BUILDING CROSS-BORDER COMMUNITIES THROUGH COOPERATION: EU REGIONAL POLICY AND CROSS-BORDER REGIONS AS SPACES OF GOVERNMENT

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The European Union's cross-border cooperation initiatives are perceived as an important tool for harnessing the process of European integration, which includes the ideas of fostering economic competitiveness and reducing regional discrepancies. The paper aims to analyse the role and function of notions of cooperation and cross-border communities used and advanced within the EU regional policy and, more specifically, within the European Territorial Cooperation objective. We argue that cooperation is a specific governmental technology which works through the promises of incorporation and inclusion of different stakeholders, binding them into more or less durable and institutionalised cross-border communities. Through cooperation, members of the community can be mobilised in novel programmes which encourage and harness political practices of self-responsibility and self-management. As such, cooperation is promoted as a necessary feature for building, cultivating and fostering cross-border communities in which self-disciplined citizens and other stakeholders are governed such that they are deemed responsible agents in their own development.

Key words: cooperation, community, governmentality, cross-border cooperation, European regional policy, regions

1 INTRODUCTION

The prevailing assumption in the age of globalisation is that borders are becoming increasingly irrelevant and insignificant. According to Hutton, for example, globalisation has stimulated a process in which "all borders are

coming down—economic, political and social. There is a new conception of time, risk and opportunity".[2] [3] For many, the European Union is a clear exemplification of this borderless world.[4] With the 1985 Schengen Agreement and its subsequent incorporation into the European Union *acquis* in 1997, the ideas of the abolishment of internal border controls and harmonisation of internal security measures were gradually realised. Furthermore, the idea of integrated economic space across the Member States of the European Union was actualised with the introduction of the Single European Market which offers four key freedoms, namely, the freedom of the movement of goods, capital, services and people. Here, state borders are viewed not only as unnecessary but also as barriers to increased competition and efficient allocation of resources and as blockages in the cross-border flows of goods and services.[5]

It was the Single Market project that provided the opportunity for the European Union to rationalise borders between the Member States, not as barriers but as something which creates opportunities and new possibilities for enhanced cooperation. In this context, the European Commission developed new initiatives for These initiatives are seen as an integrative element of the process of European integration, which is intricately connected to the ideas of fostering economic competitiveness and reducing regional discrepancies. The key term in this context is cohesion, that is, the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Union. Therefore, "challenged by the idea of European integration, the strategies to describe and guide potential opportunities for contact, networking, and integration across borders are searched for".[6]

Within the European Union, the cross-border initiatives are fostered through the EU regional policy, which is an investment policy aimed at supporting social and territorial cohesion by reducing disparities between unequally developed regions of the Member States. Cohesion policy, as this policy is also known, consists of a set of distinct yet interrelated regional policy measures "with spatially redistributive effects based on multi-sectoral interventions targeted at specific areas".[7] Between 2007 and 2012, the Cohesion policy has focused on three main objectives: (1) convergence, that is, solidarity among regions, (2) regional competitiveness and employment and (3) European territorial cooperation. While the aim of the first two objectives is to reduce regional disparities and to create jobs by promoting competitiveness, respectively, the aim of the third is primarily to encourage cooperation across borders between countries or regions. In the words of the current Directorate-General for Regional Policy, José Palma Andres, "European Territorial Cooperation offers a unique opportunity for regions and Member States to divert from the national logic and develop a shared space

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[2] Anthony Giddens, "Anthony Giddens and Will Hutton in Conversation," in *On the edge: living with global capitalism*, ed. Anthony Giddens and Will Hutton (London: Jonathan Cape,), 1–2.

[3] The notions of a borderless world and the insignificance of borders within the European space are far from uncontested. "Borderless-ness" has been widely criticised and rebuffed. See, for example, Henry Wai-chung Yeung, "Capital, State and Space: Contesting the Borderless World," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 23, 1 (1998), 291–309.

[4] Joseph S. Nye and John D. Donahue, *Governance in a globalizing world* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000); Kenichi Ohmae, *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy* (London: Collins, 1990); Alan S. Milward, *The rise and fall of a national strategy, 1945–1963* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

[5] See CEC, Commission of the European Communities, *Research on the "Cost of non-Europe": basic findings* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1988).

[6] Henk Van Houtum, "An overview of European geographical research on borders and border regions," *Journal of Borderlands Studies,* 15, 1 (2000), 64.

[7] Markus Perkmann, *Policy Entrepreneurs, Multilevel Governance and Policy Networks in the European Polity: The Case of the Euregio* (Lancaster: University of Lancaster, 2002), 3.

together, build ties over borders and learn from one another. It is a laboratory of EU integration and EU territorial cohesion".[8]

Quite a few studies have examined borders and border regions, especially since the early 1990s, which is obviously connected to the intensified activities of the EU to promote the cross-border activities of border regions. There has been increasing attention on the terms and concepts connected to the processes of regional, national and cross-border integration, such as borders, regionalisation, networks and the Single European Market.[9] Moreover, comparative studies of the cross-border cooperative efforts of the border regions across Europe have shown the diversity in the effects of European regional policy on cross-border governance in different border regions.[10]

While recognising the importance of such studies, this paper aims to analyse the role and function of the notions of community and cooperation used within the European Territorial Cooperation objective and, more broadly, within the EU regional policy. We argue that cooperation is a specific governmental technology,[11] formulated, advanced and affirmed through diverse documents, policies, programmes and (institutionalised) practices, working through the promises of incorporation and inclusion of different stakeholders, binding them into more or less durable cross-border communities. As such, these communities are not primarily geographical or social spaces, but moral fields of the affect-laden relationship among stakeholders, ranging from individuals to collective subjectivities and political actors.[12] Through cooperation, members of the community can be mobilised in novel programmes which encourage and harness political practices of self-responsibility and self-management. Cooperation is, therefore a specific governmental technology which establishes cross-border communities in which self-disciplined citizens and other stakeholders are governed such that they are deemed responsible agents in their own development.

