Neighbor, but a Necessary Partner**

The honeymoon between Russia and the Western democracies was heralded as being over (E 1.5.2006) when a new kind of hardness appeared in Russia's foreign policy agenda. It was seen that Putin was deliberately taking Russia ever further from the ideals of Western democracy and the Western market economy based on private ownership. This was reflected in Russian foreign policy, which had been getting an increasingly self-conscious make-up and now picked its goals in confined manner from a national perspective. In Finland, the strengthening of Russia was followed disconcertedly.

While it was clear that the change was based on an increase in energy prices, which in turn had strengthened Russia's financial room to maneuver, Russia's foreign policy was, however, seen as being “reminiscent of a consumer, who goes shopping without deciding what he really wants to buy” (E 1.5.2006). Consequently, there was an apparent risk that Russia could be “becoming a

great power, without the idea of the state, a good partner and a threatening problem simultaneously or alternately, always depending on the current market trends change" (ibid.).

In addition to a more assertive foreign policy line, the internal developments in Russia were also followed anxiously. In his annual speech on television, President Putin had defined worrying demographic (instead of democratic!) development as the most urgent problem of modern Russia (E 11.5.2006), which was interpreted to tell a lot about the priorities of the leadership (E 8.6.2006). Putin had been vowing in the name of democracy, but his views on its development in Russia were blamed to be a "vision of an enlightened autocrat" (E 5.6.2006). Whereas in the beginning of Yeltsin's term a democratic euphoria was burgeoning in Russia, during the Putin presidency, it was explained, democracy was not allowed to evolve from the bottom up and must be controlled in an autocratic manner from above (E 5.6.2006).

As Finland's six-month EU presidential term neared, the discussion turned to what ought to be done with this opportunity. There was a long list of issues, which had to be either agreed upon or at least discussed. There were, however, also issues that would not be handled formally in the meetings. Geography and history divided Europe in two; relations with Russia – or attitudes towards Russia – separated Eastern and Western states from one another (OE 28.6.2006). It was clear that Russian relations would be a challenge for Finnish presidency, but it was also the topic to which Finland had the most to contribute. Russia's importance had all the while increased on the EU's agenda, and even if increasingly self-confident, it had to be persuaded to commit genuinely European cooperation somehow. However, when compared to the festive mood of exactly seven years ago when Finland began its first presidency of the EU, the mood was now different. While back then:

...officials had uttered French verbs in unison and learned about the working group management strategies. Flags flapped, ties were selected and willow grouse's breast was roasted while waiting for the important EU visitors. Finland was very much ready to take Europe to the new millennium. (E 1.7.2006)

Now the public interest in the six-month period was diluted. For Finland, the EU had become already business as usual. However, while during the previous Finnish presidency the construction of Russian relations had come to a halt due to the tension surrounding the war in Chechnya, Finland now had a second chance to build more coherent, trust-based relations with Russia. (E 1.7.2006.)

It was suggested that Russia had to be dealt with as it was, and "not as one would ideally wish it to be" (OE 7.7.2006). No one could deny that Russia had oil, gas, influence, a growing market, and its own will. While it thus was "too big and too self-aware to be influenced much by nagging," there was no reason to accept its self-characterizations. After all, from their Soviet-era experience, if

anyone Finns should know how easily courtesy, self-indulgence, and opportunism can change into self-deception. This was to suggest that while in the West many still wished to believe that Russia's road to democracy was a mere question of time and learning, during President Putin's second term in office, Russia had not been "lingering on the road to democracy," but rather "hurrying up on its way out from there." (OE 7.7.2006.)

For ordinary Finns, Finnish-Russian relations had become a constant cause of irritation (OE 27.8.2006). Although the relationship between the two countries was officially in better shape than ever, trade was soaring and Russians' overnight stays in Finland increasing, sparks were downright flying because forest fires in Russia had brought smoke and fine particles across the border to Finland. Calculations on how much Finnish mortality and health expenditure would increase due to the fires were presented and people appeared particularly upset by the fact that the Russian authorities were not, in their view, doing anything to extinguish the flames.

It became apparent that the times of shushing were certainly over in Finland. While Finns were sweating over the EURO-4 emissions and catalytic converters, Russia, it was accused, had a cavalier attitude towards environmental protection (E 16.8.2006). This was seen to indicate a bad attitude problem – "pure ignorance and laziness," which was only made worse by a kind of crooked pride that a superpower did not need or accept help. It was seen that cooperation should be easier and Russia should "wake up and realize" that environmental issues were common and neighboring countries had to be able to cooperate "without the simple-minded sense of national pride" (E 16.8.2006).

However, whereas it was certainly a positive development that the things could be openly criticized and discussed with Russia, it was noted that it was a shame that "nasty and dismissive generalizations" have been made about the next-door neighbor (OE 27.8.2006). The attempt to cool off the debate remained, however, somewhat superficial and came with an undertone that, if anything, served to reconfirm the normative difference between the two countries:

Finland and Russia are separated by the Europe's deepest gap in living standards. People in the Nordic welfare states live in a completely different world than Russia and the Russians. In Finland, the basics issues are generally speaking in good condition and people have moved in some way to a fine-tuning phase of living... In Russia, a new start for the former social system and the ruins of the imperial empire is being sought. Now, an attempt to erect the pillars of a new social system is being made. Everything else remains to be done. (OE 27.8.2006)

In the end, the crux of the matter was that there was no common understanding of the problem. Whereas in Finland the fires were seen as a severe public health issue and fine particle invasion, in Russia the fires ranked as only one of the many daily life issues of a large country. The public health aspect of it was

hardly even more recognized, and if it were, there were a number of more pressing challenges to deal with (OE 27.8.2006). Nevertheless, the fact that Russia paid off, well in advance, its more than \$ 20 billion debt to the Paris Club countries, Finland among them, but could not afford to allocate resources to put out the forest fires made Russia seem duplicitous, pretending “to be poor at one time and rich at another” (E 27.8.2006).

A more pressing question had to do with instability and downright vigilantism in Russia. The murder of Anna Politkovskaya, a Russian journalist and human rights activist, was taken to reflect the state of Russian society and seen as yet another indictment of what a desolately long way Russia was facing on the road towards stable democracy and freedom of speech (E 10.10.2006; L 10.10.2006). The murder and how it was dealt with cast a dark shadow over Russia and aroused both grief and consternation in the letters. The uproar caused by the murder came in an inconvenient time for Finland as the EU Summit in Lahti was only ten days away and it was feared that the topical issue would downplay the agreed program. The Finnish government was even criticized for having invited President Putin to the meeting (E 20.10.2006).

At the same time as the Summit, more than 300 civil society actors from across Russia and EU countries gathered in “Together for the Future” Forum to discuss the future forms and opportunities for EU-Russian cooperation at the level of civil society. This was seen as desperately needed given that the EU regarded Russia as a strategic partner and genuine partnership presupposed active contacts also at the civil society level. CSOs had already developed networks to a certain point within the Barents and Baltic Sea regions, but within the EU there had not been meetings in which civil society actors with connections to Russia could have discussed together with Russian actors questions of networking as well as the development of cooperation.

In the actual Summit, Russia had to face a more coherent Union. While before various EU member states had been seeking compromises by communicating directly with Moscow, as was preferred also by Russia, the situation was now different. Politkovskaya’s murder and other events that had revealed the rise of human rights violations in Russia, as well as the authoritarian power politics illustrated by the events at the Georgian-Russian border, drove the member states in one row and cemented unity amongst them. The situation was new also for Putin: at this time he had to face the EU, which told its criticisms of these events and its desire to build a common energy policy for the Union with one voice. From the Finnish perspective, it was a great benefit that this voice was that of Finland and that there was enough courage to raise it. (E 22.10.2006.)

An entirely different matter, of course, was whether the EU’s unity would withstand and how Putin would react to the Western criticisms. Even though the EU set itself up as united in front of Russia in Lahti, there were doubts whether this would endure a real test (E 24.10.2006). There was a general

consensus that Russia's progress towards democracy had been painfully slow and not at all straightforward, and this should not and could not be ignored in Finland or anywhere else in Europe. While these setbacks formed yet another good reason to treat Russia with caution and to maintain distance (OE 26.10.2006), at the same time the economic interdependence between EU and Russia had only strengthened. It was thus argued that Russia's democratic development should not be made into the threshold question that would overshadow everything else on the EU-Russian agenda. Keeping Russia's democratic development "flamboyantly on view in the meetings between the EU and Russia" was seen to be merely "a publicity game of politicians," something that was talked about in the public but not at the negotiating table (OE 26.10.2006).

In Finland, the alarming developments in Russia caused Janne Virkkunen, the then HS Editor-in-Chief, to announce his and his newspaper's support for Finnish membership in NATO. Virkkunen based his stand on a traditional geographical argument and put forth that while it was true that Finland, Sweden, and Austria are colored with the same crayon on the political map of Europe, demarking them as neutral countries that also joined the EU on the same day but had not sought to join NATO, Finland alone shared a common border with Russia. Accordingly, only Finland would be directly threatened should things go wrong in Russia (OE 28.10.2006).

To make things worse, less than a month from the EU Summit in Lahti, the unity of the EU had already begun to crack (E 14.11.2006). The "we-spirit" that Matti Vanhanen (Centre Party), Prime Minister of Finland at the time, had heralded as having been found in Lahti was now on a thin ice as particularly Poland and the Baltic countries had become far more critical of Russia than the rest of the member states. It was acknowledged it to be futile to try to whitewash the fact that the member states, Finland included, had many questions needing to be negotiated bilaterally (E 23.11.2006). This meant that the perfunctory smiles had been doled out and what happened in Lahti also stayed in Lahti.

As a result, the accomplishments of the official Helsinki EU-Russia Summit remained slim. While little was expected from the summit, even less was there to remember about it. At a press conference of the Summit, both sides nevertheless reassured the public that the meeting had been important and that the prospects of Russia-EU relations remained bright (OE 19.12.2006). Much more the leaders in that situation were not able to say. What was positive about the Summit was that it was the first occasion in which the Northern Dimension policy was discussed at the top level (see subsection 4.5.4). The resultant revitalization of the policy was great news for Finland and it confirmed that relations with Russia had to be maintained at the top of Finland's political and economic agenda.

## Geography Remains – Expertize Does Not

Given that few other matters could have as tangible an effect on Finnish security and well-being as the social and economic transformations in Russia, the development of EU-Russia cooperation and the ability of Finland to understand and take advantage of these trends, it was seen that more attention had to be paid to these matters. In the government platform of the time, Russia was mentioned three times: in a vague sentence about foreign policy, in the context of the Northern Dimension, and in the transport section. This was deemed as insufficient for in addition to mere economic linkages, Russia provided a particularly great opportunity also in the fields of education, science and research, and culture. Furthermore, it provided also a skilled workforce. It was seen that common interests could be found in working towards the reliability of energy supply, environmental issues, security issues and threats, and opportunities of globalization. (L 16.1.2007.)

The Russia report<sup>66</sup> published by the Committee for the Future of the Parliament of Finland confirmed that the importance of Russia to Finland had been only growing and a good future for Russia was important for Finland as well (E 27.1.2007). It repeated the old message that even if everything else would change, geography would remain the same. The Paasikivian premise had endured and Russia continued to be Finland's neighbor – “[i]ts destiny has always influenced ours, and always will” (Kuusi, Smith & Tiihonen 2007, 7). In the letters in was concurred that the geography should not indeed be forgotten and Finns themselves should thus focus on getting along with Russia without major conflicts (L 14.2.2007). It was argued that the best and the safest way to do this would be to “continue and increase economic and cultural cooperation with Russia” (ibid.).

While the report was largely agreed upon, it ignited a debate on the poor Russian language skills of Finns and the young people's non-existent knowledge of Russia and lack of interest towards it. The old generations with their often transfixed attitudes were regarded as worrying too much about Russia, whereas the younger generations were blamed for not worrying enough (E 27.1.2007; L 3.2.2007; L 12.2.2007; L 14.2.2007). Lack of knowledge and/or interest was seen as problematic for in the EU – at least in its western part and in Brussels – Finns still enjoyed appreciation as “connoisseurs of Russia” (E 12.2.2007). While such a reputation was largely welcomed, it had to be acknowledged that Finns' expertise on Russia was on “an embarrassingly narrow base” and that “instead of really knowing Russia,” it merely referred to “an ability to get along with the great neighbor much better than many others” (E 12.2.2007).

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<sup>66</sup> In the report itself (see Kuusi, Smith & Tiihonen 2007), the experts of the Committee for the Future took boldly new paths in their effort to outline three different scenarios of Russia's future development during the upcoming ten years. These were titled as 1) Influential Global Player, 2) Mosaic Russia, and 3) Power Elite's Russia.



## Strategic Distrust

An op-ed published on February 16, 2007 aptly argued that two different types of logics were clearly pitted against each other. One of them was described as being mostly common sense-based, relying on the facts, while the other was depicted as being speculative, relying on hypothetical. Russia's Western partners were seen to believe in the former, while they were instinctively trying to banish the latter. The fact the little progress was made during the recent Helsinki Summit regarding the new Partnership Agreement was seen to reflect that the image of Russia had only continued to deteriorate in the West (OE 31.5.2007). It was considered as odd that the "strategic partners" could not even begin the negotiations on a new agreement (OE 16.2.2007).

The cooling of the atmosphere, it was argued, had been so consistent that it had to be considered as the Kremlin's conscious policy (E 28.4.2007). Putin had sent, inter alia, a chilly message that the Kremlin would not tolerate foreign influence in Russian CSOs, though there was little evidence that the activities of the organization supported from the West would have exceeded the limits of normal interaction. It was seen that during Putin's second term Russia's political system had diverged further and further away from the Western system, and the difference between the two in itself was now feeding the distrust (E 28.4.2007). Others saw that the ever-colder atmosphere had been caused not only by "a series of agitating individual incidents and concrete disputes, but also by a very deep mutual disappointment" (OE 30.5.2007).

Either way, "the Lahti spirit was lost" and "the gap between East-West grew" (E 17.5.2007). Now, six months from the Summit, it had become clear that Prime Minister Vanhanen had been either simply wrong or mistaken to sense the calm before the storm. Russia behaved ever more loutishly and attempted to poke the EU front in pieces. Thus, there was no longer a common we-spirit in relation to Russia; instead of talking with one voice, some of the countries asserted requirements on their own, others remained silent and the rest were at a loss for words. It was analyzed that from the Russian perspective the stalemate surrounding the new partnership agreement was not necessarily a negative thing as EU countries would have to buy gas and oil from Russia in any case (E 17.5.2007). In Finland, the dispute was seen to be absurd for both Russia and all the EU must have known that they were "doomed for cooperation" (E 17.5.2007). Even so, the way out of the stalemate was blocked because, no matter how necessary cooperation was, Putin did not have "the slightest intention to set up a faithful copy of Western constitutional democracy in Russia" and the EU would not accept Russia as an "equal partner without such a democracy" (OE 30.5.2007).

## Geography, Geography, Geography

In 2007, the traditional threatening image of Russia was reasserted by the Finnish Minister of Defense Jyri Häkämies' (National Coalition Party) speech

about Finland's security policy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC<sup>67</sup>. The speech, or rather a phrase the media picked up from it, led to a public uproar akin to which had not been experienced in a while. In its stinginess, the debate topped even that caused by Admiral Kaskeala's statement a year earlier (see above). In all, it revealed much about the underlying attitudes that Finns hold towards Russia.

Minister Håkämies stated that Finland was fortunate to be located in one of the safest corners of the world. This geographical location had, however, also its downsides. According to Håkämies, the three main security challenges "not only for Finland, but for all of us" were "Russia, Russia and Russia." Few had, however, read the entire speech but focused rather on this single sentence – thus taking it out of its context. Those who read further began to notice that in the second part of his speech Håkämies backtracked by saying that "it would be a foolish and mistaken conclusion to draw" that the new Russia would threaten Finland's security. This was "not the case."

Criticism was spearheaded by Foreign Minister Tuomioja (Social Democratic Party). His statement, however, lost some of its credibility for Tuomioja had indulged in distortion, a common sin in the Finnish Russia debate, by claiming that Håkämies had declared Russia to be a *threat* to Finland (OE 11.9.2007) while in fact Håkämies had evoked the word *challenge*. These two words were seen to have a completely different meaning. Tuomioja's wording – conscious or not – thus sounded like an attempt on his part to fuel already existing prejudices against Russia and fearful attitudes. Others blamed Håkämies for aggregating a normative anti-Russian alliance by stating that Russia was a challenge "for all of us" (OE 9.9.2007). As "us" was seen to include not just Finns but also Americans and apparently also all other countries that embraced Western democracy. Even though Håkämies' use of plain language was praised, his underlying analysis was seen to be incorrect; the national security challenges of Finland extended beyond a single large neighbor. (Ibid.)

The fuss caused by Håkämies' speech was suggested to indicate in a depressing manner how difficult it was to have an unrestrained foreign and security political debate in Finland:

In the bad old times people did not dare to say the king of the forest's name aloud, so a rich set of euphemisms was created instead. Now in the place of the word "bear," there is a word "Russia." To mention that of three times corresponds to three bears attacking the only horse of the village. (OE 11.9.2007)

The criticism towards Håkämies' outspokenness was seen to confirm that the rhetoric of Finlandization had rooted incredibly deep into the minds and

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<sup>67</sup> The original English language version available at [www.defmin.fi/index.phtml?663\\_m=3335&l=en&s=270](http://www.defmin.fi/index.phtml?663_m=3335&l=en&s=270)

backbones of Finns. It seemed that the fuss had given an excuse to dig out the “foreign political marking hatchets” from behind the woodshed, where they had been hidden well oiled (OE 11.9.2007). The hassle about a single sentence aside, Håkämies’ speech could be seen a rather clear articulation of Finland’s position, why it stuck to the areal defense and general conscription and why it was not a NATO member.

While the argument Håkämies had put forth was commonplace in the public debate in Finland, hearing it being said in such a formal situation was something new. Instead of evaluating the truthfulness of the statement, the public debate surrounding Håkämies’ assessment focused mainly, just as it had been the case with Admiral Kaskeala’s statements a year earlier, on whether or not it was suitable for the Finnish defense minister to say such things about Russia.

The perpetual fuss caused by the speech was also seen to suggest that the security political debate in Finland was still the chore of a small circle; even a single cleverly timed address could influence the topics and priorities of the debate for weeks (OE 1.10.2007). The NATO debate that had begun already in 1991 and had since then continued without substantial changes, confirming Russia as the eternal other, was a good example of this. It was argued that it was hardly worth marketing the NATO membership for Finns with the threat of Russia, or other negative arguments, as the support of NATO would not grow until the new generation politicians manage to communicate to the people that NATO was a normal part of the current international system to which Finland is participating because of its own interest (OE 1.10.2007).

### Wishful Thinking and Power Politics

On the level of EU-Russia relations, a shadow was cast over the cooperation designated as a ‘strategic partnership.’ While the related treaties had not lost their significance, many had begun to doubt whether the partnership was anymore genuine. While the media on both sides conveyed an image that hardly corresponds to what real partners would expect from each other, it was seen that the choice had always been, and still was, that of Russia. The Western policy towards Russia could not be spared from criticism either; since the break-up of the Soviet Union it had deviated from its own principles and only encouraged Russia to act as it had done. (OE 22.10.2007.)

In his op-ed of October 25, 2007, Olli Rehn, then European Commissioner for Enlargement, responded by stressing that even though Russia’s foreign policy line had unquestionably become tougher and record-high oil prices provided “food for muscles and weight to words,” what was needed was not a confrontation but rather strategic thinking and perseverance on both sides. Rehn insisted that the time had become for Russia to show that it was seriously committed to responsible, multilateral cooperation because “when one wished to join the European family,” it was necessary to “comply with the principles agreed by the family together” (OE 25.10.2007). Perhaps due his position, Rehn

chose to ignore the fact that Russia had recently been showing little interest in joining the European family, but rather sought to emancipate and remain single – or to create a family of its own.

Rehn acknowledged that while Russia had prospered and stabilized, civil liberties had become more encumbered, democracy was going through a cold spell and the authoritarian mode of governance had been strengthened. The EU, he explained, did not preach about these problems, but sought to bring them up in the discussions with the Russian leadership. After all, strong economic interdependence with Russia was expected to counterbalance the political difficulties of the EU-Russia relationship. It was this interdependence that was believed to create a fruitful base for mutually beneficial cooperation also in other sectors. Rehn recalled that at the same time as Finland continued its close bilateral relations with Russia, it was also expected to continue its active involvement in the EU-Russia relations. He saw that the Northern Dimension provided a crucial platform in managing this because it was one of the few cooperation programs between the EU and Russia that actually worked. (OE 25.10.2007.)

Regardless of the level, good relations had to be preserved because there were a number of open questions waiting to be solved (L 19.12.2007). Those that had been on display in public ranged from the lease renewal of the Saimaa Canal, protection of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland, the development of the oil destruction measures on the Gulf of Finland, the alignment of the Russian-German gas pipeline with its environmental problems, problems with customs, and truck queues. Last but not least was the dispute on the timber export tariffs, which was also linked to the EU and to Russia's desire to join the WTO.

In addition to these, Russia was struggling with large-scale internal problems. Threats were directed, above all, against the Russians themselves, but they were seen also as relevant questions in terms of Finland (L 21.10.2007). Third sector actors, civil society organizations, were seen to hold the key to solving some the problems, especially at local and regional levels to which the Russia State had now granted more practical responsibility of the welfare solutions. CSOs were seen to play an important role in coming up with new initiatives as well as complementing public services by filling in the gaps with their training and awareness-raising work. While the CSOs in this sector received government support, they were largely dependent on foreign financing. In spite of the 2006 NGO law, Finnish cooperation projects were still reported to be welcomed and necessary. (Ibid.)

### **5.2.6 Govern and Conquer: Russia as a Neighbor, Partner – or on Its Own?**

The Putin-Medvedev era that followed Yeltsin's "wild years" was commonly given credit for stabilizing Russian society. The tragic acts of violence, whereby

human rights activists had been murdered, a number of activists and journalists mugged, NGOs harassed, and demonstrations repressed the by force, were taken to indicate that the stability was only superficial. As revised in the op-ed of August 21, 2009, the heavy legacy of the war in Chechnya as well as the widespread corruption and arbitrariness in the justice system, the Militsiya and the Federal Security Service (FSB) eroded societal stability and democratic development and suppressed the operational preconditions of the civil society by placing ordinary citizens and civil society activists in a very vulnerable position.

Murders and assaults were seen to indicate that activism criticizing those in power and keeping watch on their actions had become more risky. As a result, it was explained, Russian civil society had become increasingly divided into two camps (OE 21.8.2009). The first one operated in close cooperation with the authorities and included, inter alia, a number of youth as well as social and health care organizations. From the authorities' perspective, such organization seemed useful as they provided services that the government was unable to offer; even though some of the organizations were critical of the prevailing policy, their behavior did not threaten the political system in the eyes of the authorities. As it was, many activists had learned to accept that it was safer to avoid open confrontation with the authorities and instead direct their activities towards solving the everyday life problems of citizens. (OE 21.8.2009.)

The other camp was seen to include organizations that were constantly in a collision course with the political and economic interest groups (OE 21.8.2009). Among others, they included human rights organizations as well as organizations investigating corruption and environmental organizations. These organizations had suffered from both the law on combating extremist activities that came into force in 2002 and the NGO law approved in 2006, which had narrowed their living space significantly and subjected them increasingly to greater state control:

As things stand, public watchdog activism requires exceptional courage in Russia. It is likely that some of this kind of activism has to go underground and turn to the "kitchen politics" familiar from the Soviet era; i.e., begins to act in secret from the public scrutiny. (OE 21.8.2009.)

The broad design of the laws had enabled the authorities to interpret them arbitrarily and to apply them selectively. Critical organizations had been closed down, or they were deprived of the right to register, inter alia, by appealing to fire safety violations and taxation ambiguities. Also computers had been confiscated. (OE 21.8.2009.) Such a practice was far from the rhetoric of the early Putin era, when activists had reason to be optimistic about the future of Russian civil society. For example, in November 2001, President Putin told the first Civic Forum, a large meeting initiated and sponsored by the Kremlin that gathered

together representatives of state institutions and the civic sector, that there could not be a strong democratic state in the context of a weak society (Weigle 2002, 137). In his often-cited opening speech Putin addressed the audience by stating that:

Without a true relationship of partnership between the state and society there can be neither a strong state nor a prosperous and happy society. What is needed is an equal dialogue. And we are aware that the effectiveness of the dialogue depends on us to a great extent, on the representatives of power.... We are ready to listen attentively and to hear what you propose. I believe that now that the time of truly great opportunities has come for Russia and its citizens such cooperation can become highly productive.... It is our duty together to use the historical chance presented to us. Otherwise, we may again find ourselves in the 'backyard of civilization.' (Cited in Salmenniemi 2007, 19)

### Last Chance for a New Beginning?

The problematic relations at the EU-Russia level shifted the focus back onto bilateral relations. Finland was seen to lack an actual national strategy towards Russia – it only had “uncoordinated fussing in individual, in themselves good, things here and there.” If the situation got difficult, Finns were seen to “immediately seek help from Brussels.” (L 28.1.2009.) It was seen that a lot of both Finnish national and EU money had been burned in the “bureaucratic guidance” of the numerous stand-alone programs and the neighboring area cooperation projects, yet, in the absence of a strategic thread, coordination, the results remained “minimal, if not non-existent.” (Ibid.)

It was contemplated that this was due to a lack of genuine interest for many would prefer “not have to touch that direction even with tweezers.” The political conditions and general uncertainty, it was seen, were used only as excuses for not even considering the opportunities that Russia would offer. However, given that “[o]ddly enough,” it seemed that the Russians still preferred to cooperate “with their familiar neighbor, a national strategy was urgently needed now when the financial crisis had shattered Russia’s illusions of striking it rich on its own. The realization of this was seen to enable more honest and “persistent cooperation based on the economic realities.” (L 28.1.2009.)

During his visit to Finland, well-known Russian scientist Dmitri Trenin argued that the reality revealed by the economic crisis had “saved Russia into the twenty-first century” after the relationship with the West had first declined to “the Brezhnev-era level” (OE 24.2.2009). The crisis was seen to undermine Putin’s unwritten social contract, whereby the people were satisfied with

“securocracy”<sup>68</sup> as long as living conditions improved. A more pessimistic way of seeing the situation was to consider the rapprochement only as a phase, which did not erase the more prominent trend that Russia was moving away from the European values and seeking to nullify the EU's foreign policy objectives. The difficulties arose from the fact that Russia was “playing with different rules” and had been turning its policy ever more visibly against the Western ideas and actions. (Ibid.)

The popularity of the system created by Putin was seen to be based on three pillars: economic growth, the promise of “order,” and the return to foreign policy, which would raise the country back up among the leading powers in the world (OE 8.8.2009). Now that the global economic crisis had hit Russia hard, all the pillars had begun to falter. However, if the system could cope with current problems, it was accurately foretold, Putin could be re-elected in the 2012 presidential election, whereby he would get the opportunity to terminate the model of two strong leaders. It was seen that in this case, Russia could become more reluctant and unable to reform itself and sow seeds of problems not just with its borders but also in the neighboring countries. (OE 9.7.2009.)

In particular, Putin’s statements about the negative repercussions that would ensue should the NATO military infrastructure approach the Russian border caused alarm in Finland where debate about the pros and cons of the membership had been lively. The negative repercussions, to which Putin had alluded, were interpreted to mean that should Finland join NATO, it would affect CBC and trade adversely – and this had to be avoided as it was seen that cooperation had been highly beneficial for Finland. Thus, the border should not be hardened but softened; a sensible way to do this would be to give up the visa regime as soon as possible (OE 30.4.2009).

The Neighboring area cooperation program, in particular, was taken as an example of mutually beneficial cooperation (E 8.6.2009). Even though the projects were carried out in practice on the Russian side, such as in the case of treating the sewage of St. Petersburg, they were seen to serve Finnish interests as well. According to Minister of the Environment Paula Lehtomäki (Centre Party), the use of Finnish funding had not only led to network building and mutual learning processes but it also allowed the entrenchment of Finnish technology and know-how in Russia. Granted that the environmental challenges knew no borders, Lehtomäki saw that it was important to invest in “improving the state of our common environment also beyond our borders” (L 18.6.2009).

Others, however, insisted that neighboring area cooperation was a “lame expression” (L 24.6.2009). Even if supporting the wastewater project at its early

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<sup>68</sup> Securocracy [*sekurokratia*] is a term used mainly by Docent Arto Luukkanen by which he refers to the political system of Russia under the Putin leadership, during which the power has been given in the hands of the state security apparatus, such as army, police, and the federal security service (see Luukkanen 2009).

stages may have been understandable, it was argued that one could now only question the meaningfulness of the support that continued to flow despite Russia had evidently become wealthier thanks to its massive oil, gas, and arms exports:

Shouldn't every state take care of themselves, in particular of their infrastructure? One would think that Russia – perhaps the richest state in the world in terms of natural resources – would take it already as a question of honor. (L 24.6.2009)

A sense of acrimony stemmed from the premise that Russia had been targeted by Finnish broad-based assistance since the early 1990s. The example shown by the state had been followed and put in practice by municipalities, municipal associations, churches, regional councils, schools, civic and charitable organizations, and even private individuals, who had – with their own input and voluntary work – participated in supporting the neighboring areas in Russia. In addition to pure financial aid, various goods from clothing to hospital beds had been taken across the border. In most cases such...

... relief work has been mainly designed, done, and even eventually almost completely paid for by the Finns.... Even Russia's unpredictable administrative bureaucracy, tangled border crossings, not to mention the refusals of entry, has not deflated our enthusiasm for our voluntary aid work. When necessary, A Finn can be very spunky in his actions. (L 24.6.2009)

It was proposed that “no matter how good the targets of aid may feel like,” the continuum of the neighboring area cooperation should be looked at more critically because “continuous support makes one passive.” Thus, the Finnish support funds to Russia had to be reassessed (E 12.8.2010). If nothing else, “its name should be changed to match the actual situation, i.e., to near area *assistance*.” That would be “more honest to both parties.” (L 24.6.2009, emphasis added).

In the debate in the parliament about the NAC and other Finnish public funds used to support the Russian border region, the principles had been greater than the sums of money. There was hardly any disagreement over the fact that the development of the Russian side was important for Finland. While over the year even the small streams had cumulated into quite a stream – even overflowing to many in the public, what was interesting about the dispute in the parliament was that it was fundamentally about measuring and outlining the role of the state in the everyday Finnish-Russian relations (E 12.8.2010).

Equally significant with respect to the ongoing debate was the fact the original 1992 agreement, which enabled the creation of the NAC program to begin with, was on behalf Finland signed by then Foreign Minister Väyrynen (Centre Party), who was now the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development,



under the authority of whom the NAC belonged. It was thus expected that Minister Väyrynen would do his best, once again, to advocate maintaining the appropriations at the current level. In May 2010, the Foreign Ministry, Minister Väyrynen in the lead, organized a seminar to discuss the cooperation with neighboring areas in Russia carried out by Finnish NGOs. In his introductory speech, Minister Väyrynen stressed that Finland had two types of motives with respect to the program:

It can bring about positive developments in the neighboring areas, which creates social stability in the region and the basis for positive economic development. On the other hand, cooperation can be used to repel threats to Finland, such as to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. (Väyrynen 2010)

During the present governmental term, the NAC had been renewed, by broadening it geographically to reach further in Russia and by narrowing its scope substantively. In the event, Minister Väyrynen used the changing operating environment as a justification for increased focus on economic cooperation but stressed that was also important to maintain the broad scope of cooperation and develop further the traditional sectors such as environmental, social, and health, as well as nuclear safety. As the state laid emphasis on economic activity in its own activity, Väyrynen (2010) explained, the role of NGOs in social, health and educational sectors would get emphasized and their respective share of funding could be increased. The Russian partners, in turn, made up their share, for example, by providing the needed facilities (E 12.8.2010).

Instead of the mere sums of money, the real question had to do with the discord over which of the numerous joint projects had actually contributed to balanced development and took into account the interests of both parties, as was required by the agreement. It was regarded that in less than two decades, Russia had undergone many changes and was no longer overly interested in the advice, for example, on the rule of law, democracy, and civil society development (E 12.8.2010). The Finns, in turn, had over the years experienced a lot of frustration, as many projects had turned out differently from what had been planned.

Problems arose already from the simple fact that the objectives of cooperation defined by the Foreign Ministry differed from those defined in the 2007 Government Program. While the latter stressed particularly environmental, nuclear safety, and social and health sectors, the former now put weight on the economic matters. Even though the Foreign Ministry had not listed in detail which projects it believed should be eliminated, the general consensus went along with the notion that there was plenty to be cut. It was seen that only the most important projects should be selected and that the structure of the organization deciding upon them should be rethought (L 13.8.2010) The projects should no longer be financial vending machines for their practioners (E

12.8.2010), independent of the results, but the results gained should be evaluated vis-à-vis the support received.

