

Border Paradox: Striking a Balance between Access and Control in Asymmetrical Border Settings

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Abstract

The rhetoric concerning globalization and a borderless world depicts political borders as relicts from the past. Although in the dynamics of globalization borders create constraints for interaction, their functions as filters and denotations of difference have remained imperative. This article sheds light on the opportunities and constraints created by borders. By focusing on two asymmetrical yet increasingly integrated border settings, the Finnish-Russian and the United States-Mexican, this paper examines how the rhetoric concerning globalization on the one hand and the discourses of securitization and demarcation on the other are reflected on the practicalities in these border areas. Based on empirical material collected from the border areas in question, the article puts forth that even the same border is seen in a very different light at different levels and that a workable balance ought to be found between different interests as well as between access and control.

Introduction

The rescaling of the state, most notably through macro level regionalization and transnationalization of governance, has downplayed the traditional function of borders as geographic boundaries demarcating the sovereign space of political entities. The world is far from borderless, but the dual movement of integration and securitization, has made borders more complex. Borders are barriers, which create constraints for the dynamics of globalization, yet their functions as filters of flows, as constructs guiding and obstructing our activities, as denotations of “weness” and “otherness,” and as symbols of power – or the lack of it, or difference – or the yearn for it, have also remained imperative. The processes of *de*- and *re*bordering are not exclusionary, but occur simultaneously.

This article investigates the opportunities and constraints created by international borders. By reflecting upon two asymmetrical yet increasingly integrated border settings, the Finnish-Russian and the United States-Mexican, this article examines how the prominent geopolitical contexts and the juggle between the globalization rhetoric and the discourses of securitization and demarcation are reflected on the practicalities in border communities.

Both of the borders are marked by socio-economic gaps that are among the widest in the world. Differences cause various side effects and tensions in the border region. As the frontlines of

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the hackneyed Huntingtonian “clash of civilizations,”¹ these borders have become (over-)used as examples of the great divides where, respectively, the North meets the South, and the West meets the East. Due to a complex tussle between centrifugal and centripetal forces, the neighbors in both cases have become increasingly integrated, but also more carefully divided. Despite their fundamentally different nature, an essential role in finding the balance is played by the supranational regimes, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU) respectively.

The essentially unequal position of Finland vis-à-vis Russia as well as Mexico vis-à-vis the United States is at the root of difficulties with interaction and integration. In addition to the divergence in numerous economic and social indicators (Table 1) and lop-sidedness in leverage to control the openness of the border and the relations across it, the differences are clearly observable also in the operational spaces, assessment of problems and needs and, as a result, in the methods and the forms of activities taken. All this makes the basis for interaction asymmetrical. To what extent, then, can so different neighbors have a compatible interpretative frame towards issues of common concern? To what extent, that is, can increased *interaction* fuel *integration*?

The Finnish-Russian case study is based on the EXLINEA² and EUDIMENSIONS³ research projects. Material for comparative analysis was collected from the San Diego-Tijuana border region at the United States-Mexico border. A total of 81 questionnaires were collected from the Finnish-Russian border area and 170 from the San Diego-Tijuana border region.⁴ Additional information was gained through in-depth interviews and participation in expert meetings. In both cases, respondents were selected from a group of stakeholders involved in cross-border cooperation practices. The chosen group of respondents consists of people from a geographically specific area who are involved in a specific activity, cross-border interaction. Being an exclusive group of people, conclusions based on their opinions do not necessarily correspond with the “official” and common perspectives on the issues in question.

¹ Huntington’s civilizational thesis offers an example of adopting culture as an explanatory variable for great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of international conflicts. See Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72:2 (1993) pp. 22-28.

² EXLINEA (Lines of exclusion as Arenas of Co-operation: Reconfiguring the External Boundaries of Europe-Policies, Practices and Perception) project was supported by the European Commission under the Fifth Framework Programme and contributed to the implementation of the Key Action Improving Human Research Potential. Contract no: HPSE-CT-2002-00141.

³ EUDIMENSIONS (Local dimensions of a wider European neighbourhood) project was supported by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development of the European Union under PRIORITY 7, Area 4.2.1 “New Borders, New Visions of Neighbourhood.” Contract no: CIT5-CT-2005-028804.

⁴ 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 were included. On the Russian side, the research was conducted in the Republic of Karelia, the city of St. Petersburg, and Vyborg, a city within Leningrad oblast. For the U.S.-Mexico case study, data was collected from greater San Diego area and greater Tijuana area. Questionnaire data consists of 39 collected questionnaires from Finland, 41 from Russia, 107 from the U.S. and 67 from Mexico. This paper utilizes only a part of the data.

Table 1: Country Profiles, Assorted Data. Sources: Statistics Finland; CIA Factbook; U.S. Department of State; The United Nations Human Development Report 2009; and International Monetary Fund.

Official name	REPUBLIC OF FINLAND (<i>Suomen tasavalta</i>)	RUSSIAN FEDERATION (<i>Российская Федерация, Rossiyskaya Federatsiya</i>)	UNITED MEXICAN STATES (<i>Estados Unidos Mexicanos</i>)	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Government type	Semi-presidential republic	Federation; semi-presidential republic	Federation; Federal presidential republic	Federation; Federal constitutional republic
Capital/Largest city	Helsinki/Helsinki	Moscow/Moscow	Mexico City/Mexico City	Washington, DC/New York City
Population (2011)	5,259,250	138,739,892	113,724,226	313,232,044
Population growth rate - % (2011)	0.075	-0.47	1.102	0.963
Area - km ² (2009)	338,145	17,098,242	1,964,375	9,826,675
Population density - per km ²	16	8.3	55	31
Net migration rate - migrants/1000 pop. (2009)	0.68	0.28	-3.61	4.31
Urbanization - % of total pop. (2010)	85	73	77	82
Life expectancy at birth: female/male/total (2009)	82.89/75.79/79.27	73.14/59.33/66.03	79.0/73.5/76.06	80.69/75.65/78.11
Birth rate - births/1000 pop. (2011)	10.37	11.05	19.13	13.83
Total fertility rate - children born/woman (2010/2011)	1.73	1.41	2.34	2.06
Infant mortality - deaths/1000 live births (2010/11)	3.43	10.56	18.42	6.06
Population below poverty line - %	N/A	15.8 (Nov. 2007)	18.2 using food-based definition; 47+ using asset based definition (2008)	12% (2004)
Budget: revenues/expenditures \$ (2008)	143.8 billion / 132.3 billion	364.6 billion / 304.6 billion	257.1 billion / 258.1 billion	2.524 trillion / 2.978 trillion
GDP Total \$ (2008)	193.5 billion	2.266 trillion	1.088 trillion	14.26 trillion
GDP per capita \$ (2008)	36,900	16,100	14,200	46,900
GINI	26.8 (2008)	41.5 (2008)	46.1 (2008)	45 (2007)
HDI (2007)	0.959	0.817	0.854	0.956
Household income or consumption by % share: lowest 10%/highest 10%	3.6/24.7	1.9/30.4	1./37.9	2/30
Ethnic groups	Finn 93.4%, Swede 5.6%, Russian 0.5%, Estonian 0.3%, Roma (Gypsy) 0.1%, Sami 0.1% (2006)	Russian 79.8%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 2%, Bashkir 1.2%, Chuvash 1.1%, other or unspecified 12.1% (2002 census)	Mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 60%, Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian 30%, white 9%, other 1%	White 79.96%, black 12.85%, Asian 4.43%, Amerindian and Alaska native 0.97%, native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.18%, two or more races 1.61% (July 2007 estimate). Approx. 15.1% of the total US population is Hispanic.
Border disputes	Various groups in Finland advocate restoration of Karelia and other areas ceded to the Soviet Union, but the Finnish Government asserts no territorial demands. Russia has shown no intention of returning the ceded areas, or discussing the question.		Abundant rainfall in recent years along much of the U.S.-Mexico border region has ameliorated periodically strained water-sharing arrangements; the US has intensified security measures to monitor and control legal and illegal personnel, transport, and commodities across its border with Mexico; Mexico must deal with thousands of impoverished Central Americans who cross the porous border looking for work in Mexico and the United States.	

Borders as a Research Topic

Borders have long been one of the most central topics in political geography.⁵ Ever since the geodeterministic framework of early border studies, the focus of border studies has developed in relation to the predominant geopolitical visions; from studying borders as delimiters of territorial control and ideology towards “areal differentiation,”⁶ the dynamic role of borders as bridges, and eventually to the everyday construction of borders, i.e. “bordering” through ideology, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and agency.⁷

Despite the ever-globalizing world, the barrier function of borders remains resilient. As barriers borders have both monetary and time effects; they increase the relative distance⁸ and hinder flows, interactions and integration between the two sides.⁹ In addition to the distance-bridging costs in communication, linguistic, and cultural dissimilarities, differences in the scope of social and political life as well as political influences may deliberately or unintentionally result in the further

⁵ Laris Kristoff, “The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries” *Annals of the association of American geographers* 49:3 (1959) pp.269-282. Julian Minghi, “Boundary Studies in Political Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 53:3 (1963) pp.407-428; John Robert. Victor Prescott, *Political Frontiers and Boundaries* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987); Anssi Paasi, “The Political Geography of Boundaries at the End of the Millennium: Challenges of the De-territorializing World,” in Heikki Eskelinen, Ilkka Liikanen and Jukka Oksa (eds.), *Curtains of Iron and Gold. Reconstructing Borders and Scales of Interaction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) pp. 9-24; Vladimir Kolossov, “Border Studies: Changing Perspectives and Theoretical Approaches,” *Geopolitics* 10:4 (2005) pp.606-632; Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, “The State of Borders and Borderlands Studies: A Historical View and a View from the Journal of Borderland Studies,” *Eurasia Border Review* 1:1 (2010) pp. 1-15.

⁶ See: Richard Hartshorne, “Suggestions as to the Terminology of Political Boundaries,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 25:1 (1936) pp.56-57; Richard Hartshorne, *Perspective on the Nature of Geography* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1959).