Following the main arguments outlined above, the paper is structured as follows. First, we critically theorise the notions of cooperation and community as two distinct yet interrelated concepts employed in advanced liberal societies.[13] As such, we theorise the notion of cooperation as a specific technique of governance comprising, on the one hand, the creation of

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[8] European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, *European territorial cooperation: building bridges between people* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, 2011a), 8.

[9] Michael Keating, *The new regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial restructuring and political change*. (Cheltenham: E. Elgar, 1998); Liam O'Dowd, "The Changing Significance of European Borders," in *New borders for a changing Europe: cross-border cooperation and governance*, ed. J. Anderson, L. O'Dowd and T. M. (Wilson. London: Frank Cass, 2003), 14–36; Neil Brenner, "Building 'Euro-Regions'," *European Urban and Regional Studies,* 7, 4 (2000), 319–345; Anssi Paasi, "Region and place: regional identity in question," *Progress in Human Geography,* 27, 4 (2003), 475–485; Mike Goldsmith, "The Europeanisation of local government," *Urban Studies,* 30, 4–5 (1993), 683; Markus Perkmann and Sum Ngai-Ling, *Globalization, regionalization, and cross-border regions* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002).

[10] See, for example, Chang-woon Nam, *Cross-border cooperation between regions: a comparative analysis of Bayern, Comunidad Valenciana, Andalusia and Norte (Portugal)* (Munich: Ifo-Inst. für Wirtschaftsforschung, 1993).

[11] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–1976* (New York: Picador, 2003); Michel Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Barry Hindess, *Discourses of power: from Hobbes to Foucault* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

[12] Nikolas Rose, "The death of the social? Re-figuring the territory of government," *Economy and Society,* 25, 3 (1996), 331–332; Suzan Ilcan and Tanya Basok, "Community government: voluntary agencies, social justice, and the responsibilization of citizens," *Citizenship Studies,* 8, 2 (2004), 129–144.

[13] Nikolas Rose, "Governing ''Advanced'' Liberal Democracies," in *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*, ed. Barry, T. Osborne and N. Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press and UCL Press, 1996), 37–64.

communities as collective allegiances of diverse actors, while simultaneously moulding, shaping, configuring and framing the conduct, behaviour and practices of those actors. Community is, therefore, instituted as a sector for (European) governance which is characterised by the decentralisation and pluralisation of decision-making centres so that governance is obtained in sites "at a distance" from diverse centres of power. In the second part of the paper, we analyse the role and images of borders and border regions in the European context. We particularly reflect upon the historical formations and current arrangements of regional cooperation within the EU regional policy. In the third part of the paper, we move on to analyse how cooperation and the notion of community are employed within the EU's European Territorial Cooperation objective as a specific governmental technology.

2 COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY: THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS FROM A GOVERNMENTALITY PERSPECTIVE

Through Cohesion policy, and, more specifically, through cross-border cooperation initiatives, the declared aim of the European Union is not only to support social and territorial cohesion but also to empower different regional actors to participate in decision-making processes and to enable local authorities to actively participate in European integration. As Hrbek[14] points out, the European Union's specific aspiration is to ensure that European political unity is based not only on cooperation among national structures but also on cooperation among regional communities. Cooperation and regional communities have obviously occupied a prominent place in Europe.

Therefore, it is important to understand how and why the concept of community emerged as one of the new territories of (European) government for the administration and regulation of individuals and populations. In this context, we need to theoretically examine how power and government operate in advanced liberalism. The latter is, according to Rose,[15] following Foucault's insights on power and governmentality, a diagram of government based on new ways of allocating the tasks of government among the political apparatus, intermediate associations, professionals, economic actors, communities and private citizens. Therefore, a modern form of government should not be understood solely in terms of central authority as a coercive force, and it should not be reduced to a type of sovereignty in which legitimate authority is codified in law. Rather, government means the deliberations, strategies, tactics and devices employed by authorities aimed at individuals as well as populations at large;[16] in advanced liberalism, it is possible to locate the emergence of rationalities and techniques that seek to govern the society without governing[17] and, instead, govern through "the conduct of conduct", that is, through a form of "activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons".[18] In his genealogy of this new mode of governing, Foucault, among others, traced how the clear distinction between public and private, prominent in liberal theory, is highly

[14] Rudolf Hrbek, "The role of the regions in the EU and the principle of subsidiarity," *The International Spectator,* 38, 2 (2003), 59.

[15] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[16] Nikolas Rose, Pat O'Malley and Mariana Valverde, "Governmentality," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science,* 2, 1 (2006), 86–87.

[17] Alan Hunt, *Governing morals: a social history of moral regulation* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 216–217.