In the debate it was also often noted that the funds had not in any case been intended to be permanent but as a solution during the transition period. Thus, to continue the allocation of funds towards that purpose was to indicate that the belief that Russia was indeed transitioning into something was still alive. If the target of the expected transition was to become a Western democracy, Finland might need to continue funding the neighboring areas for quite some time as Russia was currently on its way towards the opposite direction. On the other hand, if the funding was supposed to continue until Russia had become rich enough to manage its own affairs independently, one could easily argue that Finnish aid should have been terminated already a long time ago.

Certainly, the Neighboring Area Cooperation had developed from assistance to Russia to broader action that was justified by Finland's own interests. The question was not just about assisting Russia but also about the development of cooperation that was needed in order to seek shared interests and solve common problems. It was seen that the amount of funding had also influenced what kind of actors had been recruited for the funded projects and what had actually been done in practice (L 13.8.2010.). The brevity of the funding was seen to limit the construction of a long-term horizon.

It was suggested that instead of chopping up the NAC funds into even smaller pieces alongside the EU funding, it might make sense to consider organizing a proper funding mechanism for a few key long-term joint projects (L 13.8.2010.) This, of course, would require prioritization, i.e., defining the most important sectors from the Finnish perspective. A good way to start, it was proposed, would be to choose those important projects that had been perceived to lead to important social benefits on both sides of the border. Among the chosen there could also be projects arising purely from the initiatives of non-governmental organizations, in which case a credible demonstration of effectiveness and social relevance would be essential. (Ibid.)

### Unrealistic Images

More realism was also called for in Karelia debate in Finland. The romantic image of a lost Karelia that many hold was claimed to be, from an academic point of view, “skewed and imaginary” (OE 4.8.2009). The bond to the border regions was claimed to be superficial:

A zeal for Karelianism springs unto life in most cases only during the summer. It belongs to the summer in the same way as the Midsummer festival [*Juhannus*], flies and barbecue. During the winter, Karelia is not wanted – For the Finns, the Russian Karelia does not exist in the winter. (OE 4.8.2009)

The writing went on to fan the flames by asserting that contemporary tourism had a clear political frame: Russian Karelia was made more Finnish by being present there. Furthermore, it touched upon a sacred topic by suggesting that in addition the human tragedy, the yearning after the lost Karelia could be explained by an attempt to spread a map of political memory around Karelia as well as by the unfortunate trauma caused by the military operation that had failed. The experienced bitterness caused by the loss, it was argued, had ever since then been reproduced in memoirs:

Those who now look back on those dramatic times were children at the time, and their memories are in accordance with that: fragmentary, patchy and selective. Also, today's debate on the ceded Karelia is partly based on the impressions of childhood. The building blocks of the reminiscences are the sunny summers, playgrounds, primary school and the home yard of the childhood. (OE 4.8.2009)

The academic image of the present-Karelia was thus not, in all its realism, compatible with the "politically oriented or emotional love of Karelia." Integration of the two lenses of analysis, however, was expected to make contemporary travels across the border more enriching than what it was to "meander in the ruins of the Finnish houses in border area." (OE 4.8.2009.)

The writing touched a nerve among many. As could have been expected, many Karelians and their descendants struggled to recognize themselves in the disparaging generalization presented as an academic perspective. The Karelians' right to reminisce was reclaimed by rectifying that they were not seeking for traces of Finnishness but of themselves, their families, and ancestry (L 7.8.2009). Such heritage tourism was thus a key part of the Karelian identity, which had traditionally been strongly place specific and geographically bound. It was also seen to give the young descendants of the Karelian immigrants "a lot of meanings, social capital, and particularly a sense of solidarity" (ibid.). These travels could also be seen as the first forms of cross-border interaction as many had sought to help elderly and families with children residing in Karelia in various ways during their travels.

The editorial staff of *Helsingin Sanomat* limited themselves in stating that better knowledge about the Swedish and Finnish history of the formerly Finnish Karelia would undoubtedly be beneficial for the current population and an obvious target in a civilized country. This, in turn, could create a more solid base for the relations between Russia and Finland as well as the Russians and the Finns, which should gradually achieve a more natural and more mature phase (E 11.11.2009).

Even if there was no reason to forget what had happened, it was also suggested that the Finns should let the memories of the Winter War rest in peace (HS 22.1.2010). It was time to stop wallowing in time of war as "[n]ot every ailment, ache, indisposition or sleepless night" could no longer be due to the

war (L 17.1.2010; cf. L 15.1. 2010). Others, however, disagreed and corrected that on the Finnish side, the Winter War should be remembered as a Finnish heroic tale, which had to be told in every suitable opportunity (L 30.1.2010). The reason why the war was less known on the Russian side was seen to be due to the simple reason that “[o]ver there, the new generations do not know anything about the Winter War, as it is not told in school textbooks at all” (ibid.).

### Rethinking the Basis of Relations

The experience from the Nord Stream gas pipe negotiations highlighted ever more clearly that economic cooperation with Russia needed clearer rules of the game. While no one could decide on Russian economic policy on its behalf, the Western countries were seen to possess leverage to decide on the terms of cooperation and to stick to them (OE 22.10.2009). Economic cooperation was seen as a good start for it promoted stability and enabled peaceful growth and development; it was understood that Russia would not become akin to EU countries in the foreseeable future, but already its commitment to the Western economic system would create opportunities for growth and democracy. It was also necessary to rethink the basis of international (i.e., *interstate*) cooperation (L 8.12.2009) as they were seen to have a major impact on the other forms of CBC.

But there were also many open questions. What was the current role of Nordic cooperation? Should all cooperation be treated as EU cooperation? How should Russia be involved? It was proposed that in order for the EU to start constructing its relations with Russia with a clean slate, concrete actions, instead of ceremonious affirmations, would be needed. The best way to proceed was seen to be to create a common, firm, and realistic strategy for Russia that would be approved and committed by the Commission, Council, Parliament, and the member countries alike (L 8.12.2009).

While Finland now operated in the EU frame, it had not, however, changed the fact that Russia was Finland’s immediate neighbor and as such it was hard to ignore. It was not easy for a small country to balance next to a great power (OE 25.2.2010). It was also noted that Russia too had its own views of its neighboring countries. After all, it was reminded that through its history, Russia had had 24 different neighbors, 17 of which belonged to it at one point in history. (Ibid.)

It was explained that the countries that shared the “burden of a common history with Russia” had turned to different security policy solutions. Some had resorted to NATO, while others had run down their national defense understanding that it would in any case be insufficient if Russia were to attack. In Finland, defense remained strongly based on national defense because “[i]f we are attacked, the best ways to survive are credible territorial defense and the ‘spirit of the Winter War.’” While clear irritation particularly of Estonian and Polish approaches had shone through official speeches and documents of the Russian foreign policy leaders, Finland’s approach was expected to be clear to

Russia: in an extreme situation, Finland would defend its existence with arms. It was thus assessed that the Finnish-Russian special relationship was, above all, based on a “balanced and wise foreign policy” and a thorough knowledge of the Russian way of thinking. (OE 25.2.2010.)

From the Russian perspective, some of the neighbors had been labeled as hostile and anti-Russian, while others received high marks. Finnish-Russian relations, it was noted, had been described as being even embarrassingly good, which it certainly was if compared to Russia’s relations with Estonia or Poland. However, if compared with Germany, Finnish-Russian relations were appraised as satisfactory. (OE 25.2.2010.) This was because Finland was not...

...a superpower, the cooperation with whom would yield world political weight. Russia has not benefited in its EU’s policy from Finland as it perhaps had hoped for when our country joined the European Union. In addition, there exists a lot of snappy criticism of Russia in Finland and our common history is not simple either. (OE 25.2.2010)

It was assessed that Finnish-Russian technological cooperation must have been valuable to Russia, and many Russians did holiday in Finland, but Finland could not be seen with these respects unique to Russia. Instead, from the Russian point of view, respect and appreciation were the cornerstones of cooperation; courage and patriotism meant a lot to Russians. (OE 25.2.2010.)

There was thus every reason to argue that Finnish-Russian relations were a broader phenomenon than ordinary inter-state relations (OE 9.4.2010). In addition to geographical proximity, it was based on historical, cultural, and economic development, as well as on the existence of the Finnish kindred peoples on the territory of Russia. Also the Baltic Sea was seen as a unifying factor as it defined the Finnish-Russian parallel interests in politics, economy, environment, and culture. The increase in “the political will to build friendly, mutually beneficial and equal relations in the Russian centralized power apparatus” created a hope that the cooperation would develop favorably (ibid.).

It was suggested that Russia’s attitude towards Finland was now so favorable that it would be a perfect time to explore the possibilities for new scientific cooperation and to establish a multi-disciplinary research center together (OE 9.4.2010). Vyborg, it was proposed, would be an ideal location for this due to its history, culture, and location. It was regarded that a lot depended on Finnish-Russian Intergovernmental relations, as the agreements signed at that level could pave the road for cooperation at other levels and fields. In order for the cooperation to be successful, there was also a need for careful planning of operations as well as for people who were able to shoulder the delivery of agreed programs and solve problems emerging from disagreements. Otherwise, it was predicted, the bureaucratic attitudes and delays would downplay any progress made. (Ibid.)

The rhetoric stressing the importance of cooperation largely ignored the alternative discourse that pointed towards drawbacks to Russian society. The two seldom met in the same context. For instance, it was reminded that that in Russia the freedom of speech still required a lot of courage (E 3.5.2010). According to Freedom House statistics, there was no freedom of expression in Russia. On the list of 192 countries, Russia ranked among the most difficult cases; number 175 to be exact, next to Congo, Gambia, and Vietnam. Certainly, the state of freedom of expression did vary between the 83 administrative districts of Russia. The situation was reported to be relative good for example in the Republic of Karelia and in St. Petersburg, much worse in Moscow, but non-existent in 20 districts, mainly in the Caucasus. Freedom was, however, no longer restricted by direct pre-censorship but more indirectly, yet effectively, by the threat of economic intimidation, the prohibitions imposed under cover of fight against terrorism, insecurity caused by the unsolved murders of journalists, and the fear of falling into disgrace of the political leaders. (E 3.5.2010.)

Whichever approach was taken, the conclusion remained the same: it was never boring with Russia as there were plenty of surprises. From being a serious question of life or death, relations with Russia had, however, become a more lighthearted topic. In Finland one could "follow the relations with Russia in all seasons, both inside and outside" (OE 4.8.2010). Recently the weather had favored outdoors, as it had been possible to watch as Presidents Halonen and Medvedev had been cruising cheerfully along in a golf cart in Naantali. After that the presidents promised that officials would quickly solve the controversial dispute about an import ban that Russia had suddenly ordered on Finnish dairy and meat products. And this was exactly what happened. The fact that foreign trade issues commonly prepared by public servants at ministries could be taken care of with a political announcement could not but bring to mind the Soviet era.

Many pondered whether Russia was looking for cooperation or conflict. The common answer was yes; the two were not mutually exclusive alternatives to Russia. Relations with Russia were now "broader and more open than ever before during Finland's independence" and there had to be also room for friction in the broad spectrum of human, economic, and political interaction (OE 4.8.2010). Disputes on custodies, deportations, timber export tariffs, truck traffic, and foodstuffs did not necessarily indicate that Russia was seeking for conflicts particularly with Finland. They rather proved that Finland did not have any special immunity to problems. However, while in general the relations were "healthy," even "entertaining," especially when compared to the forced friendship of the past, Russia undoubtedly produced conflicts with a logic that was difficult to discern (*ibid.*).

The conflict rhetoric was seen to stem from the perception that to the intelligence service circles, which had been granted increased authority during the Putin administration, reforms and openness were solely a threat and not an

opportunity. A similar trend was suggested by the summer camp of the youth organizations in support of the Kremlin (HS 25.7.2010), where the reforms had been talked about, but all the opponents had been labeled as fascists (OE 4.8.2010). It was clear that such a trend should be reacted upon in order to remind Russia that it also needed friends, and that it should stop acting like a “schoolyard bully” (L 25.8.2010).

### Practical Consequences of the Open Border

There was the smell of smoke in the air. An op-ed published on August 22, 2010 described how in South-East Finland, Russian forest fires and the glow of the steppes had been almost an every summer phenomena. However, now also the rest of Finland had had to notice that the state's most heavily guarded border was powerless to the acts of nature:

Pallas' Sand grouse migrated from the east, delighting the bird lovers, but so did Colorado beetles and grasshoppers. And during the days of the worst heat waves, I wished that the border would extend as wall into heaven. For the Russians, the border with Finland seems to be more like a string rather than a wall. (OE 22.8.2010)

The records were broken in the number of border crossings at the crossing points of South-eastern Finland. About 80 per cent of them had been made by Russians. In practice this had become apparent in Lappeenranta and other Finnish cities by the border as the visitors from across the border had been walking from a shopping center to another and paying for their tax-free purchases in a thick wads of bills (OE 22.8.2010). While this brought more jobs and money to the Finnish border region, the local response was not only positive. Bloody murder was screamed when the regional newspaper reported that Russian language street signs were planned for Lappeenranta – the uproar did not subside, even when specified that the question was only about guide signs for tourist (ibid.).

Those who emphasized the links to Russia bragged that the trip from Lappeenranta to St. Petersburg was shorter than that to Helsinki. In practice, the comparison hobbled; Helsinki was less than three hours away, but to St. Petersburg one could not go just like that. Many who had traveled in Russia must have been able identify themselves with the description about the border crossing to Russia provided in the op-ed of August 22, 2010:

I do not get used to the uncertainty that overtakes me in Russia. It starts already at the Finnish border post: how to pass through, which papers to show, how to behave. Suspense continues on the Russian side, where the wide border zone with strict limitations awaits. Car should not be stopped for no other reasons than compulsion; side roads cannot be deviated to, nor people or goods can be taken on or off aboard.

In a related writing it was also noted that while “Russians vacation and shop in Finland without an effort and fly away from Lappeenranta on Ryanair, many from here would cross the eastern border “only by order.” However, on the other hand, it was argued that as the eastern border becomes thinner, interaction increases, distrust dissipates, and thus the border per se becomes more secure. The commercial and cultural relations were seen to work already just fine: “[m]y friend from Imatra fetches at times diesel, at times linen curtains from Svetogorsk.” (OE 22.8.2010.)

### Back to Power Politics

The world was integrating, and Finland had become increasingly influenced by things happening at greater geographical distance. In August 2010, the then Minister of Finance Jyrki Katainen (National Coalition Party) stated while Russia was an important EU partner, as one was supposed to say, it was a comparatively small economy, which focused mainly on exports of raw materials. According to Katainen, Russia desired to see itself as a more significant geopolitical player than what it in reality was. “Listening to Russia speaking,” Katainen noted, it was difficult to believe that its economy was “only the size of the economy of the Netherlands” (HS 17.8.2010a/b; HS 18.8.2010). That was to say that Russia was not an economic superpower, “not by any indicator.” While Katainen had a point, his estimate of the size of Russia economy was off mark – by some \$ 700 billion; “the correct point of comparison would have been Spain” (HS 20.8.2010). Foreign Minister Stubb (National Coalition Party) corrected Katainen's statement by refining that Russia could not be taken as a superpower in economic sense for only three per cent of the world economy came from Russia (HS 20.8.2010).

The reaction followed a typical pattern: people heard what they wanted to hear whereby the actually message got twisted. The quite realistic, even though not numerically accurate, comments made were labeled as “childish defiance” (L 22.8.2010). The “boys of the National Coalition party,” it was suspected, must have been fool enough to blurt out such things because given their young age they could “not know Russian history as well as both the classical and kremnological literature through which information on the Russian national character can be attained.” By revealing a lot about his own world view, the author of the letter then went on to portend that there was “a danger that the skillful Russian politicians would see the through the simplistic Jyrki-Boy [Katainen]... Lord have mercy on Finland” (L 22.8.2010).

The apparent fact that even the slightest criticism of Russia caused such uproar and a storm in a teacup indicated that Finlandization still raised its ugly head (L 23.8.2010; cf. L 25.8.2010a/b). While the criticism was directed more broadly to the Finnish society, the Aleksanteri Institute of the University of Helsinki, which functions as a national center of research, study, and expertise



pertaining to Russia and Eastern Europe, was not spared from accusations either. It was regarded...

...downright ridiculous that the researchers from the Aleksanteri Institute are dragged to the TV to comment whether or not Katainen's talk insulted the Russian bear. After all, a representative of the Institute cannot answer but that we have already stopped beating our wives, that is, to say that Katainen talked dirty and harmed the Eastern relationship. If the representative of the Aleksanteri Institute were to say something else, soon he would no longer get visas from the Kremlin, and a promising career would soon be only a memory. Journalists should ask advice from the retired journalists. They have nothing to lose. They can tell the truth even about Russia. (L 23.8.2010)

For others, it had been refreshing to hear these opinions on Russia as direct comments had traditionally been far and between in the Finnish politics. Many had wondered...

... why so different news comes from our two neighboring countries, Sweden and Russia? We rarely receive unpleasant surprises from the West; the East instead is unpredictable. We can of course refer to the history and cultural differences. I think they will not explain everything. Would it be a bit of the same type of phenomenon as with school bullies: bullying continues because the subject is unable to give back? (L 25.8.2010)

Yet another approach to the issue was that the entire debate on Russia was missing the point; to talk about a superpower was Finns' way of stigmatizing and criticizing Russia's foreign policy by skirting the actual point – the threat of Russia (OE 5.9.2010). It was claimed that when Russia was talked about in Finland, almost without exception such concepts as the "sphere of influence" and "great power" were dug from the word storage. Both concepts, it was seen, were used loosely, and instead of assessing international politics, they were used to condemn Russia's foreign policy. It was reminded that the great powerness, in turn, ought not to be seen as related only to what kind of status the state had in relation to others but also and above all to what the state could do in relation to other states. Thus, it was told, Russia wished to stick to its own great power status in order to defend the traditional system of sovereign states. (Ibid.)

The current debate was thus, in fact, a debate about Russia being a possible threat to Finland and the rest of the world – and this had little to do with the superpower problematique (OE 5.9.2010). After all, the threat that Finns saw had to be related specifically to Russia as the superpowerness of the United States was not questioned in a similar manner:

What difference does it make whether we believe that Russia is superpower or not? Nothing. What makes a difference is whether Russia is a threat and to whom Russia can be a threat. That is what we really want to talk about. What difference does it make for us whether the Russian government leaders consider their country a superpower or not? Nothing until we know what superpower means in Russia. If Russia's superpower identity makes it a threat to other states, the superpower status is relevant. (OE 5.9.2010)

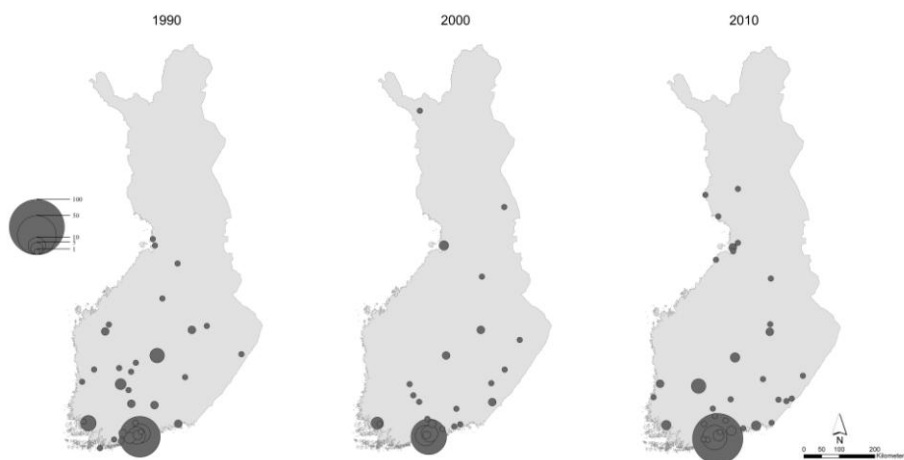
According to a HS Gallup poll (HS 13.9.2010), an overwhelming majority of Finns did, however, see Russia as a superpower, especially in military terms. Nevertheless, people still took living next to such superpower in stride. Nearly 60 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the Finnish political leadership's attitude to Russia; less than one tenth wished for more complying attitude, while almost 30 per cent called for a bolder take. Interestingly, the article that revealed the results had been titled as "[o]ne in five is afraid of Russia" (HS 13.9.2010), while the fact of the matter was that 75 per cent did not see Russia as a threat. Such formulation should not be ignored as statements about public opinion made in the media usually not only reflect but can also drive popular attitudes. Whether or not the formulation had been conscious act, it served as a reminder of how necessary it was to have critical and attentive public debate on the threats and fears. Topics touching upon threats and threat perceptions were particularly sensitive. As the reactions to the poll results confirmed, calculations and hidden goals were easily seen even in pertinence (OE 18.9.2010).

In all, the poll results suggested that Finns' understanding of Russia as a threat had not changed noticeably in recent years. The young considered the fear as unnecessary slightly more often than those who were 65 years or older, but in general the opinions did not show the kind of warming that what the Pew Research Institute had discovered earlier this year, for example, in the attitudes of the French, Germans and Poles. 69 per cent of Finns still viewed Russia with suspicion. (E 14.9.2010.) Such a high level of doubt and disbelief, if the numbers were trusted, could easily be fueled and molded into fear by choosing wording that could be interpreted to confirm them to be justifiable. This way, as the example of the wording in the title illuminated, the sender may modify the message, if so chosen, to better match with what the receiver, the audience, is expected to want to hear.

### **5.3 RUSSIA IN HELSINGIN SANOMAT**

Taken together, the authors of the letters are neither demographically nor politically unrepresentative of the general public. Instead, they tend to be well-educated and gainfully employed but include also representatives of various

interest and lobby groups, some of which write to the paper regularly in order to advance their cause. The sampling is also unrepresentative for in addition to the capital region, *Helsingin Sanomat* is mostly read in the other large Finnish cities – and as a consequence also receives most of the input for its opinion pages from these larger cities (Figure 28). This is, of course, quite logical as that is where the majority of Finns live. Unless the issue at stake happens to be clearly of national focus, residents from other parts of the country understandably direct their letters by in large to regional papers.



*Figure 28. Distribution of the letters included in the study according to author's place of residence in 1990, 2000, and 2010*

Writings dealing with timely, topical issues are preferred. Many of these come and go, but some have managed to remain newsworthy for extended periods of time. Russia, and the border with Russia, is understandably a topic that has evoked strong opinions year after year. The share of letters devoted directly to Russia (or the Soviet Union) has decreased around the turn of the millennium but has increased slightly since then (Figure 29). The better the relations are, the less Russia is talked about, whereas the widespread uncertainty of the 1990s as well as Russia increased self-confidence in latter half of the 2000s clearly caused more concerns among the general public.

The thematic categorization of the collected articles was not an easy task to undertake as a great number of articles could easily be placed under several different themes as a consequence of which the categorization is prone to being subjective. Thus, the following figures (30 and 31) are meant not as accurate numerical description but rather to illustrate the overall trends and to give an overlying glance to the collected data.

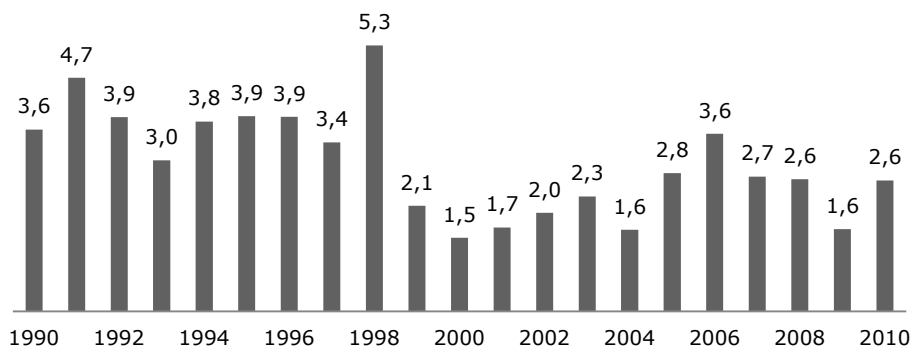


Figure 29. The share of letters devoted to Russia of all accepted letters (per cent)

The differences between different types of opinion articles were minimal in this respect. Letters, op-eds, and editorials all approached Russia and the border typically either from security/foreign political or social vantage point. The other pre-given categories, chosen based on the most common topics among all articles (i.e., not just opinion articles) dealing with Russia, were seldom addressed. In particular, both border management and economic issues are clearly underrepresented in the opinion articles.

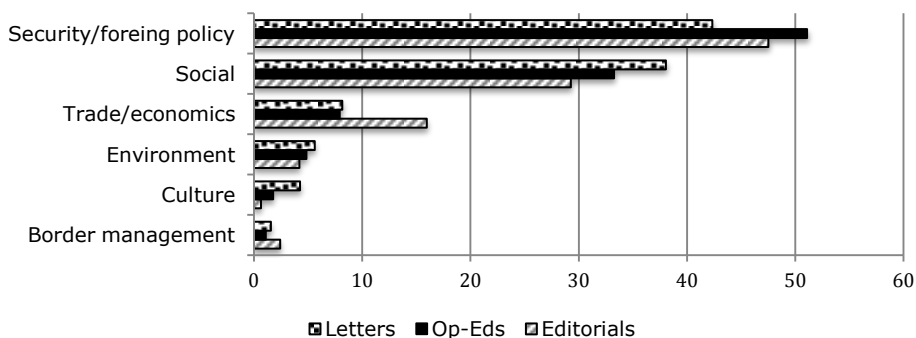


Figure 30. Sectors of opinion pieces by type of article, per cent of total

Security/foreign political (45.4 per cent of the total) as well as social issues (34.5 per cent of the total) of various kinds have dominated the content of letters throughout the entire study period. In the letters, softer social issues (38.0 per cent of the total) challenged the harder security and foreign political issues (42.2 per cent of the total) on certain years (1995–1998, 2006, and 2010). In the op-eds and editorials, the ranking was clearer as approximately the half of the writing

fell rather consistently under the security and foreign policy sector. Trade and other economic related issues were discussed particularly in the editorials (16.0 per cent of the total).

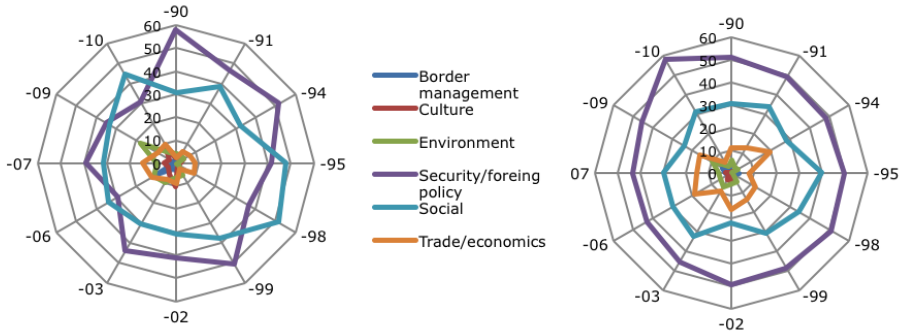


Figure 31. Sectors per year in letters (left) and editorials and op-eds (right)

### 5.3.1 No News is Good News

A further analysis reveals that those who approach Russia from a cultural perspective depict it in a less negative manner (Figure 32). While the share of positive evaluations remains low, though higher than in other sectors, most writings had a rather neutral tone. Many of these dealt either with the opportunities the cultural scene in Russia offered or the cultural similarities between Russia had with Finland. In all the other sectors, it was the differences rather than the similarities between the countries that were brought up and were used to portray Russia in a more negative light.

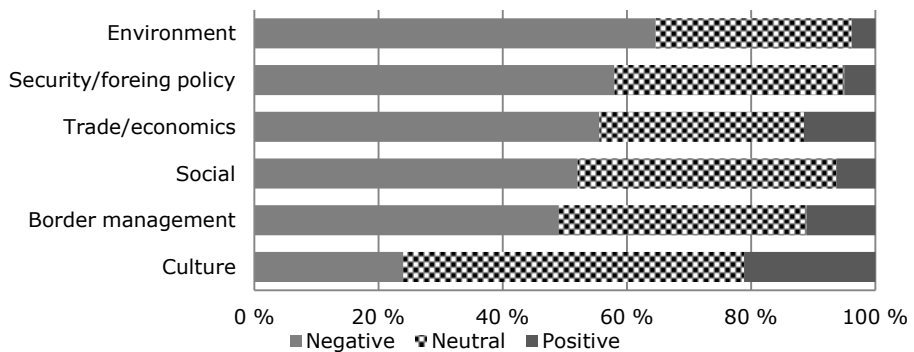


Figure 32. Sectors vs. tone

When the tone of the articles is analyzed in a temporary fashion, an interesting trajectory is revealed. The articles were coded negative, neutral, or positive based on the image they portray of Russia; i.e., if a particular text was positive towards its actual topic, say environmental protection, but at the same time still painted a negative picture about Russia, it was given a negative value. This is because what this study aims to discover is that what kind of image of Russia does the writing convey to a reader; i.e., how is Russia presented in the media.

Figure 33 depicts how the tone has altered during the study period. The cautiousness of the early 1990s soon turned into more critical voices and the nascent euphoria fuelled by the projection that the transition in Russia would be simple and short was quickly overshadowed by the increased awareness of the negative ramifications and side effects of the collapse of the Soviet system. Also, the freer condition following the 1992 began, slowly but surely, to upset the deep-root tradition of self-censorship by allowing a more direct formulation of opinions in public. The culmination point was seen in the late 1998 to early 1999 when the Russian society was shaken by a severe financial crisis, which left the country in the state of despair.

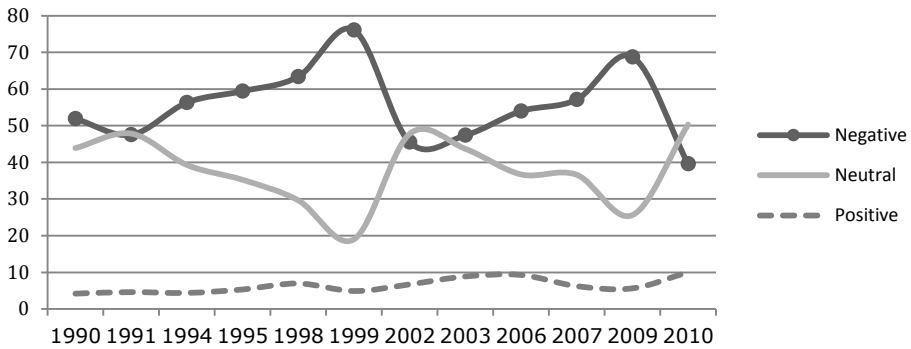


Figure 33. Distribution of tones 1990–2010, per cent of total

Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better. The crisis served to reset the relations as the apparent human drama that followed gave Russia a more human face as the distinction between the state actions and the ordinary people grew ever clearer in the perceptions of the Finns. Whereas in 1999 no less than 76.1 per cent of the articles were written in a negative tone, by 2002 the figure had decreased to 45.5 per cent. The rapid shift can be explained largely by the high hopes associated with Mr. Putin coming to power as he was seen to bring well-needed stability after the perplexities of the 1990s. A stable Russia was perceived as a better option for Finland than an unpredictable and uncontrollable Russia.

Despite the official cooperative rhetoric on the EU-Russia level, its translation into practice never materialized in any concrete manner. Mutual strategies reflected the shared interest in enhanced cooperation and, surely, the EU and Russia became increasingly important partners, but the relationship fell from the start far short of being a 'strategic partnership' in any meaningful interpretation of the term. Accordingly, despite much acclaimed introductions, the Common Spaces and Road Maps, even if valuable achievements as such, have actually accomplished fairly little.

The tone of the articles grew more negative as it had become evident that instead of seeking to transform the country into a Western style democracy, as the West had hoped, President Putin was working vigorously to restore the country's unity, to strengthen the authority of the state, and to bring the federal power closer to the regions in order to re-gain Russia's great power status. Fuelled by its vast energy sources and the related economic growth, Putin's Russia grew ever more self-confident, assertive, and aware of its strategic global importance. By 2009, at the peak of the financial crisis, the share of the negative writings had again raised up to 68.8 per cent.

History, however, repeated itself once again as the tone of the writing began to improve rapidly in the aftermath of the crisis. During 2009–2010, remarkable changes occurred also in Russia's self-perception. The financial crisis shook the country profoundly and revealed how deeply interconnected the global economy actually was. Bringing one's own house in order was no longer enough, but crises could only be overcome through coordinated, cooperative effort. Realization of this prodded Russia to reset and redefine its relations most notably with the United States, but the tone towards the new partnership agreement with the EU has warmed up as well. As can be assessed on the grounds of Russia's new foreign policy guidelines, which were leaked to the media in May 2010, the country's relations with the West should become much friendlier and more cooperative in order to attract more foreign investments (see Laine 2011).

When the analyzed articles are divided in two separate groups, the letters forming one and the op-ed and the editorials the other, an almost perfect correlative trend lines are revealed (Figure 34). Even though the letters can hardly be seen as a comprehensive representation of the *vox populi*, they do definitely represent the voice of the people more accurately than the intellectual op-eds or the newspapers own stand as described in the editorials. Many letters are written in response to op-eds and editorials, but the as the figure suggests the op-eds and editorials also hold the power to steer the topics and tones of the letters. The causality is, of course, hard to proof and it has to be borne in mind that all the published letters have gone through a selection process. The apparent finding here is that negative writings fuel more negative writings rather than striving to challenge the proposed view.