⁷ James W. Scott and Silke Matzeit, EXLINEA (Lines of Exclusion as Arenas of Co-operation: Reconfiguring the External Boundaries of Europe – Policies, Practices, Perceptions) Final Project Report (2006); Henk van Houtum, “Borders of comfort: Spatial Economic Bordering Processes in the European Union, ” *Regional and Federal Studies* 12:4 (2002) pp.37-58.

⁸ See: Henk van Houtum, “Borders, Distances, and Spaces: A Typology of Borders in Terms of Distances,” Paper presented at the congress of the European Regional Science Association. Dublin, Ireland, August 1999; Piet Rietveld, “Obstacles to Openness of Border Regions in Europe,” in Marina van Geenhuizen and Remigio Ratti (eds.), *Gaining Advantage from Open Borders. An Active Space Approach to Regional Development* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001) p.79; Liam O’Dowd, “The Changing Significance of European Borders,” *Regional and Federal Studies* 12:4 (2003) pp.13-36; Reprinted in James Anderson, Liam O’Dowd and Thomas M. Wilson (eds.), *New Borders for a Changing Europe: Cross-Border Cooperation and Governance* (London: Frank Cass, 2003) pp.13-36; Joachim Blatter, “From ‘Spaces of Place’ to ‘Spaces of Flows’? Territorial and Functional Governance in Cross-Border Regions in Europe and North America,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28:3 (2004) pp.530-548.

⁹ See: Remigio Ratti, “Strategies to Overcome Barriers: From Theory to Practice,” in Remigio Ratti and Shalom Reichman (eds.), *Theory and Practice in Transborder Cooperation* (Basel and Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1993) pp. 241-268; Henk van Houtum, “Introduction: Current Issues and Debates on Borders and Border Regions in European Regional Science,” in Martin van der Velde and Henk van Houtum (eds.), *Borders, Regions and People* (London: Pion, 2000) pp.1-12.

separation of countries.¹⁰

Borderlands have distinct features and characteristics due to either increased interaction or lack thereof. Whereas an open border fuels the formation of functional cross-borderlands, a closed border creates peripheries suffering from the cut-off effect of the border. In addition to their disadvantageous geographical *location*, many border areas may be considered as peripheral due to their *position* in relation to a centre. The width of the borderland is dependent on the intensity of cross-border exchanges; the more open a border is, the wider the borderland¹¹ and the wider the space for action, where interaction is prevalent.¹² Increased cross-border interaction may bridge the two sides of a border together, catalyze innovation and give rise to new complex identities along with creating stronger regional attachments across the border, improving thus the competency of the border region.¹³

Brunet-Jailly asserts that to understand borders, there is a need to focus on the different lenses of analysis that underscore the tug of war between agency (ties and forces spanning the border) and broader structural processes in the multi-scalar construction/de-construction of states that frame individual action, and their concurrent impact on border regions and policies. National governments remain key players yet governing, and central governments' influence on borders in general, has become more complex.¹⁴

The borderland dweller's priorities and perceptions often function at cross-purposes with those of national governments. Especially when the government seeks to manage and control the cross-border processes in borderlands in ways that challenge the interests and accustomed patterns of interaction of local residents. Cross-border cooperation cultivates varying degrees of interdependence that in turn contributes to varying degrees of "porosity," creating "problem(s) for the makers of security policy." Paradoxically, the less integrated a borderland is, the less need there is for government to integrate their policies, while the more integrated the borderland is due to similar

¹⁰ Karin Peschel, *Perspectives of Regional Economic Development around the Baltic* (Kiel: Institut für Regionalforschung, University of Kiel, 1992).

¹¹ Lauren McKinsey and Victor Konrad, *Borderland reflections: The United States and Canada* (Orono: Canadian American Center, 1989); Oscar J. Martinez, "The Dynamics of Border Interaction," in Clive H. Schofield (ed.), *Global Boundaries. World Boundaries* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Oscar J. Martínez, *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1994).

¹² Henk van Houtum, *The Development of Cross-Border Economic Relations: A Theoretical and Empirical Study of the Influence of the State Border on the Development of Cross-Border Economic Relations between Firms in Border Regions of the Netherlands and Belgium* (Tilburg: CentER, Tilburg, 1998) p.18.

¹³ Heikki Eskelinen and Folke Snickars, *Competitive European Peripheries* (Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1995).

¹⁴ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective," *Geopolitics* 10:4 (2005) pp.633-649; Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Border Security and Porosity: An Introduction" (with Bruno Dupeyron) in Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (ed.), *Borderlands: Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007) pp.1-18; Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Conclusions: Border, Borderlands and Security: European and North American Lessons and Public Policy Suggestions," in Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (ed.), *Borderlands: Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007) pp.351-357; Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Special Section: Borders, Borderlands and Theory: An Introduction," *Geopolitics* 16:1 (2011) pp.1-6.

culture, strong cross-border clout and market forces, the more need there also is for the intergovernmental integration.¹⁵

Cross-border regional systems within borderlands do not operate as massive quantities, but as multilayered structures in which every layer has its own scale and is part of a more extensive layer.¹⁶ Particularly in the European context, multileveled governance is expected to turn border regions into places for action by encouraging their inhabitants to cooperate with their neighbors.¹⁷ A central aspect of this re-territorialization process has been the definition of rules, norms and practices that aim to “Europeanize” national spaces; from this derive the objectives and values that create a “common” set of discourses in which various policy issues can be negotiated.¹⁸ Cross-border cooperation (CBC) provides ideational foundations for a networked Europe through symbolic representations of European space and its future development perspectives. Euroregions, local and/or regional government associations devoted to CBC, in particular seek to reconstitute borders,¹⁹ but provide also as a powerful tool with which to transport European values and objectives.²⁰

The situation is considerably different in North America, where borders are currently being made increasingly impenetrable, mostly at the behest of the United States, and the public support for CBC is less in vogue.²¹ In comparative terms, NAFTA charts quite a different course than the EU. The grand idea of a gigantic marketplace that would be the most prosperous in the world thanks to the free movement of goods, services, and people has not fully materialized – especially when it comes down to the movement of people. Also civil society faces a rather complex position within the unfolding processes of North American integration.²²

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, Brunet-Jailly, as per note 14.

¹⁶ Bert van der Schelde and Gerald A. Høekveld, “The Regional Development of Borderlands: An Explorative Study in the Franco-Italian Alps,” *Cashiers de Géographie du Québec* 36:99 (1992) pp.483-500.

¹⁷ Marina van Geenhuizen and Remigio Ratti (eds.), *Gaining Advantage from Open Borders* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Markus Perkmann, “Cross-Border Regions in Europe: Significance and Drivers of Regional Cross-Border Co-operation,” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 10:2 (2003) pp.153-171; James W. Scott, *EU Enlargement, Region Building and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

¹⁸ Julian Clark and Alun Jones, “The Spatialities of Europeanisation: Territory, Government and Power in ‘Europe,’” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33:3 (2008) pp.300-318.

¹⁹ “EUDIMENSIONS (European Commission 6th Framework Programme, Project no. CIT5-CT-2005-028804) Synthesis Reports, p.16.

²⁰ Markus Perkmann, “Euroregions: Institutional Entrepreneurship in the European Union,” in Markus Perkmann and Ngai-Ling Sum (eds.), *Globalisation, Regionalisation and Cross-Border Regions* (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) pp.103-124; Gabriel Popescu, “Geopolitics of Scale and Cross-Border Cooperation in Eastern Europe: The Case of the Romanian-Ukrainian-Moldovan Borderlands,” in James W. Scott (ed.), *EU Enlargement, Region Building and Sifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) pp.35-51.

²¹ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, “Comparing Local Cross-Border Relations under the EU and NAFTA,” *Canadian-American Public Policy* 58 (2004).

²² Jonathan Fox, “Assessing Binational Civil Society Coalitions: Lessons from the Mexico-US Experience,” Chicano/Latino Research Center Working Paper No. 26 (Santa Cruz: University of California, 2000); Laura Macdonald, “Civil Society and North American Integration,” IRPP Working Paper Series No. 2004-09e (Montreal: Institute for Reseach on Public Policy, 2004); Daniel Sabet, “Building Bridges: Binational Civil Society Cooperation and Water-Related Policy Problems,” *The Journal of Environment and Development* 14:4

Cross-border cooperation cannot be based on mere goodwill.²³ According to Blatter and Clement, there are two specific motives for CBC. Firstly, interdependencies and spillover effects that reach across borders and must be jointly addressed to take advantage of possible synergies and/or avoid negative externalities linked with border regions. Secondly, intrastate tensions and cleavages between the border region and the respective center motivate regional actors to look to their neighbors as allies.²⁴ This functional approach clearly stresses the rationality aspect: it makes sense to cooperate in order to advance regional development and to avoid problems that would harm both regions.

Effective CBC provides obvious merits, yet in order to succeed, certain preconditions have to be met. Functioning transportation linkages, common values, history, local “industrial atmosphere,” administrative regulations, public institutions, and sociopolitical identity,²⁵ together with a general awareness and comprehension of a common problem, trust between the actors, and an adequate number of committed activists in key positions with powerful political patronage function as impetuses for cooperation.²⁶

Understanding Asymmetry

Asymmetry implies irregularities with respect to observed attributes, for example economic output, social issues, military strength, geographic extent, population, political leverage, administrative systems, etc. In sub-national cross-border contexts, the asymmetry is regularly manifested by differences in competences, central-local relations, budgetary cycles, administration hierarchies, the roles of elected officers and public servants,²⁷ and by the extent of central government engagement. While some asymmetries, such as differences in price level or particular laws and

(2005) pp.463-485.