[18] Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction," in *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 2.

problematic because during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, government discovered that the population had a reality of its own, with its own regularities and processes that were more or less independent of government.[19] "Government had to act upon these relations [...]" and in this manner addressed itself "to knowing and regulating the processes proper to the population, the laws that modulate its wealth, health, and longevity, its capacity to wage war and enhance in labour [...]".[20] Advanced liberalism, therefore, does not offer a clear distinction between private and public, but a relationship where the state or any other authority maintains the infrastructure of law and order while the population promotes the well-being of individuals as well as the population at large.[21] The task of government is no longer limited to planning, controlling, supervising and regulating, but enabling, inspiring and assisting citizens to secure their well-being and to promote welfare for all.

Communities are a specific sector of government, where individuals as well as collectives can be mobilised and deployed in programmes which stimulate, inspire, encourage and harness active practices and self-management. The community became the object of government's political strategies and manoeuvres precisely because of its apparent non-political status, naturalness, primordiality and even neutrality.[22] This apparent non-political status of community made it the target of the exercise of political power while maintaining its position as ostensibly external to politics.[23] Community's natural and primordial appearance is not something which is conjured *ex nihilo* or is uncontested. Government's mobilization of community as its framework or sector for different political projects is always enmeshed with diverse perspectives on meanings and the supposed role of a specific community. Any community as a site of government is always marked with an excess of symbols, geographies and memories which government is unable to confine, and therefore, community becomes the site of struggle. That is why every governmental attempt to act through the community is a political strategy of assembling a constituency and forming more or less permanent social networks.

A certain paradox is inscribed in the political strategy of building a community. Community needs to be constantly improved and built upon, yet this is "nothing more than the birth-to-presence of a form of being which pre-exists".[24] In other words, although community appears as something already present, this presence must constantly be confirmed, verified and attested. If a community is to be something which offers a framework for a good life and the well-being of all of its members, it needs to be permanently improved and enhanced. While improvement is the responsibility of every member of a community, this participation is not enough. If authorities aspire to govern through community, this governance is rendered technical. It is expert assistance and constant investigation, mapping, classification and documentation of community that provide an assessment of the community's

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[19] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87–104.
[20] Nikolas Rose, Pat O'Malley and Mariana Valverde, "Governmentality," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science,* 2, 1 (2006), 87.
[21] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 139.
[22] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community & society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957).
[23] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 168.
[24] Nikolas Rose, "The death of the social? Re-figuring the territory of government," *Economy and Society,* 25, 3 (1996), 334.

characteristics.[25] Yet, on the other hand, expert knowledge is not enough to form, constitute and manage community either. Community as a field of government must be spacialised in diverse ways; it can be geographical, a social or sociological space or a space of services and, above all, a moral field binding individuals into more or less durable relations. Therefore, community must be a framework where emotional relationships are integrative to the formation of micro-cultures of values and meanings in which individuals and collective identities are constructed.[26] What one can observe here is that the collective logic of the community is closely associated and coupled with what can be termed individualised ethos, in which the important values are choice, personal responsibility and control over one's own fate, self-promotion and self-government.[27] This coupling enables new modes of community participation to take place, where self-reliance and self-responsibility appear as crucial features of the empowerment and engagement of members of a specific community in decisions over matters which affect local life and the lives of individuals.

While Rose forcefully argues, as shown above, that community became a moral field binding various actors into different institutional forms of collaboration in which self-responsibility and self-management are crucial political practices, we need to reflect also upon how these actors form networks and are joined, associated and tied into relations. Different scholars[28] have shown that the formation of a community evolves in different institutional forms that foster collaboration between diverse actors. These institutional forms can emerge and can be based on formal or more informal networks, institutional or organisational arrangements. They can be temporary or more lasting networks with established and explicit rules and procedures, while also having a symbolic dimension which is crucial for establishing certain norms, loyalties and (cultural) identities.[29] Emphasis is put on the cooperation between the actors who form a specific community. Therefore, cooperation through which community becomes a field of government is a range of governing techniques which include various devices, strategies and mechanisms which form community as an arena for collaboration as well as a group of subjects who are ready and willing to collaborate, show solidarity, listen and accept the opinions of others and achieve a consensus. Government seeks to constitute cooperative subjectivities which are able to "ally themselves with political authorities, focusing upon their problems and problematizing new issues, translating political concerns about economic productivity, innovation […]".[30] On the other hand, individuals ally among themselves, cooperating and working together to solve existing issues and problems, and make decisions regarding investments, to enhance entrepreneurial dynamism[31] and to mobilise themselves in their own governance. This process of cooperation is what Foucault termed "ordered maximisation of collective and individual

[25] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 175.

[26] Ibid., 172.

[27] Nikolas Rose, "The death of the social? Re-figuring the territory of government," *Economy and Society,* 25, 3 (1996), 335.

[28] Ole Johan Andersen, "Public–Private Partnerships: Organisational Hybrids as Channels for Local Mobilisation and Participation?," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27, 1 (2004), 1–21; Erik Swyngedouw, "Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State," *Urban Studies* 42, 11 (2005), 1991–2006.

[29] Josefina Syssner, "Conceptualizations of Culture and Identity in Regional Policy," *Regional & Federal Studies* 19, 3 (2009): 453.

[30] Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political power beyond the State: problematics of government," *The British Journal of Sociology,* 61 (2010), 286.