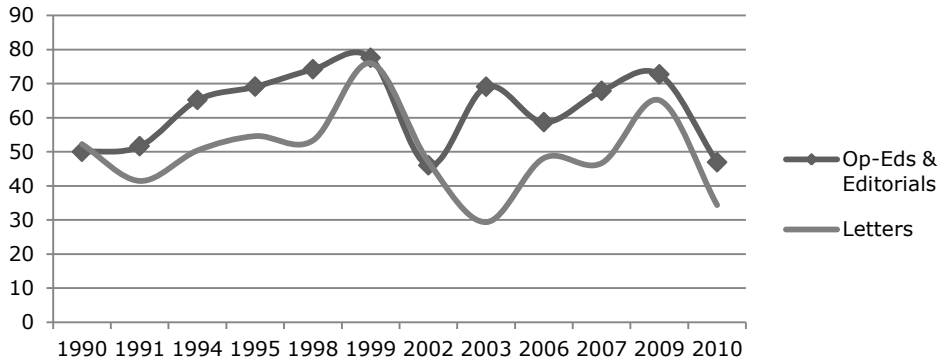


Figure 34. Writings with negative tone on Russia. Letters vs. op-eds and editorials, per cent of the total

Analyzing all the different types of articles separately confirms the tone of the op-eds (neg. 62.1 %, neut. 31.7 %, pos. 6.2 %) and editorials (neg. 61.6 %, neut. 31.7 %, pos. 6.7 %) go largely hand in hand. The letters were not any more positive (6.7 %) but less negative (48.5 %) and, accordingly, more neutral (44.7 %). Figure 35 presents the same finding in absolute numbers.

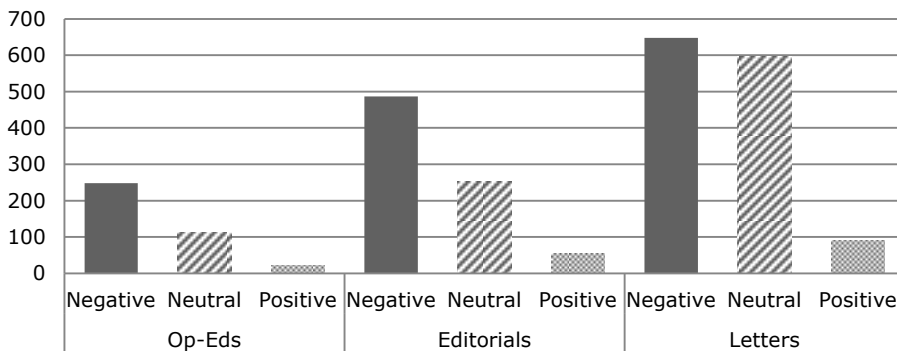


Figure 35. Tones by article type, absolute numbers

In all, out of the 2,383 analyzed articles, only 171 offer positive connotation. Ninety, or 52.6 per cent of them, were in the form of a letter; 53 positive stances were voiced in the editorials and 28 in the op-eds. Most of these (21.1 per cent) approached Russia from a cultural perspective with trade and economy related writings ranking second (11.4 per cent). At the other end, from a security and foreign political, environmental, and, lastly, political angle there were clearly



less positive things to say about Russia; these sectors received only 5.2, 3.9, and 2.8 per cent positive hits respectively.

The signifier category of ‘place,’ while small in absolute terms ( $n=67$ ), was in relative terms used most often to give a positive description of Russia, as 10.5 per cent of the writings were positive. The reason for this is, however, that to an extent Karelia was used with respect to different signified. In some writings Karelia was approached almost as a Finnish internal issue with little or no reference to Russia. In a particular writing, it was even argued, “after all, spiritually we own Karelia, even if it would not be part of the Finnish state” (HS 23.8.2005). In all the other signifier categories there were fewer than 10 per cent of positive description of Russia, stories (4.6 per cent) and events (4.5 per cent) ranking last in terms of positive evaluations.

When the positive descriptions are analyzed in terms of their respective signifier and sector categories, it is revealed that the most of the positive writings focus on activities in the social field, in the field of trade and economics, or security and foreign policy (Table 3). Stories received a positive connotation in the sector of security and foreign policy. While the figures on the table below reflect the uneven distribution of the writings with respect to the categories used, what stood out was that with the exception of trade-related writings, most writings in these categories focused on Karelia rather than Russia.

*Table 3. Cross tabulation of positive connotation and sectors of writings*

SECTOR			SIGNIFIER					Total
			ACTIVITY	EVENT	OBJECT	PLACE	STORY	
BORDER MANAGEMENT	Count	5	0	0	0	0	5	
	% of Total	2.9	.0	.0	.0	.0	2.9	
CULTURE	Count	6	0	5	1	3	15	
	% of Total	3.5	.0	2.9	.6	1.8	8.8	
ENVIRONMENT	Count	3	1	0	1	0	5	
	% of Total	1.8	.6	.0	.6	.0	2.9	
POLITICS	Count	1	1	0	0	0	2	
	% of Total	.6	.6	.0	.0	.0	1.2	
SECURITY & FOREIGN POLICY	Count	<b>19</b>	2	11	2	<b>23</b>	57	
	% of Total	<b>11.1</b>	1.2	6.4	1.2	<b>13.5</b>	33.3	
SOCIAL	Count	<b>23</b>	4	14	2	13	56	
	% of Total	<b>13.5</b>	2.3	8.2	1.2	7.6	32.7	
TRADE/ ECONOMICS	Count	<b>21</b>	0	3	1	6	31	
	% of Total	<b>12.3</b>	.0	1.8	.6	3.5	18.1	
<b>Total</b>	Count	78	8	33	7	45	171	
	% of Total	45.6	4.7	19.3	4.1	26.3	100.0	

A chronological summary of the most positive factors used in forming the image reveals only minor changes (Table 4). Objects, most commonly with reference to

Finnish leadership, dominated the debate around the collapse of the Soviet Union. Activities such as development in Russia, Russian actions, and the maintenance of Finnish-Russian relations then took over. While writings in which activities were used as the main signifiers tended to focus on current situation or look towards the future, stories were generally based on the past. Interestingly, story was the most positive signifiers during both of the major financial crises, though it was seldom used with a reference to trade or other economic related issues. Apart from the early 1990s, out of the three opinion writing types analyzed here, letters painted the most positive (though still rather negative) image of Russia in the context of CBC.

*Table 4. Main positives per period*

<b>Period</b>	<b>Main Positive Signifier</b>	<b>Main Positive Sector</b>	<b>Main Positive Type</b>
<b>1990–1991</b>	Object (13)	Security/FP (12)	Editorial (13)
<b>1994–1995</b>	Activity (13)	Security/FP (6) & Trade/Econ (6)	Letter (15)
<b>1998–1999</b>	Story (9)	Security/FP (10) & Social (10)	Letter (17)
<b>2002–2003</b>	Activity (10)	Security/FP (7)	Letter (12)
<b>2006–2007</b>	Activity (21)	Social (15)	Letter (17)
<b>2009–2010</b>	Story (17)	Security/FP (18)	Letter (18)

### 5.3.2 Russia as a Semiotic Sign

Following the semiotic line of thought, an extra effort is put on understanding how people design and interpret meanings, how semiotic systems are shaped by social interests and ideologies, and how they are adapted as society changes. The basic logic here is that of contextualization: no semiotic form, material entity or event, text, or action has meaning in and of itself. Attention has to be paid to the social dimensions of meaning and power operating through the human processes of signification and interpretation – or ‘semiosis’ as Peirce would call it – in shaping individuals and societies. Building on the work of Thibault (1991; 1993), this study suggests that the Finns as a nation, have regular and repeatable patterns of meaning-making, which are typical of them, which help define and constitute a sense of a community, and to distinguish it from other communities and nations such as Russia.

Knowledge is not merely socially constructed but perpetually co-constructed by language and culture. As Vygotsky (1978) explains, an individual’s naked perceptual field is layered with additional meaning through language and culture. An individual, he states, does not simply see the world in color and shape, but also as a world with sense and meaning: “I do not merely see something round and black with two hands; I see a clock” (ibid., 39). The

analytical constructs derived from social semiotic theory do not provide a neutral or value-free “window” on an objective and pre-existent reality (Thibault 1993) nor can they determine how an individual reader might interpret the representations of the news items in a real social context. Including editorials, op-eds, and readers’ contributions in the analysis help formulate at least a suggestive impression of this process.

The Saussurean sign provides us with an analytical angle on this process. Signs have multiple meanings, which are profoundly relative to particular social settings, discourse, and context. Inspired by, though not directly based on, the work by Edensor (1998; 2002), Hall (1996) and Wodak (2004; 2008; also De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak 1999), several categories of signifiers can be discerned. *Activity* signifiers can be characterized as being of longer duration or having certain permanence, whereas *events* on the other hand are generally of one-time occurrence. *Places* refer to specific geographies and landscapes. *Objects* can be categorized either as being material culture or personifying certain groups. Lastly, *stories* refer to accounts, narratives, and myths. These main categories consist of multiple subcategories, 153 in total. The signified, Russia, is given meaning through the signifiers grouped here under five main categories, but the relationship between the two is in a constant state of flux as people connect form and meaning in ways deemed apt to the particular need and occasion. While a signifier may have a negative connotation at one time or on a specific place, in another period or region it may be the opposite.

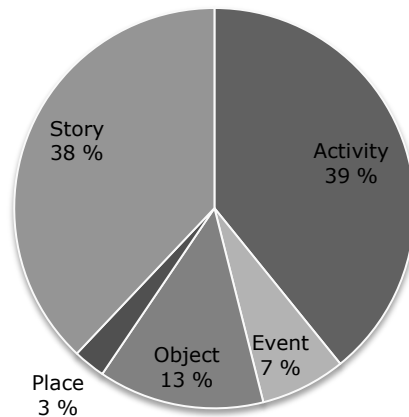


Figure 36. Share of signifier categories, per cent of the total

As Figure 36 implies, a vast majority (77 per cent) of all the analyzed writing fall under the main signifier categories of activity and story. Objects ranked the third, while events and in particular places were used seldom. These are, of

course, analytical distinctions to help structure the analysis. In practice, the categories are interrelated as many writings used more than one of them simultaneously. However, in most case the primal signifier was relatively obvious to indicate.

A more detailed analysis reveals that writings focusing on different topics use signifiers from different categories in forming the image of Russia (Figure 37). No fewer than 64 per cent of the stories dealt with security and foreign political issues while, for example, signifiers from a category ‘place’ were often used in environmental writings. Trade-related issues were most commonly brought up in relation to activities. The social aspect received a significant representation in all the categories, while culture and border management played in a miniscule role throughout the collected material.

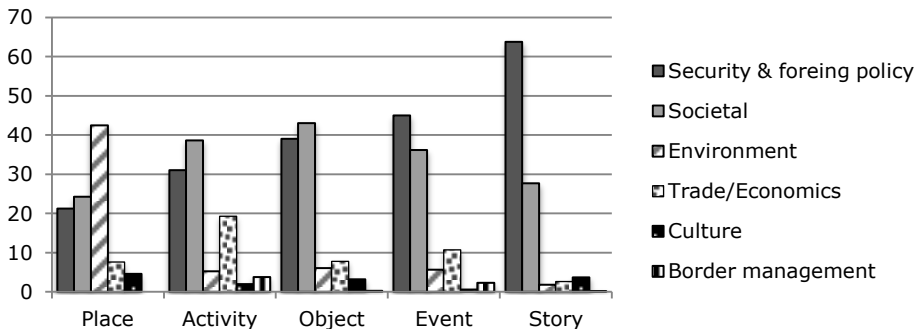


Figure 37. Sectors per main signifier categories, per cent of total

Out of the 153 signifiers that were distinguished from the analyzed material, 45 were used at least ten times (Table 5). Most commonly, Russia was approached through by commenting on its development or lack of it, followed by stories about the relations in general, the Karelian question in particular, but also through reinterpretations of the past. The meaning of Russia as an object was sought through four different connotations: 1) Russia as a cultural whole, as the ‘other,’ 2) Russian leadership and state level policies, 3) Russians as a nation and individual citizens, and 4) through the Russian minority in Finland. In addition, Russia was given meanings indirectly by referring to its actions and perceived attitudes with regard to other objects, most notably the Nordstream gas pipeline.

However, as table 6 summarizes, op-eds and editorials were largely analogous, but letters differed with relation to all the signifier categories. While the former focus on the development and events *in* Russia, the letters paid more attention to the Finnish relations *with* Russia.

Table 5. Main signifiers per category ( $n \geq 10$ ),  $n \geq 100$  in bold

ACTIVITIES		STORIES		OBJECTS		EVENTS		PLACES
<b>Russian development</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>FIN-USSR/Russia relations</b>	<b>148</b>	Russia as a country	81	Mishap in Russia	33	Baltic sea 28
Russia's actions	84	<b>Karelia question/Relocation of border</b>	<b>143</b>	Finnish leadership	74	Conflict/Disagreement	31	Karelia 19
Trade	69	<b>Historical review/Commentary</b>	<b>140</b>	Russians as a nation	57	Russian elections	24	
Transit traffic/Queues	58	<b>NATO</b>	<b>108</b>	Russian leadership	30	Border incident	16	
Managing Russia	55	Finland's position	94	Gas pipe	29	Critical review	12	
Cooperation/interaction	48	Perceived threat	62	Finland	25	Sign of strength	11	
Forming new relations	39	Russia as an int. actor	46	Rus. past leaders	21	Meeting/Conference	11	
Remigration	39	Scars of the past	36	Fin. past leaders	12			
Aid/charity work	34	EU-Russia	30	Russians in Finland	10			
Language question	31	Nation-building	24					
EU's influence/role	31	Finland as a mediator	15					
Defense	16	Lack of language/Knowledge	15					
Refugees	12	Wars	10					
Border control	10							

Table 6. Main signifiers by article type

	MAIN ACTIVITY	MAIN EVENT	MAIN OBJECT	MAIN PLACE	MAIN STORY
<b>Letters</b>	Cooperation/interaction	Conflict/disagreement	Finnish leadership vis-à-vis Russia	Karelia	Historical review/relocation of the border
<b>Op-eds</b>	Russian development	Mishap in Russia	Russia as a country	Baltic sea	Position of Finland
<b>Editorials</b>	Russian development	Mishap in Russia	Russia as a country	Baltic sea	Russia as an internat. actor

Signifiers used in forming the image have remained relatively stable during the years (Figure 38). The two main groups (activities and stories) stand out also when the material is studied on an annual basis. Due to the lack of personal connection and experiences, many Finns seem to build their image of Russia on broader descriptions and developments in the country as well as both internal

and foreign policy actions. Especially in the letters, different types of stories were commonly used to confirm the traditionalist perception of the Russian threat and inability to change with the help of historical evidence. The teachings of history were a pressing signifier, which were commonly referred to as side notes also in the writings that primarily focused on something else.

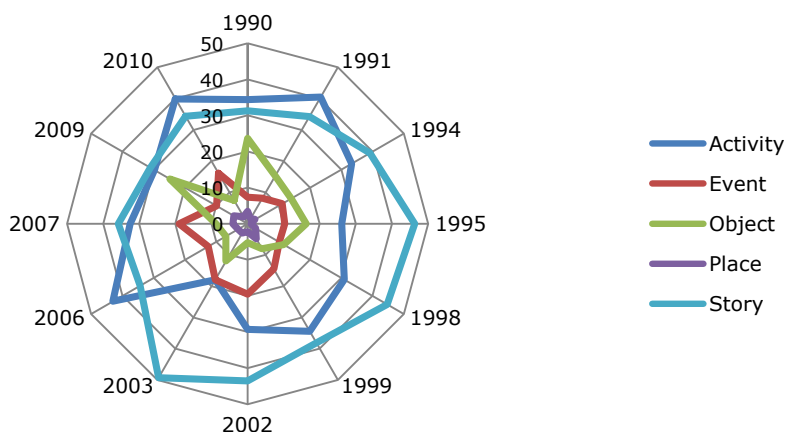


Figure 38. Signifier categories by year

While the signifiers used in forming the image has not changed much, the changing social and political context has influenced more the fluctuation of the signifiers within the five main signifier categories. Interestingly, the same signifier can stand for more than one signified, constituting in so doing a different sign. For example, when cross-border cooperation is talked about using Karelia as a signified, the tone is quite often positive, whereas when the signified is Russia, the tone is more often negative. Similarly, places and stories about Karelia had a positive, or at least neutral, take clearly more often than those depicting Russia as the signified.

Analysis of the different types of articles separately reveals that while most of the letters (48.0 %) were formulated as stories, activities (51.6 %) were the dominant signifier in editorials (Figure 39). In the op-eds, both activities (40.3 %) and stories (38.8 %) were used quite evenly. In particular, the contemporary and potential future trajectories in Russia were left for the editorials and op-eds. Instead, a vast majority of the letters dealt either with the past or more recent, local level concerns. The argumentation presented was typically based on personal experiences, though broad generalization was also often drawn based on them. The wars, the resultant border treaties, and the Karelian question caused by them were reinterpreted on numerous occasions, often without any clear goal. The following examples demonstrate typical formulations in the

letters: “Based on the experience from the Second World War, I believe that...“(L 14.2.2007); “I am probably not pouring too much oil on the fire a if I interpret that the Finns feel that Russia has not...” (L 7.7.2009).

Historical writings are always also political by their nature. They seek to manage the history and convince the other of what ‘really’ happened. The signifiers themselves are thus loaded with meaning and they are used to express, organize, and maintain shared ways of conceptualizing the image of Russia. Thus, the writings have also an ideological function, as they serve to convey ideological norms of a culture and naturalize the cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs as something self-evident and obvious. They are stimulated by the desire to create the ‘correct’ picture and to find the ‘truth,’ something to be shared and hailed.

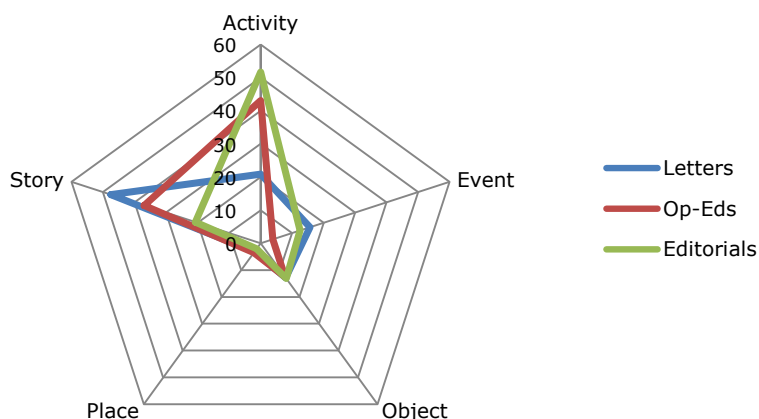


Figure 39. Signifiers per article type

Apart from year 1991, when the collapse of the Soviet Union drew attention to contemporary activities, stories formed the main category in the letters throughout the entire research period (Figure 40). The most common individual signifiers were (in order) 1) the Karelian question/relocation of border, 2) contemporary Finnish-Russian relations, 3) historical reviews and reinterpretations, 4) the NATO option and its impact on the Finnish-Russian relations, 5) Finland's position in Europe and its impact on the Finnish-Russian relations, and 6) Russia as a threat.

In the editorials and op-eds, the situation was the opposite as activities were clearly the most common signifier category with the exception of the 2003, when the upcoming EU enlargement brought about intense debate in the form of stories most notably about the position of Finland vis-à-vis the Baltic States in relation to Russia. In the editorials the most used signifiers which could be

categorized as activities were 1) Russian development, 2) Russia's foreign political actions, 3) internal management of Russia/domestic issues, 4) trade with Russia, and 5) attempts to forming new relations unhindered by the experiences of the past. The same signifiers ranked on the top also in the op-eds, thought also stories about history events, Finland's positions, NATO, and EU-Russia relations were brought up.

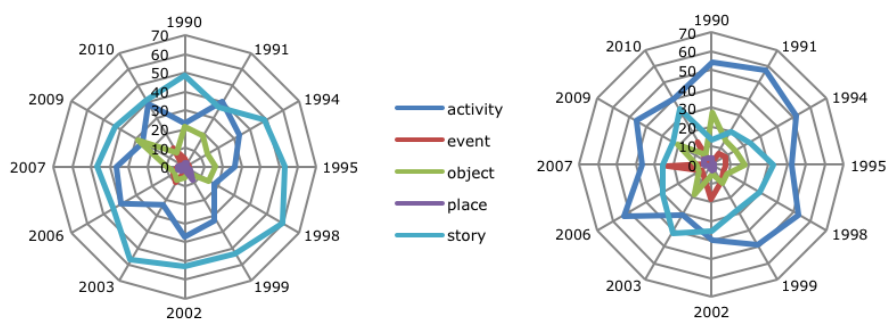


Figure 40. Signifier categories per year in letters (left) and editorials and op-eds (right)

The research on Russia has the advantage that every Finn, particularly those past the middle age, has something to say about the topic. Many letters conformed to the Paasikivian doctrine that wisdom begins with the recognition of facts, and in order to improve relations, Russia ought to acknowledge what in Finland is largely perceived as downright wrongdoings. Particularly the Karelia question transformed during the years to be increasingly more about principle and less about practice, from a possible reality to a fading myth. Given the aging population, the direct links to the lost areas have become fewer and farther between. Accordingly, the analyzed material suggests that the connotation of Karelia has been transforming from one of geographical area or a concrete place to more of a state of mind, the discussion of which now serves more of a therapeutic function than anything else.

Out of the main categories used, events (65.0 %) followed by activities (58.1 %) depicted the most negative image of Russia (65.0 %) (Figure 41). 'Story' was the only category in which less than 50 per cent of all writings in that category were negative – but only barely. While story was the most neutral category, it was places and object that were used, in relational terms, more often to convey a positive image of Russia.



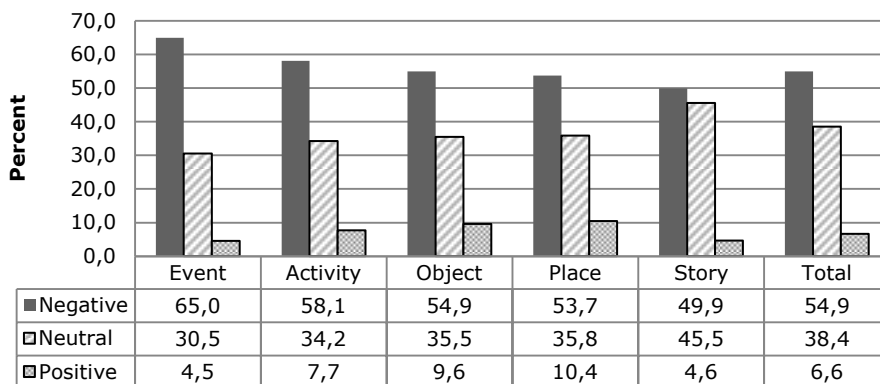


Figure 41. Tone of analyzed articles by signifier category

As table 7 indicates, there are again clear differences between the letters and the op-eds and editorials. With the exception of stories, the op-eds and editorials were generally more negative towards Russia than the letters. The difference gets emphasized in particular in the smallest categories, places and events, as though given the small sample size the statistical representation of the results are somewhat decreased. Thus, the greatest statistical difference can be found in the activity category, which was used clearly more negatively in the op-eds than in the letters.

Table 7. Tone of analyzed articles, letters vis-à-vis editorials and op-eds

LETTERS TO EDITOR				Signifier	OP-EDS and EDITORIALS			
Total number	Positive	Neutral	Negative		Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total number
421	9.5	47.3	43.2	<ACTIVITY>	68.7	24.9	6.4	591
59	5.1	49.2	45.8	<EVENT>	74.6	21.2	4.2	118
180	11.7	36.1	52.2	<OBJECT>	57.9	34.8	7.3	164
34	14.7	47.1	38.2	<PLACE>	69.7	24.2	6.1	33
643	3.3	44.9	51.8	<STORY>	46.3	46.6	7.1	337
<b>1337</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<TOTAL>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>1243</b>

In the letters, places, most commonly Karelia, serve as the most positive signifier in forming the image of Russia. In the editorials and op-eds, places were used very negatively, but here the main signifier was also different: the Baltic Sea. The

most positive signifier category for the editorials and op-eds was object. Most of these writing depicted Russia as an important neighbor that had a lot give, mainly in terms of trade, for Finland. Nevertheless, in all signifier categories Russia gets portrayed in overwhelmingly negative terms.

The social and political events seem to have an influence in the fluctuation in the signifiers according to which the image of Russia is formed. While the building blocks have remained rather stable, as activities and stories dominated the entire 20-year study period, the image of Russia is nevertheless constantly made afresh as various signifiers are used during different times and in different contexts and to address different topics. This is to say that image of Russia has not been evolving so much from one to another but that Russia is rather seen differently through different thematic fields and at different levels. As a global superpower, Russia looks very different than it does as a next-door neighbor with whom daily practicalities need to be taken care of.

The Saussurean assertion about the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified is, when taken outside linguistics, difficult to verify. Instead, this study leans towards Barthes' claim that the signifiers themselves are coded and loaded with meaning. The *denotation* and *connotation* of a particular signifier are interlinked and as such they construct a message – a myth, as Barthes would call it. This myth serves to maintain largely invented, imaginary, unproved or over even false collective beliefs that are in turn used to justify the socially constructed image, in this case, of Russia. The signs are thus produced by this myth, but they also serve to maintain it.

# *6 Civil Society Engagement: Institutional Practices*

Whereas the previous chapter focuses on the discursive practices of civil society through the analysis of newspapers material, this chapter focuses on the institutional practices of civil society. Two datasets are used to provide different, yet mutually complementary, perspectives on the studied phenomenon. The two perspectives are intertwined as when conducting the interviews, it became clear that it is with the public debate rather than the official rhetoric that civil society actors are more familiar.

Whereas the discursive practices studied above illuminate how the image of Russia is formed in the public debate, the interview material presented in this chapter is used to investigate civil society as a sphere of organization and the institutional practices that have influenced, and been influenced by, the perceptions fostered. The image of Russia impacts and even directs civil society engagement in CBC, yet at the same time the increased knowledge gained through thought cooperation influences the image of Russia that the civil society actors hold. A positive image is, therefore, not only a result of CBC practices but also its prerequisite. It has to be kept in mind that the interviews were conducted in late 2007, 2008, and 2009, and naturally much has since taken place. With the help of the discursive context above, the interview material can, however, be situated within its own timeframe.

Civil society has begun to occupy a major role in the development of Finnish-Russian CBC. In the European comparison, the Finnish-Russian case stands out, however, in a number of respects, which need to be understood when cross-border practices are studied. The Finnish-Russian border region is very sparsely populated with continually dwindling numbers, especially amongst its younger denizens. Distances are long, and the urban centers are situated far away from each other. These geographical and sociological constraints together with the insufficient number and uneven distribution of border-crossing points hinder CBC's potential (see European Commission Communication "Wider Europe – Neighborhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors," e.g., Németh et al. 2012 for more details). As a result, Finnish-Russian cooperation cannot in many cases be characterized as being cross-border cooperation, but rather as interregional cooperation – in practice, remote or telecooperation – where transnational, though often virtual, networks play a crucial role. The border, then, only increases the relative distance, posing a

barrier in terms of marking a difference between two very different cultures, languages, political systems, living conditions, and the like. All this undoubtedly makes the basis of cooperation challenging.

## **6.1 ACTORS ACTIVE IN CROSS-BORDER INTERACTION**

Despite the burdensome geographical constraints, the historical burden and strict border crossing procedures, and the insufficient number and uneven distribution of border-crossing points, Finnish-Russian CBC has become more nuanced and balanced during the last two decades. Certainly, the CSOs operating across the Finnish-Russian border face now a rather different reality than they have in the past. The superficial friendship rhetoric of the past has turned into more pragmatic cooperation based on a rather realist evaluation of the situation, which in turn has allowed the formation of a more voluntary friendship. The increased permeability of the border together with increased (potential) funding options has brought about new kind of possibilities, even if grasping them has proven to be easier said than done. While there has been a gradual growth of cross-border ties amongst civil society organizations, for some maintaining these relations have been too much to handle. The organizations interviewed for this study confirmed Skvortsova's (2005, 37) finding that even though the basic situation is a positive one, in many cases the upsurge of cooperation has been closely suggestive of a love story in which two partners meet, fall in love, marry, only to become disappointed and finally get divorced.

The core of the cooperation is heavily based on very few key networks actors. A lot of local level work has been and is done, which does not become visible through the analysis of different programs or funding instruments. Even if cooperation across the border has been troublesome and even disappointing for many individual actors and organizations, the networks have managed to keep up active cooperation across the border already for a long time – heedless of individual project time frames or funding periods. It is exactly this type of long-term cooperation that is perceived as most beneficial by the actors themselves. Even if short term projects, for which funding is often easier to find, may be efficient in avoiding endless debates of which principles should frame cooperation or focusing a particular issues or a problem, they often do not produce the broader and longer term objectives originally set out in the PCA, neither do they contribute to any major extent to the creation of social capital and more constructive dialogue between the neighbors, which is in turn likely to create more proponents of deeper integration. More long-term cooperation certainly requires resilience, patience, and flexibility; that is precisely what makes it rarer, though not nonexistent.

### **6.1.1 Thematic Focus of Cross-Border Interaction**

The thematic focus of cooperation has changed only little during the last two decades. More importantly, the activity sectors are clustered geographically. The social and health sector is by far the most visible and active in CBC at the Finnish-Russian border. Reasons for this are multiple. The economic and political transformation in Russia was pushed forward at a very high social cost. The rapid changes in the general social situation and the drastic weakening of the country's economy had the most negative impact on those who occupied the most precarious positions in terms of social welfare and health. A difficult economic and social situation in the 1990s led to the establishment of self-help groups and new NGOs for distribution and administration of humanitarian aid and support from the Western countries.

In Finland, the social and health CSOs have long already been important players in the Finnish society. In conjunction to the construction of the Finnish welfare state, some CSOs began to be regarded as serious partners for other sectors, if not semi-authorities. Given their vast practical knowledge, social CSOs hold great potential as CBC actors. As a result, the Finnish working model was simply stretched to cover also cooperation with Russia, where there was great demand for social and health services. This was, of course, helped by the fact that the social and health sector had long been one of the main priority sectors defined by the Finnish state, and thus there has been a continued flow of funding available for activities and projects concerned, inter alia, with public health promotion (diabetes, epilepsy, cancer), welfare for the aged and the disabled, social exclusion, and mental health, as well as substance abuse and for the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The large number of social, especially health-related, CSOs is also partly explained by the fact that they are well networked.

Culture has also been an important sphere of cross-border activities. The Finno-Ugric nationalistic movements in the Republic of Karelia were the first ones to institutionally transform into NGOs in the beginning of perestroika. Cooperation with Finnish partners followed soon after. Whereas many older Finnish cultural CSOs focus on Karelia, the newer ones see the metropolis of St. Petersburg as a fascinating target. All in all, cultural cooperation has been developing from traditional friendship and twinning activities to more substantial forms of cooperation focusing, for example, on multidisciplinary art, children's and youth's projects, tolerance education, diversified educational projects, artistic and traditional handicrafts, literature, literary art and library cooperation, cultural heritage, and tourism and traveling but also on cooperation in cultural administration and governance.

In 2000, the Finnish-Russian Cultural Forum was developed as a result of cooperation between the Finland-Russia society, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Russian Federation Ministry of Culture. The forum seeks to activate and promote direct cultural cooperation between CSOs, cultural institutions, and artists by helping participants to find partners and

launch joint ventures, by arranging continuous partnership activities, including an annual Forum arranged alternately in Finland and Russia, and supporting cooperation between the Finnish and Russian cultural administration. Between 2000 and 2011, altogether 1,574 project proposals have been made within the Forum.

There are also a variety of religious and spiritual CSOs operating across the Finnish-Russian border. In particular in the 1990s, numerous Finnish parishes were involved in development, humanitarian, social/welfare, missionary or simply friendship work in Russia. In Finland, the Evangelical Lutheran Church plays a central role in promoting societal cohesion and combating social exclusion. It forms a central element of the Finnish civil society and an essential factor of the identity of many Finns (see Yeung 2003). The social work of the church has long been a central element of the Finnish welfare model and thus also suitable for being extended to CBC.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland cooperates on educational, diaconal, and child welfare and youth work with the cross-border churches. Also the Finn Church Aid (FCA) has a wide global network and established, direct, local contacts. Especially during the late 1980s and 1990s, the FCA was exceedingly active in advocacy work and development cooperation in Russia. However, as the FCA works to help the world's most vulnerable and poorest people, Russia has not anymore been given the top priority due to its improved economic situation.

The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church has also been conducting fruitful bilateral ecumenical talks with the Russian Orthodox Church since the 1970s. The negotiations have mainly been theological in nature. Likewise, there have been doctrinal discussions with the Finnish Orthodox Church. Characteristic of these talks has been that two churches, living in the same social context but in different traditions, have been able to view together their own conceptions, and those of the other party, on important theological and pastoral questions. Discussions like these increase the mutual understanding and tolerance of the churches.