²³ Riccardo Cappellin, “Interregional Cooperation in Europe: An Introduction,” in Riccardo Cappellin and Peter W. J. Batey (eds.), *Regional Networks, Border Regions and European Integration* (London: Pion, 1993) pp.70-88; Paul Brenner, “What Makes an Interregional Network Successful?” in Riccardo Cappellin and Peter W. J. Batey (eds.), *Regional Networks, Border Regions and European Integration* (London: Pion, 1993) pp.239-244; Malcolm Anderson, “Transborder Co-operation: An Assessment,” in Lars Hedegaard and Bjarne Lindström (eds.), *The NEBI Yearbook 2000. North European and Baltic Sea Integration* (Berlin: Springer, 2000) pp.201-216; Malcolm Anderson and Eberhard Bort, *The Frontiers of the European Union* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

²⁴ Joachim Blatter and Norris J. Clement, “Transborder Collaboration in Europe and North America: Explaining Similarities and Differences,” in Martin van der Velde and Henk van Houtum (eds.), *Borders, Regions and People* (London: Pion, 2000) p.87; Norris J. Clement, “International Transboundary Collaboration: A Policy-Oriented Conceptual Framework,” in Paul Ganster (ed.), *Cooperation, Environment, and Sustainability in Border Regions* (San Diego: San Diego State University Press, Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias, 2001) pp.17-31.

²⁵ Riccardo Cappellin, “Theories of Local Endogenous Development and International Cooperation,” in Markku Tykkyläinen (ed.), *Development Issues and Strategies in the New Europe* (Avebury: Ashgate, 1993) pp.13-15; Riccardo Cappellin, “Interregional Cooperation in Europe: An Introduction,” in Riccardo Cappellin and Peter W. J. Batey (eds.), *Regional Networks, Border Regions and European Integration* (London: Pion, 1993) pp.71-74.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, Anderson, as per note 23, p.211.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, Anderson, as per note 23, p.209.

regulations may encourage interaction, differences in language, financial resources, specification of respective interests, development of a networking process, 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.²⁸

Clement, Ganster and Sweedler argue that from an economic perspective, there are three underlying concepts that support cross-border cooperation in asymmetrical settings: economies of scale, externalities – either positive (benefit) or negative (cost), and transactions costs. Economies of scale refers to both physical and social infrastructure as well as marketing and lobbying efforts that ought to be undertaken and financed by all parties deriving positive externalities they generate. The negative externalities must also be managed as, for example, pollution or communicable diseases can spill over to the other side. Transaction costs are likely to be high in comparison to expected profits. Resources and time often have a better rate of return if invested domestically, because of a lack of information, legal constraints, different business practices and differences in language and culture.²⁹

These three concepts became emphasized on unequal borders characterized not only by economic and non-economic asymmetries but also economic complementarities that, in turn, generate a variety of both economic and non-economic cross-border linkages. These include cross-border flows based on economic transactions, environmental interdependencies, and cultural interactions through people-to-people contacts between the two sides of the border. The linkages, in turn, represent opportunities, which can lead to higher levels of development if managed properly (through CBC), but also challenges that can hinder development.³⁰

Kozák provides more of an international relations perspective to asymmetry in conflicting issues and tensions between two countries. The weaker state and stronger state have different policy options when approaching the other. The weaker state can choose to “close” (i.e. isolate) itself 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 an active government role in the economy. The weaker state may alternatively opt to “open” itself towards the stronger state, i.e. lower the economic and political barriers, in an attempt to diminish the asymmetry by raising its level of economic and social development on a par with the stronger state.³¹

²⁸ Riccardo Cappellin, “Interregional Cooperation of a Regional Foreign Policy,” in Riccardo Cappellin and Peter W. J. Batey (eds.), *Regional Networks, Border Regions and European Integration* (London: Pion, 1993) p.13; Paolo Giordano, Francesco Lanzafame and Jorg Meyer-Stamer (eds.), *Asymmetries in Regional Integration and Local Development* (New York: Inter-American Development Bank, 2005).

²⁹ Norris Clement, Paul Ganster and Alan Sweedler, “Environment, Development, and Security in Border Regions: Perspectives from Europe and North America,” in Paul Ganster and David E. Lorey (eds.), *Borders and Border Politics in a Globalizing World* (Lanham: SR Books, Lanham, 2005) pp.199-236, Reprinted from Eskelinen, Liikanen, Oksa 1999, pp.243-81.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, Clement, Ganster and Sweedler, as per note 29, p.230.

³¹ Krystof Kozák, “Facing Asymmetry: Understanding and Explaining Critical Issues in U.S.-Mexican Relations.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Theory vs. Policy? Connecting Scholars and Practitioners, New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel, The Loews New Orleans Hotel, New Orleans, Feb 17, 2010;

The stronger state has four basic options in asymmetric relations. In addition to closing itself (insulating itself against problematic issues arising from asymmetric relations) 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 on relations with other strong states or a different weaker state. Domination, in turn, is usually manifested in the use of overwhelming (military) force to advance one’s interests or promote one’s values.³²

The United States-Mexico Border

Historical Context and Development Trends

Prior to the 1848 treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,³³ which ended the two-year long U.S.-Mexican War, the territory consisting of the present-day U.S. states of California, Nevada, and Utah, as well as of parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming, was part of Mexico. The newly drawn U.S.-Mexico border was illogical in terms of ecology, culture and history.³⁴ Dictated largely by the United States, it imposed a vaguely defined 2000-mile-long arbitrary line running through vast, unremittingly arid and inhabited lands from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. In all, the border was “nothing more than a barren corridor of boundary markers, border gates, and customs houses,”³⁵ which run through a “land of sunshine, adobe, and silence”³⁶ – characterized the best by “scarce natural resources in a forbidding environment.”³⁷ The arbitrariness of the border, and the resultant tensions above all in the management of scarce water resources, has had an enduring impact on U.S.-Mexican relations.³⁸

The rapid population growth and urbanization of the latter half of the twentieth century transformed the perception of the border.³⁹ The population in the Mexican border states multiplied by 4.4 times from 3.8 million to 16.7 million and the population of the U.S. border states multiplied by

Krystof Kozák, *Facing Asymmetry: Bridging the Peripheral Gap in U.S.-Mexican Relations* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010).

³² *Op. cit.*, Kozák, as per note 31.

³³ Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement between the United States of America and the United Mexican States concluded at Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2 1848 (TS 207, 9 Stat. 922-43); Ratification advised by the U.S. Senate, with amendments on March 10, 1848; Ratified by President Polk on March 16 1848; Ratified by the Mexican Congress on May 25 1848; Ratification exchanged at Queretaro on May 30 1848; Proclaimed on July 4 1848, and entered into force May 30 1848.

³⁴ Lawrence A Herzog, *Where North Meets South. Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas, 1990) p.35.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, Herzog, as per note 34, p.xii.

³⁶ Charles Lummis, *Land of Poco Tiempo* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1925)

³⁷ John W. House, *Frontier on the Rio* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) p.56.

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, Herzog, as per note 34, p. 35. Paul Ganster and David E. Lorey, *US-Mexican Border into the Twenty-first Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2nd Edition, 2008) pp.153-155.

³⁹ *Op. cit.*, Herzog, as per note 34, p.37.

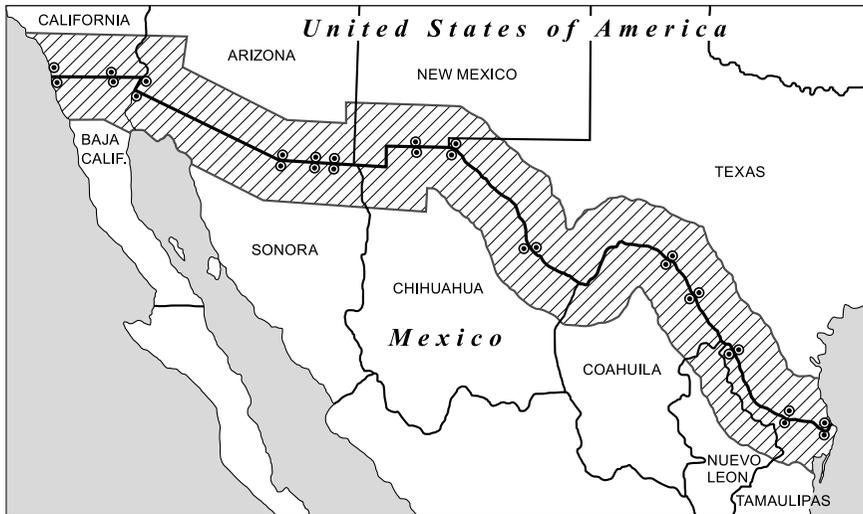


Figure 1

3.1 times, from 19.7 million to 61.7 million.⁴⁰ By the turn of the century, the previously sparsely populated border region consisting of ten U.S. and Mexican border states had become the most populated region in North America.⁴¹

In the 1940s the Bracero Program⁴² helped to ease the agrarian labor shortage in the U.S., while by the 1960s most of the legal and illegal immigrants from Mexico headed to U.S. cities, which now offered manufacturing and service-oriented jobs.⁴³ The border cities soon became the fastest-growing urban areas of the entire continent, making the border region the most urban region of the United States.⁴⁴ On the Mexican side, border municipalities experienced economic and population growth rates that were much higher than other Mexican regions, resulting in higher demand for public services and infrastructure.⁴⁵

In 1965, less than a year after the termination of the Bracero Program, the Mexican government launched its Border Industrialization Program (BIP), better known as the Maquiladora Program, to solve the problem of rising unemployment along the border.⁴⁶ The availability of cheap labor made the maquiladoras attractive to U.S. firms. Together with the devaluation of the peso and

⁴⁰ David E. Lorey (ed.), *United States-Mexico Border Statistics since 1990. 1990 Update*, (Los Angeles: University of California, 1993) pp.13, 18; *Op. cit.*, Ganster and Lorey, as per note 39, pp.116-117.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, Ganster and Lorey, as per note 38, p.115.

⁴² The Bracero Program consisted of a series of laws and diplomatic agreements between the United States and Mexico in 1942-1947 for the importation of temporary contract laborers from Mexico to the United States. After the expiration of the initial agreement in 1947, the program was continued in agriculture under a variety of laws and administrative agreements until its formal end in 1964.

⁴³ *Op. cit.*, Ganster and Lorey, as per note 38, p.123.

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, Herzog, as per note 34, p. 37; *Op. cit.*, Ganster and Lorey, as per note 38, p.123.