[31] Jason Read, "A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity," *Foucault Studies,* 6, (2009), 25–36.

forces",[32] and it is necessarily spatialised, since it must be situated in a defined territory. One of the defining features of cooperation within a community is its rearrangement and transfer on local and more in-touch scales which are understood and advanced as the prime spaces for new forms of political actions and practices.[33] On this local level, cooperation is a governmental technology "through which different forces seek to render programmes operable, and by means of which a multitude of connections are established between the aspirations of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups".[34]

3 MEANING(S) OF BORDERS AND REGIONAL (CROSS-BORDER) COOPERATION: HISTORICAL FORMATIONS AND CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Borders as a phenomenon, ideas, processes, symbols and a body of practices, precisely because of their alternating forms, fluidity, complexity and heterogeneous and divergent meanings, are an important theme in the work of many scholars ranging from geographers, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, literary scholars and legal experts.[35] Due to the global processes of increasing interdependence, the new élan in the European integration in the last two decades of the twentieth century and the creation of many new borders since the breakdown of the Cold War power structures, there has been an immense and widespread upsurge in the study of borders.[36] As Delanty[37] notes, with the emergence of European polity, the question of European borders is especially significant. New, often contradictory, meanings of borders have appeared, while the older ones took on new functions and the external borders of the European Union were materialised as an area of new European external governance.[38] These changes made it possible to observe new re-territorialisations, the emergence of new spaces and changes in the character and characteristics of old borders. Spaces within the European Union are now regulated and governed in new ways and, with this, they have become increasingly differentiated. There is, in this context, a complex political process of creating distinctions between different types of borders in which the crucial distinction is between internal and external borders. Consequentially, there is a constant process of differentiation in terms of who is included and who is excluded from the European space, who is allowed to cross borders and under what condition.[39] This political function of borders is also reflected in diverse European Union policies where there has been "a proliferation of

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[32] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: Introduction* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 24–25.

[33] Erik Swyngedouw, "Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State," *Urban Studies,* 42, 11 (2005), 2001; David Blunkett, *Politics and progress: renewing democracy and civil society* (London: Politico's, 2001).

[34] Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political power beyond the State: problematics of government," *The British Journal of Sociology,* 61 (2010), 281.

[35] David Newman, "Borders and Bordering," *European Journal of Social Theory,* 9, 2 (2006), 171.

[36] James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, "Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance," *Regional Studies,* 33, 7 (1999), 593–604; Henk Van Houtum, "An overview of European geographical research on borders and border regions," *Journal of Borderlands Studies,* 15, 1 (2000), 58.

[37] Gerard Delanty, "Borders in a Changing Europe: Dynamics of Openness and Closure," *Comparative European Politics*, 4 (2006), 183.

[38] Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, "EU rules beyond EU borders: theorizing external governance in European politics," *Journal of European Public Policy,* 16, 6 (2009), 791–812.

[39] James Wesley Scott, "Bordering and Ordering: the European Neighbourhood: A Critical Perspective on EU Territoriality and Geopolitics," *TRAMES: A Journal of the Humanities & Social Sciences,* 13, 3 (2009), 232–247; Henk Van Houtum and Ton Van Naerssen, "Bordering, Ordering and Othering," *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie,* 93, 2 (2002), 125–136; Henk van Houtum, Olivier Thomas Kramsch and Wolfgang Zierhofer, *B/ordering space* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

European Union development programmes for border areas; and of policy-oriented agencies, either freestanding or part of local government, dealing with cross-border regions, cooperation and governance".[40]

Therefore, the internal borders of the European Union play an important role in conceiving and structuring diverse policy processes within the European integration. Especially since the early 1980s, the integration process has been meant to unify economic space across Member States through removing the borders between them. Here, state borders are viewed as barriers to market flows and, as such, need to be removed with the implementation of diverse European policies and programmes in order to enhance cross-border flows of goods and services. This logic is also incorporated in the project of the European Single Market.[41]

The efforts to create a Single European Market initiated diverse strategies and mechanisms through which the European Union has sought to realise the objectives and measures related to the idea of the Single Market. Among others, the European Commission developed and advanced new initiatives for border regions, as they were understood as zones peripheral to key economic flows and as underdeveloped spaces of common European territory as well as spaces where economic integration is crucial if economic flows within the European Union are to be smooth, uninterrupted and unobstructed. For the Market to function properly, therefore, the bridge or gateway dimensions of the state borders and border regions had to be enhanced.[42] Within this perception of borders, the latter are not understood as physical barriers hindering economic flows, but as barriers to the successful integration and effective collaboration of diverse actors in creating European polity. Hence, borders need to be transformed and utilised in a way that will enable them to create opportunities for contact, networking and cooperation, thereby transforming them from barriers to gateways, and transforming border regions from underdeveloped spaces to spaces of intensive flows, numerous economic possibilities and the thorough integration of diverse actors from both sides of the borders. In this context, border regions were advanced on the European level as a framework where the European Union could form an alliance with regional and local bodies and other stakeholders, constituting border regions as a cornerstone of the future European political community.[43]

Early cross-border initiatives, in which border regions were advanced as spaces of new economic, cultural and political partnerships among the border communities of different European countries, were launched in the 1950s. A tradition of cross-border cooperation developed in the Rhine Basin, involving Dutch, German, Swiss and French border areas. Moreover, early cross-border initiatives may also be traced to Benelux countries. The expressions "Euroregio" and "Euroregion" were coined on the Dutch-German border. As Perkmann[44] states, Euroregion originally denoted a formal collaboration between border municipalities. Besides local authorities, other

[40] James Anderson, Liam O'dowd, and Thomas M. Wilson, "Why Study Borders Now?," in *New Borders for a Changing Europe*, eds. James Anderson, Liam O'dowd and Thomas M. Wilson (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 1.