The economic CSOs work with activities with the objective to promote and advice economic activities such as rural entrepreneurship or tourism in order to implement a new type of economic cooperation culture between the two countries, which would then consolidate the region's business life, economy, employment, and services. Also trade unions have, yet again, become more active in interaction. Bilateral interaction between Finnish and Soviet trade unions began during the 1970s. The interaction of the times consisted mainly of official delegation visits from side to side on a regular basis. Also a number of declarations concerning cooperation were drafted, yet most of them led to little action in practice. As the Soviet Union collapsed, the setting began to transform. The 1990s was a period of transition, which ultimately led to the new phase of multilateral cooperation. Today, the Finnish-Russian cooperation between trade

unions is administrated through international umbrella organizations and networks. However, Finnish organizations see still a need to maintain also bilateral relations with Russia. All the three Finnish central organizations (STTK, SAK, and Akava) interact jointly with the Russian trade union movement, particularly with the Moscow-based Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR), by far the Russia's largest national trade union center. Also individual unions have direct bilateral links to Russia.

Since the Finnish EU membership the EU-funding has been used for various educational projects in Russia, mainly in the Republic of Karelia, but later also in Kaliningrad. In practice, the focus of cooperation has included educational projects regarding social dialogue, advocating, and protecting workers' rights due to increased movement of labor and cooperation with employers' organization and authorities as well as improving the general image of trade unions in Russia. In Russia, the number of trade union members has decreased drastically, and the reasons for this are numerous. Breaking the overall image and the legal stranglehold of the Soviet-era trade union structure on the provision of social security benefits has been crucial in enabling new unions to gain legitimacy in the eyes of workers. For many in Russia, the entire trade union movement appears still as a burden. Also relative poverty and a gray economy reduce the eagerness to participate and pay the required dues.

Cooperation has become increasingly multilateral. In addition to the global level, the International Trade Union Confederation, and the European Trade Union Confederation, as well as the Pan-European Regional Council, cooperation takes place within a sub-regional context. The Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN) was established in Helsinki in July 1999 in connection with the European Trade Union Confederation Congress. The network works as a forum where by the trade union confederations of the Baltic Sea Region exchange information and discuss and define common interests. BASTUN aims at political and social influencing, coordinates joint projects, many of which are run by EU funds, and raises issues related to the Baltic Sea Region within the international trade union family. Two Russian unions (the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia and the All-Russia Confederation of Labor) are members of the network. The trade unions of the Baltic State's have brought in needed knowledge about the situation and working culture in Russia, which has been for the Finnish trade unions at times difficult to come to terms with. Through BASTUN, both Finnish and Russian trade unions participate in the activities of relevant international organizations in the region (The Council of Baltic Sea States, Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Council and the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being).

Also the Finnish chambers of commerce, particularly those located in Eastern Finland, are increasingly active in relation to Russia. Chambers of commerce

operate at the interface between private and public sectors; as a rule the chambers of commerce promote the business environment by provide training, up-to-date information on economic management, legal advice, tax counseling, advice on export documents, etc. Furthermore, the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce (FRCC)<sup>69</sup>, a registered non-profit association founded in 1946, offers companies focusing particularly in Russian trade various services in the fields of market research, company operation, export promotion, training, information, and consultation. The FRCC is a lobby organization for its members; through various working groups and projects the board members and the operative management seek to influence issues, which hinder the development of trade between the countries. By the end of 2010, the FRCC numbered around 850 members, about 750 of which are Finnish and some 100 Russian.

Chambers of commerce are, by their nature, clearly more business-oriented than most of the other CSOs included in this study. Hence, they are also driven by a different operational logic, as their aim is to promote Finnish interests rather than cooperation as a value of its own. In addition to operating bilaterally, the Finnish Chambers of Commerce are part of larger supranational networks, such as Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA) and the European Association of Chambers of Commerce (EUROCHAMBRES), both of which also have Russian members. Both bilateral and multilateral cooperation is today heavily financed by EU funding mechanisms.

Also various expert and development organizations have become more active internationally since early 1990s. As an example, Pro Agria is the leading agricultural expert organization in Finland, the main goal of which is to serve its members, mainly rural entrepreneurs, in Finland by providing comprehensive farming and business consultation to enhance their production, profitability, and broader rural development. However, at the same time, Pro Agria is an association of public utility, which is involved in development work in Russia. It carries out work that is in the interest of the public organizations (state or regional councils) and receives also funding from them. The work includes mainly the transfer of knowledge and know-how across the border in order to vitalize Karelian agricultural production.

Pure forms of political cooperation are rare, but the operations of many CSOs' have political nuances. Due to the broad differences in today's party politics between the countries, the cooperative links between actual parties are infrequent. However, many Finnish parties have sub-groups, which are more involved in CBC. Good examples of these are Svenska Kvinnoförbundet, the women's organization of the Swedish People's Party and the Green Women's Association, which is the women's association of the political party known as the Green League of Finland. However, these groups work for their specific cause (in these cases, women's rights), the actual political content being on the

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<sup>69</sup> The Finnish-Soviet Chamber of Commerce until the collapse of the Soviet Union.



background. Nevertheless, due to their political background and links, they form an important and a well-functioning channel for their CSO partners to get their voices heard by the political elite not only in Finland, but also at the Nordic, EU, and UN levels. Also some political youth organizations have voiced their interest in cooperation. Another example is formed by certain children's activity organizations, which also function as a special interest group for children in political discussion. In practice, the international cooperation here commonly takes place in the form of camps where children from Finland and Russia and various other countries spend time together.

An interesting and rather recent example of politically nuanced cooperation is the Finnish-Russian Civic Forum. The forum was established in 2007 sparked by the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, seen as a sad manifestation of the current situation and development of Russian society. The objective of the forum is to promote interaction and cooperation between citizens and peoples of Finland and Russia by supporting and strengthening civil society contacts across the border. Despite its long and influential line-up of key Finnish political actors, being an association, rather than a governmental body, the forum has already been willing and able to address the Russian situation more outspokenly than the government ever could. For example, the Forum played a key role in helping the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society, which was liquidated by a court decision based on the new NGO law in Russia, to get registered in Finland in order to continue monitoring the situation with human rights in Chechnya. The Forum is also a participant in the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum (est. 2011), a permanent common platform for cooperation and coordination of civil society organizations from Russia and the EU. During its so far short existence, the Forum has managed to establish itself as umbrella organization competing in friendly terms with the Finland-Russia Society by providing a well-need alternative approach to the decades old friendship model.

An important platform for a security-related discussion is provided by the Finnish Committee for European Security (STETE), the members of which consist of all the leading Finnish political parties and other political organizations, the trade union movement, the women's, youth, student and peace organizations, as well as other NGOs. Its executive committee consists of representatives of leading political parties. The underlying design of STETE is to facilitate networking and cooperation between politicians, officials, and civic society actors between all Baltic Sea countries in order to create a fruitful base for common future challenges. STETE's idea is "to include decision makers in the dialogue, but still offer an unofficial platform for discussion and open the door for sensitive matters." As an example, STETE together with its Finnish NGO partners organized an international NGO-based forum in Helsinki in December 2–3, 2008 in connection with the 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council hosted by the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship. The OSCE Civil Society Forum concentrated on the OSCE's human dimension issues and gave the participating

civil society actors a possibility to carry their recommendations for the high-level discussions of the Ministerial Council.

Other organizations active in Russia consist mainly of human rights association such as Amnesty International and the Finnish League for Human Rights, which are religiously and politically non-aligned yet have a strong societal influence through, for example, giving statements and disseminates information about human rights. Both organizations operate in Russia mainly through or in cooperation with their European or Global level bodies. It must also be noted that there is small, but relative loud independent citizen movement, Pro Karelia, the aim of which is to return the Finnish Karelia, ceded to the Soviet Union as a result of the Second World War, back to the context of Finland and the EU. According to their vision, returning Karelia back to Finland would only strengthen the neighborly relations and contribute positively to the development and prosperity of the Eastern parts of Finland and in the southwest parts of Russia.

The environmental cooperation between Finland and Soviet Union commenced already in 1970s, when a scientific-technical cooperation agreement was signed between Finland and the Soviet Union. However, back then the CSOs in the Soviet side were scarce as a consequence of which Finnish CSOs cooperated directly with Soviet Ministries, authorities, research institutions or individual activities. Meetings, seminars, and expeditions were organized alternately in both countries. The very first concrete result of the cooperation was the establishment of Friendship Park consisting of areas on the both sides of the Finnish-Russian border with the objective of protecting nature in the border region, increasing nature conservation cooperation and initiation of further joint research projects.

Already around 1970s satellite pictures illustrated a green belt of old-growth forest along the Finnish-Russian border, which has been largely untouched due to the strictly restricted access to the border area. However, at the end of 1980s the Soviet Union made the military border zones narrower, thus enabling people to visit the border areas. It was at this point that the economic potential of these areas began to be exploited, prompting the Finns to interfere by offering information on the old-growth forests and their natural values. The first government-to-government agreement was signed in 1985.

The new program for cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe launched by the Ministry of the Environment in 1991 formed a new tool for cooperation. An inventory project on border forests was carried out jointly with the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences from 1992–1994. The establishment of a Strict Nature Reserve in Paatsjoki in 1992 initiated the trilateral nature conservation cooperation between Finland, Norway, and Russia in Northern Lapland. Cooperation in the Murmansk region began in 1994 when a protected area was re-established in Kutsa. Cooperation in the Leningrad region began in 1994 with the planning of a natural reserve in the eastern

archipelago of the Gulf of Finland. Protected areas have been planned also for the Karelian Isthmus and for the St. Petersburg area in connection with the Finnish-Russian Development Program on Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation of Biological Diversity in Northwest Russia. Plans for the management and use of the proposed protected areas have also been prepared through the support of the Tacis program.

The Finnish-Russian Development Program on Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation of Biological Diversity in Northwest Russia was initiated in 1997 with the aim of coordinating forestry and nature conservation cooperation between Finland and Russia, and extending international cooperation in this domain. The objective of the program was to promote the ecologically balanced development of the forest sector and the protection of nature areas. The program's nature conservation projects are being carried out in the Republic of Karelia, in the regions of Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Leningrad, and Vologda, and in the City of St. Petersburg. The program had links with a number of other international programs, e.g., with the EU Nordic Dimension forestry program as well as with the Barents and the Arctic Councils. Furthermore, the International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region (HCF) was established in order to improve and coordinate nature conservation protection between Finland, Russia, Sweden, and Norway in 1999.

A number of projects have received additional support from the EU. The nature inventories carried out on the Green Belt and the protected area proposals from 1999–2001 were continued through the Karelian Parks project implemented by Metsähallitus Consulting. The EU Tacis program provided the support enabling the drawing up of plans for management and utilization of the proposed protected areas of in a number of locations. The initiatives were implemented in order to develop the infrastructure of the protected areas, and to promote their establishment and their future as areas for eco-tourism.

All in all, the environmental cooperation at the Finnish-Russian border has developed clearly from bilateral towards multilateral, broader international cooperation. A number of cooperation projects that were originally being implemented bilaterally between Russia and Finland, Sweden or Norway have subsequently become multilateral projects implemented by all four countries. Similar networks have been created around the Baltic Sea region, a visibility and status of which has skyrocketed during the very recent years. Recently, the principal fields for cooperation have been pollution reduction in and around the Baltic Sea, improved oil spill management capacity, enhanced control of hazardous substances, sustainable forestry and nature conservation, and strengthened environmental management. Geographically, the environmental NGOs have formed their own multilateral networks within the Barents region in the north and Baltic region in the south, while the environmental cooperation with Russia Karelia has remained more bilateral.

### **6.1.2 Cooperation in the Area of Regional Development<sup>70</sup>**

Post-Soviet political transformations not only focused attention on local welfare systems and the need to develop them; economic development issues also came to the forefront of Finnish-Russian cooperation agendas. The collapse of state enterprises, ensuing economic crisis and a lack of investment capital in Russia affected Finland as well – dependency on Soviet markets resulted in a severe crisis of the Finnish economy in the 1990s. Again, self-interest dictated a need for cooperation. While this took place at a bilateral level, much concrete, project-based work was again regionally focused on the two Karelias. Similar to the case of regional social welfare cooperation, economic development strategies for the Finnish-Russian borderland emerged out of horizontally organized networks. In addition to CSOs, also public agencies and private firms have been heavily invested in cross-border project development focusing particularly on tourism, industrial cooperation, and institutional aid for business development.

Tourism especially is seen as one the most promising areas of economic development on both sides of the border as it provides a strategy of diversification for local economies heavily dependent upon forestry, wood processing, paper pulp production, and mining (see Izotov & Laine 2012). Partnerships between non-profit business development organizations, firms, and local and regional agencies have emerged and have targeted small businesses in Russian cities such as Sortavala and Finnish cities such as Joensuu, Ilomantsi, and Lieksa. Due to the rapid increase in foreign, primarily Finnish, visitors during the first half of 1990s, Sortavala experienced a boom in small hotels, restaurants, and the related services. Nevertheless, a lack of amenities, the poor state of infrastructure, and low standards degraded Sortavala's image as a tourist destination. Development activities were thus put in place and investments sought to achieve a 'European level' of services. Another strategy was the promotion of expertise in gastronomy and hotel entrepreneurship through professional training. Public attention was drawn to the need to improve roads and thus the accessibility of the region and its attractions. In general, CSOs played a key role in improving the image of the region as a binational tourist destination and in improving the skills of local entrepreneurs to market their products.

Further exchanges between Sortavala and Finnish border cities were promoted through the means of professional training as well as transfer of best practices and methods used in Finland. For example, the newly inaugurated Continuing Education Centre in Sortavala began to provide training for the unemployed, business training seminars were organized, and joint international education, in particular related to the development of small businesses in the border area, was commenced. Finnish CSOs have offered joint courses aimed at training qualified restoration and construction workers in order to upkeep the

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<sup>70</sup> This section builds on Scott and Laine (2012).

traditional wooden houses and other valuable buildings. While these measures have helped protect the Finnish legacy in Sortavala, they have also helped improve the general image of the city. Business development support of a more material nature has also been supplied: computers, machines, tools, and equipment have been provided as part of attempts to strengthen local enterprises in Russia.

Economic development cooperation at a more regional level is another important aspect of the work of CSO and multi-actor cross-border networks. The focus here has been on strengthening the industrial base, which on both sides of the border is largely extractive (forestry, paper, and mining). With EU and Finnish government funding, projects have been carried out that target joint marketing strategies, technological innovation, and industrial diversification.

A further institutional 'third sector' strategy with which to promote cross-border regional development took shape with the creation of Euregio Karelia in 2000. As already discussed in the subsection 4.5.3, this ambitious initiative was based on the claim that cooperation would be able to overcome gaps in standards of living and improve the general economic and social development prospects on both sides of the border. Utilizing funds provided by the EU and other sources, the Euroregion facilitated numerous projects between 2001 and 2008 that involved local and regional governments, CSOs, universities, and enterprises. From the beginning, the key figures behind the initiative promoted their institutional structure as a new European CBC model. The idea was that as the EU enlarged eastwards, joint administrative structures with Russian regional authorities would gain broader European significance (Cronberg 2000, Cronberg 2003). In the planning phase of Euregio Karelia, Tarja Cronberg, head of the Regional Council of Finnish North Karelia, even anticipated that, "common decision-making procedures and common funds [would] create a foundation for establishing new border region identities" (Cronberg & Shlyamin 1999, 25–26).

### **6.1.3 Examples of Cooperation in Entrepreneurial Development<sup>71</sup>**

Promoting entrepreneurial development in Russia is a considerable challenge given the lack of credit for smaller firms and a less than helpful institutional environment that limits access to markets. CBC driven by Finnish non-profit and profit-oriented organizations in cooperation with Russian local governments is an experimental field of business development and vocational training. One example of this is the St. Petersburg Business Campus Bench learning Network, which aims to improve the operational abilities of Finnish small and medium-size companies (SMEs) in the St. Petersburg region. The Campus is coordinated by the Baltic Institute of Finland in close collaboration with the City of St. Petersburg and is co-financed by the EU and the Finnish Ministry of Employment and Trade. To improve the operational abilities of participating

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<sup>71</sup> This section builds on Scott and Laine (2012).

firms, the network applies advanced learning processes and helps to develop leadership and professional skills to better adapt to new business environments. While the main objective of the Campus is to facilitate market access for Finnish SMEs, it is reciprocal in the sense that the Campus offers high-level vocational and linguistic training for Russian participants (i.e., actual and potential employees of Finnish firms). All in all, the Campus is designed to enhance international networking and collaboration between regional authorities, universities, technology centers and enterprises. In addition, the project aims to ensure better cooperation possibilities between Russia and the EU in the field of fostering innovations.

Another example of business development through CBC is the Technopolis PLC, a Finnish corporation that pursues aims of social entrepreneurship by marketing a service concept that addresses the needs of young technology companies. Technopolis provides premises, business and development services that it sells to client firms in order to finance its long-term operations of business promotion. As part of its activities, Technopolis provides services in contexts where traditional models of high-tech incubators are difficult to implement. The Technopolis St. Petersburg project aims to create a functional business environment for both Russian and international companies in order that they may focus on core activities.<sup>72</sup>

## **6.2 A GENDERED CIVIC SECTOR?**

Interconnections between gender, civil society and political citizenship have been the popular topic in Finland but even more in post-Soviet Russia during the recent years (Salmenniemi 2005). The gendered, in practice female dominated, nature of civic activity became also apparent in the joint Finnish-Russian cooperative context, yet it became manifested rather differently on different sides. In general terms, this occurred in two dimensions. The first one concerns the overall, 'natural' according to some, gender dimension of the CSOs involved in cross-border cooperation. A majority of interviewees brought up the relatively strong feminine composition of CSOs involved in CBC, which can, however, at least partly be explained by the fact CBC is heavily dominated by the field of social welfare and health, which have traditionally been, and still is, dominated by women.

The second dimension of the gender sector is the special gender specific organizations; i.e., women's organizations. As the gender policy in terms of women's rights promotion is very central in the Finnish political agenda, the Finnish CSOs often bring the discussion of these issues into the Russian context as well. The women's movement, an interviewee explicitly suggested, has a

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<sup>72</sup> See: [www.technopolis.fi](http://www.technopolis.fi).

“tendency to seek partners and really gain mutual understanding” even though it was clear that there was “a difference in mentality – such as biological essentialism” between the partners separated by the border (F #14).

Indeed, the overall cause seems to be an enabling factor here. Even though on many occasions the work is carried out by small scale, pragmatic projects, the CBC with Russian CSOs is framed as a part of greater goal of working towards helping women and children all over the world. In this manner, the CBC is not seen as bilateral cooperation between Finland and Russia, but rather connections with Russia are made by way of participating in international organizations, such as the Soroptimist International. A common agenda is easy to find, as for this sector...

...the motivation is the same all over the world...the same ideals, the same values, the same work for peace, and helping women and children. All our members, we are equal in our organization, and they are giving us a lot of information and we are returning our information and our friendship. It goes both ways. Russia’s no exception. (F #23)

The importance of the gender aspect mirrors the main features of the cooperation in general; as Finnish partners are more active initiators and fundraisers of joint projects, they also have more influence on setting agendas and cooperation priorities. The Russian interviewees agreed that the dominance of the social and health sector is mainly a result of Finnish priorities. For Russian CSOs and local and regional authorities, these priorities were also very easy to understand, accept, and implement as they matched well with the needs of the Russian side. This has resulted in the discussion of these issues in Russia as well and in the promotion of a more critical understanding of what ‘gender’ issues in Russia actually entail. In order to comprehend the contextual differences and the asymmetrical setting between the countries and the issues that the CSOs face today, a glance at the history may be in order.

### **6.2.1 Finland: A Genderless Gender Sector**

In contrast to the characteristic desire of organizations in the Anglo-Saxon world to create a new active civic identity divided between the public and private spheres, creating two unique forms of participation for men and for women; in Finland such a division has been absent. Already early on, both men and women were equally suitable for representing the ‘people’ and the ‘will of the people’ (Liikanen 1995). Both men and women worked together in the organizations and the distinctions between sexes were taken with the same naturalness as in the agrarian community in general.

Men and women had their own places and duties, yet the interrelationship between the sexes formed a functional entity, which was not divided into the spheres of public and private. (Sulkunen 1987, 170; cf. Haavio-Mannila 1968.)

They had, in effect, created a 'gender contract' in the same essence that states may create social contracts with its citizens. It has been argued that both Finnishness and gender share the idea of sameness, which creates 'genderless gender' in the Finnish gender order (Kortteinen 1992). As argued by Lempiäinen (2000), Finnishness positions gender ideologically into a certain frame of thought, and in that way it stops the flow of gendered meanings. This, then, creates an area of sameness, one system instead of two areas; "the sexual difference, the idea of two different worlds, is understood with one logic, through one template."

The lack of stark separation of public and private life, and thus of men and women, already during the initial stage of the organizational expansion in Finland has been one of the most distinctive features of Finnish organizations. The fact that the non-gendered organizational model endured for long as a central feature of the entire organizational arena can then be seen as a result of the dominant position of agriculture as well as the strong agrarian tradition among the urban population in Finland. The activeness of women did not lead only to the improvement of the status of women but was reflected in a non-gender-specific reform movement advocating the status of all of the disenfranchised groups.

It was only later on when the organizational model began to acquire a more voluntary basis that the collective structure began to break down. The formerly coherent world view of the people was divided into separate life spheres and in this process also the role of sexes was reorganized according to the interests of these specific spheres. Perhaps, the most obvious development in this respect was that men, by far more than women, became politicized. Women, in turn, privatized the domesticity and societal caretaking as a feminine life sphere making themselves, in consequence, the basis of social moral. This, according to Sulkunen (1987, 172), was not, by any means, an act against men but, on the contrary, under such a division of labor women purposefully absolved men from these duties, enabling them to focus on anchoring the capitalist, 'immoral,' method of production and erecting the public bourgeois social structure. The legacy of this specification is clearly visible today.

The women's organization interviewed in Finland did, however, see the development somewhat differently. According to a representative of National Council of Women of Finland, many feminists in Finland do not agree with Sulkunen's opinions (F #9). On the contrary, according to her, it was never a 'purposeful' act on the part of Finnish women to leave the public sphere to men and turn to focus on domestic duties. This was never a choice but rather a continued flow of the status quo, since women in Finland were 'granted' the right to vote in 1906 because they were not considered full citizens, and therefore under the guardianship of their husbands or fathers until 1929. This means that women were politically, publicly, and economically active prior to



gaining the right to vote, being active especially in the underground movement against the Russian empire.

After 1906, the first women Parliamentarians, according to Kuusipalo (2000) and a representative of the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations (F #14), immediately began working on social welfare issues, child care, and education because they had experience in this area and because the male politicians did not as they were not interested in issues of this nature; i.e., not because the women "chose" domesticity and issues related to it. "That actually was good for us, how else would our 'welfare' Finland been born?" (F #9). The public sphere outside social work and care, therefore, had "always belonged to men... there is a saying in Finnish: 'world is the man's home, home is the woman's world' and although the early suffragettes worked to change this, it took time for other women to realize this possibility – still many women thought and continue to think that politics is not for 'real' women" (F #9). Civil society, therefore, often remains the only way women can access and participate in the public sphere: through social work, "filling in the gaps."

In the field of social and health, the dominance of women is clearly more striking than in any other fields of the civil society. The fact that these organizations have gained a strong and visible footing in the Finnish society (according to statistics, 74 per cent of the volunteer workers in the field of social and health are women), most famously in connection with the formation of the welfare state, has made the entire civic activity to appear fairly feminine. Explanations for female activeness ranged from upbringing to having no choice:

I just think that it's the way we've [women] been brought up. We want to take the responsibilities that the government doesn't – to fill in the gaps. And I think in Russia... women are feeling that if they don't do their share, no one will.... We [women] think that it [taking care] belongs to us... if we didn't start it, men wouldn't have started it at all. They couldn't have cared less... (F #9)

[W]e wanted to get rid of the Russian empire. Women were needed in that work... Women saw that they were actually needed, and they wanted to go out to the public life... [T]hey got organized by themselves – the rich ladies did so first... Actually, it was because of these gentry women, who never married, that we got our rights. (F #9)

However, it has to be kept in mind that on other fields of the civil sector, such a differentiation between men and women is a lot harder to find. Regarding, for example, volunteering – the basis of Finnish civil society, the activeness varies very little between women and men. According to the study carried out by Yeung (2003), men are actually slightly more active in volunteer work than women (38 % of men, 37 % of women volunteer), but women spend more time than men in volunteer activities (men 16 hours; women 29 hours per month). This, in turn, reflects where values lie in civil society – clearly the marked

distinction between Finnish men and women volunteerism in women and children welfare vs. other welfare or activities demonstrates the stark divide between the gender sector and other sectors of civil society and the lack of flows between the two.

An interesting topic discussed in the interviews with the Finnish women's organization was, then the question of how does the 'genderless gender' manifest itself in civil society today, and specifically in gender issues. On the one hand, this idea of 'sameness' and 'gender neutrality' seems to provide fertile ground for implementing gender-mainstreaming values. On the other hand, gendered discrimination persists and, according to many activists in the field, is actually getting worse, due to the phenomenon that there is no way to point to and describe this discrimination through the template of 'sameness':

[W]e just had the news today that the income gap is widening in Finland... But [in this article that mentioned the gap] nobody said anything about gender, which reflects that Finland is such a gender-neutral country, we don't see, reporters, journalists, politicians don't see the gender, evaluate the gender, so they don't see what it means. (F #14)

[W]e talk about women's issues sort of, but we don't act on it. It's not legitimate to put men and women as different – because our ethos has been about women and men work together and we have the same goals – it's called the "Finnish gender contract." (F #9)

### **6.2.2 Russia: Feminist vis-à-vis Feminine**

In Russia, the gender and women perception is more complicated. The notions of feminine morality, care, and self-sacrifice are long embedded in Russian society, as well as in many societies in the world. Russian interpretations in particular, however, tend to more directly tie these (socialized) characteristics to women's participation in a resoundingly feminine civil society. Soviet ideology served to only strengthen these feminine assumptions and reinforced an ideology of the 'strong Soviet woman' as the 'moral backbone' of the nation. Thus, civic activity and institutional politics have divergent meanings: civic activity is characterized by femininity and morality, collectivism and the 'common good' whereas institutional politics were characterized by masculinity and self-interest, power, and egoism (Salmenniemi 2005).

Central to Russian society are references to women's endurance, moral superiority, and altruism that are translated as the explanatory 'reason' that women do not 'descend' into formal politics, whereas their overwhelming participation in civil society is accepted as 'moral.' According to Salmenniemi (2005), today's civic activity is situated in a specific national gendered landscape and historical continuum, which explains why civic society is associated with femininely marked attributes (social and care work) and not with power and

radicalism. These assumed attributes stem from a common belief in biological essentialism to explain women's and men's positions and roles in society – that is, characteristics, personalities, and roles are tied explicitly to biology (the body), and therefore divergences in positions, respect, and hierarchy are deemed 'natural.' It establishes rigid boundaries between men's and women's proper spheres of activity and assumes a foundation upon which femininity and masculinity are grounded and which directs channels of and motivation for participation (Salmenniemi 2005, 744).

Another elucidatory factor in women's role in civil society perhaps derives from the Soviet period. Women were key partakers in *blat* networks (extensive informal ties to trade necessary goods and services) and were fluid actors in the 'semi-public' sphere during the USSR where they conducted everything from procuring additional necessities to maintaining cultural events, traditions, and community building. This then implies that contemporary women's activism in civil society, rather than in institutional politics, builds upon a tradition of accomplishment not through official state and political structures but through non-official channels, such as civic organizations (Salmenniemi 2005). However, a more plausible explanation is that civil society remains more open to women than formal politics because it does not require extensive material resources or powerful personal connections – both of which Russian women very rarely attain. In Finland, the situation is different: *personified* characteristics tied to a male or female biology still exists (albeit vaguely), but this is often not directly tied to women's or men's positions in society. Therefore, whereas in Russia gendered incongruity is deemed 'natural,' in Finland, discrepancies caused by gender may go unrecognized.

Women also largely dominate the Russian CSOs active in cross-border cooperation. This female dominance is seen by the Russian CSO actors to be connected mainly with the strong recognition of gender questions and related organizations in Finland as well as the domination of the social policy field, which in turn has traditionally been, and still is, dominated by women; "There are many women NGOs in comparison to other NGOs; therefore, the share of women NGOs is also very big in cross-border cooperation (R #56)."

However, in most cases Russian interviewees did not refer to a feminist or gender organizations per se but merely to organizations largely run by women. Accordingly, Russian understanding of a women's organization is quite different than that in Finland. In Russia, a more normative understanding of women's role in the family and society can be observed:

Like in the world and in the family, women are prevailing in our organization. Naturally, passive people cannot work here; therefore we have all who are active. And women are naturally more active. And our organization is not an exception. (R #52)

On the other hand, a number of Russian interviewees reacted critically to questions on women NGOs and gender issues. These were women who claimed not to have anything to do with gender issues or “women’s problems,” even though they worked with social problems of children and mothers. Such a view can be explained by the fact that a part of the Russian population, as well as NGO representatives, regard gender issues as feminist issues, which have been brought from the West and which are not relevant to Russia. By making such a differentiation, social organizations often try to demonstrate their importance in comparison to gender organizations per se.

Gender organizations are increasingly popular in Russia. However, oftentimes they do not deal with the social problems themselves but rather with the infrastructure of gender equality protection. Such organizations and centers work in the field of gender studies, expertise, organization of conferences, seminars, hearings, etc. They are mostly funded by the Western foundations or partners and are pro-feminist or Western-oriented. A number of Russian social and health organizations differentiate themselves from these gender organizations by claiming that they are not socially important enough.

### **6.3 DOUBLE-EDGED EUROPEANIZATION**

The new EU policy documents concerning CBC have been a major source of inspiration for the discussion over new forms of cross-border regionalization. At the same time, their message has been rather directly linked to Europeanization and the spreading of a supranational European identity (Scott 2006, 22). In regard to CSOs and paradiplomatic interaction, the EU’s CBC documents continue to see civil society actors in normative terms, mainly as part of democracy promotion, as has been particularly the case in Phare and other pre-accession instruments. Being openly based on the principle of conditionality and envisioning CSOs as a part of the process of Europeanizing and democratizing Russia, such an approach is susceptible to be written off or regarded as intrusion. As the concept of civil society is inherently linked with the concept of the state, EU support has been taken as aiming not just for civil society but involving an agenda for reshaping the state-civil society relationship as well.

As explained in the section 4.2, Europeanization is a confusing concept for it has been used to refer to various different things. In this study, the concept of Europeanization is used to refer to shared institutional and discursive practices that take place in a common European frame, i.e., as a patterns of change away from state-centeredness whereby, inter alia, rules, norms, values, and resources are denationalized and become directed towards and/or increasingly influenced by the European (more precisely, European Union) model. In a temporal sense, in the Finnish case it refers to the post-1995 era, i.e., the phase during which new

supra-national administrative structures were put in place in the development of Finnish-Russian relations.

### **6.3.1 The European Union as an External Stimuli**

Despite all the criticism, the role of the EU is generally being evaluated in positive terms by both sides. As the EU is fundamentally based on economic and political concerns, relations across its external borders have been characterized by parallel leanings. As the cooperation across the Finnish-Russian border has been dominated predominantly by social and health-related issues, it is not surprising that the EU appears detached or simply irrelevant in the eyes of many civil society actors. Given that its origins are also closely linked to concerns about democracy, human rights, and international conflict, the updated EU external policies now have a broadened focus, which in turn permits a greater number of CSOs to get better involved. Also the Russian stakeholders are now taken as more serious and equal partners than ever before. The EU now offers Russia a privileged partnership, building upon a mutual commitment to common goals and values – at least as long as they are ‘European’ values.

The European dimension provides CSO with a leverage to articulate social and political concerns in a broader international context and obtain greater moral material and support. Such support, along with the exchange of knowledge and best practices, has been vital for Russian CSOs as it has provided an alternative avenue for them to work on essential public services that financially strapped government has not been able or willing to provide. These services are frequently provided in direct collaboration with CSOs from EU member states and other international organizations:

There are some positive shifts in collaboration with our authorities though they are come out too slowly. That’s why we cooperate with Europe and Finland. We hope that by means of this our relationships with the state will be developing faster, that this will influence our authorities and they will become more flexible when dealing with us. (R #72)

While the EU certainly provides bigger circles and increased political and economic leverage, the bilateral cooperation had served an important role in maintaining the ‘special relationship’ and allowed more pragmatic forms of cooperation. On the other hand, the EU’s internal logic of stimulating regional development in the often peripheral border regions and erasing borders, the products of past conflicts, has not, however, fit the Finnish context, in which the border was still seen to possess an important filtering function.