⁴⁵ Jorge I. Salazar and André V. Mollick, "Mexican Northern Border Municipalities, Financial Dependence and Institutions," *The Annals of Regional Science* 40: 4 (2006) pp.859-874.

⁴⁶ Joan Ferrante, *Sociology: a Global Perspective* (Toronto: Thomson Wadsworth, 6th Edition, 2005) p.38.

favorable changes in U.S. customs laws, the program helped Mexico to convert itself from an inward-oriented economy to one seeking economic growth through export production.⁴⁷

NAFTA, which came into effect on January 1, 1994, impacted the growth of maquiladora plants, and the entire U.S.-Mexico trade, favorably. Whereas during the five years before NAFTA, the maquiladora employment had grown at the rate of 47 percent, in the five years following the enactment of NAFTA maquiladora employment grew by 86 percent.⁴⁸ The number of plants in Mexico grew from about 1,700 in 1990 to nearly 3,800, of which 2,700 were in the border states, by 2001.⁴⁹

Communities on both sides of the border saw a phenomenal growth in international trade. By 2001 real U.S. exports to Mexico had increased by 93 percent while real U.S. imports from Mexico by 190 percent since NAFTA was launched.⁵⁰ However, the project of North American economic integration did not suddenly appear with NAFTA. The first attempt to create a North American market dominated by the U.S. dates back to 1910 when the U.S. government proposed trade agreements with Mexico and Canada on the grounds of “the specific relations derived from the territorial nearness.”⁵¹

The urbanization of the U.S.-Mexican border emerged with a pattern of numerous twin cities, i.e. interrelated and interdependent city pairs or twinings consisting of a U.S. city and a Mexican city grown physically together, yet separated by the border. During the latter half of the twentieth century, the population of 14 main twin city pairs soared. In the case of San Diego-Tijuana the total population grew from 17,942 in 1900 to 394,337 in 1950 and to 2,434,220 in 2000, denoting a multiplication by 135.7 times over the entire century.⁵² Today, the total population of the two cities is estimated to be more than 3.2 million⁵³ and the total population of the greater twin city region is close

⁴⁷ Ellwyn R. Stoddard, *Maquila: Assembly Plants in Northern Mexico* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1987) p.2; Gordon H. Hanson, “The Role of Maquiladoras in Mexico's Export Boom,” *Research & Seminars* 9:1 (2003).

⁴⁸ Richard H.K. Vietor and Alexander Veytsman, “American Outsourcing,” *American Outsourcing, Harvard Business School Publishing case 9-705-037* (2007), p.6; William C. Gruben, “Did NAFTA Really Cause Mexico’s High Maquiladora Growth?” *Center for Latin America Working Papers* No. 301, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas (2001) p.3.

⁴⁹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “US-Mexico Border 2012 Program,” <http://www.epa.gov/border2012/framework/people.html> accessed August 19 2010.

⁵⁰ Laurie-Ann Agama and Christine A. McDaniel, “The NAFTA Preference and U.S.-Mexico Trade,” *Office of Economics Working Paper* No. 2002-10-A, U.S. International Trade Commission. (2002); Aspen Institute, *El Medio Ambiente y la Economía en la Frontera entre México y Estados Unidos (Environment and Economy at the border between Mexico and the United States)* (Queenstown: The Aspen Institute, 2000); Keith R. Phillips and Carlos Manzanares, *Transportation, Infrastructure and the Border Economy* (Dallas: The Border Economy, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, 2001) pp.11-14.

⁵¹ Teresa Gutiérrez Haces, “The Roots of North American Economic Development” in Yasmeeen Abu-Laban, Radha Jhappan and François Rocher (eds.), *Politics in North America: Redefining Continental Relations* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2008), p.92.

⁵² *Op. cit.*, Lorey, as per note 40, p.49; *Op. cit.*, Ganster and Lorey, as per note 38, pp.125-126.

⁵³ Based on estimations by the National Population Council (CONAPO) of 2009 and 2008 Population Estimates by the United States Census Bureau, Population Division.

to 5.3 million, making it the largest bi-national conurbation along the border.⁵⁴

Increased Interaction and Integration

Cross-border interaction within the twin cities soared as well; the number of northbound border crossings at the San Ysidro crossing point, connecting San Diego and Tijuana, increased from 10 million in 1950 to 40 million in 2000, in addition to which the Otay Mesa crossing point just six miles west from San Ysidro facilitated another 12.2 million northbound border crossings.⁵⁵ The number of legal northbound border crossings as a whole increased from 48.7 million in 1950 to 294.9 million in 2000 before beginning to gradually decrease after the events of September 11 2001.⁵⁶

Not all entries, however, occurred at the official points of entry. Particularly since the 1990s, large numbers of undocumented immigrants crossed the land boundary northwards. Porosity of the border caused growing concerns about international drug trafficking and produced a series of U.S. programs to enhance border enforcement through infrastructure construction and added personnel. These included Hold the Line (El Paso 1993), Gatekeeper (San Diego 1994), Safeguard (southern Arizona 1995), and Rio Grande (South Texas 1997). Despite the border reinforcement, the number of illegal northbound crossings continued to increase, particularly after the 1994 economic crisis in Mexico. According to a recent report by the Pew Hispanic Center, which echoes the findings of a study released earlier by the Department of Homeland Security,⁵⁷ roughly 850,000 illegal immigrants entered the U.S. annually from 2000 to 2005, whereas the figure decreased, for the first time, to 300,000 in 2007, when the recession and increased border enforcement forced potential crossers to reconsider their odds.⁵⁸

As the border cities grew and became more interdependent, the two governments were faced with concerns broader than mere border demarcation or management as such. Binational cooperation was now needed regarding a number of issues, which were either hindered by the border or failed to respect it. This was reflected in such directly border related treaties as the ones dedicated to telecommunications, economic and social development, combating illegal flows of narcotic drugs,

⁵⁴ World Gazetteer, "San Diego-Tijuana," <http://world-gazetteer.com/wg.php?x=&men =gpro&lng=en&dat=32 &geo=-223&srt=nnan&col=aohdq&pt=a&va=&geo=-1049427> accessed January 20 2012.

⁵⁵ The data only reflect the number of entries from Mexico to the U.S. The United States Customs and Border Protection Agency does not collect comparable data on southbound crossings. Data source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Border Crossing/Entry Data; based on data from U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, OMR database.

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Border Crossing/Entry Data; based on data from U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, OMR database.

⁵⁷ Micheal Hoefer, Nancy Rytina and Bryan C. Baker, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2009" *DHS Office of Immigration Statistics Report*, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2010).

⁵⁸ Jeffrey Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "U.S. Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade," *Pew Hispanic Center Report No. 126* (2010) p.11.

environmental cooperation, housing and urban development, disaster assistance, and later fire protection and health related cooperation.⁵⁹

The U.S. and Mexico became increasingly interdependent and, hence, important to each other particularly during the last quarter of the twentieth century. This was recognized by both countries and became manifested by the proliferation of treaties and other international agreements between the countries. The new agreements dealt, *inter alia*, with aviation, cultural property, defense, energy, extradition, finance, judicial assistance, mapping, migratory workers, narcotics, postal matters, scientific cooperation, social security, taxation, telecommunication, tourism, trade, and commerce and transportation.⁶⁰ Even though some of these agreements referred to the border only indirectly, cross-border cooperation being an international issue, they set the basic rules for more regional level interaction across the border. Even though the broad spectrum of treaties and agreements indicate that the two governments found scores of incentives to work together, they did little to improve the intergovernmental relations and the interaction remained focused on trade and economic questions. Political disagreements remained and the impetus for actual cooperation stemmed largely from proximity based necessity and expediency.

The trajectory of cross-border relations took a turn for the worse as the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001 and the increased violence related to human smuggling and drug trafficking suddenly made the U.S. border with Mexico a critical component in the fight against terrorism. The events of 9/11 changed the paradigm with reference to how the border was viewed. Even though they were not directly related to the border, they had profound ripple effects, which led to the securitization of the border. The push to harden the border through the construction of fences, barriers, access roads, as well as adding large numbers of law enforcement personnel, often brought security agencies into conflict with federal, state, and local land managers whose core mission was to preserve the land and its ecosystems.⁶¹

Economic and social interdependency is most apparent in the border regions, which turned towards each other and became increasingly knit together by a multiform, yet complex web of interconnections and transactions penetrating the international border with few constraints and caring less about the traditional notion of sovereignty. This contributed in transforming the border to a fuzzier zone of interaction – an increasingly *intermestic* area where the border between international affairs and purely domestic issues was ever harder to draw.⁶² Residents from both sides cross the

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Treaties in Force: A List of Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States in Force on January 1, 2010. Bilateral Treaties and Other Agreements between Mexico - United States,” Compiled by the Treaty Affairs Staff, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State (2010).

⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, U.S. Department of State, as per note 59.

⁶¹ Paul Ganster, “Recommendations Regarding the Environmental Effects of the Construction and Maintenance of the U.S.-Mexico Border Fence and Associated Infrastructure,” Good Neighbor Environmental Board Advice Letter to President Barack Obama, http://www.epa.gov/ocem/gneb/pdf/2009_1202_advise_letter.pdf accessed May 10 2010.

⁶² Abraham Lowenthal, “U.S.-Latin American Relations at the Century’s End: Managing the ‘Intermestic’ Agenda,” in Albert Fishlow and James Jones (eds.), *The United States and the Americas: A Twenty-first Century View* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

border routinely to work, visit friends and relatives, shop, purchase health services, etc. The northernmost states of Mexico also became in many ways more closely connected with the U.S. than they were with Mexico City.

Today, more than 13 million people reside in the U.S.-Mexican border region consisting of U.S. counties and Mexican municipalities along the border, and 86 percent of those people reside in 14 pairs of sister cities.⁶³ On the U.S. side, the border areas have gained more population, and also more political leverage. On the Mexican side, the border municipalities are among the most affluent ones in the country and among the most developed ones based on their Human Development Index (HDI).⁶⁴ As a consequence, and despite the increased violence and crime rates,⁶⁵ the border cities continue to attract people from the rest of the country and beyond. The border population is expected to increase to 24 million by the year 2020, which will put an enormous strain on the natural resources and affect adversely the environment and public health on both sides of the border.⁶⁶ This, in turn, provides an important impetus for further cooperation.

