OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF NON-STATE DIALOGUE ACROSS THE FINNISH-RUSSIAN BORDER

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Abstract:

Increased inclusion of non-state actors in world politics has brought up the need for a wider understanding of power and agency. In a new Europe of post-national borders, the state sovereignty and authority has been weakened not just upwards and downwards, but also sideways by social movements and civil society organizations. The re-scaling of state, multileveled governance, and the cross-border initiatives fuelled by them, have initiated a transition from international to transnational relations. Reflecting this shift from debordering to rebordering, the role of borderlands has changed from integrators to buffer zones. More attention needs to be paid on those actors and processes that respond to globalizing forces by propelling border-spanning activities and foster cross-border relations. Building on empirical material collected from the Finnish-Russian border, this paper argues that cross-border civil society has the potential to address bi-/transnational problems and push governments toward binational solutions.

Key words:

Civil society, Finland, Russia, Transnationalism, Cooperation

Introduction

A border separating two different countries is always, by its nature, an international one. Thus, interaction across it has also been considered to be an inter*national* (or more precisely inter*state*) issue, an aspect of foreign politics, to be administrated and run by the state officials in state capitals. In many cases, however, the capital cities with their respective decision-making institutions locate at safe distance from the actual border. This presents a problem not only because people's perceptions of a subject matter tend to be more exaggerated the further away they are from the very subject in question, but also because the local and regional level interest often differ from those of the higher levels.

While local issues at the border often involve also national interests, the national (or supranational) actors' ability and/or will to pay attention to the local circumstances or problems is more limited. While for the local border communities, the border may have always been 'intermestic', i.e. not really international, but not fully domestic either (Lowenthal, 1999), for the center the border still fundamentally represents the limit of sovereignty and, hence, a separation between domestic and international politics.

Certainly, in many cases the intensity of cross-border interaction as well as the common problems shared by the two sides has pushed the governments of the neighboring countries to communicate better with each other. In the Finnish-Russian case this is exemplified, for instance, by an increased number of high-level visits and international agreements. On a supranational level even more ambitions objectives have been envisioned. With the Neighborhood policy of the European Union (EU) has set out a vision of transnational space extending beyond its external borders. Despite the common rhetoric suggesting otherwise, and the more multifaceted understandings

of borders that it would imply, in practice it has become clear that the Finnish-Russian border is still very much a classical state border – and as such the jurisdiction of the national governments, as well as the EU, stops at this very border.

In order to circumvent this problem, a previously unseen premium has been placed on the role of civil society cooperation in addition to the more conventional political and economic aspects, as civil society organizations (CSOs) are commonly less restricted to move back and forth across the border. Based on the experience from the Finnish-Russian border, this paper goes beyond the border and investigates the previously unseen premium placed on the role of transnational non-state cooperation in the increasingly securitized and exclusionary environment.

International vs. Transnational

Alongside states, world politics of today involves many non-state actors who interact with each other, with states, and with international organizations (Keck & Sikkink, 1999, p. 89). The increased inclusion of international organizations and non-governmental actors to the relations between states on the one hand, and the states increased sensitivity to the decisions and actions by non-state actors as well as events in other parts of the world on the other, have brought up the need to question the accustomed theories and concepts of International Relations. At large, the re-scaling of state, multileveled governance, various cross-border initiatives fuelled by them has initiated a transition from international (border confirming) to transnational (border eroding) relations.

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

It is however more common to begin one's review from the groundbreaking article by Nye and Keohane (1971, p. 332), in which they clarify that whereas *interstate* interactions are "initiated and sustained entirely, or almost entirely, by governments of nation-states", *transnational* interactions "involve nongovernmental actors – individuals or organizations". Transnational interaction, in their definition, may involve also governments, but nongovernmental actors must play a significant role. Nye and Keohane however also diffuse the term by adding that transnational relations also "include the activities of transnational organizations, except within their home states, even when some of their activities may not directly involve movements across state boundaries" (Ibid., p. 335). This, they argue, suggest that "most transnational organizations remain linked primarily to one particular national society" (Ibid., p. 336).

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that the recognition of new actors does not indicate that this would happen at the cost of state, as Keohane & Nye's emphasis on "free-wheeling transnational interaction" seems to imply. Tarrow (2001, p. 3) makes a valid point by noting that social movements, transnational networks, and NGOs are not the only agents operating transnationally; states do not only have central roles in national policy, but also they have always reached beyond their borders and played a key transnational role. Tarrow argues that they do so increasingly, for instance by signing international agreements, interfering in the internal lives of other (usually weaker) states, and building international institutions. In doing so, they often aim to respond to transnational activities that states cannot control (Keohane & Nye, 1974, p. 39–62) or to provide "insurance" that other states will honor their commitments (Keohane, 1989). As a consequence, the dominant states in the international system have a profound effect on transnational relations, not only by controlling non-state actors but often by subsidizing them (Uvin, 2000, p. 15), and by providing models of transnational politics from their own domestic templates (Huntington, 1973).