Civil society actors see that the Europeanization of the program administration promotes cooperation by bringing well-needed vigor in the currency of ideas but even more so in form of funding. Europe offers the

national civil societies the chance to modernize and, when needed, to bypass national legislation that may discourage nonprofit growth and sustainability. The EU was seen to bring positive and progressive changes to Finnish legislation, laws, and statements particularly with regard to gender policy. Nevertheless, while the EU was considered to have good intentions and a progressive agenda, the respondents agreed that it brought very little in the way of action. Its main benefits were seen to stem from the fact that having an external player in the field has forced the two countries to move beyond, or at least broaden, the old bilateral agenda colored by history:

...after we joined the EU – the EU policies replaced our old YYA policies... we cannot escape the history. We were, in a way, the only country taking care of the Soviet/Russia relations, until we got an important partner, the EU... The EU offers the most interesting funding mechanisms. Local and Neighboring Area Cooperation funding programs are nice, but do not compete in any way in the same category [with the EU funding], that's a fact. (F #48)

Tapping the new stimuli has, however, been far from straightforward. The new situation has offered new opportunities, the utilization of which has remained largely unused due to the apparent mismatch in the operational configurations between the Commission and CSOs. The interviewed CSOs maintain that in order to succeed the EU must forget its one-sided attempt to 'order' its external borders and transform the rhetoric about multilevel and reciprocal neighborhood building into practice. From their perspective, a greater focus on cooperation dynamics from below will help connect citizens and communities with the EU and make the abstract notion of a cooperative neighborhood more credible.

Today, CSOs are better heard but not always listened to. According to the EU rhetoric, CSOs now have a valuable role to play in identifying priorities for action and in promoting and monitoring the implementation of CBC (Commission of the European Communities 2007, 11), but in practice it seems to lack actual means to do much about it. The EU is likewise, in some cases advisedly, undiscovered by CSOs; not all CSOs are capable of, or simply interested in, using the opportunities provided by the EU. Reasons for this are manifold and context dependent, but at least a part of it comes down to the fact that the operational space of most of the CSOs is still very much shaped by national states and their rules. On the other hand, some CSOs, especially in the neighborhood, have exaggerated expectations towards the ability of the EU, which may lead to excessive scale jumping and ignoring the roles of their respective governments as the principal decision makers. The lure of the EU urges these organizations into EU circles, whereby activities directed towards the national situation and circumstances, of which the respective civil society is an inherent part, may get neglected.

Albeit only a few had direct experience on the matter, the EU was characterized off-hand as being a distant and unapproachable actor for its projects were seen as overly laborious (bureaucratic) and too time-consuming given the limited resources that the CSOs have. The EU was seen as a “governmental organization” and, hence, it was logical that the “governments play the main role” and why “everything is a political question anyhow” (F #23).

Were the expressed opinions influenced by the general trend and rhetoric or not, the fact of the matter is that with its standards of civil society engagement, the EU was seen to favor larger players and isolate smaller ones. The EU funding available was considered to be “as bureaucratic and unclear as it just can be” (F #20). Even though promising in principle, EU projects were judged to be in practice simply overly burdensome for smaller organizations to engage in more directly.

[T]he EU projects are really off-putting because of the administration, reporting, and budgeting they require are all so burdensome. The idea behind them is good, but to administer them just requires too many resources – there’s no resources left for the actual work... Many simply cannot afford that. (F #32)

We have given up with these EU funding mechanisms... I have a feeling that they [the EU] pay according to the text we provide, not the work we do (F #35).

Above all, the EU funding mechanisms and procedures were criticized heavily for being overly lengthy, requiring employees to work solely on them, and for requiring the CSO in question to have a significant amount of personal funding to initiate the project as EU funding is oftentimes granted only after the project is implemented. The multi-tier structure of CSO was, however, seen to ease the situation.

You would have to have enough time or money, because you need to spend at least three months in preparing before you even know you if receive any money. Since we have that European level organization, that’s their job, that’s what they do, so it’s easier for us. (F #14)

To participate in a EU project is pretty complicated. The filling of papers to start with... and the whole procedure takes a lot of time, and effort, and maybe the money that you receive from that is not that much in comparison to the time and efforts it requires. (F #23)

It’s a very difficult and involved process; you have to consider really carefully what you get for the amount of effort you put in for applying... and dealing with everything that comes with the money. Even if you have the money, it is so much work to put into the monitoring that maybe you don’t win after getting the money from the EU. (F #21)

[T]hey [EU projects] are so, so complicated; they take so much energy – especially the monitoring part which we take seriously. We had one EU project in 2004, that went ok, but it took a year before all the papers were correct, and then we got our money. So you would have to be a rich organization in order to survive... We have been partners, or taken part, in many projects, but not directing them. We give our expertise.... So somebody is crazy enough to apply! (F #9)

While those left out, by force or by choice, emphasize that the application procedures, administration, reporting, and the required magnitude of projects make EU-projects seem unwelcoming and unapproachable, the ones that can 'afford' to be included see that the EU projects do bring in bigger circles and resources, and thus appear unquestionably as more interesting. On the other hand, some of the organization based in the bigger cities further away from the border felt that they were excluded from the cross-border programs simply because of their location:

We [here in big cities] are wondering that how on earth you, over there in Joensuu or Lappeenranta, survive on you own with these big actors [EU and Russia]... our view, of course, is that the entire Finland should be regarded as a border area... many other cities that are not even close to the border are still very active... we consider it very strange that the cooperation done from here [further away from the border] has no value, that we can not be part of the bigger frameworks. (F #48)

The EU seems to be quite successful in having a say by setting an example. Europe is seen as a success story particularly in terms of social development and welfare, which appears to be an important demarcation line as well. A number of Russian respondents admitted that the ideal of a 'social Europe' has provided impetus for cooperation and transnational links have created a platform to gain knowledge of and discuss issues such as human rights, gender equality, and discrimination of minorities, which in the Russian national context have been sidestepped or even throttled. The EU was also perceived as "good for women" and as being more progressive than the Finnish state in promoting women's rights and related issues. Thus, being part of the EU has been beneficial, as it has forced Finland to awake and realize that more could be done.

Interestingly, it was mentioned on a number of occasions that Finns are doing a good job promoting gender and women's rights outside of Finland but often forget to be active domestically. The reason for this was perceived to be the assumption that the situation of women in Finland was quite good in relation many other countries. However, the women's CSOs strongly emphasized that Finland was "not such a paradise for women" after all (F #9). Such thinking was fuelled by the recent Gender Gap Report in the ranking of which Finland had just lost its pole position, being now the second best in the world, after Norway.



This, it was argued, proved “that things have not gone very far, or progressed at all in a while” (ibid.). In general, the overall feeling was rather negative towards the lack of progress in Finland. In contrast, the EU was portrayed as a positive force in Europe, and the one that will, with enough political leverage, bring about progress and changes in women’s rights and push a progressive gender agenda. The women’s organizations and networks just need to be more proactive in pushing, lobbying, and getting women in to high political representation and influence in order to make sure that gender issues are not forgotten. Such a perspective provides quite a contrast to the common, at least Finnish, way of thought that Finland would be the leader in this respect.

[W]hen we joined the EU, there was in Finland this very strong idea that we already have equality between women and men... and now they are coming and taking this away, so if we go there [to EU] we have to go and teach them, how to do this equality... It is good, what has happened, because we have seen that no, we are not number one, not even in Europe, or in the world... we have very many bad things here too. So that was good to happen to Finland, to see this. (F #21)

While it was generally regarded as a positive development that CBC had become more balanced, some suggested that the Commission has forgotten to push for its own agenda as it now listened to Russia too much in the decisions concerning CBC priorities (F #9). This was seen to lead to slow down the potential progress that could be gained. It was, however, understood that cooperation that does not “bring in money” is bound to be sidelined anyway – “because of power relations, of course” (F #9).

The CSOs also experienced that the room for maneuver allowed by the EU legislation has not been utilized enough, and that for example, the tax law has been interpreted from the CSO perspective more strictly than would have been more necessary. Most of the CSOs studied had some sort of link to the EU either via an umbrella organization or a European supranational body such as the European Women’s Lobby. There was a broad recognition that the climate had changed since Finland became a member in 1995 as gender-related CSOs were no longer so isolated but now could magnify their influence and leverage within European networks – speaking “with stronger words, perhaps even bigger voice” (F #23). It was, however, emphasized that even though development had certainly taken place, it may not be only due to the EU.

I don’t know if it [EU] is positive or negative, it’s more of a question of its usefulness. It’s quite useful, belonging to the EU, if you think about certain issues like trafficking or migration, and the gender issues and women’s rights in that context. If we wouldn’t be in EU or have cooperation and networks, we would just be... more alone in these [issues]. Now we have the possibility to discuss and learn, to get information. (F #21)

The broadened scope of EU policies makes the role of CSOs ever more important, yet the EU still lacks effective means to channel its assistance to where it would be needed the most. Instead, many local and regional level CSOs receive their shares through public agencies or private firms that are also invested in CBC. It is not uncommon to see representative of the different societal sectors as partners in a project. While the three sectorial partnerships, with the both horizontal and vertical linkages they imply, are certainly a positive phenomenon, the current arrangement remains far from balanced. This is not helped by that apparent fact that the EU, acting as a quasistate, has developed a systematic framework for implementing cross-border civil society projects that involves a bureaucratic process of implementation and that channels support for civil society projects largely through state structures. Here, the EU demands certain types of bureaucratic discipline, which includes budgeting, (including matching funds) auditing, monitoring and evaluating civil society projects which often subordinates CSOs to state agencies at the national, regional and local level – in so doing granting them the power to determine, with little accountability, which and what type of CSOs gets selected for grantees. This approach largely determines the types of CSOs that are capable of practicing such discipline and of accessing EU financial support. It also contributes to a ‘mission drift’ and the emergence of a privileged CSO elite separate from other CSOs and from its potential constituents.

The EU funding, most importantly through past Tacis and INTERREG programs, has made actions increasingly project-based. Projects are regarded as useful for solving short-term issues, but also as challenges as they tend to lack a long-term vision and, hence, also coherence and at times commitment. Project based CBC also entails more frequent applications and increased reporting, both with which require special skills and, in particular, mastery of very specific EU language and knowledge. Especially the Russian CSOs implied dissatisfaction in this regard. Due to difficult the application process, poor language skills, lack of experience in project management, inability to find a required partner, and general lack of resources to implement the project should one be accepted, are brought forth as reasons for the lack of success in applying funding or as reason not to even bother. On the Finnish side, many local level actors seem also detached from the EU programs and their priorities. However, thanks to the three, four, or even five-tier model of the Finnish associational activity (consisting of village, municipal, district, national, and potentially international associations), the decisions, ideas, and priorities, as well as funding tend to reach the actors from all levels with a whimper rather than a bang.

Another interesting point that emerges from the opinions of Finnish CSO actors towards EU policies is that there is neither a coherent European civil society nor is the EU a coherent actor in relation to Russia. Policy frameworks that endeavor to capture the entire picture are seen as destined to overlook country-specific issues and circumstances. It was often expressed that for CBC to

be effective, projects receiving EU funds should be derived from practical issues that emerge locally. Accordingly, a majority of the Finnish CSOs that have already managed to establish contacts with Russian CSOs work rather independently from EU initiatives and policies. According to many, cooperation has arisen from a general awareness of a common interest or problem, which has functioned as an impetus for cooperative initiatives. It is these bottom-up initiatives that have mobilized the people to take the first step across the border and engage in pragmatic and constructive forms of cooperation.

The Russian CSOs that enjoy support from regional and local authorities, have the acquired organizational and infrastructural resources, and/or are managed by an internally oriented and educated persons are generally more involved in the EU-sponsored projects, EU organized forums, or major European civil society networks. In most cases, the Russia CSOs did not have direct experience on the EU program procedures, but they had been working together with the EU member partners, which are in charge of the application, reporting, and other communication with the EU. As a general rule, the availability of the funding is a lot more important than the source from which comes.

### **6.3.2 Europeanization and its Influence**

In the Finnish case, the concept of Europeanization, with all its flaws, provides an alternative context for the age-old balancing at the border of East and West in all matters related to the border with Russia. In the national and regional level administrative discussions concerning CBC policies, the conceptual shift towards the new European rhetoric can be easily recognized. As Liikanen et al. (2007) have explained, this shift overlapped largely with broader changes in political perspectives. The state controlled bilateral relations came to an end together with the collapse of the Soviet Union and as Finland joined the Union soon after, CBC programs and projects were streamlined to match with the policy frames defined by the EU and the new Europeanizing rhetoric.

This study supports the hypothesis that the normative power that the EU possesses as a 'democratizer' and 'stabilizer' is not only exercised explicitly through formal policy avenues but also through more subtle and informal channels. Europeanization is taking place most notably through informal networks and non-hierarchical institutional learning as civil society actors who engage in CBC between EU member states and neighboring countries are adopting new institutional and discursive practices that are widening the political landscape from the local to the national and European level. This is evidenced by the changing domestic agendas of CSOs in neighboring countries; these reflect an incorporation of social objectives defined by EU-based CSOs and a gradual appropriation of EU norms. The EU's influence is, however, selective, appealing rather to civil society 'elites' who are politically influential or well

connected to transnational CSO networks. There appears to be a general failure on the part of the EU to interact more intensively with local societies.

Civil society plays an important role in a bottom-up diffusion of 'Europe' beyond EU borders. Such Europeanization is not, however, taking place in terms of point-blank convergence to normative models but rather occurring as a complex process of accommodation and adaptation. Nor is this Europeanization taking place as a wholesale appropriation of EU norms and values but rather selectively; civil society actors are attempting to build bridges between states and very different societal contexts to define common agendas in the area of social policy and in the pursuit of social equity.

The transfer of 'European' civil society agendas and values takes place within processes of contextual adaptation and through pragmatic strategies that depoliticize cross-border cooperation between civil society actors. This is an illustrative example of how network governance, applied to civil society actors, has led to an informal, yet mutually reinforcing cooperation that transcends formal policy spheres. Such decentralized forms of CBC have helped put specific issues on the agendas of civil society groups in neighboring states. Through such decentralized, informal practices, issues such as gender equality, environmental awareness, transparent governance, social welfare, and minority rights are translated and framed locally.

CSOs with more developed national profiles and managed by internationally oriented and educated elite are generally more involved in the wider political debate at the national level and communicate with EU representatives and participate in fora organized by the EU and major European civil society organizations. Regional and local CSOs tend to be marginalized from this level of political interaction, but, ironically, it is at the level of locally embedded cross-border networks between local civil society organizations at which Europeanization as an 'ideational' projection of social values is most palpable and where the influence of CSOs is greatest. To an extent, cross-border learning processes within these networks often appear uni-directional, e.g., West to East. Through supporting structural modernization in former socialist states, the EU has sought to reshape national societies to better match with its own institutional image. This has also contributed to a 'deformation' of civil society is taking place to the extent that CSOs are partly becoming detached from their original social contexts and concerns; agendas are often externally imposed rather than developed locally.

Russian respondents assessed the European Neighborhood program in positive terms, in comparison to the previous Tacis-INTERREG era but remained quite skeptical about the potential development of EU-Russian relationships in general – reflecting, thus, the official Russian federal rhetoric regarding this issue. It is obvious that, despite the rhetoric, the EU's formal geopolitics have remained state-centered, whereby civil society actors in neighboring states feel marginalized and discriminated against.

Even though EU projects and funding were perceived as complicated and difficult to receive, the policies as such were mainly assessed as reasonably friendly and non-excluding. The Karelian respondent made a clear point of the Republic of Karelia being clearly, in comparison to other parts of Russia, a European region – a sort of a ‘pilot region’ of greater EU-Russian cooperation. Such understanding is closely connected with the overall positive evaluation of civil society development in Karelia. The Europeanness of the Republic is understood in terms of having various connections with the EU, i.e., in practice with Finland, through which European values but most notably ideas and modes of action get exported across the border. The regional government and the municipalities are named as the mediators in and engines of CBC, but the cross-border links are regarded as having benefited the Republic’s infrastructure and population as a whole. The special status of the Republic of Karelia is widely shared and may be taken as important an element of the Republic’s new regional identity<sup>73</sup>.

Europeanness is taken to refer to specific attitudes towards, for instance, governance, labor, gender equality, and human rights. The European model of governance is characterized as being transparent, representative, accountable, scrupulous, punctual, and just. Work and production were seen as being good and of high quality; European societies were regarded as having greater equality of the sexes and respect for human rights. These characterizations were then used to make a demarcation between the ‘European’ practices and the present Russian ones. For instance, the European model of governance is perceived to allow greater CSO participation, whereas the Russian vertical of power and ‘managed’ democracy are regarded as leaving little room for the CSOs.

Russian civil society actors had often received training and education through cooperating with their EU partners. This had often led to the absorption of institutional rhetoric that emphasizes effective and efficient problem solving rather than the role of civil society in more normative terms. Europe was also often seen as a success story in terms of social development and welfare. Even though many aspects related to the EU (freedom of movement, single currency, large common market) were given a high value, the respondents noted that it is neither possible nor necessary for Russia to seek EU membership due to the vast and fundamental dissimilarities between Russia and the EU. However, deep association with the EU without any loss of sovereignty is seen as vastly preferable by the Russian CSOs.

Despite its noble rhetoric, at times the Europeanization of CBC tends to confirm the existing differences between the EU and non-EU members. The Russian civil society actors, who work intensively with the Finnish and other EU partners, expressed a desire to break down the barriers between a Russian ‘us’

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<sup>73</sup> As an example of this, in 2003 the Republic of Karelia was nominated as the European Region of the Year.

and EU-European 'them.' Nonetheless, respondents from both sides of the border underlined that Russia is a very special kind of Europe. As a non-EU member and a country, which does not seek EU membership, Russia has a very clear border, also in mental terms, with EU countries. Thus, the EU is not seen as an appropriate actor for supporting the Russian civil society. In the recent past, Russia has tried to build much more clear borders and to raise its national self-understanding, which in turn reduces the significance of international cooperation of the Russian actors, especially regarding Western funding. The nationalized political discourse and demonization of international organizations and their Russian partners reduce the significance and achievements of international cooperation. The need for foreign funds is also being reduced by better availability of the federal funding for civil society – even if on a very selective basis. To what extent this will impact the motivation for CBC remains to be seen.

#### **6.4 CIVIL SOCIETY IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION**

As the geopolitical climatic relaxed and the border became more permeable, it was seen that the CSOs did not only have a role to play in stabilizing the relations but that they also had vast practical knowledge about a number of issues seen as important concerning CBC. The Finnish working model was thus stretched to cover also cooperation with Russia – and this came about quite separately from ideological ambitions about Western democracy or civil society building. In addition to cooperation between CSOs, much interaction took, and takes, place at the individual, people-to-people level. While this is seldom visible in program reports or through the analysis of funding mechanisms, such personal level ties do form a crucial part of civil society interaction.

There is a widespread agreement among the Finnish CSOs that their work and connections provide an alternative avenue for cooperation when inter-state relations go sour and play also a vital role eventually in re-establishing relations. While Finnish businesses have had clear difficulties adapting to the unfamiliar conditions in Russia and the jurisdiction of governments stops at the political border, as any action beyond that could be easily taken as an intrusion, individual citizens and CSOs are viewed to be less restricted from moving back and forth across the border and entering into cross-border cooperative relationships – breaking up, as a result, the surprisingly persistent East-West divide.

CSOs are seen to have a number of qualities that emphasize their aptitude for CBC. In relative terms, CSOs are fairly flexible, innovative, realist and, as a result, able to react to local issues fast and effectively. CSOs tend also to be less bureaucratic as well as less constrained by long-term strategies than official governmental programs. In addition, CSOs are logically more suitable for

promoting civil society as a foreign governmental promotion of civil society could easily be seen as involving an agenda of reshaping also the state institutions, making it less acceptable in the recipient country. This is commonly understood both by the state institutions as well as the CSOs themselves:

Genuine and productive cooperation between different countries and different cultures also calls for interaction and dialogue between ordinary people. Non-governmental organizations do extremely important work in increasing dialogue and developing a wide range of cross-border cooperation between civil societies. (President of the Republic of Finland, Tarja Halonen at Forum on civil society cooperation of European Union and Russia, 17.11.2006 in Lahti, Finland)

[B]ecause our work doesn't take place at the official level, it is not like, as you know, ministers, members of the parliament or heads of the councils, who are there [in Russia] against their will, because they are forced to go there... we [NGOs] go to meet these people in a face-to-face situation, that's the best way to have an impact, both sides. It influence the attitudes, personal relations, working methods, everything. At this level we learn to know each other. (F #32)

All in all, it can be argued that cross-border interdependence has been created as the border became more permeable and people were finally able to interact with those with whom they were the closest geographically. The growth of cross-border linkages among various CSOs has now become a driver of bottom-up integration in contrast to integration from above.

#### **6.4.1 Asymmetrical Bases for Cooperation**

The premises of Finnish-Russian cooperation are largely based on asymmetries and the externalities, whether they are positive (benefits) or negative (costs), that they imply. These cross-border flows are based on transactions, interdependencies, and interactions through people-to-people contacts between the two sides of the border. Such linkages represent opportunities and further development, if managed properly, but also to negative externalities and challenges that can hinder development. CBC is needed also in order to manage and diminish the negative side effects of increased interaction. While the difference and unfamiliarity that the border implies fuels interaction to an extent, as do differences in price levels and product selection, otherwise the transaction costs in such an asymmetrical setting tend to be high in comparison to expected profits. To cross the border still takes time, effort, and money.

There are a variety of factors that hinder CBC across the Finnish-Russian border. In addition to the troublesome border crossing formalities, the visa requirement, and poor infrastructure (especially in the northern part of the border), CBC is discouraged by a general lack of information and knowledge, the related negative mentality and stereotypical thinking, and the substantial

gap between the Finnish and Russian laws and regulations. Differences in language and working culture lead to misunderstandings. Differences in institutional bases, organizational forms, and asymmetries in the available recourses and state support lead to different capacities for action and room to maneuver. More generally, the asymmetry in the governance approaches; i.e., centralized, vertical power-relations on the Russian side vis-à-vis more multi-level, horizontal on the Finnish side (see Laine 2012; Németh et al. 2012), pose an apparent mismatch, with which regional actors need to struggle. Fortunately, the CSO actors tend to see most of these factors not as actual obstacles but rather as drawbacks – something that one just has to live with if involved in CBC. To many, the border “is just a regrettable fact that one has to live with.” It is “a drag, but not a barrier” across which “cooperation is not easy, but it can be done” (F #48).

At the local and regional level in Finland, there is an overall interest in forging links with Russian organizations but also a keen awareness of the difficulties involved. Russian CSOs were blamed for being overly nationalistic, patriotic (F #23), and “scarily right-wing”(F #21). The language barrier is the most commonly mentioned inhibiting factor, a problem that Russians are expected to fix by learning to communicate through the medium of English. Also the difference in culture, with the obvious side effects (communication problems, lack of understanding of how things work) posed a practical barrier:

[T]he language barrier has been really big. And the language, of course, affects your thought. The Russian language; Russians they think and they speak like the French, you never know what’s the real point! ...we need to know if they have an actual goal and what do they need from us. (F #14)

We don’t have any relations to Russia anymore... because we just haven’t been able to find any organizations, that aren’t so patriotic, nationalistic, enthusiastic... we have difficulties in cooperating with Russian organizations... I don’t understand why they are so nationalistic... it’s so difficult to cooperate with people that are always like “homeland, homeland.” (F #23)

The border or the border crossing procedures were rarely mentioned as negative factors and visa issues only slightly more often. While visas are today easier to acquire, the application procedure still takes time making natural, day-to-day, unplanned, impulsive interaction impossible. Historical issues (the wars between Finland and Russia) were brought up in a couple of cases, but they were not perceived as significant obstacles, especially for or by younger generations. Other factors mentioned by the Finnish actors included difficulties in finding a trustworthy partner and the lack of general knowledge and know-how. The Russian CSO activists, in turn, mentioned that sometimes it is difficult



to go through a project implementation without misunderstandings. The most often mentioned complaint dealt with Finnish partners' overstated expectations about how projects goals can be achieved or different perceptions of how routine activities must be done.

Also the very different working culture and difficult overall situation in Russia were seen as drawbacks also for the Finnish CSOs; to travel to Russia simply feels complicated and problematic. The high turnover of Russian authorities was perceived to harm the cooperation as there is not simply enough time to get to know the relevant people well in order to form the personal connections, which are often required to move things forward in Russia. It was also underlined that in Russia the role of the government is overpowering and that civil society has very limited chances to influence the system. The situation has, especially in Karelia, somewhat improved as a number of local CSOs have been able to create relations with the authorities. However, Russian authorities' attitude towards foreign aid is still seen to harm cross-border cooperation:

Russian authorities have been fairly unappreciative... they seen that it their job to take care of things, and they do not like that we try to tamper with that... during the Putin's era the control over environmental organizations has been tightened... the foreign funding for Russian organizations is something that doesn't fit in with Russian system... it has a whiff of interfering with Russia's internal issues... they do not like that we fund and help Russian organizations. (F # 46)

On the other hand, in cases it was the Russian CSOs themselves that were blamed for not having the 'right' (i.e., Finnish) attitude:

They always want money... the first question always is: how should we do this as we do not have any money? My answer always is that you just have to do it even if you do not have money. Like we do it, we [in Finland] are doing a lot of things even when we do not have money, these things just have to be done, you have to look for volunteers. (F #36)

From the Russian perspective, the problems seemed less problematic:

Finns are mostly our partners. They don't know Russian, we don't know Finnish. But it doesn't hinder our communication. We understand very well what they want to say, and they understand very well what we want to say. It means interaction between countries. It can proceed by the rules of the emotions. (R #52)

A couple of Russian interviewees criticized the lack of information and informational infrastructure for the cooperation:

There is a very deep informational vacuum... informational field is not developed. It would be good if there would be special resources for this. For example, this would

be able to bring information about life in Finland, or Baltic states. In fact, there are many myths that “Everything is good in Finland; it is just a paradise abroad.” If people would know that they also have problems there, it would be better. (R #55)

The same issue was voiced also on the Finnish side. It was agreed that in the past Finnish groups’ establishment of cooperative contacts with Russian groups was carried out “the wrong way” since Finnish CSOs perceived their experiential superiority in understanding how civil society works and how it should be conducted. It was remained that:

It’s important to involve them [Russian CSOs] in the discussion about that they want. There’s no idea to go to a country and tell them, ‘this is all wrong.’ It’s more like the Swedish way. Finns are a bit like it, but less so. Things are better these days in that we do tell them that we also don’t have a perfect society. (F #14)

For the Russians, one of the major obstacles for CBC was the different scope and scale of the problems. An example given was the 30,000 registered people infected with AIDS in St Petersburg, compared to the just 326 people in the whole of Finland (R #54). The difference in the scope of the problems faced was also acknowledged by the Finnish CSOs. It was, however, seen that the problems posed a major barrier especially in the early 1990s, when most of the activities initiated by Finnish CSOs were directed towards St. Petersburg, a metropolis that boasts more denizens than Finland itself. Soon after, Finns became more active in the Republic of Karelia, where the problems were, even if just as serious by their nature, at least somewhat smaller in terms of scope. The difference in scales became apparent in the assessment of problems and needs, some of which were unheard of within the Finnish context. Nonetheless, it was also pointed out that often when an agreement about a mutual goal as well as about the division of labor has been reached, many of the mentioned drawbacks became suddenly less significant. For many, it was argued, the well-known differences simply formed an excuse not to get involved.

Practical operations revealed that the difference between the two countries was not only evident in scales or even in the methods and forms of activities but also in the very systems through which the work had to be carried out (see Skvortsova 2005, 38). The vast differences in operational capacity, financial resources, and political support pose a major hurdle for CBC. Not only can Finnish organizations count on much greater resources from philanthropic sources, foundations, the EU and, in particular, the Finnish government, they are also considered by the government and political parties as partners in many areas of public policy. Russian CSOs are often partners of local governments for whom they often function as subcontractors of public services, but they play a clearly subservient role in terms of influencing public policy agendas. Russian organizations, particularly in peripheral regions such as Karelia, also have a

much more difficult time securing funds for CBC. Those Russian CSOs that receive foreign support have, in addition, been subject to critical scrutiny and suspicion by the present Russian government (Laine & Demidov 2013).

#### **6.4.2 Why Cooperate?**

The Finnish NGOs list a variety of motivations to cooperate with CSOs across the border. However, there seems to be an overall understanding that even though it is becoming clear that only Russia itself can solve its problems, it is Finns' duty to help the nearby regions in this process. For example, the social and health sector has been enormously active setting up the welfare system and basic services in Karelia. For many, however, it would simply be abnormal not to cooperate with one's closest neighbor:

If we would not cooperate with Russians, with whom could we cooperate? (F #46)

The starting point today is that this is not development cooperation, but the idea is that the border is only a titular one... we need to cooperate with our closest neighbor at all possible levels (F #48).

For many, cooperation with Russia is portrayed as a value of its own and does not necessarily need to produce concrete results all the time.

[T]here are some things that we just do... and I rarely stop to think, well, why do we do it? Why is this so important? But it is. (F #21)

We must increase interaction somehow (F #45).

We see how much work is needed and how much work they are doing... Sometimes I am really tired of travelling... but it's just, when you get these feelings of cooperation that yes, we share a common agenda – it just gives you hope [to keep working]... In the international context, we can do so much. Alone you can't. (F #14)

Russia is also seen especially as 'our,' Finland's, neighbor, and it is seen almost as a shame that Finns do not have closer ties with Russians:

If you see in your own neighborhood, something not nice to happen to women and children then you try and help – you start from home (F #23).

[I]'s our neighbor country... and I think that Russia is part of Europe as well, and it's not good to isolate Russia... or us from Russia! (F #21)

Moreover, ignoring or isolating Russia is regarded as an unbeneficial strategy for Finland as being a large and powerful country; Russia is seen to have a lot to give to Finland in return in the long run.

Somehow it's quite amazing that there is such a big, interesting country, with a strong culture... in Finland we are quite.... ignorant about this, maybe. There are very few people that speak Russian here as well... it is not wise. We could get a lot from Russia. (F #21)

In a couple of interviews the long-term benefits of cooperation were brought up. It was seen that it is important to good relations with Russia, in every sector, as it is a significant market area and trade partner for Finland. Russia is seen as developing and becoming more prosperous, and Russian investments and money brought to the country by tourists is envisioned to play a highly important role in Eastern Finland:

Our geographical situation is what it is; why not make good use of it? (F #45)

Another motivation for Finns was mentioned to be the greater aim of raising awareness or advocate a topic or an issue relevant for the organization in question (environment, human rights, women's organizations etc.), and yet another simply the quest for new experiences (especially the field of culture) or something else that cannot be found in Finland:

The nature that they have over there, during the soviet times there was no settlement... the nature was totally empty, nothing had happened over there after the war... we don't have that in Finland. That attracted many of us. (F #46)

All in all, the role of CBC in building social cohesion and converge is also emphasized by the majority. Benefits for the Finns derive from interaction in itself; many highlighted the growth of trust and understanding even though more concrete goals have also been reached.

When individual citizens meet citizens of another country in an everyday, informal setting, it has so efficient influence on the attitudes. A minister would have to talk six years to arrive to the same results with his papers... and if we are thinking about the very big picture, this is the best security policy there can be, interaction between the citizens. (F #32)

### **6.4.3 Andrey Does Not Want a Barbie Backpack**

The earlier official, at times compulsive, 'friendships' visits have, for the most part, been replaced with more substantive cooperation. It has to, however, be acknowledged that the long history of such friendship served its purpose to an extent that it formed a basis for current cooperation, which in part relies on the connections and channels that were made earlier. The trend has also been moving away from the basic aid work towards more balanced interaction as the

standard of living has been rising and the basic needs have been getting better satisfied on the Russian side.

While questions about whose agenda and interest dominate cooperation is often disregarded as irrelevant, at times even as accusatory. According to the Finnish CSOs, the Russian side has recently become more and more active in initiating cooperation. Yet as long as the funding derives mainly, if not completely, from the Finnish side, it is the Finnish CSOs who eventually determine which ideas are worth working for. It can thus be argued, with some exaggeration, that it is Russian interests with a Finnish agenda that still dominates the cooperation.

Even if this is not done in point-blank manner, the tendency seems to be that the Finnish organizations choose those Russian organizations as their partners that best fit the Western model, whose agenda is closest to the Finnish/Western CSO agenda and ideology. In so doing, they govern the CBC agenda and import the Western values indirectly, yet efficiently. Those Russian CSOs that are willing to work for the cause driven by the Western CSOs are preferred as partners.

Although many Russian CSOs have become more experienced and active in initiating cooperation, many of them are still quite passive in getting support and, therefore, not active in the development of the priorities for the CBC. The passiveness has, of course, understandable reason. Due to the difficult domestic conditions and downright harassment on behalf of the Russian state structures, many Russian organizations rely heavily on foreign funding. Nevertheless, the passiveness is manifested in timidity, or pure inability, to fight for the cause and uphold any specific preferences:

Preferences? What preferences? Who want to help us, please, who want to work with us, please. If somebody needs us, we are ready to help as well. We have no preferences (R #52)

Some of the Russian CSO representatives even admitted to modifying their preferences and interests during the process of project development as a means to improve the chances of obtaining funds.

At times, however, the Russian interest collided with the Finnish one. Surprisingly, this was the most obvious in the case of women's organizations. Small clashes were at times learning experiences for Finns as it forced the Finnish side to critically view and reassess the sensibility of the Finnish model – and perhaps to consider alternatives to the manner things are done in Finland. Practical reminders of this came about, for example, in that the gender division, or more appropriately the lack of it, applied in the Finnish society, could not be transplanted without question asked across the border (L 4.6.2002; 10.6.2002).