[41] Liam O'Dowd, "The Changing Significance of European Borders," in *New borders for a changing Europe: cross-border cooperation and governance*, eds. James Anderson, Liam O'dowd and Thomas M. Wilson (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 20–21.

[42] Ibid.

[43] C. Mestre, *The Implications for Frontier Regions of the Completion of the Single Market* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1992).

[44] Markus Perkmann, "Building Governance Institutions Across European Borders," *Regional Studies,* 33, 7 (1999), 658.

public agencies, associations and chambers of commerce were involved in these cooperation initiatives. These collaborative actions were locally specific and focused on particular issues related to, for example, industrial decline, pollution and land-use planning. According to O'Dowd,[45] although early cross-border networking was quite abundant and successful, it was not replicated elsewhere in Europe and, thus, remained marginal until the 1980s.

In the 1980s, both the Council of Europe and the European Union increasingly began to regard cross-border cooperation as an important mechanism for developing the European community, which can be seen as a response to practical matters and factors, such as the increasing need to address environmental and transportation policies.[46] As noted above, it was also the aim of creating a single European Market and reducing regional disparities that gave an élan to the Council of Europe and the European Union to step up as the main drivers of cross-border cooperation. The first legal act to recognise the right of territorial border regions to cooperate in diverse political matters was the Council of Europe law, based upon the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, which entered into force in December 1981. The Convention was expected to facilitate cross-border collaboration between local and regional authorities and, consequentially, stimulate regional development and improve diverse public services.

In the early 1990s, cross-border cooperation was adopted by the European community as a part of a transnational strategy of cooperation and integration.[47] During that decade, such cooperation initiatives became the most dynamic areas of EU regional policy,[48] which is also reflected in the fact that practically all borders in the European Union were covered by some type of cross-border cooperation scheme.[49] Euroregions included the European Union, national governments and local authorities, as well as other actors who helped establish networks of cooperation. Cross-border cooperation was, thus, promoted as one of the crucial mechanisms in creating a borderless European space.

To provide financial assistance to cross-border cooperation related activities, the community developed and launched the Interreg Initiative in 1990. Interreg also served as a mechanism to call upon the Member States to develop joint cross-border programmes, which included diverse actors, ranging from local and regional to national authorities. The aim was to promote and enhance institutional structures through which cross-border communities could administer, plan and implement these programmes.[50] Interreg was financed under the European Regional Development Fund, but, as a community initiative, has been more autonomously managed by the Commission than most of the other regional policies. It was made up of three

[45] Liam O'Dowd, "The Changing Significance of European Borders," in *New borders for a changing Europe: cross-border cooperation and governance*, eds. James Anderson, Liam O'dowd and Thomas M. Wilson (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 19.

[46] Alice Engl, "Future Perspectives on Territorial Cooperation in Europe: The EC Regulation on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation and the Planned Council of Europe Third Protocol to the Madrid Outline Convention concerning Euroregional Co–operation Groupings". *EDAP Papers,* 3 (2007).

[47] Liam O'Dowd, "The Changing Significance of European Borders," in *New borders for a changing Europe: cross-border cooperation and governance*, eds. James Anderson, Liam O'dowd and Thomas M. Wilson (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 22.

[48] Thomas Christiansen and Knud Erik Jørgensen, "Transnational governance 'above' and 'below' the state: The changing nature of borders in the new Europe," *Regional & Federal Studies,* 10, 2 (2000), 62–77.

[49] Gabriel Popescu, "The conflicting logics of cross-border reterritorialization: Geopolitics of Euroregions in Eastern Europe," *Political Geography,* 27, 4 (2008), 423.

[50] Markus Perkmann, "Cross-Border Regions in Europe," *European Urban and Regional Studies,* 10, 2 (2003), 659.

strands, namely, Interreg A, Interreg B and Interreg C. Strand A covered cross-border cooperation between adjacent regions and was by far the largest strand in terms of budget and the number of programmes. Strand B involved transnational cooperation between national, regional and/or local authorities. Under this strand, the European Union promoted European integration through the formation of larger European regions. Strand C covered interregional cooperation and aimed to facilitate the effectiveness of regional development policies. Furthermore, Strand C covered large-scale networks which improved the efficiency of information exchange and the sharing of experiences. The first Interreg Initiative was re-confirmed in 1994 as Interreg II and again in 2000 as Interreg III.

For the period 2007–2013, the European Commission introduced a new cohesion policy architecture which integrated Interreg III into the European territorial cooperation objective.[51] The European territorial cooperation objective aims to reinforce cooperation at different levels and promote common solutions to a range of socio-political issues shared by cross-border region communities. Similarly to former Interreg Initiatives, European Territorial Cooperation covers three types of programmes which are financed by the European Regional Development Fund; 52 cross-border programmes are financed at a sum of €5.6 billion and 13 trans-national cooperation programmes at a sum of €1.8 billion. The interregional cooperation programme (INTERREG IVC) and 3 networking programmes (Urban II, Interact II and ESPON) cover all 27 EU Member States and are funded at a sum of €445 million. The total budget of €8.7 billion for the European Territorial Cooperation objective accounts for 2.5% of the total 2007–2013 allocation for cohesion policy.