The Finnish-Russian Border

Historical Underpinnings

The border, which today separates Finland and the Russian Federation, was first drawn as a result of the Treaty of Nöteborg between Sweden and Novgorod, a medieval Russian state, in 1323. Being a demarcation zone between resurgent Swedish and Russian empires, and thus also eastern and western Christianity, the border was frequently redrawn according to the changing balance of power. The border separated two cultures, religions and languages for centuries, yet in geographical terms it did not follow any logical contours nor did it erect any clear-cut natural barriers to interaction. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the border in practice did not exist and people were free to move around.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Russian Empire gained supremacy, which resulted in the Swedish Empire handing over the territory of Finland in 1809. Finland became an autonomous grand duchy within the autocratic Russian Empire. A customs border with Russia was

⁶³ Heath in Americas, "United States-Mexico Border Area," http://casr.ou.edu/pubs/HIV_AIDS_Alone_The_US-Mexico_Border.pdf accessed June 9 2010.

⁶⁴ International Community Foundation, "Corporate Giving Trends in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region," <http://www.icfdn.org/publications/cs/> accessed June 18 2010.

⁶⁵ In 2010, the Department of State issued a Travel Warning to inform U.S. citizens travelling to and living in Mexico of concerns about the security situation in Mexico, and authorized the departure of the dependents of U.S. government personnel from U.S. consulates in the Northern Mexican border cities of Tijuana, Nogales, Ciudad Juarez, Nuevo Laredo, Monterrey and Matamoros. See: U.S. Department of State, "Travel Warning: Mexico," http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_4755.html accessed August 1 2010.

⁶⁶ Good Neighbor Environmental Board Twelfth Report "*Innovative and Practical Approaches to Solving Border Environmental Problems*" (2009) p. 7.

established, but this border was neither a military nor an ethnic one.⁶⁷ In economic terms, the growing metropolis of St. Petersburg had important effects on the Finnish side of the border with its constantly mounting demand for goods and labor.⁶⁸ Finland retained its own religious organizations as well as laws and administrative structures created under the Swedish rule. Now, for the first time, Finland formed an administrative unit of its own.⁶⁹ 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. 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.⁷⁰

In connection with World War I and the Russian Revolution in 1917, Finland became an independent nation-state. After a Bolshevik-backed abortive revolution in 1918, a peace treaty between the Republic of Finland and Soviet Russia was signed in 1920.⁷¹ A heavily guarded, hostile military border was formed and all forms of cooperation halted. The border was redrawn for the last time during World War II when two wars between Finland and the Soviet Union were fought.⁷² Under an interim peace treaty in 1944, Finland had to cede large areas to the Soviet Union and almost the entire population of these areas, more than 420,000 people, was resettled in different parts of Finland.⁷³ In 1948, Finland and the Soviet Union concluded a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which 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 regard to the Soviet Union but to the Western countries as well.⁷⁴ The border itself remained heavily guarded between two armies, as the treaty did not necessitate military cooperation, as had been the case with the Soviet satellite countries of Eastern Europe.⁷⁵

During the Cold War, the border divided two competing socio-political systems, the communist and the capitalist, and formed a “civilizational” frontier zone between the East and West. The border remained thoroughly militarized, heavily guarded on both sides, and from a regional and local perspective practically closed. Trade connections and other forms of official interaction were

⁶⁷ Ilkka Liikanen, Dmitry Zimin, Juha Ruusuvoori and Heikki Eskelinen, *Karelia – a Cross-border Region? The EU and Cross-border Region-building on the Finnish-Russian Border* (Joensuu: University of Joensuu, Publications of the Karelian Institute 146. 2007), p.22.

⁶⁸ Kimmo Katajala, “Near the Metropolis, beyond the Border. St Petersburg and Eastern Finland before the October Revolution,” in Heikki Eskelinen, Ilkka Liikanen and Jukka Oksa (eds.), *Curtains of Iron and Gold: Reconstructing Borders and Scales of Integration* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) pp.297-315.

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, Katajala, as per note 68.

⁷⁰ Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, Liikanen et al., as per note 67, p.25.

⁷² The so-called Winter War (1939-1940) and the Continuation War (1941-1944).

⁷³ Antti Laine, “Finland and the Contribution of Germany to the Enemy Image in the Soviet Great Patriotic War,” in Antti Laine and Mikko Ylikangas (eds.), *Rise and Fall of Soviet Karelia, People and Power* (Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2002) pp.133-152.

⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, Liikanen et al., as per note 67, p.27.

⁷⁵ Jukka Nevakivi (ed.), *Finnish-Soviet relations 1944-1948* (Helsinki: Department Political History, University of Helsinki, 1994).

administered by bilateral agreements between the two states.⁷⁶ In addition to its ideological weight, the border was increasingly perceived as having distinct historical, political, natural, as well as artificial roles,⁷⁷ the influence of which are still felt today. 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.

Post-Cold War Setting and Europeanization of Cooperation

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.⁷⁸ The Russian model of federalism was being tested as sharp political competition and institutional instability shook the country. The regions were provided with an unprecedented room for 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.

Finland recognized the Russian Federation as the successor to the Soviet Union and was quick to draft bilateral treaties of goodwill between the two nations. In 1992, the countries signed the treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation, which retired the 1948 pact and the special relations dictated by it. The new treaty formed, *inter alia*, the basis for Finland's Neighboring Area Cooperation (NAC) with Russia. With an aim of contributing to a stable social and economic development in the neighboring areas and preventing soft security threats, CBC was spurred by granting project-based financial assistance to a variety of regional and local actors. In the years from 1990 to 2011, Finland allocated about 320 million euros to projects carried out jointly with Russia.⁷⁹ These funds have become a vital structure for supporting and maintaining cooperation, without which the cost-benefit ratio of CBC would certainly seem less appealing

The 1992 treaty set Finland free to move towards what was considered its "proper reference group"; only a few weeks after signing the new cooperation treaty with the Russian Federation, Finland applied for EU membership.⁸⁰ After Finland joined the EU in 1995, cross-border cooperation, that was previously coordinated as part of state level foreign politics, were streamlined according to

⁷⁶ Vilho Harle and Sami Moisio, *Missä on Suomi? Kansallisen identiteettipolitiikan historia ja geopolitiikka (Where is Finland? The History and Geopolitics of National Identity Politics)* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2000).

⁷⁷ Anssi Paasi, *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness. The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1996).

⁷⁸ Ilkka Liikanen, "Europeanization of Cross-border Co-operation and the Territorial Institutionalization of the Finnish-Russian border," in Hiroshi Okuda and Jarmo Kortelainen (eds.), *Russian Border Regions from the Perspective of Two Neighbours* (Sapporo: Centre for Development Policy Studies (CDPS), Hokkai Gakuen University, 2008) pp.143-155.

⁷⁹ Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, "Finland's Cooperation with Neighbouring Areas," <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=34823> accessed September 27 2011.

⁸⁰ Pekka Sutela, "Finnish Relations with Russia 1991–2001: Better than Ever?" *BOFIT Online* 11 (2001) pp. 6-7.

the policy frames defined on different levels of EU administration and new Europeanizing rhetoric.⁸¹ Even if Europeanization did bring fresh vigor and fueled regional and local actors to take a more active role in cross-border relations, the function of the border as an external border of the EU, particularly after it was bulked up with the Schengen *acquis* in 2001, dictated that the border had to be controlled securely.

Since EU membership, Finland's Russian policy has been carried out on two levels, through the bilateral relationship and through participation in the formulation of EU policies towards Russia. The EU's internal logic of stimulating regional development in the often peripheral border regions and erasing borders, the products of past conflicts, did not, however, fit in the Finnish context, in which the border was still seen to possess an important filtering function.

The EU-Russia relationship is based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) of 1997. A further development of EU-Russia relations led to the adoption of the EU strategy towards Russia and a Russian Strategy for policies towards the EU in 1999. In 2003, the EU and Russia agreed to reinforce their cooperation by defining the long term four "common spaces." A single package of Road Maps for the practical implementation of the four Common Spaces was then adopted in 2005. As recognized repeatedly in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) strategy,⁸² Russia is considered a "key partner in the EU immediate neighborhood." As a regional expression of the ENP, the Northern Dimension (ND) has aimed at softening and "deproblematizing," even depoliticizing, the border by allowing the central governments to utilize the border as an active resource for sub-national actors.

Key Characteristics of the Border and Border Region

For most of its length of 1,340 kilometers, the Finnish-Russian border runs through forests and extremely sparsely populated rural areas, the metropolis of St. Petersburg at the distance of some 150 kilometers from the border being the only notable exception. Although small towns and villages are located near the border, major urban centers are situated further away and no real twin cities exists. The actual borderline is beefed up by a special border zone, access to which is allowed only with the Border Guard authority's permission. On the Finnish side, the zone is three kilometers wide at a maximum, whereas on the Russian side the width of the zone has been altered on several occasions and has ranged anywhere between five and 130 km, while during the Soviet period the zone reached up to 200 km in width.

In 2010, the population living on the Finnish side in the border municipalities was approximately 300,000 and in the border provinces around 1.14 million. A common character for the

⁸¹ *Op. cit.*, Liikanen et al., as per note 67, pp. 30-31.

⁸² Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy paper," May 12 2004, COM (2004) 373 final, pp. 4, 6, 7; see also Commission of the European Communities, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument," November 29 2004, COM (2004) 628 final.

border region is that it loses population continuously.⁸³ On the Russian side the total number of population in the three border regions (Lenin-grad Oblast, the Republic of Karelia, and Murmansk Oblast) is 3.47 million while St. Petersburg with its 4.9 million inhabitants (2010 Census) is a separate administrative unit inside the Leningrad Region. The number of border crossings increased from 1.3 million in 1991 to 8.4 million in 2010 and new crossing points were opened to facilitate the cross-border flows (Figure 2). Whereas in the early 1990s Finns dominated the border crossings, today it is Russians whose share constitutes the vast majority of the crossings.