Apart from that, it was mainly the underlying cause that created a schism. The Finnish side saw the Russian women's CSOs as certainly feminine but “not

really feminist”: i.e., not aligned with the Finnish and Western ideas of feminism and the way in which women’s rights should be presented and enacted. As described in subsection 6.2.2, the Russian ideal seemed to connect womanhood very closely with motherhood and, as a result, many CSOs view gender issues from a family perspective rather than a purely feminist perspective, making it very difficult for Finnish and Russian CSOs to form a common understanding or agenda for cooperation.

They were more like social organizations – of course working in violence against women but also in the family context. More like, not from a feminist perspective but from a family perspective. So they were more like the ‘third sector’ actors in my point of view. So they weren’t talking with the concepts that we are used to talk with. (F #14)

Their organizations are so different... They want us to help men... to understand men and have programs for men... It has been awful to hear in Russia that young girls think that prostitution might be a great job and also being a stay home mother is really fantastic – even though your husband beats you but still... They had such a big burden during the Soviet Union that anything else is better than that. (F #9)

What the Soviet-era burden that the interviewee referred to meant in practice was that Soviet women were expected, if not demanded, to work formal jobs (as ‘equals’ to men in the labor force) and perform and procure domestic activities as well as to uphold social/community events and education all while providing a ‘moral backbone’ for the state and society. Soviet men, in turn, were expected to work in formal jobs or perform leadership roles in the Party and government bodies. Men were seen as ‘immoral’ and, therefore, unable to share in the other two ‘burdens’ allotted to women. This ideal was long established before the Soviet Union but only became further entrenched into the collective conscious, as these two burdens were ‘naturally’ belonging to women, where gainful employment in addition to these was to prove the ‘equality’ that the Union created among women and men. This ideal of ‘natural’ difference and, hence, ‘natural roles’ in society and economy continue with as much strength today as in the past.

Even though problematic, it is also understandable that the desire to further a Western understanding of feminism, women’s rights, and progress is inherent to every Western CSO that forges contacts with Russian groups. Coming from the Western feminist standpoint and ideals, it is hardly surprising that stereotyping, biological essentialism, womanhood that equates motherhood, morality of the self-sacrifice of women versus a natural and acceptable immorality of men for self-preservation are difficult concepts to accept and work through. Misunderstandings and frustration thus become a frequent problem, and success is therefore limited. Furthermore, for many activists and leaders in

women's and feminist CSOs, working for women's rights, respect, and health is very personal – thus, cooperation with organizations that work towards different goals and through rhetoric that is damaging to women (from a Western perspective) is dispiriting – a shattering of the 'sisterhood' of the women's movement that most Western feminists still cling to.

Such discouragement in spreading a 'common feminism' is a significant factor in explaining why most CSOs prefer to contact and cooperate with Russian CSOs that reflect the same ideals and goals that Western CSOs hold to. Another central reason is a lack of understanding in how to work towards common goals through different ideological bases. However, all the interviewees again were very open to knowledge-sharing and many were taking steps to break down these barriers of language and thinking by learning Russian and sending study delegations to Russia and vice versa. Moreover, Russian CSOs are being increasingly active in proposing potential areas for cooperation; yet lack often the know-how or other resources to tackle them on their own.

In addition to spreading Finnish/European/Western values and working models, the CBC agenda was influenced by pragmatism and security concerns. There is a clear consensus that while the short term benefits of cooperation fall on the Russian side...

...the better everything work over there, the better it is consequentially for us. But then there is the proximity to the border – if we think about the security aspect, criminality, environmental aspects... things like this. The faster the development in Russia goes towards Western democracy, if that is possible... [laughs] ...Anyways, we are neighbors, we share the same Baltic Sea, everything impacts everything. Also, if we thing about the economic life... Russia is an important trade partner for us – if it would be easy and safe to invest in Russia, which it is not at the moment... there are surprises all the time. If we could create a well functioning economic area, where the business life could operate, and if the movement of labor would be possible and terms of employment would be respected, if everything would function in a civilized manner – as they should – it would benefit all of us. (F #18)

## **6.5 ENVIRONMENTS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT<sup>74</sup>**

A less studied aspect of the Finnish-Russian civil society cooperation has been the role of civil society in developing Russia's social economy and the impact of CBC in supporting social welfare, economic development, and the more general civil society endeavor. As elaborated previously (6.4.1), the main contextual factor that influences the scope, intensity, and quality of civil society cooperation is the institutional asymmetry and the large gap in capacities for action between

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<sup>74</sup> This chapter builds on ideas presented in Scott and Laine (2012).

Finnish and Russian civil society organizations. Another issue that deserves attention is the problem of project dependency and problems of financial sustainability of civil society cooperation. Furthermore, as context-sensitivity is of central importance, it is vital not to 'benchmark' the performance of Russian CSOs in terms of Western categories that apply to very different socio-political situations. Indeed, different conceptualizations and self-images of CSOs as providers of public goods must be taken into account.

Through partnerships in the delivery of public services, CSOs in Russia, while as yet relatively inexperienced, are contributing to the emergence of a post-socialist social economy as a means to create sustainable alternative forms of public goods provision (see Anders 2010, Scott & Liikanen 2010). While CSOs pioneered many of these services, local governments often created agencies to expand the scale of delivery (Struyk 2003, 3). The Finnish experience shows that practices of social contracting, which in effect outsource public services to CSOs, could provide a viable, cost-effective, and sustainable form of civil society participation also in Russia. In contrast to the generally more restrictive regulation regarding civil society operation, laws have actually been put in place that facilitate social contracting and other economic activities in many Russian regions<sup>75</sup>.

As was already mentioned, a major focus of the CBC between Finnish and Russian CSOs has concentrated on the field of social welfare and health care. The experiences generated by this cooperation challenge the supposition that metanarratives of universal norms, rather than contextual knowledge, are necessary for successful cooperation between Russian and international organizations as Sundstrom (2006), for example, suggests. As Volkov (1997) has argued, it is unrealistic to seek out Western civil society in Russia; it is more fruitful to discover Russian actors that fulfill functions similar to those carried out by civil society actors in the West. In fact, CBC can be seen to promote new forms of 'policy learning' outside formal institutionalized policy channels by creating a pragmatic, rather than normative, environment of transnational communication and exchange. This has been crucial for its success and endurance. Informal policy learning does not require structural equivalence

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<sup>75</sup> CSOs may engage in economic activities to the extent they advance the purposes for which the organization was created but may not pursue the generation of profit as its primary purpose (Article 50(3), Civil Code, Articles 2 and 24(2), Non-Commercial Organizations Law, Article 37, Law on Public Associations, and Article 12, Charities Law). Profit from the economic activities of CSOs is generally taxed in the same manner as are commercial organizations. Lower tax rates may be offered by regional or local authorities for qualifying CSOs. In July 2011, the Russian Parliament adopted amendments to the Russian Tax Code that substantially improve the taxation of CSOs. For example, NCOs no longer have to pay profit tax or value added tax (VAT) on the value of the in-kind contributions (services or property rights) that they receive. Moreover, the amendments extend VAT exemptions previously applied to state budget funded institutions providing social services to CSOs providing the same services. (ICNL 2012.)



between civil society actors; it is promoted by common practices and agendas rather than by economic-political commonalities (Nedergaard 2006).

### **6.5.1 External Funding Dependency and its Consequences**

While the formation of civil society does not directly mean that the public's interests would be met, there is a coherent understanding that a vibrant civil society is a necessary condition for democracy (Hyden 1997; Inglehart 1997; Putnam 1993; Tocqueville 1969). Accordingly, Western governments, non-profit organizations and various international organizations have provided funding for the building of civil society in Russia, with the assumption that this is a crucial aspect of the transition to and the consolidation of democracy. To the disappointment of many, these good intentions have, however, provided unintended outcomes (see, e.g., Sperling 1999; Mendelson & Glenn 2000; Bae 2005). It has become palpable that transplanting a workable model from its original context to another is not an unproblematic task. The very core of the problem has been that the concept of civil society is inherently a "product of the West" (Kocka 2004, 76), and as Basina (1997, 104, cited in Alapuro 2005, 8) has pointed out: "all 'Western' planted into our [Russian] soil bears fruits which differ considerably from the seed, and, what is most important, from the expected result."

The current funding mechanisms have caused many cross-border activities between Finland and Russia to be project-based with limited duration. Furthermore, these activities are either pre-defined by international organizations and the existing funding opportunities or dependent upon the acceptance of central authorities and/or regional and local elites in Russia. Even if projects are easier to manage and evaluate, the short-term character of many projects has resulted in a lack of long-term strategies, a lack of clearly defined perspectives and plans, and, hence, discontinuities in CBC. Partners are often chosen on the basis of their objectives, expertise, and capacities to carry out joint projects rather than with regard to the needs of the borderland communities. More long-term cooperation requires resilience, patience, and flexibility; that is precisely what makes it rarer, though not nonexistent.

In many cases, development agendas are prepared by central organizations and their agencies, relegating local CSOs to an executive role through deciding what priorities will be funded. In addition, locally based Russian CSOs with greater knowledge of community problems, needs, and cultures have often been crowded out of cooperation projects because of their lack of visibility. At the same time, more professional and successful Russian organizations are often quite distant from the local communities and act more as centrally managed development agencies than bottom-up entities. Technical criteria here may outweigh more substantive criteria.

The issue of funding dependency has been extensively dealt with in the past. According to Henderson (2002, 142), dependency on the West has resulted in

several serious problems with regard to civil society development in post-socialist countries. Even if these issues fail to capture the big picture, the actors interviewed confirmed with practical examples that these issues are valid concerns and need to be acknowledged when future CBC is being planned. Firstly, finance from the West has created instances in which it is the Western donors, rather than the needs of Russian citizens, that dictate civil society agendas. For example, some Russian CSOs have redesigned their activities and agenda to fit better with those of donor organizations in order to safeguard future funding.

Foreign aid has also strengthened the division between civil society 'haves' and 'have-nots' and centralized the resources in the hands of those with connections to the West, creating a fairly distinctive 'civil elite' (Henderson 2002). Such an elite consisting of wealthy and educated activists may eventually form closer contacts with their transnational partners than with the constituents they are supposed to represent or the state structures they claim to be influencing. Even if the elite knows how to get organized and play the game, the everyday civic life is still far from reality (HS 28.8.2010).

Instead of fostering horizontal networks, small grassroots initiatives, and civil development, the aid has contributed to the emergence of a vertical, institutionalized, and isolated civil community (Henderson 2002, 140). The fragmentation among Russian domestic CSOs is seen to hinder coalition building and resource mobilization. Rather than building networks and advocating the interests of the public, many groups that had received foreign funding are uncooperative or even competitive towards other CSOs. Even though the aim of many Western donors has been to facilitate grassroots movements, Russian CSOs tried to mimic the organizational style of Western donor organizations, which are often large, wealthy, centralized, and fairly 'corporate' in nature. All this, together with the drastic political changes brought by the collapse of the Soviet Union, has led to a structural shift within Russia's incipient civil society, which has actually weakened rather than enhanced its development potential (Bae 2005, 3).

It is common for the Finnish and other Western organizations to choose their Russian partners out of those who already have a track record of having previously received funding and who have learned how to articulate their objectives in way that that complements the Finnish/Western agenda and expectations. In so doing, they govern the CBC agenda indirectly, yet efficiently. This forms an efficient channel of importing Western values to Russia. In practice, the Russian partners are often chosen from an already existing network of a Finnish umbrella organization or a network for these key actors have often good relations to corresponding Russian key actors and other organizations. Through such a preassessment, the Russian organization whose operations and agenda match the best the agenda of the Finnish CSOs seeking a partner is chosen.

Decent knowledge of English or Finnish is also often mentioned as an important practical criterion, as otherwise cooperation would be overly burdensome or costly (requiring an interpreter). Generally, the importance of personal connections is underlined repeatedly, as without them the establishment of a cooperative relationship has proven to be close to impossible. If a trustworthy contact has been created, the same partner is often kept in mind for future projects as well. Given the fairly small circles, the knowledge about and experiences of Russian partners gets circulated rapidly and those organizations that are deemed to be active for wrong reasons, i.e., for the money, are singled out. It has to be borne in mind that for many the partner has already been pre-selected as in many cases Finnish NGOs are involved in CBC only through a project run by an umbrella organization or by a supranational organization, utilizing thus the already existing connections.

In terms of future funding for civil society cooperation, the growing significance of the social economy and social contracting could provide an alternative that, as of yet, has remained untried. The potential for including such contractual arrangements within CBC projects, for example on Karelia, is undoubtedly large but the barriers to such practices remain formidable. As the CSOs interviewed commented, legal issues regarding the nature and regulation of social contracting in both Finland and Russia as well as the technical incompatibility of combining grants and income-generating activities as part of funding packages for CBC projects were but two obstacles. A development of a cross-border 'market' for social economy services would require a substantial rethinking of present, nationally oriented welfare policies.

The Finnish CSOs continued to target the improvement of public health and social welfare in the Karelian Republic through the EU-funded Tacis program, which provided CSOs with the necessary practical tools in planning future CBC and gave guidance to proposal making and project work as well as partner search and financing. An essential part of the cross-border interaction took place in the form of pragmatic and material support, but an increasingly strong effort was made to improve the situation on the Russian side by elaborating upon new models for action, building institutional capacities, professional training, and creating infrastructural basis for local CSOs. These 'improvements' were, of course, based on a Western design, and as the Russian organization adopted them as the basis of their own agenda setting, the European model of civil society became, to an extent, imported to Russia. The joint projects became an important driver of local development on the Russian side and the intensity of the CBC grew to the extent that it was seen to a certain extent to replace social services previously provided by the state (Izotov 2013). The void in educational, and to some extent recreational, activities caused by a lack of financial support and neglect on the part of the state was filled by technical, informational, and practical assistance provided by the Finnish CSOs.

A remarkable development brought along by the deepening of European integration, particularly through the EU's CBC programs, has been the promotion of new discursive and institutional practices on the regional level paradiplomatic activity. This has been the most apparent in the rhetoric of cross-border regionalization and in the formation of Euregions. In connection with the establishment of Euregio Karelia, such rhetoric has become part of Finnish-Russian paradiplomatic relations and the borderland of Karelia became defined in terms of a new type of European cross-border region.

Funding dependency is also seen to have been partly detrimental to social entrepreneurship, as it has encouraged easier 'grant-seeking' behaviors. Of course, the other side of this coin has been a dearth of alternative funding mechanisms. The lack of financing mechanisms, microfinance in particular, is a major problem as access to credit for the development of social enterprises is exceedingly difficult. Commercial loans are expensive and commercial banks remain hesitant to provide loans to voluntary organizations. This means that social enterprises are largely limited to trade-based activities, operating from the proceeds of the services and goods that they are able to sell. Russian CSO representatives mentioned that grants from foreign sources could theoretically be used to co-finance start-up investments in social enterprises but that these funds could also be subject to rigorous financial controls as well as heavily taxed. In addition, organizations that receive such funding are subject to close political scrutiny and must be exceedingly careful not to arouse suspicion of serving 'foreign' interest rather than domestic social needs.

In terms of future funding for civil society cooperation, the growing significance of the social economy and social contracting could provide an alternative that, as yet, has remained untried. The scope of many Finnish CSOs has been increased to include service provision through contracting with local, regional, and national agencies – at least in areas where private entrepreneurship has not proven to be profitable. Initial assessments of the financial viability of social contracting with CSOs in Russia have been less than favorable due to a lack of cost-effectiveness, inefficient recruitment, strategic planning, and poor management techniques.

There is a realization that a lack of independent funding sources – independent of foreign organizations as well as the Russian government – is a serious hindrance to greater CSO engagement in the social economy. Given extreme economic difficulties and low wages in most regions of the country, unpaid voluntary work is not a sustainable option. There is also a lack of strong firms working within the social economy that could assist in the promotion of entrepreneurial start-ups. Accordingly, attempts to develop a domestic infrastructure of microfinance and credit cooperatives have been initiated, also with coaching from European and North American CSOs. Initiatives such as the Russian Microfinance Centre (established in 2002) and the Fund 'Our Future'

(inaugurated in 2007) are, at the moment, few and far between but could signal an important change in the conditions of action for Russian social entrepreneurs.

### **6.5.2 Processes of Social Learning**

Even if cross-border civil society cooperation has certainly had its problems in the Finnish-Russian case, in general terms a cautiously positive picture can be drawn based on practical experiences. One reason for this is the processes of social learning that have enabled Finnish and Russian civil society actors to learn how to operate in new international cooperation environments. In addition to highlighting contextual factors that influence civil society cooperation between Finland and Russia, there is clear evidence of social learning through CSO networks. Despite their differences in outlook, operating capacities, and resources, civil society actors from Finland and Russia confirm that CBC has been a major contributor to capacity building and the transfer of political skills. While the motives for establishing cross-border contacts have differed, direct interaction through exchanges of experience, training sessions, joint project implementation, and practical experience in the technicalities of working on either side of the border has benefited both Russian and Finnish CSOs.

Given the nature of the situation, particularly in the early 1990s, initial interaction across the border was certainly closer to humanitarian work based on goodwill rather than cooperation between equal partners for mutual benefit. However, as Russian civil society has developed institutionally, Finnish CSOs have begun to engage in the practical training of Russian civil society actors in order to help them to develop their own organizational skills and increase their effectiveness in the new, internationalizing environment. Asymmetry, despite its problematic nature, has in itself been an important motive for cooperation: CBC is now becoming more of a two-way process in which both sides can learn from each other.

Social learning is also evident in cooperation strategies in which, from the CSO actors' perspective, the key to success lies in the avoidance of directly focusing on ambitious goals of social transformation and democratization. Resources are instead channeled into strengthening the conditions for civil society development in Russia and thus empowering Russian CSOs to improve their own situations. New opportunity structures within Russia would greatly increase incentives for entrepreneurial activities and help change negative attitudes towards social entrepreneurs. An important precondition for this would, of course, be a legislation enabling such for-profit activities. In addition, greater local and regional government autonomy would also strengthen the potential for social partnerships and thus provide a more sustainable basis for social enterprise operation.

The Finnish civil society actors perceived CBC in positive terms and as a value in itself:

It [CBC] is extremely important... important as hell, in many, many ways. If we could get the Russian civil society to work, at the moment it doesn't working at all... No other organizations than NGOs can bring this up... We have to deliver the message that citizens have to be able, and allowed to make their voices heard... and this way to plant the seed of democracy... it does not matter in which sectors the work is done as long as it includes volunteering, input and voices of individual citizens. Extremely important work, extremely. (F #32)

From the Russian perspective, CBC was evaluated positively as it had allowed the Russian actors "to share experiences, extend the competencies, consolidate the forces to solve different problems" (R #52) and "exchange experiences, knowledge, and new technologies" (R #56).

The role of horizontal networks is perceived as crucial for shaping the quality, thematic focus, and dynamics of cross-border activities in ways that are sensitive to local concerns. Such networks help shape the quality, thematic focus, and dynamics of cross-border activities in a means more sensitive to local concerns. Such networks have also enabled different actors to pool resources, share their knowledge and reduce CBC transaction costs for the smaller, local organizations. They have enabled different actors and organizations to come together and share their knowledge and reduce the transactions costs of cooperation for smaller, local organizations. Perhaps even more importantly, networking has helped individual organizations make the first steps across the border by providing the know-how and other resources that individual organizations often lack as well as by forming a framework that allows individual organizations to participate in CBC on an on-and-off basis. From a practical point of view, most of the problems that CSOs face dwarf the capacities of any single organization. In addition, networking has proven to be a more efficient way of attracting funding and made the actual application procedures easier for individual organizations.

The respondents of this study fully confirmed the finding of Németh et al. (2012, 214) that on the Finnish side CBC with Russia has intensified also the relations among the Finnish CSOs working for the same cause. Inter- and transnational projects have not only lead to closer cooperation with other CSOs but also with relevant private sector and public sector actors interested in "going to Russia." In cases where EU funding has been used, the intersectoral links have become a necessity as the ENPI CBC programs are largely managed by the Regional Councils, which have become key actors in pulling different actors together. In any case, this is deemed as beneficial as mutual learning does not respect sectoral boundaries.

In contrast, based on the accounts of the actors interviewed on the Russian side of the border, cross-border projects have only seldom fostered domestic links. While example of this do exist, most notably in the field of social welfare and health, the existence of cross-border links has fuelled internal competition

between actors and organizations on the Russian side. This has been particularly the case when an international partner has been functioning as a channel for funding. The situation has not been helped by the Finnish habit of sticking with the same partner from one project to another. While this makes practical sense, as personal relations continue to matter and trustworthy partners are needed in order for CBC to succeed, the respondents from the Russian side would like to see the scope of partners involved in CBC to be broadened as to impede the formation of a civil elite. This situation is, however, expected to improve as the funding sources diversify and especially now that funding of CBC has become more balanced.

While there is no single formula or institutional architecture that would characterize the cross-border networks, they are generally constructed around clusters of organizations with ties either to large national (i.e., Finnish) or international non-profit organizations. Larger and more experienced organizations within the network usually address politically relevant, bureaucratic, and the time-consuming aspects of grant-seeking and general project development while smaller, regionally embedded organizations with local knowledge carry out concrete projects. Thus, a division of labor is possible that distributes resources in a more appropriate manner than an individual CSO would be capable of. Through such networks, 'weaker' and smaller organizations can gain access to sources of support – although this can take place at the cost of operational autonomy.

All in all, the presence of cross-border CSO networks appears to provide a favorable operating environment, even in conditions of fiscal tightening and political adversity. CSO actors in Russia have mentioned that cross-border activities with their EU counterparts have allowed them to grow professionally and develop the skills to address serious local problems. Furthermore, the interviewed CSO actors suggested that within networks, inexperienced organizations could mature and acquire hands-on project management experience and accumulate knowledge that could increase their independence in future.

# 7 *New Civic Neighborhood*

The success the EUropean neighborhood building depends on various factors. The way the external border can be transcended depends on the role that the border is assumed to play; i.e., on the perception of what the borders are perceived to be. The conceptions of European borders are, in turn, dependent on the perception of what the European integration is all about; i.e., where the process of European integration is expected to lead us. Examining what Europe is helps us to understand what type of role civil society may potentially play in the process. While there are traces of all of them, the Finnish situation gets closest to Anheier's (2008a/b) NPM-scenario, according to which civil society is becoming more corporate and has assumed tasks previously belonged to national states, modernizing in so doing the entire welfare state arrangement – from a welfare state to a welfare mix, where responsibilities are shared among different types of organizations.

To focus simply on the EU would, however, be a political statement in itself. Europe is still not subsumed into the European Union. In fact, there have been an increasing number of incidents suggesting quite the opposite. The EU is nothing but *an* interpretation among many, and even quite a recent one. Understanding Europe as a civilization or through the processes of pan-European unity, as Sakwa (2006, 22) has suggested, would change the entire picture dramatically and transform the manner in which Russia is seen completely. As any student of geography would know, Europe is, by convention, a continent and not a politico-economic entity. But this, then, forces one to ask where the borders of Europe are? Does European unity need to be confined to a certain geographical or territorial limit to begin with?

Given that the Finnish-Russian border forms also a part of the EU-Russian interface, the different conceptions of both Europe and the EU influence the forms and motives of CBC. The different accounts are numerous and they all have an equally different take on the role and position of Russia. Whereas the mainstream EUropean story situates it in a Wider Europe, in the margins as a semi- or close outsider, to use Aalto's (2006) categorization, the Pan-European dimension provides a 'half-way house' approach for integrating Russia by providing some sort of institutional framework but failing short of a fully-fledged supranational transformative agenda (Sakwa 2010, 18). In particular regarding the former, the further away from Russia one is, the more likely it is to consider Russia European, while those sharing the common border tend to be more eager to draw the border (cf. Kuus 2011b, 1150). If, in turn, the Civilizational approach is used, Russia must be counted in.



Even though the Finnish-Russian border doubles as the EU external border, in the context of local and regional level CBC it is still approached in rather binational terms. While the rhetoric has certainly been Europeanized, much of the practices still carry traces of earlier traditions of Finnish political culture and Finnish-Russian relations. This is why it needs to be analyzed also in these terms; i.e., as a border that separates two very different historical trajectories of state and nation-building and two models of civil society. In order to deconstruct the border, we first need to understand how it has been constructed and what are the current forces maintaining it. In the Finnish-Russian case, it is clear that the different historical trajectories have led to different understandings of nationalism, which have led to different understandings of not just what is a nation, but also what is meant by trans-, inter/ or supranational. Given that the different understandings denote different political aspirations, objectives, and ambitions, each of them imply a different concept of an external border.

## **7.1 BORDERS FOR WHOM AND FOR WHAT?**

The rhetoric concerning globalization and a borderless world depicts political borders as relicts from the past. Accordingly, the traditional view of borders as geometric lines running across often sparsely populated frontier territory at the edges of nation-states, demarcating thereby both functionally and symbolically the sovereign space of political entities has been downplayed by rescaling of the state most notably through macro level regionalization and transnationalization of governance. With an increasingly integrating Europe, the nature of borders has not only been altered, but also a new order based on their respective statuses has emerged. The distinction between an internal and external border keeps growing ever stronger as the former are being softened and the latter hardened. Even though in the dynamics of globalization borders create constrains for interaction and integration, their functions as filters of flows, constructs guiding and obstructing our activities, denotations of 'weness' and 'otherness,' and as symbols of power – or the lack there of, difference in, or the yearning for – remain imperative for many. The lure of nationalism and sovereignty remain, but at least in Europe both of the concepts have been redefined to permit increased transnational linkages.

As is discussed in chapter two, the basic premise of this work is the notion that in order to understand the borders of today, one must first understand how they came to be. Understandings of the nature of state borders are simultaneously characterized by both continuity and change. While borders have over time become increasingly understood to signify more than simply lines on a map, as broader constructions they are also perceived differently by different actors. From the CBC perspective, significance lies not in what borders are, but what they are perceived to be. Broader, more multifaceted and

multileveled conceptions of borders allow for more activity particularly for civil society engagement in CBC. CSOs are important societal actors, functioning as innovators, facilitators, conveners, advocates, and service providers. Thus, the further into the society that borders extend, the more prominent the role of CSOs becomes. As is suggested in chapter three, due to the increased linkages with the public and private sectors, civil society activism can no longer be placed neatly within the 'third sector,' rather, civil society blurs the borders between sectors, creating new organizational forms that bind public and private activity together in the advancement of the common good.

Despite the apparent centrifugal forces of globalization, national borders have remained a crucial research topic. While conceptions of a border are now evidently broader and fuzzier, national borders have remained imperative largely due to the increased prominence of nationalistic thought. The EU has clearly become too expansive to adequately nurture feelings of belongingness amongst its population, fueling the need to seek out smaller frames of reference for identity formation. As the European experience clearly shows, the nation-state has endured as an idealistic mode of organization; people still want to belong to and identify with a particular nation, not to an unidentified political object. Nations have not disappeared, but the borders between them have been partly dismantled as new supranational institutions have come into being.

The mental aspects of borders seem, however, to be more deeply rooted and sticky, and thus more time consuming to tear down. Borders of the mind are difficult to blot out as they often include strong stereotyped imaginations and imagined distinctions. Borders are thus not simply imagined *or* real, but imagined *and* therefore real. A border of the mind implies a mental incapacity to deal with others. One has to free his or her mind from the myths of the past and move beyond the biases and prejudices related to them for the future, by definition, lies ahead. While in principle we seem to trivialize, if not despise borders, it seems that in practice we are unable to live without them. This should not, however, be taken to axiomatically indicate some sort of hostility towards the other side. At least part of the allure of borders can be explained by psychological comfort and a sense of control over the space that the confinement, enclosedness, and demarcation brings about. Even if cooperation comprises part of what North (2005, viii–ix) refers to as the “genetic architecture of humans,” it is equally human to draw borders and build fences, to manage space (Laine 2008).

In the Finnish-Russian case, the national border is clearly perceived as an inconvenience to local life, but at the same time it is taken as an issue of nationalistic pride. Despite the EUropeanized rhetoric and the more multifaceted understandings of borders, the Finnish-Russian border is still very much a classical state border. To talk about borders – particularly in the Finnish-Russian case – is to talk about difference. Excessive openness is now desired for it is perceived to erase this difference. Even though the difference has certainly

been transformed from downright threatening to more exiting, even inviting, its existence still remains an imperative for many.

The border, in a strict sense, causes only a few constraints. It is just “a regrettable fact that one has to live with” if involved in CBC; it is “a drag, but not a barrier” (F #48). However, what it signifies is what matters. The Finnish-Russian border forms a barrier because it signifies where one set of rules end and another begins. Thus, cross-border flows reflect more than just a simple supply and demand relationship; they are impacted by a complex web of non-economic factors, some of which encourage diminishing the barrier effect and others that reinforce it. Borders are expensive constructions and the lack of trust only adds to this cost. In the end, to cross a border is a move out of one's own, familiar culture and enter into a different and unknown one. It is these differences together with general unpredictability that is being pushed to the foreground as an explanation for the lack of cross-border relations.

Borders continue to exist but they are transformed by networks, which penetrate right through them. What we have witnessed is an unprecedented multiplication, diversification, specialization, and personalization of borders (Popescu 2011, 77). A borderland is not a single system but a combination of several systems overlapping one another. The resultant porousness of borders both enables and necessitates cross-border cooperation. While transnational networks have increased cohesion within and beyond the EU, the structural arrangements demanded by them have created dichotomies more locally. The transnational ‘elite’ who cross borders regularly – whether in real life or virtually – perceive borders very differently from those who have decided to avoid crossing or those who are explicitly excluded.

Categorizing borders as either ‘open’ or ‘closed’ paints a rather black and white picture. The reality is grayer, as a border may be permeable at one point in time and impermeable at another or may be permeable for some functions and impermeable for others. Accordingly, the very same border can reinforce nationalism among some while it may reinforce transnationalism among others. The sovereignty and territorial integrity is still deemed to be something worth protecting, while trade and economy-wise borders tend to pose obstructive and costly barriers. Accordingly, the function of borders is thus not just simply transforming one way or another, but due to the dual movement of integration and securitization, borders are simultaneously both opening and closing; i.e., the processes of de- and rebordering are not exclusionary, but occur simultaneously.

In addition to merely enabling or disabling human achievement, in Agnew's (2008) view there is a need to change the way in which we think about borders to openly acknowledge their both practically and ethically equivocal character. Borders should not be seen as fixed or as something that must be overcome, but as an evolving construction that has both merits and problems that must be constantly reweighed. This must be done, as Paasi has repeatedly argued, for borders are institutions and symbols that are produced and reproduced in social

practices and discourses. As human constructs, they can also be removed. Borders do not pre-exist, but they are always an outcome of social and political processes; change the process and you change the border.

Even though a “post-Nietzschean/Foucauldian/Freudian/pragmatist/socially critical” way of understanding borders confirms that borders are indeed complex social constructions (Scott 2012), they also materially embedded and constituted (Paasi 2009). Borders not mere lines on the map, but they are sedimented in broader and smaller processes, from education to politics and economy, all over the border region and also linked in complex ways to the institutions of ‘external world.’ They vacillate (Balibar 1998; Brunet-Jailly 2011) and manifest themselves in practices and institutions that produce categories, distinction, and the sense of belonging. As such they are predominantly markers of inclusion and exclusion.

Borders are about power relations. As today’s global politics illustrate, borders are not hardened by those who are weak, but by those who are strong. Strong players create strong borders because they can, because they hold the power to delimit. In so doing, one also tends to also get more detached from what is going on the other side of the border. The resultant lack of knowledge and information nourish uncertainty and fear, making the border per se a manifestation of irrational rationalities, misunderstandings, exclusion, and paranoia (van Houtum 2010; Scott 2012).

## **7.2 THE COLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL: IMAGE OF RUSSIA AS A PARTNER**

When drunk, Finns oppose Russkies, Swedish speaking Finns, baseball, modern art, opera, the government, agricultural subsidies, men who read poetry and obnoxious regulars. When drunk, they can also to some extent love these very same things. (L 18.5.1994)

There is a 1000-pound gorilla in the room, and it is not going away. Even when the gorilla is sitting quietly in the corner of the room and causing no harm, its presence is apparent. Because it takes up most of the room, there is no ignoring it. Even its smallest movements cause anxiety among the rest, as no one can tell what it is going to go. And somehow, it has to be included in all the major discussions that are taking place in the room, be they about the EU, NATO – or even about the weather. It arouses strong feelings both for and against – everybody has something to say about it.

The analysis of the public debate within the Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* has provided a fascinating overview of how Finnish attitudes towards and images of Russia as a CBC partner and neighbor have evolved since the 1990s. This also formed an interesting time for the beginning of the analysis as

the official image of the Eastern neighbor was beginning to crumble, creating a void that had to be filled. Accordingly, the Finnish media was freed from its shackles and now provided an oppression-free public sphere for civil debate.