In 2007, the European Parliament and the Council also established the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation, a new European legal instrument for the promotion of cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. Compared to the structures which governed cooperation initiatives before 2007, this legal entity will, according to the Commission, more effectively enable regional and local authorities and other public bodies from different Member States, to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality. This instrument is, at least in part, a response to the recognition of the European Commission in its launching of the Interreg III programme, in that while quite a few cooperation activities have occurred, "it has been much more difficult to establish genuine cross-border activity jointly".[52]

4 BUILDING EUROPEAN CROSS-BORDER COMMUNITIES THROUGH COOPERATION

At the outset of EU Regional policy, under which European territorial cooperation is an important objective, there is an aim to reduce the territorial, economic and social disparities between large- as well as small-scale regions of the Member States. Although the project of the European Union is based on the idea of convergence and equal development of all its territories, the European authorities recognise that there are disparities and unequal possibilities among the different European regions. The persistent problem of

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[51] European Commission, *Cohesion policy 2007–13: Commentaries and official texts* (Luxemburg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007).
[52] See Liam O'Dowd, "The Changing Significance of European Borders," in *New borders for a changing Europe: cross-border cooperation and governance*, eds. James Anderson, Liam O'dowd and Thomas M. Wilson (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 22.

the disparities among regions is not something which is permanent; according to the EU, it is a deficiency that can be uprooted and removed. The key rationale of EU regional policy is, therefore, built on the expectation and anticipation of the balanced, cohesive, harmonious and symmetrical development of all European areas. One of the key mechanisms for achieving this has been identified in cooperation as the utilisation of the unexploited potentials of regional advantages. In the words of Johannes Hahn, member of the European Commission in charge of regional policy, "The huge cooperation community involving stakeholders at regional and local level, Members of the European Parliament, and many of our partners in the Member States share the conviction that cooperation is a great European tool with a lot of potential still to be explored".[53]

Cooperation is playing an increasingly relevant role in shaping European integration, and it is also being promoted as an essential tool in the construction of a unified and cohesive European Union. Cooperation in the European Union is seen as necessary because there are differences and disparities between European areas which need to be overcome, if the EU is to work in the most optimal way.[54] According to the European Commission,[55] there are at least three aspects of cooperation, namely, sharing, integration and the improvement of the quality of life.

Firstly, cooperation can be understood as sharing knowledge, infrastructure or other assets which can facilitate the creation of joint facilities of diverse social services, and thereby stimulate more integrated communities, the improvement of cross-border transport systems and the transference of lessons learned from one region to another. Another aspect of cooperation is integration. According to the Commission, cooperation in this context can help people integrate into a Europe beyond their borders by supporting long-term partnerships across borders. Through partnerships, people are willing and ready to trust each other and enhance their understanding of the differences and particularities of regions across borders. Connected with this, cooperation enhances integration by promoting joint cooperation structures, institutions and organizations. The third aspect of cooperation is related to the improvement of the quality of life. In this sense, cooperation is a tool for minimising the potential consequences of natural disasters, enhancing the joint protection of environmental resources, creating more efficient and speedy services for EU citizens and supporting job creation and job protection.[56]

Cooperation is obviously advanced as a complex and multidimensional mechanism which tackles a large variety of issues. It includes different stakeholders or partners from diverse levels, ranging from national and local authorities to universities and civil society organisations. Furthermore, it promotes partnership(s) between these actors in an attempt to create cross-border communities which are involved in tackling a rich variety of issues that directly affect the lives of the individuals living in these communities. As the former European Commissioner for Regional Policy and current Member of European Parliament, Danuta Hübner stated in her reflection on the cohesive

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[53] European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, *European territorial cooperation: building bridges between people* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, 2011a), 3.

[54] See Colin Wolfe "INTERREG, irrelevant or indispensable?," *Inforegio-PANORAMA 24* (December 2007), 7.

[55] European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, *European territorial cooperation: building bridges between people* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, 2011a).

[56] Ibid.

development of European regions, it is "local communities […], particularly in cities and rural areas [that] should play a more important role in delivering priorities on the ground".[57] Communities are placed in a key position to fulfil the needs of a particular region and people. European funding mechanisms are presented as mere tools which create opportunities, while communities are those who must, through cooperation, take the responsibility of seizing the opportunities and fulfilling the agendas of development, reducing the disparities and harnessing, controlling and directing growth towards their own ends. It was in this sense that Vladimír Špidla, the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities, in explaining the role of the EU funding opportunities and the impact of Cohesion Policy all over the regions of Europe, stressed that "the funds help people to cope with the changes we see and the challenges we face. Investing in people's future has real impact in their daily lives. The funds represent not only good economic policy but also the social face of Europe".[58]

The agenda of change focussed on eradicating the discrepancies among the European regions and facilitating the development of lagging areas and the communities living there is based on and articulated through economic logic. The key elements in the advancement and progression of all regions across Europe are, according to this logic, growth, investment, competitiveness and entrepreneurialism. Therefore, Hübner proposes that "in regions experiencing strong barriers to growth, it will be essential to address the key bottlenecks and identify the core capacities to facilitate integration in the single market and unlock their growth potential",[59] while Paweł Samecki, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, claims that "a further motivation behind a development policy run at EU level lies in the existence of strong cross-border interdependencies and the need for reinforcing linkages between leading and lagging areas, maximising cross-border spill-over effects and gearing investments towards EU priorities".[60]