Figure 2

Even if migration between Finland and Russia is trivial in comparison with the U.S.-Mexican case, its impact is considerable in the border regions. Migration contributes to the growth of bicultural people, which in turn is a potential resource in cross-border interaction. The net migration from Russia to Finland increased significantly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and has consisted approximately of 2,000 people since the year 2000. Today, there are less than 30,000 Russian citizens living in Finland, but the number of people speaking Russian as their mother tongue

⁸³ EUDIMENSIONS Background Profile of the Finnish-Russian Case Study, http://www.eudimensions.eu/content/pstudy/finland_russia.htm accessed August 19 2010.

is already more than 52,000, yet still less than one percent of the entire population.⁸⁴

Even though trade and investments have not boomed hand in hand with the 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.⁸⁵ Although between 2008 and 2009 the economic crisis reduced exports to Russia by no less than 47 percent and imports by 31 percent,⁸⁶ Russia remains Finland's most important trading partner.

Barriers for Interaction

A border forms a barrier when it hinders free movement and interaction of people, capital, products, services or ideas. Borders also generate and uphold differences in behavior, culture, language, and socio-economic levels by creating simultaneously discontinuities in cross-border flows.⁸⁷ Conversely, a barrier may be seen as a catalyst for increased cooperation in the sense that the "differential" they provide, or the "complementarity" they show, can encourage interaction.⁸⁸

In the U.S.-Mexican case, the barrier effect of the border is perceived to be higher by the Mexican respondents. Both sides agree that security problems and corruption are the main reasons hampering interaction, yet the Mexican respondents would also like to receive more assistance, in terms of both financial support and political will, from all levels of government: the federal, the state and the local (city and municipal). The bureaucratic procedures related to trade and frequent changing business rules were also mentioned as issues to be tackled. The federal level is blamed for its lack of interest towards the border issues also by the U.S. side, while the state, and particularly local (city, county and municipal) level are given a more positive assessment. The inadequate functioning and capacity of the existing ports of entry are seen to hinder interaction, particularly trade, and, thus, cause economic losses for both sides.

The Finnish-Russian border has (been) transformed from a practically closed one to one that is considered as sufficiently open to allow access, yet closed enough to uphold control. The respondents see the border as a resource for interaction and regional development, yet its barrier function is also valued. The border actors see some aspects of the border as a greater barrier than others. The highest barriers are not directly related to the border *per se*, but rather caused by the

⁸⁴ Statistics Finland, "Suomessa jo 50,000 venäjänkielistä (Finland has already 50,000 Russian speakers)," http://www.stat.fi/artikkelit/2009/art_2009-09-08_005.html accessed September 8 2010; Heikki Eskelinen and Aku Alanen, "Immigration from Russia vis-à-vis Regional Development in Finland," Paper presented at the 2010 European Conference of the Association for Borderlands Studies. Veroia, Greece, September 24 2010.

⁸⁵ Simon-Erik Ollus and Heli Simola, "Finnish Re-exports to Russia," *BOFIT Online* 5 (2007).

⁸⁶ Statistics of the Finnish National Board of Customs, "Trade by Regions and Countries; Imports by Countries of Origin, Exports by Countries of Destination" (2009).

⁸⁷ Jussi Laine, "Incommodious Border? Rethinking the Function of the Finnish-Russian Border," *Fennia* 185: 1 (2007) p.50.

⁸⁸ Philippe De Boe, Claude Grasland and Adrian Healy, "Spatial integration," final report, Strand 1.4, *Study Programme on European Spatial Planning* (1999) p.17.

existence of it. The border is thus not understood as a strict cut-off line, but as a broader social construction situated within an understanding of neighborliness that recognizes that mutual will overpowers the hindrances and differences between the sides.

Trade and general conditions governing interaction are perceived to be the highest barriers by the Finnish respondents. In particular, the frequent changing of business rules, corruption, security problems, limited product differentiation, and the quality of the banking system in Russia are seen as problems in cross-border relations. From the Russian respondents' perspective, the deficiency in assistance from business associations, agencies, and the federal government form by far the highest barriers to interaction and is regarded as hindering the full potential of CBC. While the border poses a barrier to Finns in a cultural-historical sense, for Russians it is a barrier due to its technical-logistical and political-administrative characteristics. Whereas the Finnish view consists of factors resistant to change, the Russian view puts more emphasis on factors, which can be eroded or fixed swiftly should there be political will to do so.

Bases for Interaction

In the U.S.-Mexican case, the initial conditions for interaction are accepted largely as they are and less in terms of problems or assets. Only the cultural differences between the two countries are seen to encourage interaction. Despite some opinions to the contrary, the current relations between the U.S. and Mexican local and regional level authorities were seen to obtain potential for greater interaction. This would nonetheless require better harmonization, or at least management, of the differences.

Both the United States of America and the United Mexican States are federal republics, built from three tiers of government (federal, state, and local) to regulate and distribute services. Nevertheless, there are differences in the local level structures as well as in their role, responsibilities and leverage. Mexico consists of a federal district and thirty-one "free and sovereign states."⁸⁹ The states have their own constitution and congress, as well as a judiciary, and their citizens elect a governor and representatives to their respective state congresses.⁹⁰ States are further divided into municipalities. Each municipality is administratively autonomous and headed by a popularly elected mayor or municipal president, who leads the municipal council, which is responsible for providing all public services for their constituents.⁹¹ Despite its federal structure, Mexico's political system is highly centralized; state governments depend on Mexico City for much of their revenue, which they, in turn, funnel to municipal governments in a "clientelist fashion."⁹² As a result, many border

⁸⁹ "Article 40 of Mexican Constitution," see: <http://constitucion.gob.mx/index.php?idseccion=12>

⁹⁰ Tim Merrill and Ramón Miró eds. *Mexico: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996).

⁹¹ *Op. cit.*, Merrill and Miró, as per note 90. Carlos Moreno, *Analyzing the Performance of Local Governments in Mexico: A Political Explanation of Municipal Budgetary Choices* (Austin: University of Texas, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 2005).

⁹² *Op. cit.*, Merrill and Miró, as per note 90.

municipalities, being far away from and out of sight and mind of the federal center, have had major difficulties in acquiring sufficient funding for solving the socio-environmental issues brought about by the massive population increase.

The United States comprises fifty states⁹³ and a federal district. As the states essentially created the federal government and not vice versa, the states possess – in principle – a relatively large degree of autonomy. Each state, in turn, grants further autonomy to its own subdivisions. The states are usually divided into counties, at times into townships,⁹⁴ which are further divided into incorporated cities, towns, villages, hamlets, other types of municipalities, possessions and insular areas, Indian reservations, and other autonomous or subordinate public authorities and institutions.⁹⁵ A county can also include just a part of a city and there are also independent cities, which belong to particular states but not to any particular county or consolidated city-counties.⁹⁶

Due to the complex structure of the administrative system, the division of responsibilities and leverage between the levels of government is unclear. A number of “boundary spanners,” special bi-national, quasi-governmental agencies linking scientists and policymakers and other agencies have been created to ease the situation,⁹⁷ yet there are limits to their mandate. According to the fundamental, even if idealistic, federal logic, the lowest level of government that is able to handle a particular issue should indeed do so. In practice, however, this model has proven to be problematic particularly in regards to border and cross-border flows, such as immigration and trade. Whereas it is acknowledged that the local level obtains the knowledge and knowhow, is the most active, and usually also the most effective, the federal centers in both countries view border issues predominantly as international issues and as such belonging to the federal domain. As perceptions of a subject tend to become more exaggerated and twisted the further away they are from it,⁹⁸ this leads to frustration, misunderstandings and, in all likelihood, misguided policy decisions and actions.

In the Finnish-Russian case the initial conditions for interaction are judged as faintly positive. Whereas in the U.S.-Mexican case the two sides perceive conditions in a closely analogous manner, a more significant difference exists between the Finnish and Russian respondents. Despite a greater standard deviation, the Russian respondents perceive conditions as clearly more advantageous than the Finns. Political differences among regional/local administrative frameworks and cultural

⁹³ Four of these, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia, are officially styled as commonwealths.

⁹⁴ Exceptions exist: parts of Alaska are organized into boroughs and the rest of the state's territory that is not included in any borough is divided into "census areas," and Louisiana is divided into county-equivalents that are called parishes.

⁹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, “Geographic Areas Reference Manual,” <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/garm.html> accessed April 18 2010.

⁹⁶ Information Technology Laboratory, “Counties and Equivalent Entities of the United States, Its Possessions, and Associated Areas,” <http://www.itl.nist.gov/fipspubs/fip6-4.htm> accessed August 8 2010.

⁹⁷ Tonatiuh G. López and Glenn Sparrow, “Governance and Administrative Boundaries,” in Paul Ganster and Richard Wright (eds.), *San Diego-Tijuana International Border Area Planning Atlas* (San Diego: SDSU, Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias, 2000).

⁹⁸ Thomas F. Saarinen, *Environmental Planning: Perception and Behavior* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976).

differences are perceived as assets by the Russian respondents, whereas for the Finns they constitute disadvantages. Both sides agree that the main problem for interaction stem from linguistic differences, which are seen as a root for misunderstandings, lack of knowledge, and hesitance to initiate and sustain cooperation.

The current relations between national governments as well as local/regional authorities are seen to be an advantage for CBC. As discussed above, Finnish-Russian relations have been close and distant, and sometimes seemingly both. The former Finnish President Juho Kusti 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 “[w]e cannot do anything for geography, nor can you”⁹⁹ has been, contrary to its original connotation, transformed to mean that the two countries now possess a great deal of potential to utilize the opportunities offered by their geographical proximity.¹⁰⁰ It is probably not an exaggeration to argue since its EU membership in 1995, Finland has been willfully and consistently proclaiming itself as something of a litigator of Russia in all things Europe, albeit with only occasional success.