In the beginning, the analyzed texts suggested that in order to avoid dealing with the situation as it was, it was hoped that the gorilla, or rather the bear, would simply go away if it went unmentioned. Such beating around the bush began to transform into more straightforward accounts on the situation, but only slowly. According to common ways of thought, Finlandization and the related ideas that questioned the Finnish policy of neutrality, some extortionately, were unfair and served only to prove that not all understood what it had meant to live next to an unpredictable superpower. The groveling before the Soviet Union had heavy geographical and historical reasons:

Let us consider Finland as a little brother living in the same space with aggressive big brother: would it be wise for the little brother constantly provoke the big brother, which not only hold superiority, but has also used it? (L 8.12.2003)

While more general Western attitudes towards Russia have turned, at times in an instant, from euphoria to outrage and from despair to hope, Finns' underlying attitudes towards Russia have been more stable. This can partly be explained by the fact that Russia is constantly present in the Finnish media and general public debate while elsewhere, further away, its image is formed based on more pointed events. Finns remain reserved and ground their stance on past experience. Whether this is called Russophobia or just realism depends on the angle taken. The debate about Russia, then, has certainly evolved during the last two decades, but the process has not been linear, nor has it been uncomplicated. Instead, multiple alternative trends have emerged and there is still plenty of room for interpretation. This is to say that the image and meaning of Russia has not simply changed from one to another, but it is seen differently in different contexts, at different levels sectors, and by different actors. Russia looks very different depending on whether it is approached at the level of everyday life, as a next-door neighbor, or as a global re-emerging superpower.

Also different actors construct their image differently, on the basis of different principles. Supporters of the old friendship policy school continue to portray a romanticized vision of Russia and treat policies that aspire to abandon Finland's historical unalliance with caution. In contrast, others have endeavored to fight against geographical factors and place Finland at the kernel of the EU as to confirm Finland's position and identity as a genuine Western European nation (see, e.g., OE 10.8.2003). Among the Russia experts, the pessimists seem to be more often right than are the optimists (OE 16.2.1999). Some continue to see Russia as the eternal other, with whom any interaction is doomed to failure, while others maintain that cooperation is possible only by recognizing the facts – whatever they may be.

The further away one views Russia, the more European it seems to be. Right at the border, the contrast is more obvious as that is where the face-to-face everyday interaction most often occurs. This does not, however, have to be taken as an inherently negative thing. While some asymmetries, such as differences in language, governance models, financial resources, specification of respective interests, level of knowledge, and instability in objectives and of the people responsible for individual projects are the most common explanations for the lack of cross-border relations, differences in price levels or particular laws and regulations may actually encourage interaction.

All in all, in contrast to the EU documents and the speeches by the Finnish political leadership, both of which draw a rather optimistic picture of the relations and developments in Russia, the public debate in HS is clearly more pessimistic. This study fully supports Lounasmeri's (2011a, 15) findings that when it comes to time orientation, everyday discussion stems from the past and, at times, may even get stuck there. The standpoint and arguments advocated in the letters to the editor are commonly built on a traditionalist take built on past experience and the assumption that Russia has and will not change. Historical remarks are often disguised as historical facts, which are then used to depict how things usually go with Russia. Accordingly, while editorial and op-eds tend to pay attention to more long-term developments, letters often focus on single, isolated events, which are then used as *yet another* evidence of Russia's incapability to get things right – from the Finnish perspective, that is. The letters depict Russia as a threat and seek to maintain the difference, indicating that while increased interaction may be beneficial, the border itself continues to serve a purpose in terms of identity formation and mental constructions, as a reminder of what once happened.

Media has played a central role in providing a public sphere for (re-)producing historical images and narratives. Rewriting the history in retrospect is always a political project as it allows one to use history to further his or her own ends by purposefully highlighting some aspects and overshadowing others, reinforcing in so doing a particular interpretation of the course of events in the past. Such stories can partly be understood as therapeutic gut spilling, but can also be seen as attempts to manage the history to better match with the 'truth,' objective in the subjective eyes of an individual and his or her politico-ideological leanings. This is a prime example of how borders get reproduced, as explained by Papadakis (2005), through mobilization of historical memories in order to address past injustices or to strengthen group identity – often by perpetuating negative stereotypes of the 'other.' As a result, the already negative preconceptions get renewed and activated. While most letters delved upon local concerns, the analysis of Russian internal developments as well as its role in the international arena was left for the editorials and op-eds.

It is, however, very difficult to move forward when you're looking backward. Editorials and op-eds, in which the elite accounts are emphasized, tend to take

more of a transitionalist approach and focus on potential opportunities, though at times in a somewhat dubious manner. They commonly speculate about the future, indulging at times in ahistoricism. As Lounasmeri 2011a, 15) notes, such writings often reduce the Russia relationship to the level of pragmatic pros and cons for the sake of manageability. At the same time, however, they risk ignoring the deeper underlying, often emotional reactions, which get emphasized in the letters.

The myth of Russia serves to organize the shared ways of conceptualizing Russia in Finnish culture. In order to realize the desired meaning, words, phrases, and expressions are carefully, yet often intuitively, selected from the semiotic resources that are available socially and culturally. The selection of these recourses is determined by the underlying myth, which then again gets corroborated when they are used. This myth has also an ideological function. It is used to convey the ideological norms and the dominant cultural as well as the historical values of Finnish culture. It thus serves to naturalize collective attitudes and beliefs, even if ungrounded, to seem normal and self-evident. As long as they go unquestioned, the myth need not be taken as myth, but rather as the culturally objective and 'true' reflection of the 'way things are' (see Barthes 1977, 45–46).

The opinion pieces analyzed in this study cannot be taken merely as a form of communication, i.e., a transfer of knowledge from the author to the readers. Instead, they are prime examples of communicative meaning making, whereby they evoke a process of interpretation in the reader. The stronger the underlying myth is, the easier it is for the author (sender of the message) and the reader (receiver of the message) to arrive to a common interpretation. In the Finnish case, the taken-for-grantedness of the myth of Russia is implied by the way Russia can be talked and written about; many things are left unwritten, to be read between the lines. As a result, a sort of a cipher is created, which can be decoded only by those familiar with the codes and the social knowledge that they imply as intended by the sender.

The social construction of a national identity could hardly be more obvious. The 'we' group gets defined through the process of othering; the more negative the qualities attributed to the 'them' group are, the more positive 'we' seem in comparison. The socio-economic gap at the border is often portrayed almost as a positive thing, as it is useful in bulking up the image of a prosperous Finland and in maintaining the difference from Russia. In the language used in especially in the letters, the image of Russia remains strongly associated with a bear that growls, hits, tramples, and does various other offensive things. The bear is something to be feared, but it is also used to maintain the image of Russia as aggressive, barbarian, slow, and headstrong. Heedless of their accuracy, these characterizations serve to confirm the difference between the two nations. Among Finns, they evoke feelings of assumed superiority vis-à-vis the neighbor who may be powerful but is depicted as non-civilized.

The colloquial language is full of various more abrasive expressions about Russia and Russians, none of which are positive and many of which are used even in quite formal settings without causing too much indignation. While writings of this nature were often singled out from the paper version of *Helsingin Sanomat*, the comments posted on the Internet pages of the newspaper resorted often such stereotypization in the absence of other means of getting a particular point across.

The continued use of these derogatory sayings is validated by the fact that they are just lighthearted conventional expressions, but perhaps therein lies the very core of the problem: the everyday relations across the border are still far away from being 'normalized,' and also underutilized given the geographical proximity. While the use of these stereotypical and deliberately misleading descriptions tell more about Finns than they do about Russians, the underlying attitudes they imply is quite out of tune with the rhetoric that seeks to erode mental barriers.

There seems also to be a continued need to feed and upkeep the image of Russia as a threat. While it is old news that bad news is more newsworthy than good news, the descriptions of Russia in the media goes well beyond that. The opinion writings chosen to be published portray a very negative perception of Russia and even issues that are positive from the offset tend to get twisted and transformed into negative descriptions. The negative preconceptions get renewed and utilized for various purposes, at times even with individual word choices. Russian decrees and statutes (in Russian: *указ*) having to do with Finland get usually translated as *ukaasi*, a Finnish word for 'command,' 'demand,' or a 'threat.' The verb that is commonly used in this context is *uhitella*, to be defiant, which creates a further perception that Russia would be trying to dictate what Finland should do. Negative verbs are often followed by an epithet 'as usual' or 'again' as to suggested this is what usually happens with Russia.

There is also a tendency to place Finnish-Russia relations within the customary conflict rhetoric even without justification. As an illuminating example of this, an article in HS on September 9, 2010, which presented the results of a recent poll. The article was entitled "One out of five is afraid of Russia" while it would have been just as accurate that claim that 80 per cent, a vast majority, of Finns do not see Russia as a threat. While it is true that this may correspond with what some of the audience wants to read, or at least is accustomed to reading, in terms of the credibility of the newspaper such a generalizing and, indeed, populist take is problematic.

But let us put the gorilla back on the table. When the debate acquired more substance and concrete examples that could be talked about with their real names, not with mental pictures and figures of speech, the gorilla began to transform into a more manageable partner. It was surely still big, but the increased dialogue decreased some of its unpredictably and allowed mutual exchange of ideas. Instead of evicting him, or having to fear him, there has been



a solid attempt to befriend him and to work together with him to solve *our* common problems. This has taken the edge off of the jungle fever, whereby with the relationship with the gorilla has become more normalized and the gorilla itself has become a welcome guest.

### **7.3 CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN FINNISH-RUSSIAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION**

The operational preconditions of civil society remain linked with the operations of the broader society surrounding it. There is, however, no reason to claim that this should always be understood in the frame of the nation-state. This is very different from suggesting that the sovereignty of the state would be threatened. As Häkli (2008, 6) argues, the bounded and very tangible territorial space now occupied by the Finnish nation-state has no clear alternatives when it comes to the organization of the state's juridical and administrative powers. While the territorial sovereignty of the nation-states continue to form one of the leading principles upon which international relations are based, transnational relations are run by actors and organizations whose ability to function do not stop at the border. Thanks to the changes in the governance modes, the state is no longer the primary actor, nor is the nation-state the *only* conception of space to be applied in explaining human interaction.

#### **7.3.1 What Role for Civil Society?**

Civil society plays a crucial role in Finnish society. Its core remains in voluntary organization through which Finns have built their own, common wellbeing, in so doing developing the society as a whole. Civil society forms also a public sphere where issues of common concern can be discussed, citizenship expressed, and where Finnish participatory democracy is acted out from the bottom up. CSOs have all the potential to strengthen citizen participation, increase mutual trust and to transmit needs and expertise from the ground to decision-making. Civil society can thus do many things, but this is not to say that it necessarily will. It offers excellent preconditions for a range of activities but accomplishes little without the active participation of its citizenry. A mere membership does not equal an active citizen.

The situation changes, however, remarkably when civil society activities are extended beyond their respective national frame. While CSOs encompass a number of qualities, which emphasize their aptitude for CBC (see subsection 3.2.5), their operational basis changes if the work carried out gets too detached from their constituents. It is essential to remember that the primary focus of Finnish CSOs lies on the Finnish side of the border, as that is where their constituency resides. Engaging in CBC, in turn, is usually something to be done if and when the resources and time allow. There seems to be a coherent

understanding among CSO actors that CBC could yield considerable benefits but that it also involves substantial costs and risks. Any collaborative effort involves considerable transaction costs in terms of resources and time spent in negotiating and carrying out cooperative activities. The border dramatically increases these costs. Without supportive networks, or for-the-purpose external funding, resources and time might have a better rate of return if invested internally or towards building relationship with compatriotic organizations.

This is also why the perception of Russia as a neighbor and partner impacts CBC practices. Especially when the work is carried out on a voluntary basis, it is essential that actors themselves feel that CBC is worthwhile. This really is what matters, as success of any cross-border endeavor is, in the end, measured by its respective constituents; i.e., what does this bring to us? What seems to matter is that through engagement in cross-border civil society cooperation people are able to create people-to-people contacts across the border, whereby they learn from each other and are forced to rethink their own viewpoints. The social capital formation that civil society CBC requires and depends on is not just a prerequisite, but also a result of this cooperation. Thus, CSOs in all their diversity have certainly a crucial role to play in any policy proposal or in projects aiming to enhance cooperation within a broader European neighborhood.

In an increasingly internationalized society, civil society has become to play a strong role in various cross-border activities and engaged in roles that national governments themselves cannot operate effectively and legitimately. In the EU context, CSOs are valuable for they fill the void created by inefficient governance and a market economy. They also fight effectively against the apparent democratic deficit as involving CSOs into EU governance has meant greater transparency and decentralization, heightened accountability and the more efficient governance of public institutions. As Anheier's (2008a/b) New Public Management model suggests, the contractual arrangements with CSOs has the potential to modernize the public sector and make it more effective; less government = less bureaucracy = more flexibility = greater efficiency. CSOs play a crucial role in transforming ideas from rhetoric into practice, as it is often CSOs that are responsible for policy and project implementation.

The CSOs' increased role in international relations can be largely attributed to the rise of transnational networks – enabled by multilevel governance. This has extended CSOs' space for action, making it increasingly transnational, rather than nation-state bound. As a result, they bridge the gaps created by borders and bordering by reacting fast and effectively to the practical problems that they imply. When the links across a border have been made, the ensuing cross-border civil society has the potential to address bi-/transnational problems either directly by themselves or by pushing governments toward binational solutions by articulating policy alternatives, providing applicable knowhow, required research, and supportable arguments for preferred options, creating pilot

projects, and mobilizing support for adopting policies. Given that, in principle, civil society reflects the societal forces that operate largely independently from state interests, in cases it has been necessary for the sub-national organization to skip the state level altogether in seeking new allies directly from higher levels or from the same level across the border.

Civil society is not, however, a magic bullet, and it should not be treated as such. Neither are CSOs exempt from economic pressures and environmental uncertainties that the other types of organizations, public and private alike, are struggling with. These pressures come with implications that may threaten civil society's viability. During the financial crisis, civil society has also been confronted with great challenges from budget cutting to increased competition. While on the one hand these may hinder the ability of civil society to seize all the opportunities offered by a retreating state, the difficult times have, on the other hand, also come with opportunities. The societal role and significance of CSOs have only increased as people have turned to them in search of solutions to problems the state and the market have not been able to fix. This has emphasized the role of CSOs as service providers and strengthened their societal role even further. Expanded contracting of CSOs in governmental welfare provision and user empowerment projects are only two examples of the trend. As the recapitulative SWOT matrix shown in Figure 42 aims to show, there are a number of factors that either enforce or hinder the CSOs ability to function in the CBC setting.

The next logical steps should be to figure out pragmatic ways to minimize weaknesses and use strengths to take advantage of the opportunities and to overcome the biggest threats. The strengths are specific to CSOs and separate them clearly from the other 'sectors' of society. This provided the CSOs with a clear niche in which to operate in order to capitalize on the opportunities.

As the lists in the matrix above indicate, there are a number of things to consider. It is thus necessary to prioritize, especially with respect to the challenges. Many of the threats and challenges are external in the sense that influencing them directly can be difficult. However, they still need to be acknowledged until time and resources are available for finding a solution. Fortunately, most of the weaknesses have a clear solution. Lack of funds, for instance, might be solved by the means of social entrepreneurship, and fragmentation and poor monitoring overcome by focusing on already existing best practices or through training and quality management.

Based on the interviews of the CSO actors conducted for this study, a number of practical suggestions can be made. These include 1) extending the timeframe of implementation beyond mere projects of limited duration, 2) reducing grant dependency, 3) enhancing the intersectoral relations and networking, 4) establishing greater rapport between CSOs and local governments, 5) stronger emphasis on capacity building at all levels of activity, 6) training CSO management to be better qualified for the ever more transnational environment,

7) better coordination between CSOs as well as with other CBC stakeholders, 8) encouraging innovation and mutual learning (instead of old habits), 8) more robust monitoring, evaluation, and prioritization as to avoid overlaps 9) forming better and easier two-way communication channels between the CSOs and the EU, and 10) more pragmatic funding mechanisms that do not sideline grassroots activism.

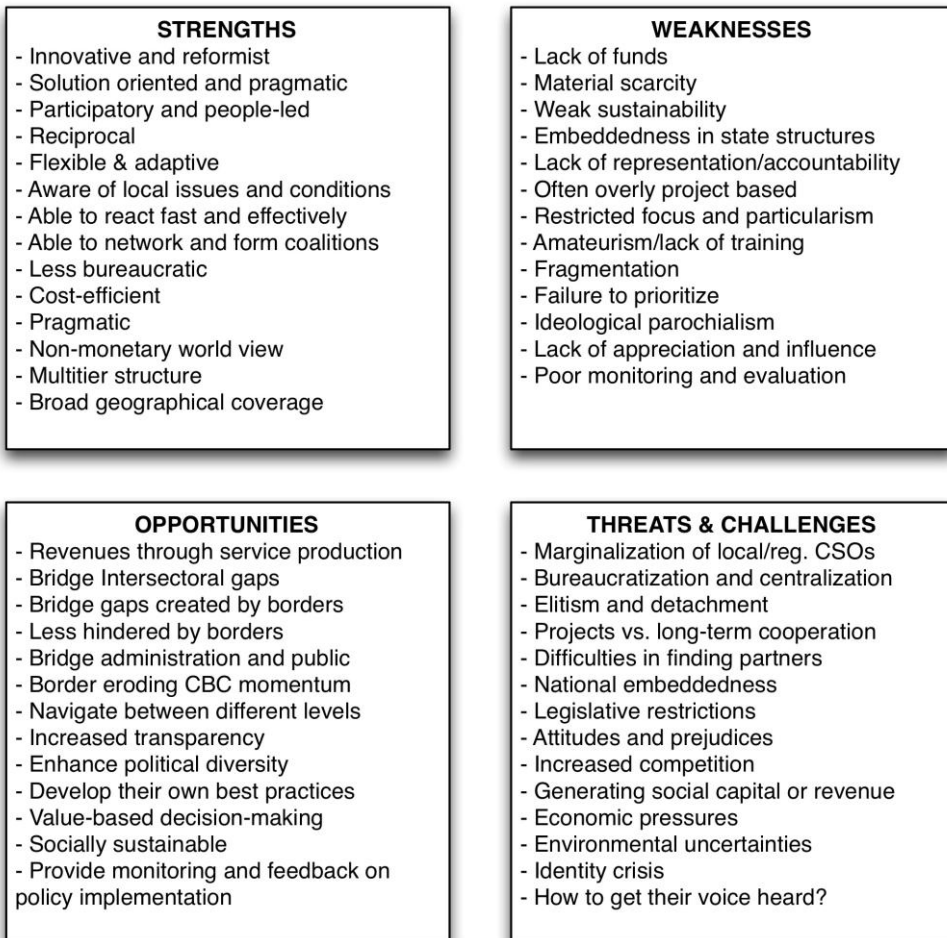


Figure 42. SWOT analysis of the CSOs' role cross-border cooperation in the EU era

As the EU's cooperation agenda has drifted on a collision course with Russia's re-emerging superpower rhetoric, the transnational civil society links have become more effectively exploited by the EU within its ambitious project of regional cooperation. In the EU rhetoric, especially within the context of ENP, civil society is assumed to be a major political forum and force. While it has its

benefits, in the relations with Russia such a politicization of civil society cooperating has also its drawbacks. The more the CSOs assume the role of EU agents, the more they will also depend on the status of EU-Russia relations. As we have already clearly seen, the Russian state has interpreted this to involve an indirect agenda of reshaping state institutions and attacked against what it deems as foreign interventions by restricting the operational environment for all CSOs in Russia.

In the post-Soviet space, where the development of civic action is still very much in its infancy, the normative load of the EU policies creates pressures for the nascent CSOs to modify their original makeup and adapt to the externally desired qualities. While there is no reason to deprecate the disquieting action that the state structures have placed upon civil society in Russia, a mere transplantation of an inherently foreign model of civil society will hardly be a solution. Not the least because the EU tends to foster sort of a genetically enhanced model of civil society, stripped of from all but its beneficial characteristics.

The success of any civil society endeavor remains largely based on its context specific circumstances. Thanks to its soft power, the EU model may be attractive and easy to stand up for, but when cultivated outside of its original habitat, in contexts and circumstances that differ greatly from those in which the model has developed, it is likely to colonize, even replace the indigenous, native forms of civic action.

In the case of Russia, the Western (not just EU) funding has acted as a growth hormone, evident in the spurring numbers of CSOs – some of which has been created for the very purpose of obtaining Western funds. It can already be seen that such growth is neither natural nor maintainable. The focus needs to be readjusted from mere numbers to the actual forms and capacities of civic action. Cross-border cooperation plays a crucial role here; it can create new spaces for civil society engagement and local initiatives in the areas important for the local inhabitants themselves.

While it is certainly true that civil society has become a major channel through which the EU's normative power gets transmitted, much of the small-scale local level CBC has been carried out in isolation from the EU's grand geopolitical aims. Instead of focusing directly on the big goals of democracy building and importing Western values to Russia, the traditional Finnish approach, which has sought to strengthen the prerequisites for individual citizens in Russia in order for them to build better preconditions for their own well-being, has proven to be a more efficient way to gain acceptance and, as a result, tangible results. Through such pragmatism in civil society networks, the building of a civic neighborhood can go beyond the merely symbolic or politically expedient. Such networks can form the basis for mutual cultural knowledge, a key precondition for security. However, having been associated with the state-building process in the East, there is an apparent risk that CSOs

may, to their own disadvantage, lose track of their pragmatic mission in getting caught between the geopolitical projects of the EU and Russia.

The future context of cooperation will be of decisive importance for the development prospects of the regions at and near the EU's external borders. With the evolution of the ENP framework, a crucial future question remains as to how to adapt the regional perspectives of EU external relations to existing institutional models and how to bring Russian regional actors into the implementation and targeting of new policy instruments. The definition of common regional concerns and the construction of cross-border regions get highlighted not only in economic but also social, cultural, and political terms. The reasons for this are rather clear; it is civil society actors who embody the local political and social contexts, they are intermediaries par excellence between community concerns and more global processes that increasingly impact everyday life. Potential exists for horizontal, non-hierarchical institutional learning that involves motivated sectors of the population and strengthens their social impact locally and regionally.

While much of the cooperation takes place separately from the EU programs, due to ever-decreasing national funds, the role of the EU is, however, bound to only increase. While it is certainly a positive development that the ENPI CBC programs are governed regionally, the EU's focus on budgetary control, administrative standardization, and security issues has unfortunately promoted bureaucratic practices and policies of conditionality that tend to complicate CSO cooperation. The EU has developed a systematic framework for implementing cross-border civil society projects that involves a laborious implementation process that channels support for civil society largely through state structures.

The EU demands certain types of bureaucratic discipline, which includes budgeting, auditing, monitoring, and evaluating civil society projects which often subordinates CSOs to state agencies at the national, regional, and local level. Regional Councils thus play a strong strategic and political role in CBC, but they also have a lot to say which CSOs get included in the programs. This contributes to the emergence of a privileged CSO elite, particularly on the Russian side, that may become isolated from its constituents. Thus, despite the EU's strong rhetorical commitment to facilitating transnational civil society networks, this goal is often subordinated to the dictates of geopolitical 'realism.' In order to make the programs more inclusive and useful for the participating regions and localities, there needs to be more room for bottom-up initiatives and the voice of local actors in defining priorities and the means to achieve them.

However, in areas such as social policy, welfare, health, and economic development there is great potential for common agendas that transcend geopolitical and inter-state tensions. Social policy has been a major victim of neo-liberal ideology and economic reforms that have privileged economic growth and liberalization. Thanks to civil society networks, shortfalls in public provision of social services have been partially compensated for while notions of

social equity, welfare, and group rights have been reframed as policy concerns in new member states and neighboring states.

Instead of Europeanization, the local level CBC has rather given a new meaning to Finlandization, as it has very much been the Finnish, not necessary European, welfare model that has been extended to cover also cooperation with Russia. Such a pragmatic approach is likely to be more beneficial for the both sides than any grand bargain. After all, if the EU wishes to remain effective in Russia than the EU has to also remain attractive, given that the conditionality principle cannot be applied to Russia and the EU commitments and their success remains subject to local interpretation and acceptance. CSOs have a valuable role to play in this respect. While Europeanization has brought new momentum, the valuable experience gained during the last two decades from the bilateral cooperation should not thus be forgotten either.

Alongside free-form voluntary civic action, during the past decades civil society has become increasingly important as a societal force in terms of service production. In practice, this entails that the number of service-producing quasi-corporations, social enterprises, will increase in the future. As this tendency will in all likelihood continue in the coming years, one is forced to ask whether or not CSOs can act both as service providers and as sources of social capital at the same time. To what extent does becoming a part of the public hand downplay attempts to revive a sense of community and belonging and enhance civic mindedness and engagement?

Charitable giving and especially volunteering has been characteristic of Finnish civil society, but as corporatization comes hand in hand with commercialization, this denotes also shifts in CSOs' revenue structure as well as their organizational structure as more CSOs evolve from voluntary organizations and social economy organizations. Regarding CBC, this can be judged predominantly as a positive development, as it implies increased self-sufficiency, but it also changes the 'ethos' and the entire civil society culture fundamentally. Service production comes with a pressure to become more professional, the underlying cause may shift from being value-based to more profit seeking, and networking and cooperation among CSOs may get overshadowed by increased competition, a concept that has been somewhat foreign to civil society activism. How far can we push the limits and organizational forms of civil society? Are we still talking about civil society in the first place?

Based on all that has been said above, I would answer "quite a bit" and "yes we are." The meaning of civil society has been far from stable. It has not only migrated extensively, but it also means very different things in different context. Instead of fixating on the organizational form, the focus needs to be on what is actually being done. Even if on an asymmetrical basis, CBC is about mutual learning: it attenuates our tendency to think in normative and categorical terms about what civil society is and what it should do. It opens up new perspectives

for understanding why civil society actors develop specific practices and provides insights into the specific social identities of civil society organizations.

As the operational environment has changed, the organizational form has also had to adapt. If state-supported voluntary organizations enlarge the social capital of civil society, then why not for-profit or even company sponsored, social enterprises. After all, civil society is a *political* concept, not an *economic* one. Given that state funding has been cut drastically and EU funding is often out of reach, revenue generation through service production might be the only viable option to attain financial security, self-sufficiency, and independence.

### **7.3.2 Self-sufficiency through Social Economy Development**<sup>76</sup>

Even though a number of individual objectives have been reached through project-based cooperation, there is an apparent need to aspire for more long-term, self-sustaining civil society cooperation. As discussed in subsection 3.2.3 in theory and section 6.5 in practice, one option could be to conceptualize also Finnish-Russian CBC in more socio-economic terms. A more social economy focused approach would offer alternative ways to generate social and economic welfare and innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems through social entrepreneurship.

Before going further, it is important to acknowledge that broader cultural issues have evident bearings also on the development of social entrepreneurship. Practical experiences from cooperation provide insights into the social identities and embeddedness of both Finnish and Russian CSOs and how these ties influence their ability and motivation to participate in the social economy. This study has confirmed Alapuro's (2008) characterizations that whereas Finnish CSOs tend to be informed by a more universal philosophy of democratic representation and, accordingly, perceive their own role as being based on general societal engagement and social justice, Russian CSOs are, generally speaking, more oriented towards satisfying specific group interests and care aspects of the social economy. Consequently, Finnish CSOs behave as societal actors with wider social and political agendas, the achievement of which necessitate the generation of profits. Russian CSOs, in turn, understand their grassroots agendas in less managerial and strategic terms.

While this categorization is undoubtedly oversimplified, it explains at least partly the aversion of many Russian CSOs to employ entrepreneurial strategies in order to enhance their sustainability. The different societal role also means that the concrete interests of Finnish and Russian CSOs are quite different with respect to CBC. While Finnish actors focus on promoting functioning social economies in Russia as a sort of investment for the future, Russian CSOs are more often directly concerned with assisting specific groups and group interests

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<sup>76</sup> This section developed the ideas introduced in Scott and Laine (2012).



that require new policy responses and forms of assistance no longer guaranteed by the state.

A basic contradiction is still perceived between profit motives and attending to social needs. Most CSOs do not in fact see their *raison d'être* in raising investment capital (even if for social causes) but in either self-help forms of social activity or in partnerships with governments, local governments especially, in providing social services. This notion of purpose is also supported by a greater focus on specific group-related problems. This varies, for example, from the outlook of many Finnish CSOs who see themselves as advocates of wider social agendas. From the Western perspective, this might make Russian CSOs appear 'clientilistic,' but in the Russian case it appears to successfully concentrate resources for particularly disadvantaged groups.

The impact of CBC in the development of the social economy in Russia has so far been somewhat ambivalent. Cross-border networks have helped establish partnerships in different areas of social welfare, economic development, training, and institutional capacity building that have assumed an important regional development role (Laine & Demidov 2013; Scott & Laine 2012). At the same time, the sustainability of joint projects is overwhelmingly dependent upon outside support, for example from the Finnish government, the EU, and large international foundations.

Civil society cooperation across the EU's external border is only slowly promoting entrepreneurial practices that could provide durable sources of finance. However, these ambiguities surrounding CBC and its impact on Russian civil society should not suggest that cooperation experiences can be reduced to a mere transfer of 'best practices.' Cooperation also has promoted new ways of seeing CSOs as actors whose roles and activities reflect their social and political embeddedness.

The evolution of civil society interaction towards more reciprocal forms of cooperation suggests that processes of institutional learning have increased the effectiveness of CSOs on both sides of the border to address social welfare and other local development issues. This institutional learning takes place in the shape of professionalization, improved knowledge about local needs and situations, enhanced lobbying and grant-seeking practices, and a better transfer of information to local citizens on health, training, employment, and other social affairs. Nevertheless, a major challenge in the Russian case lies in securing the financial viability and sustainability of CSOs and in promoting the legitimacy of social enterprises as providers of public goods. Much of the debate on social enterprise and social contracting stems from attempts to manage political, demographic, and economic change in Western welfare states. As such, the concept of social entrepreneurship presupposes several structural, social and political conditions that are not well understood or even applicable in Russia. Furthermore, Russian CSOs rarely see themselves as targeting profits for wider social purposes, focusing rather on specific group interests and concerns.

Unlike in Finland, social contracting with CSOs has so far not made headway in Russia due to a lack of cost-effectiveness, inefficient recruitment, strategic planning, and poor management techniques. While the notion of social economy is understood by Russian CSOs, principles of entrepreneurship seem foreign to many of them. As a result, social entrepreneurship generally takes place at a very small scale, often in rural areas, where trade-based social enterprises use profits to benefit specific social groups (e.g., homeless persons, the elderly, poor families, and persons with disabilities and chronic diseases). Despite a lack of trust in Russia's traditional health care systems, the notion of social contracting as well as the role of CSOs as service providers has not yet been fully accepted by Russian society (Anders 2010). As a result many social contracting projects funded by international sources have been discontinued, also the problem of limited acceptance of social contracting as such is seen as cumbersome and restricting to civil society activities.

Nevertheless, civil society CBC is an important contextual factor in the development of Russia's civil society and social economy. It contributes to the social conditions that affect local development and to new forms of social solidarity in Russian society by supporting local welfare systems and strategies of local and regional development. CBC also helps to create spaces of civil society engagement in the Russian social economy through capacity building and networking diverse actors who individually lack resources to develop cooperation projects. Increased space for civic action is likely to help individuals and local communities to improve the quality of their personal and community life and to identify and better meet their own social and economic needs. Increased civil action, then, is likely to lead to the new and innovative solutions required to satisfy the needs of those ignored by the private or public sectors.

The clearest long-term contribution of civil society CBC to the evolution of Russia's social economy has been that of reframing social welfare issues as an important area of civil society endeavors. Furthermore, considerable potential exists for horizontal, non-hierarchical institutional learning that involves motivated sectors of the population and strengthens their social impact locally and regionally (Scott & Laine 2012). Creating a critical mass of CSO 'infrastructure' will, in addition, help local communities and groups deal more effectively with changing economic and social conditions as well as adapt to the shifts in public policy that target social welfare.

## Conceptualizing a Cross-Border Space through Civil Society Organizations

Finnish-Russian civil society CBC has shed new light on issues of local welfare and the potential roles of social entrepreneurship in local development. While operating conditions up to now have not directly favored entrepreneurial strategies, CBC has initiated partnerships between civil society and local communities in the provision of social services and governance of local

problems. Problems exist, however, in opportunistic 'grant-seeking' behaviors that inhibit more strategic and long-term approaches to social enterprise development.

The interviews conducted for this study indicate that the social economy could represent an enormous playing field for civil society participation in the reconstitution of social and welfare policy in Russia – but it also could be of great benefit to Finnish border regions as well. In the light of current trends towards the decentralization and privatization of public services in both Finland and Russia, it would be prescient to conceptualize a cross-border space for social contracting and social welfare policies through civil society organizations. In this conjunction, it would also be necessary to understand how more ambitious entrepreneurial strategies for Russia's emerging social economy could be promoted.

New support structures could promote collaborative forms of policy formulation and delivery based on partnerships involving the state, the private sector, foundations, and civil society at large. This is particularly important in peripheral regions with limited prospects for short-term returns on social investment and where multiple support mechanisms are needed in order to nurture entrepreneurial activity. One possible strategy would be to develop international networks between public, private, and nonprofit sector actors that provide assistance to emerging and future social entrepreneurs through a variety of means, including: support in project development, securing grants (including the provision of guarantees), and assistance in the acquisition and provision of loans and investment capital, as well as training, advisory, logistical, and informational support. Social entrepreneurship provides a less risky option than direct partnerships with businesses as the latter would question the credibility of CSOs role as watchdogs and detach them from their value base. From the other angle, few businesses want a partner that claims to cooperate and yet remains critical all the while.