In order to promote and trigger the economic objective as well as the social cohesion envisaged in the idea of the Single Market and European integration at large, specific institutional mechanisms and establishments had to be established for particular actions of cooperation to be taken. As Paasi[61] writes, institutional shaping, also in the context of the governmentalisation of sub-national regional places, is part and parcel of the emergence of the territorial and symbolic shape, which refers to the development of informal and formal institutions that are needed for the (re)production of regional spaces. The process of the institutionalisation of regions and cross-border cooperation is evident in the establishment of the regions through specific programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation. Currently, there are fifty-two formulated cross-border

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[57] See Hübner, Danuta. *Reflection paper on future Cohesion Policy: Informal Meeting of Ministers for Regional Policy.* Available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/reflection_paper_future.pdf (December 2011), 4.

[58] See Špidla cited in Inforegio-PANORAMA, ""Telling the Story" conference explores innovative ways to communicate on cohesion policy," *Inforegio-PANORAMA 24* (December 2007), 25.

[59] See Hübner, Danuta. *Reflection paper on future Cohesion Policy: Informal Meeting of Ministers for Regional Policy.* Available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/reflection_paper_future.pdf (December 2011).

[60] See Samecki, Paweł. *Orientation paper on the future of cohesion policy*, 2009. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/pdf/pawel_samecki_orientation_paper.pdf (December 2011).

[61] Anssi Paasi, "The resurgence of the 'Region' and 'Regional Identity': theoretical perspectives and empirical observations on regional dynamics in Europe," *Review of International Studies* 35, Supplement S1 (2009), 136.

programmes, defined also through cartographic images[62] with the goals of systematising, bounding and totalising specific spaces.[63] The need to map regions is part of what Painter[64] calls cartographic reason, which seeks to parcel the world into knowable places, to make those places legible and, we might add, governable. In addition to cartographic mapping, regions as units are identified and distinguished through a series of functional, political, economic, cultural and administrative practices.[65] Within this paradox—demarcating the borders of EU regions, where borders are supposed to dissolve—making, deciding and locating regional boundaries is crucial for establishing regions as particular institutional settings, where regions gain administrative status and where actors in a region can qualify for economic support from EU funds.[66]

In more formal terms, cross-border cooperation is also institutionalised through the establishment of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). This is a European legal instrument designed to "overcome the obstacle hindering territorial cooperation".[67] The EGTC is a legal entity which is supposed to enable regional, local and other actors from different Member States to set up joint groupings with a legal personality to implement cooperation programmes and projects co-financed by the community. As such, the EGTC offers local, regional and national authorities and other public bodies a more coherent cooperation context. Setting up the institutional framework offered through EGTC is seen as a crucial step towards creating a ground on which cooperation can be actualised more easily: "the EGTC regulation tool allows broad partnership, a real intervention capacity across borders […]. It simplifies the previously very heterogeneous legal framework conditions existing for cross-border cooperation […]".[68]

Obviously, cooperation and European regions as frameworks for cooperation initiatives do not arise in a vacuum. The European Union encourages and fosters cooperation through diverse schemes of institutionalisation. Establishing regions as particular institutional settings in which specific programmes are implemented is crucial, because territorial cohesion at the EU level is increasingly seen as a precondition to economic and social cohesion.[69] Furthermore, sub-national government and other institutions, such as firms, financial institutions and innovation centres, are encouraged by the European Union to participate in realising community policies and agendas. To ensure closer inter-institutional coordination among different-scale authorities from diverse Member States while also identifying and

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[62] See European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, *Cross-border programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation Objective* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy).

[63] John Pickles, *A history of spaces: cartographic reason, mapping and the geo-coded world* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[64] Joe Painter, "Cartographic anxiety and the search for regionality,"*Environment and planning A,* 40, 2 (2008), 346.

[65] Anssi Paasi, "The resurgence of the 'Region' and 'Regional Identity': theoretical perspectives and empirical observations on regional dynamics in Europe," *Review of International Studies,* 35, Supplement S1 (2009), 134.

[66] Ibid., 136.

[67] European Union, *Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999, Official Journal of the European Union, 31 July 2006, L210.* Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:210:0019:0024:EN:PDF (December 2011).

[68] European Commission, *Report from the commission to the European parliament and the council The application of the Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).* Available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/pdf/COM_2011_0462_F_EN_RAPPORT.pdf (December 2011).

[69] See Samecki, Paweł. *Orientation paper on the future of cohesion policy*, 2009. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/pdf/pawel_samecki_orientation_paper.pdf (December 2011).

advancing particular preferential objectives, measures and agendas, a specific institutional mechanism was established by the European Commission. It is through these processes of institutionalisation that new (regional) governance emerges, in which specific old issues are reconstructed and new objectives are advanced. Against this background, the regions play a role as administrative arenas in which different interests and positions are connected and mediated and, on the other hand, different actors are networked. As Langedijk[70] writes, the objectives on the regional scale are prevailingly conceptualised through the integration of three issues: first and foremost, economic development and competitiveness; secondly, environmental development and sustainability; and thirdly, social development and cohesion. Dominant economic interests are, thus, articulated with and through the language of social cohesion and sustainability, and both of these concepts are achievable through (cross-border) cooperation. In these processes, a region is not a fixed "scale" but a perpetual and dynamic process of scaling the practices and discourses[71] and of establishing (institutionalised) political spaces[72] which come to dominate the thinking and practices of local authorities as well as regional communities.