Continuation of a “special relationship” does not imply that problems would not exist. Current bilateral issues include, but are not limited to, problems with border control causing persistent truck queues at the border, airspace violations, the pollution of the Baltic Sea, and an increase in Russian duties on exported wood to Finland's pulp and paper industry. The so-called Karelian question, the debate on Finland's re-acquisition of the ceded territories, and potential borderline adjustment pops in to the public discussion occasionally, 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.¹⁰¹ Whereas right-wing commentators commonly accuse the Finnish government of continuing the policy of “Finlandization,” i.e. allowing Russia to influence its policies and actions, those more towards the left emphasize that such an approach is necessary in order to cope with a culturally and ideologically alien superpower next door.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ 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, frustrated about the 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, *Toimintani Moskovassa ja Suomessa 1939-41 (My actions in Moscow and in Finland from 1939 to 1941)* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1958) vol. I, p.46, and vol. II, p.185. The beginning of the dictum was later used by Paasikivi himself on several occasions.

¹⁰⁰ Alexander Stubb, “Venäjään on suhtauduttava ilman komplekseja siitä, mitä Neuvostoliitto joskus aikoinaan on ollut (Russia must be treated without any complexes about what the Soviet Union some years ago has been),” *Savon Sanomat*, April 23 2008.

¹⁰¹ Whereas Russian leadership has indicated on several occasions that it has no intention to take part in discussions concerning the matter, Finland's official stance is that the borders may be changed through peaceful negotiations, although there is currently no need for open talks, as Russia has shown no intention of discussing the question. Martti Ahtisaari, “Oral Statement at a Press Conference in Kuopio on July 30 1998,” reported in *Helsingin Sanomat* July 31 1998; Erkki Tuomioja, “Ulkoasiainministeri Erkki Tuomiojan vastaus kysymykseen Karjalan kysymyksestä (Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja's Answer to the Question of Karelia Question),” Helsinki, December 22 2004.

¹⁰² Secret CIA Intelligence Report of August 1972, which was approved for release in May 2007, found that “the

The positive evaluation of the local and regional level is largely thanks to Euregio Karelia (EK), a cooperative region and forum comprising three Finnish provinces and the Republic of Karelia in Russia founded in 2000 to facilitate CBC between the countries in a new institutional structure based on the European model. According to the assessment by Valery Shlyamin, who was the Minister for Foreign Relations of the Republic of Karelia – a post that was later terminated as a reflection of Russian recentralization, the EK provided “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 [*sic*].”¹⁰³ The idea behind the initiative was that as the EU enlarged eastwards, joint administrative structures with regional authorities in Russia would gain broader European significance,¹⁰⁴ lead to cross-border region building and nourish new border region identities.¹⁰⁵

The historical events between the two countries, which generally are still reflected on in Finland with seriousness and national pride, are perceived not to harm interaction. This does not imply that history has lost its significance, yet is rather understood that a recapitulation of the past conflicts may not present the most open-minded and even-handed basis for discussing future cooperation. On the contrary, a common history is even proposed to function as a fruitful basis for further CBC.

Impact of Interaction

Both case studies paint cross-border interaction as useful and mutually beneficial. However, interaction also involves substantial costs and risks that reduce the rate of return on the money and time invested, and which have to be considered against the underlying objective of cooperation. Though exceptions exist, at the U.S.-Mexico border cooperation occurs primarily whenever and wherever there is a need for it, while few organizations have a CBC strategy as such. In the Finnish-Russian case, CBC must still predominantly be seen as an aspect for securitizing the border and the border region through cooperation. This is due to its funding base, which is still dominated by the Finnish government’s neighboring area cooperation program, an integral part of Finland’s foreign

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, “Finlandization” in action: Helsinki’s experience with Moscow,” RSS. No. 0059/72 (2007) p. 3; See Max Jakobson, “Substance and Appearance: Finland,” *Foreign Affairs* 58:5 (1980) pp. 1034-1035; Gregory F. Treverton, “Complicated Coexistence,” *Atlantic* (December 1983) p.12.

¹⁰³ Valery Shlyamin, “Euregio Karelia – New Challenges and New Opportunities,” Bulletin N1 of the TACIS Project “Euregio Karelia as a Tool of Civil Society,” http://www.gov.karelia.ru/News/2001/0518_01a_e.html#05 accessed August 19 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Tarja Cronberg, “Euroregions in the making: The case of Euroregion Karelia,” in Pirkkoliisa Ahponen and Pirjo Jukarainen (eds.), *Tearing Down the Curtain, Opening the Gates: Northern Boundaries in Change* (Jyväskylä, SoPhi, 2000) pp. 170-183; Tarja Cronberg and Valery Shlyamin, “Euregio Karelia: A Model for Cooperation at the EU External Borders,” in *Crossing the Borders in the Northern Dimension* (Oulu: Regional Councils of Kainuu, Northern Karelia and Northern Ostrobothnia, 1999) p.326.

¹⁰⁵ *Op. cit.*, Cronberg and Shlyamin, as per note 104, pp.325-326.

policy.

In the U.S.-Mexico case, both border zones and both countries as a whole are seen to gain from interaction, yet the Mexican side is regarded to gain more than the U.S. side. The Mexican respondents are of the opinion that their country gains more than the border region they are from, whereas the U.S. respondents regard the situation in their country in the opposite manner. Both sides agree that increased interaction causes winners and losers.

Given the existing differences, the Finnish and Russian border actors perceive the border in a surprisingly similar manner. The Finnish border region, the cities near the border on the Finnish side, and Finland as a whole are seen as the main beneficiaries of CBC, while the Russian side is also regarded to gain clear benefits. The numerical differences are negligible; both sides are seen to benefit in a reasonably equal manner and the gains of the interaction are perceived as decidedly greater than the losses. Both sides also agree that their region gains more than their own respective country. This suggests that border regions ought not to be seen as peripheries by definition, but rather as advantaged areas benefiting from their window position along the border.

Greater interaction is perceived to have a strong positive impact on local economies and communities. In the U.S.-Mexican case, both sides agree that the greatest benefits stem from cultural interactions and mixed marriages with immigrants. Interestingly, collaboration among universities and research institutes was ranked at the top of the list by the U.S. respondents while the Mexican respondents ranked it the very last out of the eleven given options. Altogether, investments by U.S. firms on the Mexican side and prospects of a totally open border are seen as the least beneficial. At the Finnish-Russian border, the positive impact of collaboration among universities and research institutes as well as cultural interactions stand out, but local exports to the other side is also ranked high by both sides. The role of immigrants working in the local economy and the prospect of a totally open border are seen as the least beneficial, yet still in a positive light. Given the rather critical general rhetoric surrounding the border and cross-border debate in both cases, it is pleasing to find that at least the actors involved in such practices perceive the interaction favorably. This suggests an optimistic future for cross-border initiatives, as a positive climate is not only the *result* of successful policies and practices, but also an essential *prerequisite* for future development.

Effectiveness of Interaction

In the U.S.-Mexican case, CBC is perceived to be the most efficient at the local level, particularly in the field of culture and in response to natural disaster or other emergencies. The U.S. respondents gave the existence and effectiveness of the research and education related cooperation a significantly higher ranking than their Mexican counterparts, which in turn see cooperation in the fields of environmental protection and migration as more effective. The local level is perceived as the most effective also in the Finnish-Russian case. Cultural as well as research and education related cooperation are at the top of the list.

As there is a strong positive correlation between the perceived level of implementation of cooperative policies and their effectiveness, the policies can be interpreted as having a positive effect.

However, in general the effectiveness of cooperation falls behind its perceived implementation levels, indicating that cooperation is not being assessed to the maximum extent, or that the rate of return is indeed reduced by the border's barrier effect, which makes the short-term benefits difficult to see.

In the U.S.-Mexican case, there is a difference of opinion regarding the most effective actors. The Mexican respondents perceive networks of citizens, private citizens, and labor unions as the most active cross-border actors, whereas from the U.S. perspective universities and research centers as well as NGOs top the list. Russian respondents count on the role of private citizens and cultural associations, but also of private firms. Finns rank universities and research centers as the most active followed by cultural associations, other NGOs and private citizens.

In both cases the activeness of the public sector is surpassed by individual and other non-state actors. The importance of personal connections is underlined repeatedly as without them the establishment of a cooperative relationship has proven to be burdensome and time consuming. If a trustworthy contact has been created, the same partner is often kept in mind for future projects. In the Finnish-Russian case, given the fairly small circles, the knowledge and experiences of partners gets circulated rapidly and those deemed to be active for the wrong reasons, such as for the money, are singled out. As finding a partner is often difficult due to the language barrier and lack of knowledge about the structural differences in operational spaces, many turn to umbrella organizations and other networks and utilize their already existing connections, special skills and knowhow. Accordingly, the number of activists and network actors committed to the cause in key positions is clearly one of the most essential prerequisites for effective cooperation.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) stand out in both cases for they are deemed to possess a number of qualities, which make them suited for CBC. In relative terms, CSOs are flexible, innovative, realistic and, as a result, able to react to local issues fast and effectively. They tend to be less bureaucratic and less constrained by long-term strategies than state actors. CSOs are also logically more suitable for promoting civil society, as the promotion of civil society by a foreign government is easily seen as involving an agenda of reshaping the state's institutions, making it less acceptable in the recipient country.

Supranational Regimes and their Impact on Interaction

The EU should not be taken as a model for NAFTA but, as the most developed and successful form of continental integration there is, it does offer useful lessons. Both regimes impose adjustments upon central-local intergovernmental relations that impact greatly on cross-border dynamics on local and regional levels.¹⁰⁶

The creation of the North American trading bloc was inherently related to the rise of neoliberalism in North American political circles. NAFTA was created to provide the U.S., Mexico and Canada with a market-based model of integration designed to make things easier for the three

¹⁰⁶ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Comparing Local and Cross-Border Relations under the EU and NAFTA," *Canadian-American Public Policy* No. 58 (2004) p.2.

countries. Although there were expectations to the contrary, NAFTA was never intended to be about governance or as a first step towards creating a shared community. The early years of NAFTA, when things proceeded smoothly, confirmed that governance is unnecessary as market forces are sufficient to sort things out. Integration has never been the United States' target, as it would necessitate it to share some of its dominance and leverage. Furthermore, in order to have a North American community, one must feel North American and as long as "North American" translates to "American" few Mexican and Canadians are ready to see themselves as such.