Revenue generation does not mean that CSOs would have to renounce their value base or constituents. Quite the contrary, it may help the organization to strengthen both. A social enterprise operates like a business and seeks to earn revenue but manages its operations and redirects its surpluses in pursuit of social, cultural, or environmental goals. Operating at the border between the private sector and civil society (Figure 43), social enterprises are able to steer away from one-sided grant dependency and seek financial stability through revenue generation, for example by providing services, and to invest the profits back to its mission. In so doing, social enterprises gain also independence from state funding mechanisms and the criteria set by them.

As the figure suggests, the borders of the space occupied by social enterprises can be stretched to either direction. The in-between space encompasses a wide range of organizations, from cooperatives and private limited companies to mutual societies. The distinction between market-oriented missions and socially-

based missions is not explicit, but entrepreneurs can operate at different stages along the social enterprise continuum.

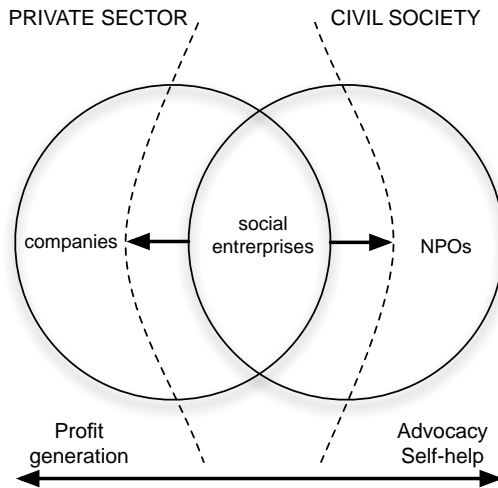


Figure 43. Social enterprises at the border of the private sector and civil society

In terms of the short-term contributions of CBC to the development of social entrepreneurialism, the most obvious area where this has taken place is that of business development. Detailed investigations into this realm of the emerging Russian social economy were beyond the scope of this research. However, it became evident from interviews with CSO representatives in Russia and Finland that business development services, microloan facilities and technology transfer appeared to be logical areas for social entrepreneurial development whereas social welfare provision was not. As mentioned above, CBC has also been a heavily subsidized affair, often precluding the generation of socially oriented profits as part of the conditionality of EU and Finnish government funding.

The clearest long-term contribution of CBC to the evolution of Russia's social economy has been that of reframing social welfare and regional development issues as important areas of civil society initiative. Considerable potential also exists for horizontal, non-hierarchical institutional learning that involves motivated sectors of the population and strengthens their social impact locally and regionally (Laine & Demidov 2013; Nielsen, Berg & Roll 2009). Creating a critical mass of CSO infrastructure will help local communities and groups deal more effectively with changing economic and social conditions as well as adapt to shifts in public policy that target social welfare.

## **7.4 EPILOGUE: SOMETHING OLD, NEW, BORROWED, AND BLUE**

Finnish-Russian relations are a broader phenomenon than customary bilateral relations between two states. They are based on common history and those lessons learned from it, geographical proximity and the long common border, cultural linkages and the existence of kindred peoples, and economic development and trade interdependencies, as well as environmental factors that respect no borders. The relations have been both close and distant – at times both at the same time. They cannot be explained by the mere supply and demand factors, but the motivations for cooperation range from a sense of duty to an outright necessity. As a partner in cooperation, Russia is perceived at the same time as an opportunity and a drag, with high hopes and frustration. Like border regions in general, the Finnish-Russian border region is characterized by specific forms of living together that entail tolerance and solidarity; “cooperation with Russia is not easy, but it can be done” and “special know-how is needed in order to succeed” (F #48).

This study has attempted to trace how the image of Russia as a neighbor and as a partner in cross-border cooperation has developed in Finnish public debate from the year 1990 onwards; i.e., since the building of direct neighborly relations became possible. Such a contextual analysis was seen as needed in order to study the discursive practices whereby the image of Russia is formed but also to avoid hindsight bias and to more adeptly situate the development of cooperation within the context in which it evolved.

The Finnish-Russian relations of today cannot be fully understood without understanding the past. Equally important is to know how to break away from it. Only by being aware of the fact that the ‘teachings of history’ are open to various interpretations can the right decisions be made today without being blind to the political use of history (OE 6.12.1999). Accordingly, what Russia signifies to Finns has to be viewed through multiple lenses, all of which alter the picture in their own specific way. The era of Finland as an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire, the nation-building process in the latter half of the nineteenth century, years of oppression in the early 1900s, the confrontation between the bourgeois and the socialists, gaining independence in 1917, the civil war of 1918, the power struggle between democracy and the right-wing dictatorship from the 1920s until 1936, then the Winter and Continuation War, after which Finland had to live in the shadows of the Soviet Union for five decades, have all added something to the complexity of these bilateral relations.

Even though the Finnish-Soviet/Russian relations have been full of twists and turns, public opinion has changed more slowly. Albeit the opinion pieces cannot be deemed to portray public opinion accurately, they do provide a valuable glimpse into the state of the public discussion and the way individual citizens perceive Russia. The analysis of this level of the relations was deemed as

important for this study as this is where much of the people-to-people interaction takes place. The analyzed writings suggest that there is no coherent image of Russia but that there exist various different, often times contradictory perspectives. The previously faceless superpower became perceived more and more in terms of everyday life as the interaction across the border increased and people's knowledge about the neighbor became increasingly based on personal experience.

Two pointed events in the external environment during the study period raise clearly above all others: the collapse of the Soviet Union in late 1991 and Finland's accession to the EU in early 1995. These incidents enabled new interpretations of the position of Finland, but they also marked deconstructive moments for the Finnish nation-state and the presumed unity between the nation and the state. Joenniemi (1993, 19) was quick to argue that as the permanent threat the Soviet Union was perceived to have lost its credibility, the meaning of state sovereignty could be put under scrutiny. The more open conditions allowed for the deconstruction of age-old stereotypes about 'Russianness' and 'Finnishness' derived from the past and related to World War II and the era of a closed border and also cleared the way for the image to be reconstructed in a more truthful manner.

With the end of the Cold War the previously stable border concept was transformed into something broader and more complex. In the Finnish case, the change was beefed up by the fact that the neighbor that Finns had learned to know, in both good and bad, suddenly disappeared. As a neighbor, the Soviet Union had not been the easiest kind, but at least the risk associated with living next to a sleeping giant could be assessed and managed, and the dangers could be judged. With its successor, the Russian Federation, the rules of the game changed fundamentally. The probabilities became harder to estimate because there was no longer any clear basis for making such a judgment.

The end of history provided a new beginning, but few knew exactly with whom Finland was now dealing with. It was exactly this uncertainty that downplayed the potential that could have been gained from the freer climate and the more open border. Since then, Russia has been viewed as being in transition towards something. In the West, it was hoped that this something would be democracy and a market economy.

The Russian internal developments have clearly influenced the nature of cross-border cooperation. In the beginning, given the turmoil that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, CBC consisted mainly of pure humanitarian aid *from Finland to Russia*. As the situation improved, Russia became an actor of its own right, whereby CBC became more of a two-way street. More recently, Russia's increased wealth and self-confidence have made its action ever more assertive, which has again created new tension on CBC practices.

EU membership provided further treatment for the long-common-border-syndrome and suggested a move away from the geodeterministic premise

whereby the geography of Finland predetermined or at least limited its choices with regard to its political development. The increasingly international context necessitated that national unity be redefined once again. This process is evidently still going on today. As the state has become redefined, so too could civil society. As an arena, it has become increasingly transnational. The share and scope of organizations and networks operating across the border and beyond the state has been on the increase. This tendency suggests that the time has come to approach interaction in post-national terms and conceptualize a cross-border space, a civic neighborhood, through civil society actor linkages. With the help of social contracting and social entrepreneurship, CSOs could gain further leverage to fill the gaps created by borders and bordering to bridge the apparent intersectoral crevasses.

The external environment has changed radically during the last two decades and so too has Finland. Increased cooperation has eroded the understanding of the border with Russia as a strict cut-off line shutting-off contacts and retaining, if not generating, the mindset of repression, injustice, conflict, or even war. While the border is still a state border, the transnational practices that transcend it allow it to be approached as a social practice, situated within an understanding of neighborliness that recognizes and respects the values of the other and the contributions that it makes. The opportunities that would be allowed by more open conditions have not, however, been grasped to their full potential. The mental aspects of the border remain etched into the minds of the people so profoundly that its relevance has not faded even though the actual institutional border has subsided. The border still functions as a barrier, but its partial permeability allows for the relations across it to be now, at last, shaped by dialog rather than by confrontation. This dialog allows both sides of the border to gain more knowledge about their neighbor, which in turn fosters mutual understanding, another important prerequisite for effective cooperation.

As a nation is inevitably a social construction, so too are its borders. As they can be constructed, they can also be erased. Changing the focus from seeing like a state to seeing like a border, as Rumford (2008) has advised, would allow us to disaggregate the state and the border, and unveil the potential that various actors of civil society hold in constructing, shifting, or even in erasing borders. If the border is no longer seen in national terms, and if the interaction is deemed not to occur between two *states*, but among *people* from these two, or more, states, such borderwork would go beyond issues of national belonging or citizenship as to allow expressions of transnational mobility and demonstrations of genuine political actorhood apart from state, or the EU, supported agendas.

Thanks to the institutionalization of cooperation (e.g., Euregio Karelia), the relationships especially between regional level officials and authorities on the two sides of the border have improved. CBC projects but also less-visible personal-level interactions have significantly contributed to a more mutual understanding and interdependence, accumulation of trust, and the breaking

down of mental barriers (cf. Németh et al. 2012). The relationship may still be far from ideal, or even what could be considered as normal between two countries sharing a long common border. Still, at least in comparison with high level geopolitics, civil society cooperation seems to be developing forward and cultivating varying degrees of interdependence.

As the recent developments suggest, the formation of a Finnish-Russian civic neighborhood depends greatly on how it is perceived on the non-EU side of the border. As the EU's conditionality principle cannot be applied to Russia, a country without aspirations of EU membership, the carrot needs to be found elsewhere. In this respect, the finding that many civil society actors see their work as separate from the grand scale EU endeavors, may serve as a benefit. Certainly, the EU's role in fuelling cooperation cannot be denied, as it certainly has created a supportive frame and a forum within which cooperation and regional dialogue has developed. It has also brought new impetus and forced the Finnish actors to move beyond the old rhetoric based on past experiences. Having said that, the main motives and initiatives for the cooperation have to arise from the local needs and concerns. The Russian regions adjacent to the Finnish border are, first and foremost, perceived as *our* neighborhood, and the self-perception this implies remains bounded within the national frame.

The ENP era brought along a greater emphasis on CSOs in CBC across the external EU border but it also included a hidden agenda: an attempt to approach Russia through an alternative channel and to create operational basis for bottom-up forces seeking to influence the system. However, as the ever-tightening climate for civic action in Russia, especially vis-à-vis 'foreign agents,' suggests such strategy may have been too obvious. In Russia, it was decoded as an attempt to influence Russia's domestic issues and political institutions. In Finland, many civil society actors also renounced the Europeanization logic and rather underlined the cooperation as a value in itself. At the EU level, the post-Lisbon securitization emphasis along the general new 'realism' in EU foreign policy has changed the picture yet again. Talks about the 'ring of friends,' which underlined the need to create better links with neighbors, now focus increasingly on a 'secure neighborhood' and the need to create a supportive buffer zone. Accordingly, the EU seems to have lost some of its faith in CBC and in the transformation process in Russia. This has urged the Union to retreat precisely to where it should not be – at the level of socio-cultural communication.

The images of Europe relate directly to its neighborhood. The process of building a European Neighborhood, as well as the way it is received in the 'Wider Europe,' depends greatly on what the EU is expected to be. It makes a difference whether we are talking about a clearly defined buffer around the European super-state, backward hinterlands of Imperial Europe, economic functionalist catchment area, or, say, a transnational space of a value community. Whereas the very structure of EU foreign policy discourse is



grounded in the political distinction between 'Europe' and *its* 'neighborhood,' the idea of a civic neighborhood is open to broader, more inclusive definitions of Europe. As discussed in section 4.1.2., the EU, even if prominent today, has yet to monopolize Europe. Whereas EUropeanization tends to confirm the difference between those who are in and those who are out, a civic neighborhood is rather based on the idea put forth by Sakwa (2006, 24) that Russia is part of a broader European civilization, and it is exactly this cultural unity that can be built upon in order to transcend political divisions and geographical barriers.

The understandings of a civic neighborhood are not based on specific policies or official definitions, but arise from more pragmatic – less normative – cooperation exercised through informal channels. Its aim is to normalize the relations and eventually create an uncoerced, free form neighborhood that would allow easy, unloaded dialogue even when disagreements occur. As such, its success and the permanence of cooperation depend greatly on its perceived usefulness; both sides need to feel that they are gaining something from it. The most successful examples can be found when the actors themselves feel that CBC is not only a means to an end but that there is added value to be gained in the process itself. After all, unlike the EU-Russia level rhetoric would suggest, at the Finnish-Russian border the question still has more to do with *neighborhood*, i.e., the maintenance of issues related to geographical proximity, than with *partnership*, i.e., need-based cooperation, which may be active at one time and passive at another. While partnership may at times be forgotten or ignored, "neighborhood cannot be just a project" (F #1). It has to be nurtured also when the interest do not match.

It is at the border where actors from two very different traditions of civil society meet. While clashes are unavoidable, they are not insurmountable. In order to move beyond them, it is essential to understand the different logics that inform civil society agendas as well as their embeddedness within more general societal contexts. The differences that are bound to arise need not to be taken automatically as barriers or something to be fixed by cooperation, as it has already become clear that merely transplanting a model from one context to another is unlikely to endure and gain acceptance. While it is necessary to be aware of the differences, this study suggests that transnational civil society should be understood as an arena extending beyond the national confines. Such a cross-border space need not to be understood only as a broader mandate and action space for CSOs, but also in terms of a cross-border public sphere, a space for a public debate regarding issues of common concern, which necessitate cooperation across the border or which may be caused by its very existence.

Increased people-to-people connections eroded faceless stereotypical images and attenuated the tendency to think normatively. In order to maintain the pragmatism of cooperation, the analysis of the situation ought not to focus excessively on what the civil society should be about and how it should be

organized, but rather on what actually gets done. What matters is that civil society actors detect common problems and are thereby of service to the citizens in their efforts to find common solutions (Stenius 2003, 17).

Understanding borders and the dynamics of cross-border interactions is crucial here. While the models introduced earlier cannot be applied directly, they do help us to understand the potential of CSOs operating within such a cross-border space. Borders cannot be studied in isolation from the regions adjacent to them, and the Finnish-Russian border is certainly not an exception. Cross-border interaction can be seen to form a multilayered regional system, in which different networks operate at different layers. Building on Schack (2000), this study suggests that the very same border appears differently at different layers, to different networks. The Finnish-Russian border thus has a different meaning in different contexts; it seems relatively open to some, while almost completely closed to another. While governments tend to have fixed views of national borders – as that is where their jurisdiction stops – and businesses have had difficulties adapting to the unpredictable conditions in Russia, CSOs are freer to move back and forth across the international border and less restricted from entering into transnational cooperative relationships.

The relaxation of the geopolitical climate also allowed increased interaction between borderlands at the regional level. However, unlike Martinez's (1994a) scheme would suggest, this has not led to a linear development towards convergence. The situation has to be approached more laterally. Due to the different roles that the border plays, it is likely to become only more multidimensional, serving as a barrier for some and a resource for others. The status of the Finnish-Russian border as an external EU border bulked up with the Schengen *acquis* will not change in the foreseeable future, and even if the visa regime would be renounced, the border obtains functions that cannot be erased by a political decision. To what extent interaction among CSOs can evolve in an ever securitizing environment remains to be seen.

All told, the entire equation of EU-level policies, the national level sovereignty endeavors, and the regional level civil society cooperation practices are interesting to look at. Even though every layer that transcends the border is part of a more extensive layer, the different layers still have also their own dynamics as well. Interestingly, even though CBC at the local and regional levels is regarded as separate from EU policies, it matches well with what the EU is aiming to do. Different levels do have different interests, but in the end they all work for the same underlying cause, normalizing the neighborly relations, and complement each other, albeit through different means. Despite the asymmetrical setting, cross-border ties among CSOs have grown gradually and created a sense of interdependence between the two sides. It is this sub-national level CBC that functions as an important driver of interaction, and thus also integration, by bringing the two sides closer to each other and forming a kind of a safety net when higher politics go sour.

So far, most of the bilateral cooperation projects have been funded by the Finnish Neighboring Area Cooperation funds. The NAC funds have been the main mechanism through which Finland has attempted to steer the development in Russia, at least right behind the border. As the program, designed expressly for a period of transition, was finally terminated at the end of 2012, one could postulate that from the Finnish perspective Russia has either completed its transition or that Finland has given up. Technically, of course, the question is about replacing the bilateral program with more multilateral EU programs. Be it as it may, if judged based on the funding mechanisms, the Europeanization finally overshadowed 'Finlandization' (!) on January 1, 2013.

The EU has brought well-needed impetus into Finnish-Russian CBC, but it has also its downsides. The future trajectory whereby binational cooperation would rely entirely on support from Brussels sounds very unnatural. Especially as long as there are no practical means to distribute EU funds to the local level where much of the work is carried out. Still very few CSOs are able to bypass the national level and engage directly with the EU. In dealing only with 'organized civil society,' the EU has also centralized and bureaucratized civil society and forced many small grassroots CSOs to dropout. In Russia, this situation has forced many CSOs to act as quasi-governmental bureaucratic organizations. After all, he who keeps company with wolves tends to learn how to howl.

CBC is particularly necessary at the external border of the EU in order to maintain an adequate level of dialogue and cooperation between local communities, institutions, and populations and to promote balanced social development and economic growth as well as to avoid any feelings of a new division in Europe. If the local and regional level CBC is expected to thrive also in the future, all the levels will need to have better understanding of their own role and of the division of labor in this equation. More funding that is better directed, more easily accessible, and more reliable is needed where the practical knowledge and expertise is. It cannot be based on the superficial friendship rhetoric, but careful planning is needed in order to move beyond the formalities and maintain the cooperation successfully. Much depends on individual actors who are able to shoulder the implementation of the agreed programs and to solve emerging problems and disagreements.

It cannot be denied that the EU has a great role to play not just in handing out money, but also in working towards creating a positive general context and a forum for regional dialogue that allows the subnational actors to cooperate and solve the problems together with their partners directly across the border. Despite its prominence, the EU must not be regarded as the only solution to this, but the CSOs themselves may need to take matters into their own hands and to seek further revenues through social entrepreneurship in order to ensure the continuity of cooperation. The situation where the public sector – at both the national level and the EU level – is being blamed for the lack of support of civil

society cooperation cannot but be deemed as somewhat twisted and may show, more than anything else, a lack of innovation and motivation to make things happen. The faceless EU, in particular, is easy to blame, and it provides an easy, trendy, and politically correct way to decline cooperation. The maintenance of cross-border ties still lies in the hands of a few, who have the aspiration and knowhow to get things done. The situation is, of course, not helped by the fact that the average Finn knows very little about modern Russia.

The newspaper analysis conducted for this study suggests that Chandler's (2002, 28) argument that language does not 'reflect' reality but rather constructs it may indeed have some merit. So far, little effort has been made to improve the popular geopolitical image of Russia. While understanding the potential of having Russia as a neighbor, many Finns, for their own reasons, continue to actively reconfirm the elements in the neighbor, which should be let go in order to move beyond stereotypes. This tendency is only reinforced by the semiotic codes and load of the language used in the newspaper, which seems to inhibit people from critically evaluating the opinions and views that they hold.

The best way to normalize neighborly relations is through increased people-to-people interaction, and preferable this ought to occur from the bottom-up, not from the top-down. After all, to be able to work together, we have to trust one another – and to be able to trust one another, we have to know each other. The state institutions can do a lot to shape the operational environment, but it should not be the state's task to maintain civil society cooperation. Given that the NAC program has been terminated and that the ENPI CBC is not properly equipped to deal with the overall context within which Finnish-Russian cooperation takes place, there is a risk that despite the rhetorical statements suggesting otherwise, the Europeanization of Finnish-Russian cooperation may well become underfunded and more technocratic. This will put the durability of cross-border contacts to the test, but it also allows CBC to be restructured and redesigned away from predefined funding programs, periods, and priorities. The NAC funding has been extremely useful, but it has served its purpose. Unrestricted people-to-people interaction feeds inspiration and innovation and leads to new solutions – also in terms of financing. There is little reason to expect anything less.

The term 'neighborhood' is not reserved only for the EU to use. A civic neighborhood is a bottom-up concept that is open to broader definitions of what is meant both by Europe and by a border. Civic neighborhood is a process, not only means to an end. It is not only an operational space within which civil society operates, but it also refers to a civil society as a public sphere within which the notion of 'neighborhood' itself is constructed. The discursive practices, studied above, not only form the frame for cooperation, but they also penetrate to the core of what is taking place in practice and how the neighbor, Russia, is viewed in this respect.

More than uniting states, the emergence of civic neighborhood is about uniting people. It is parallel to Rumford's (2008; 2011) notion of borderwork, which extends the de-/bordering from the exclusive business of nation-states to include also the multiple ways in which ordinary citizens and various actors of civil society construct, shift, and erase borders. This is to say that civil society plays a role in defining what the neighborhood is all about. CSOs are not only carrying out tasks defined by others, as was the case during the friendship policy era or how their role tends to get projected in EU programs. Instead, CSOs themselves play a key role in articulating and modifying the objectives and practices of CBC.

Civic neighborhood cannot to be confined within any strictly defined territorial limits. Rather it depicts a cross-border space that is more virtual than geographically bound. It is a manifestation of the debordering, a postmodern projection of the deterritorialization discourse. More than a mere geographical belvedere, civic neighborhood is an avant-garde network-space that is more constructive and constructed, rather than imposed. It derives from practice and pragmatism, rather than rhetoric. It works as long as it makes sense; instead of dwelling on one's status or mere location, focus on the interdependencies would allow cooperation when and where it is not just necessary but also sensible.

Though civic neighborhood does not coincide directly with any of the clearly projected models, it resonates better with the pan-European and the civilizational approach, than what it does with the conception of official Europe. Whereas the geopolitical vision of Europeanization promoted by the ENP, the official neighborhood, is based on a very Kristofian idea of the frontier, the foreland of the hinterland, civic neighborhood comes closer to a geostrategy that Walters (2004, 697) has called a 'networked (non)border' that downplays the relevance of the spatial border, the geographical borderlines, dispersing policing, and systems of control throughout the territory. As the distinction between internal and external, domestic and international become fuzzier, so does the division between 'us' and 'them.' Civic neighborhood is not about national belonging or citizenship, but about transnational mobility and actorhood. As responsibility becomes shared through cooperation, the traditional views of borders are transcended.

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# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEWED ORGANIZATIONS

#	Organization	Persons	Rec	Field	City	Country
1	Finnish-Russian Network of Social and Health NGOs	1		Social and health	Helsinki	Finland
2	Finnish Centre for Health Promotion	1	X	Social and health	Helsinki	Finland
3	M. A. Castrén Society	2	X	Culture	Helsinki	Finland
4	Finland-Russia society	4	X	Cooperation/Culture	Helsinki	Finland
5	Finnish Workers' Sports Federation (TUL)	1	X	Sports	Helsinki	Finland
6	Society for Education and Development of Karelia	1	X	Education	Helsinki	Finland
7	Save the Children, Finland	1	X	Social and health	Helsinki	Finland
8	Finnish Youth Cooperation – Allianssi	1	X	Culture	Helsinki	Finland
9	National Council of Women of Finland	1	X	Women's rights/equality	Helsinki	Finland
10	Green Women's Association	2		Women's rights/equality	Helsinki	Finland
11	Amnesty International, Finland	2	X	Human rights	Helsinki	Finland
12	Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce (SVKK)	1	X	Trade	Helsinki	Finland
13	National Union of University Students (SYL)	1		Education/social politics	Helsinki	Finland
14	Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations (NYTKIS)	1	X	Women's rights/equality	Helsinki	Finland
15	Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (JHL)	1	X	Trade union	Helsinki	Finland
16	Finn Church Aid (FCA)	1		Development/humanitarian assistance	Helsinki	Finland
17	Family Federation (Väestöliitto)	1	X	Social and health	Helsinki	Finland
18	Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (STTK)	1	X	Trade union	Helsinki	Finland
19	Service Union United (PAM)	1	X	Labor confederation	Helsinki	Finland
20	International Solidarity Foundation, Helsinki	2	X	Development cooperation	Helsinki	Finland
21	Left Women	1		Women's rights/equality	Helsinki	Finland
22	Svenska Kvinnoförbundet	2		Women's rights/equality	Helsinki	Finland
23	Soroptimist International of Finland	1	X	Women's rights/equality	Helsinki	Finland
24	Karjalan Apu ry	1	X	Humanitarian aid	Joensuu	Finland
25	Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, North Karelian District	1	X	Social and health	Joensuu	Finland
26	Finland's Scouter ry, North Karelian District	1	X	Children/young	Joensuu	Finland
27	International Solidarity Foundation, Joensuu	1	X	Development coop.	Joensuu	Finland
28	Joensuun seudun diabetes ry	1	X	Social and health	Joensuu	Finland

29	North Karelia Chamber of Commerce	1	X	Trade	Joensuu	Finland
30	Pohjois-Karjalan nuoret kotkat	1	X	Children/young	Joensuu	Finland
31	Joensuun Venäjän ystävät ry	1	X	Culture/Friendship	Joensuu	Finland
32	North Karelia Center for Public Health	1	X	Social and health	Joensuu	Finland
33	Martha organization, North Karelian District	2	X	Economics	Joensuu	Finland
34	Union of Rural Education and Culture, North Karelian District	1	X	Education and Culture	Joensuu	Finland
35	Finnish Red Cross, Savo-Karelian district	1	X	Aid work	Joensuu	Finland
36	Association for Educational Activity (AEA)	2	X	Education	Joensuu	Finland
37	Pro Agria North Karelia	1	X	Education and Culture	Joensuu	Finland
38	Regional Council of North Karelia	1	X	Administration	Joensuu	Finland
39	City of Joensuu	1	X	Administration	Joensuu	Finland
40	Joensuu Regional Development Company, JOSEK Ltd	1	X	Regional development	Joensuu	Finland
41	State Provincial Office of Eastern Finland, Joensuu Regional Service Unit	3	X	Administration	Joensuu	Finland
42	Toukolan Settlementti ry	1	X	Education/social	Kotka	Finland
43	Kaakkois-Suomen Sosiaalipsykiatrinen yhdistys ry	1	X	Social and health	Kotka	Finland
44	Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education	1		Education	Kouvola	Finland
45	Finland-Russia Society, LPR	2	X	Cooperation/culture	Lappeenranta	Finland
46	Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, South Karelian District	1	X	Environmental	Lappeenranta	Finland
47	Individ. Former NGO activist	1	X	Trade	Lappeenranta	Finland
48	The Baltic Institute of Finland	3	X	Cooperation and management	Tampere	Finland
49	The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC)	1	X	Environmental	Helsinki	Finland
50	Kehys – The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU	1		Relief and development work	Helsinki	Finland
51	The Finnish-Russian Civic Forum	2		Cooperation/human rights	Helsinki	Finland
52	Finnish-Russian Network of Social and Health NGOs	1		Social and health	SPb	Russia
53	Association of Cooperation with the Nordic countries 'NORDEN'	1		Cooperation/administration	SPb	Russia
54	Early Intervention Institute	2		Social and health	SPb	Russia
55	Association for the Protection of Children	1		Social and health	SPb	Russia
56	Parents' Bridge	1		Social and health	SPb	Russia
57	Asaria – Mothers against Drugs	1		Social and health	SPb	Russia
58	Nochlezhka	1		Social and health	SPb	Russia
59	Crisis Centre for Women	1		Social and health	SPb	Russia
60	Centre for Social Help 'Trust'	1		Social and health	SPb	Russia
61	Center for Humanities and Political Studies 'Strategy'	1		Policy institutions & civil society development	SPb	Russia
62	Osiris – Revival of Folk Arts	1		Art/culture	Vyborg	Russia
63	Vyborg-Finland Friendship Society	1		Culture/Friendship	Vyborg	Russia
64	Viipuri Centre	2		Culture/Friendship	Vyborg	Russia
65	Vita Center For Women	1		Women's rights/equality	Vyborg	Russia

66	Women Center 'Krstina'	1		Women's rights/equality	Vyborg	Russia
67	Karelian Association of NGOs of disabled people	1		Social and health	Petrozavodsk	Russia
68	Uteshenie	1		Social and health/charity	Petrozavodsk	Russia
69	Karelian Red Cross	1		Aid work	Petrozavodsk	Russia
70	New education	1		Education	Petrozavodsk	Russia
71	Centre for public policy, human rights and civic education	1		Public policy/civil education/human rights	Petrozavodsk	Russia
72	Association of women entrepreneurs	1		Entrepreneurship	Petrozavodsk	Russia
73	Doroga	1		Youth work	Petrozavodsk	Russia
74	Karelian Resource Centre of NGOs	1		Civil society development	Petrozavodsk	Russia
75	Karelian Union for Child protection	1		Social and health	Petrozavodsk	Russia
76	The Finnish-Russian Network of Social and Health NGOs	1		Social and health	Petrozavodsk	Russia
77	NGO 'Center 'Initiative'	1		Education	Petrozavodsk	Russia
78	EU-Russia Centre	1		Information/experience	Brussels	Belgium

## APPENDIX 2. INDICATIVE LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### A: General questions about the organization in question

- When was your organization established?
- What are your aims?
- Which activities have you realized since your establishment?
- What are your forthcoming activities?
- Do you have relations with local and international organizations? Please state the names and the nature of your relationship?
- How many members do you have? What are your requirements for membership?
- Do you have branches in different cities (organizational structure)?
- What is your decision-making mechanism?
- What are the sources of funding?
- Are people aware of your activities? What do you do in order to increase public attention?
- Are you satisfied with the level of media coverage? If not, why?

### B. Cooperation agendas

- Are you currently engaged in any CBC projects? How about in the past? If not, why not, with whom do you prefer to cooperate?
- What kind of cooperation do you engage in?
- How does your organization developed its cooperative strategies and define its priorities?
- What projects have been prioritized and why?
- Do you have a specific strategy towards Russia (CBC strategy)? What does it include?
- Does the Russian partners' priorities differ from yours? If yes, how? Who dominates? Why?
- Which institutions and groups have been most supportive of cooperation?
- Are you involved in any EU-supported projects? Do you have any other kinds of relations with the EU? (to be continued in section E)
- Do you receive enough support (financial and other) for your work (in cross-border context)?
- Do you see that your work impacts the local economic and social development? How?
- Are women active within the organization being interviewed?
- Have gender issues increased in importance as an area of CSO cooperation? What might explain either a lack or an increase in such activity?

### **C: Practical experiences**

- What are the obstacles for cross-border cooperation? How do you deal with them?
- Have there been any improvements? Have you heard about them? Do you think they will help you in realization of your projects?
- What is your relationship with local communities and other domestic CSOs like?
- How do you find the partners across the border (in Russia)? Do you have any specific preferences in terms of cooperation partners?
- How would you assess the quality of the cross-border activities and contacts in general? What would you like to improve?
- What is your motivation to cooperate across the border? What does CBC bring to you?
- Has the thematic focus of CSO cooperation shifted in recent years? If so, why?
- What are your cooperation activities (e.g., advocacy; implementation; expertise)?
- In general, which Finnish groups are active in interacting with partners across the border? Which groups remain reticent in engaging in cross-border activities? Why do you think this is?

### **D: Inter-State Relationships and CSOs**

- What impacts do state agencies have on the development /promotion of this cooperation?
- What role in your view state/state agencies should play?
- What is your relationship with the state institutions? Do you receive any funding? If yes, do the priorities match the needs?
- To what extent can you influence the agenda developed by state institutions?
- Have there been any shifts in your role or ability to influence the agenda in recent years?
- In what ways, if at all, is your work affected by inter-state developments?
- How do you assess the role on civil society cooperation when compared to inter-state relations?
- Do you have any relations to political parties or the political elite?
- Describe your relationship with other actors (Governmental, private sector, donor, other CSOs, EU institutions, CSO Brussels, etc.)

### **E: Europeanization**

- From your personal opinion, in what ways the EU can contribute to development of civil society sector? How about cooperation agendas?
- What implications does the EU have for you? What, if anything, has changed since Finland joined the EU?
- Do you think the EU is an important actor (regarding your work/projects), why? In what areas would you like to see the EU to be more pro-active?
- In your opinion, do the EU's policies 'include' Russia efficiently (as a partner, not as a target)?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of or being a member state?
- Do the EU policies/programs and their priorities match the local/regional priorities and need?
- When cooperation with Russia partners, do you feel yourself as a representative of the EU, Finland, your region/city or something else? Why do you think this is?
- Do you see Russia as a part of Europe? Why? What are the demarcation lines (issues, values)?
- What do you have in common with the EU?
- What does Europe/EU represent for you?