Besides the institutionalisation, specific regional identities, primarily articulated in terms of community, serve as "an important vehicle in the shaping of stories and images of region, and, more specifically, in applying the 'logics' of regional-economic positioning and regional governance".[73] These communities are not something fixed or pre-established; rather, they emerge and are re(articulated) together with the construction of cross-border regions[74] in which more or less institutionalised structures of governance may catalyse, propagate and advance new moral bonds and forms of allegiance: "governable spaces are not fabricated counter to experience; they make new kinds of experience possible, produce new modes of perception, invest percepts with affects, with dangers and opportunities, with saliences and attractions".[75] For example, Jean-Marc Popot, the director of the Regional Centre of Innovation and Technology at Charleville-Mézières (France) and a promoter of the Interreg projects, pointed out that "the added value of Interreg is, quite simply, that it allows us to work with our neighbours. Before Interreg, we didn't have a cross-border mentality".[76] Such statements promote the European dimension of cross-border cooperation as something which has never been there before, at least not fully. Cross-border mentality is a resource for mobilising and rendering possible new particular mentalities, conducts and practices in and through which communities with cultures of practicality, self-responsibility and self-help are constituted, formed and constantly (re)articulated.

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[70] Arnoud Lagendijk, "Regionalisation in Europe. Stories, institutions and boundaries," in *B/ordering space*, eds. H. Van Houtum, O. Kramsch and W. Zierhofer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 77–92.

[71] Anssi Paasi, "The resurgence of the 'Region' and 'Regional Identity': theoretical perspectives and empirical observations on regional dynamics in Europe," *Review of International Studies,* 35, Supplement S1 (2009), 136.

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

[73] Arnoud Lagendijk, "Regionalisation in Europe. Stories, institutions and boundaries," in *B/ordering space*, eds. Henk Van Houtum, Oliver Kramsch and Wolfgang Zierhofer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 82.

[74] Henk Van Houtum, "Borders of Comfort: Spatial Economic Bordering Processes in and by the European Union," in *New borders for a changing Europe: cross-border cooperation and governance*, eds. James Anderson, Liam O'Dowd and Thomas M. Wilson (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

[75] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 32.

[76] See Popot cited in Inforegio-PANORAMA, "French-Belgian territorial cooperation: Erasing the border," *Inforegio-PANORAMA 24* (December 2007), 23.

5 CONCLUSION

The paper has examined emerging discourses, specific policies and the rationale behind practices of cross-border cooperation within EU regional policy. It has analysed the ways in which cooperation has been developed and employed as a specific governmental technology aimed at creating European border regions as spaces of partnerships among diverse stakeholders. As such, cooperation relates to the demarcation of space not only as a territorially bounded area but also as an area of action and organisation of diverse actors into more or less durable relations. Programmes and specific initiatives which advance cooperation as a mode of action are attempts to create cross-border communities in which emotional relationships are crucial for the creation of micro-cultures of value, meanings and practices of self-responsibility and self-management. Cooperation is, therefore, a specific governmental technology which establishes cross-border communities as particular spaces or arenas circumscribing and guiding the conduct(s) of subjects to commit themselves to governance and the development of European border regions.

The paper argued that cooperation is playing an increasingly relevant role in the construction of a unified and cohesive European Union. Within the processes of integration and unification of economic space, special attention is given to border regions as zones where territorial, social and economic cohesiveness across borders must particularly be assured if the European Union is to be a diverse, yet homogenous polity. In this context, cooperation is deemed a crucial mechanism for transforming borders from barriers to gateways and border regions to spaces of numerous possibilities. Especially since the early 1990s, the European Union has promoted cross-border cooperation through EU regional policy and, more particularly, through specific Interreg Initiatives. Currently, cross-border cooperation is advanced through the European territorial cooperation objective. In analysing how cooperation is understood, rationalised and advanced within this objective, we have shown that cooperation is necessary for building cross-border communities including different actors from different levels, ranging from national and local authorities to universities, civil society organizations and individuals. Cross-border communities have become both the object and subject of regional policy agendas. Communities are constituted through cooperation, (financially) supported by specific European programmes and initiatives, and simultaneously, communities are the source of diverse solutions to concrete problems. Communities are placed in a key position to fulfil the needs of a particular region and the population living there. European funding mechanisms which support cooperation are presented and advanced as mere tools harnessing opportunities, while communities themselves are those who must follow the agendas of cohesiveness and development.

Shaping processes of cross-border cooperation at the European level, in which communities as morally-bounded collective subjectivities are involved, are crucial for inducing a particular form of governance that dwells or stems from the ambiguous relationship between regional identity and the formation of cross-border regions, including the drawing of boundaries.[77] On the other hand, governing through cooperation in legitimised and operationalised precisely on the basis of the concept of the cross-border community, in which

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[77] Michael Keating, "The invention of regions: political restructuring and territorial government in Western Europe," *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy,* 15, 4 (1997), 383–398; Anssi Paasi, "Region and place: regional identity in question," *Progress in Human Geography,* 27, 4 (2003), 478.

the members allegedly share values, a destiny and the willingness to take the initiative in and responsibility for cross-border regional development.

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