The EU is a project that is overdeveloped, though yet to be completed. 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. The diversity is nonetheless bound up by a certain consensus about the key values that guides its actions. The EU straddles the accepted categories of political organization,¹⁰⁷ it is not an ordinary international organization, certainly not a state – albeit at times acting as one, but not a confederation either. It is more than a mere regime, but not yet a *Gemeinschaft*.¹⁰⁸ It 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 their right to act independently, for instance, in foreign policy related matters. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two is their approach to governance and governing institutions. Whereas the EU has (too) many institutions, which play a crucial role in policy implementation and organizing cooperative mechanisms between the core and the local and regional governments, NAFTA has practically none.

In the Finnish-Russian case, the EU's influence has been twofold by nature. Europeanization brings in bigger circles and promotes cooperation especially by providing extra funding. Due to the bureaucratic nature of all things EU, grasping these possibilities has proven to be laborious, which has marginalized smaller actors while prioritizing those able to handle the required red tape. Despite the rhetoric, Europeanization tends also to confirm the existing differences between EU and non-EU members. Due to a shared border and the self-proclaimed special relationship with Russia, Finland has consistently acted as something of a mediator between the EU and Russia. This has given Finland more leverage, but also more burden. Much of the work has in practice been delegated to the regional level, where much of the interaction is based on paradiplomatic links.

The border stakeholders from the U.S. and Mexico suggest that regarding NAFTA simply as a business contract is narrow-minded. The intensity of interaction at the local and region levels infer that NAFTA has rather become outdated and incapable of managing the various forms of interaction that are underway. NAFTA is deemed to have had a positive impact on the U.S.-Mexican trade and investment-related interaction, CBC between local authorities, bilateral interaction as a whole and,

¹⁰⁷ John Peterson and Michael Shackleton (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ The concept of *Gemeinschaft* (trans. Community) was used by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) to define an ideal type of society, in which individuals are oriented to large associations as much if not more than to their own self-interest and share the same values and beliefs.

therefore, integration between the countries. It is not just about trade as it encompasses issues from social justice to the environment and women's rights. Moreover, even pure trade requires a certain level of mutual understanding to be profitable in the long run. Interestingly, NAFTA's two side-agreements, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC), added to the treaty by President Bill Clinton, have had little positive impact, and are instead perceived to have had a negative impact on both environmental and labor-related cooperation. This is by far the most negative impact, particularly from the Mexican perspective, that NAFTA has had on confidence building between the two nations. In Mexico the dominant role of the U.S. gets easily translated into Mexico being exploited or forced to dance to its northern neighbor's tune.

Asymmetry for what and for whom?

The most apparent asymmetry in both cases has to do with the power relations. To use Kozák's terms, the U.S., as the unquestionably stronger state, successfully dominated Mexico, the weaker state, during much of the nineteenth century. During the twentieth century, Mexico assumed a more closed stance vis-à-vis the U.S. in trying to shield itself from its dominating influence. This caused the U.S. to ignore Mexico in order to avoid negative externalities and the consequences of asymmetric relations. Towards the end of the twentieth century, when the pressures for political reform in Mexico grew and the economy worsened, Mexico was forced to open up. The U.S., which previously had shown interest in cooperation only on issues beneficial for itself, became more cooperative.

The signing of NAFTA brought the neighbors even closer to each other. While Mexico advocated closer cooperation notably with regards to immigration and drug trafficking, the U.S. maintained its closed stance on all other sectors apart from trade. Following the 9/11 attacks, Mexico was yet again ignored by its stronger neighbor as trade, albeit evidently beneficial, became trumped by security concerns. The border wall and the fortification of border towns has been the most apparent symbol, if nothing else, of this shift. The asymmetry remains and is intentionally maintained by the U.S.

In the Finnish-Russian case the changes have been even more drastic. Finland, as an autonomous grand duchy, had to assume an open stance against the autocratic Russian Empire. After gaining independence, Finland continued as the weaker state, now vis-à-vis the mighty Soviet Union, but with a clearly more closed approach; all forms of cooperation were halted. Even if trade began to grow after World War II, other forms of interaction remained heavily restricted. As the stronger state, the Soviet Union managed to dominate the relations in the spirit of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance. The entire situation was, however, turned around following the collapse of the Soviet Union. While Russia was at its weakest, Finland, now free at last to make the move towards what was considered to be its right reference group,¹⁰⁹ joined the EU and, bolstered by this move, suddenly became the stronger state with respect to its eastern neighbor.

¹⁰⁹ *Op. cit.*, Sutela, as per note 81, pp. 6-7.

Acknowledging its own weakness, Russia had no other option but to put the blame on the previous political model and to open itself in order to increase its levels of economic and social development and to diminish its asymmetry with regard to Finland. For Finland, the four options of the stronger state suggested by Kozák were narrowed to two. Due to geographical proximity, together with both positive and negative externalities, as well as remaining asymmetries in mere size, it made little sense for Finland to try to ignore or dominate Russia. Assuming an open stance as a stronger state, Finland perceived the negative externalities of asymmetry as such a threat that it admitted responsibility for not just cross-border problems, but also for many problems in the neighboring areas on the Russian side, and proclaimed its willingness to eliminate their root causes by providing resources and expertise.

Cross-border cooperation has been instrumental for this process. The work carried out in practice, largely by non-state actors, helped to diffuse the “us” versus “them” mentality sketched in the minds of many during the Cold War era. As Kozák’s model¹¹⁰ suggests, while in the short run, resources and efforts spent to assist the weaker state might seem wasted, the long-term benefits of the open approach are perceived as significantly beneficial for Finland as well. By assisting Russia to fix some of its most critical social issues, Finland, and the EU as a whole, broadens its surrounding perimeter of security and stability, mitigating potentially negative consequences of the underlying asymmetry. As Russia has now shown signs of reclaiming its strength, the experience from open interaction is expected to lead to an increasingly equal cooperation. While Russia seems to be keener to self-exclude itself from the EU rather than to integrate with it,¹¹¹ the more practical and less intrusive Finnish approach may indeed turn out to pay off in the future.

Conclusions

Both the United States-Mexican and the Finnish-Russian examples provide us with evidence of the persistence of borders in the globalizing world. They confirm that borders are not mere lines on the map, but rather broad and historically contingent constructions imbedded in various aspects of not only political or economic, but also social structures. A constant juggle between access and control is denoted in the paradoxical finding that intensifying interaction is desirable, while the opinion that the border has to be maintained endures. Despite the neoliberal rhetoric, borders are still seen as necessary and useful institutions, for they do not merely form artificial obstacles to trade, but also symbolize important values and identities, and continue to demarcate sovereignty, which remains of high importance for many in today’s globalizing world.

Initial conditions set the basic guidelines for interaction across a border. The uneven territorial distribution of population and economic activity is an important conditioning factor, but so are the level of knowledge and the existence of people committed to their cause. Efficient

¹¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, Kozák, as per note 31.

¹¹¹ Sergei Prozorov, *Understanding Conflict between Russia and the EU: The Limits of Integration* (London: Palgrave, 2006).

management of the economics of scale reduces the long run transaction and average costs and therefore make, the benefits of CBC more apparent.

In the U.S.-Mexico case, some differences, e.g. in market structures or in cultural characteristics, serve to fuel interaction, but impair greater integration. When asymmetry is regarded as a positive attribute, there is little reason to try to even it out. Cooperation on fields with more negative externalities is less common. The Finnish-Russian case, in turn, suggests that if interaction is to be developed into full-fledged, long-term cooperation for mutual benefit, at least a certain level of coherence, if not convergence, is needed in order to manage the differences efficiently.

At the local and regional levels, both borders serve a more explicit integrative function, for they are where shared interest and mutual concerns are expressed. Local actors utilize the integrative cross-border networks, formal and informal, to resolve cross-border issues. The growth of shared problems, as well as interaction in general, has urged local governments and communities to communicate across the border. The difference between the two case studies is that, while in the Finnish-Russian case, cooperation within the borderland is heavily encouraged (and funded) both by the Finnish government and the EU, in the U.S.-Mexican case the accustomed cross-border interaction of individuals and organizations seem at cross-purposes with the predominant political rhetoric, which seeks to enhance the border effect and restrict integration.

While local issues at the border often involve national interests, the strong state status of the U.S. enables its federal actors to ignore or, at least, be selective of the local circumstances or problems. Despite acknowledging their inability to act on local cross-border issues, the federal governments still consider the border separating the two countries to be, “naturally,” an international one, the interaction across which is thus viewed as an international (or more precisely *interstate*) issue, an aspect of foreign politics, to be administrated and run by the state officials in state capitals. Making the border “harder” also makes it more difficult to see the big picture and creates an illusion that societal problems deriving from asymmetry, such as drug trafficking and its related violence, could somehow be solved at the border.

In the Finnish-Russian case, the more open conditions has allowed more interaction, but also revealed the stark disparities between the two sides in more concrete terms. This has led to a quite exceptional cooperation dialogue. While the expectations of trade and investment related interaction have materialized only to a limited degree, the Finnish side has been actively attempting to even out the asymmetry, in order to erase its negative externalities, most notably by extending its welfare state model beyond the border to Russian soil. While the work commenced during Russia’s weak years of the early 1990s, it has continued despite Russia’s increased strength.

While EU-Russia relations have stagnated, binational relations remain warm as neither side persistently proclaims a strong state status over the other. While the Finnish government remains the main funder of binational CBC, it is largely up to non-state actors to carry the work out in practice. It is this sub-national level CBC that has become an important driver of integration and caretaker of relations when higher politics go sour. The existing differences are surmounted by a common understanding between the two sides about the basic guidelines within which the interaction takes place and about the conditions from which it should strive towards mutually beneficial cooperation.