Risse-Kappen (1995) and Walker (1994) are doubtful about the usefulness of debate over the dominance of the state vis-à-vis non-state actors in international affairs. They suggest that it is more beneficial to seek to understand the nature of their interactions, their significance, and their mutual influence. Even so, Iwabuchi (2002, p. 16-17) emphasizes that "transnational has a merit over international in that actors are not confined to the nation-state or to nationally institutionalized organizations; they may range from individuals to various (non)profitable, transnationally connected organizations and groups,

and the conception of culture implied is not limited to a "national" framework.

Even though Rosenau's (1999; 2005) approach hits the mark in capturing the changes in the ontology of the post-Cold War world politics, Sending and Neumann (2006, p. 653) make a valid point by claiming that he neither has been able to transcend the state-centric paradigm, as Rosenau himself suggests. Instead, Sending and Neumann note, he has rather began to use it "negatively" by analyzing to which actors power has moved from the state. Authority, in consequence, remains the analytical core of the concept of governance, which makes Rosenau's approach seem as being founded on zero-sum logic whereby non-state actors' increased power indicate that states have lost theirs.

Sending and Neumann (2006, p. 653) themselves propose a more Foucauldian approach, which seeks to trace and explain the ways in which state and non-state actors perform governing tasks dynamically together. It builds on the Foucault's (1991) term of "governmentality," a specific form of power that operates through the governed, and thereby moves the focus from the institutions (what actors are) to the practices (what actors do). Performed by different actors, these practices are aimed to shape, guide, and direct the behavior and actions of individuals and groups in particular directions (Sending & Neumann, 2006, p. 656-657). The state thus no longer obtain power over the non-state actors or civil society; on the contrary, the political power operates through them: the civil society gets "redefined from a passive object of government to be acted upon into an entity that is both an object and a subject of government" (Ibid., p. 651). This makes the division between state and civil society blurred.

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

Building a Transnational Space for Action

Transnational spaces consist of persons, groups, institutions and organizations and the set of values, norms, and commitments they have (Faist, 2004, p. 114). They form a transnational society, which constitutes itself on a social and symbolic level not tied on geographically territory (Ibid, 122). Pries (1999; 2007) also rejects the "container" oriented methodology, which takes the frames of nation-states as appropriate units of analysis. He makes an analytical differentiation between the relational and absolutistic understanding of social space (Pries, 1999). Thus, he proposes that transnational studies should focus not on transnational relations in general, but on "transnational *societal units* as relatively dense and durable configurations of transnational social practices, symbols and artefacts (Pries, 2007). For the quality of space can only be described as relational and discontinuous, the socio-spatial references of analysis have been transformed from the absolutistic geographical categories into pluri-locally situated topographies, which are produced by transnational everyday practices. Strengthening of the pluri-local and border-crossing social relations and fields create a transnational space, which span above and between the traditional national container spaces playing out the figure of concentric circles of local, micro- regional, national, macro-regional and global phenomena (Ibid.).

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

With the help of these tactics, TANs have the most influence on issue creation and agenda setting, influencing state's discursive positions, changing

institutional procedures, changing policy, and influencing state behavior (Keck & Sikkink, 1999, p. 89). TANs are valuable as they create a space for negotiation; by building new links among actors in civil societies, states and international organizations, they multiply the opportunities for dialogue and exchange. They also make international resources available to new actors in domestic political and social struggles. In so doing, they contribute to a convergence of social and cultural norms able to support processes of regional and international integration and help to transform the practice of national sovereignty by blurring the boundaries between a state's relations with its own nationals and the recourse both citizens and states have to the international system.

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

Civil Society Actors in Bilateral Cooperation at the Finnish-Russian Border

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

In connection with the World War I and the Russian Revolution in 1917, Finland became an independent nation-state. A heavily guarded, hostile military border was formed between the two countries, which put a halt to all forms of interaction. It was not until after the World War II, when the time had become ripe enough for the two countries to start building their neighborly relations, that the interaction began to revive – even if somewhat compulsorily.

The 1948 Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (FCA) became to serve as the key document for governing post-war relations between the two countries. The treaty defined the international status of Finland in regard to the Soviet Union, but in doing so also to the Western countries, where many saw the Finnish acceptance of the treaty as placing Finland geopolitically to Eastern Europe. For the Soviet Union the treaty provided with an instrumental tool to gain political leverage in the internal affairs of Finland, yet it not necessitate military cooperation, as had been the case with the Soviet satellite countries of Eastern Europe (Nevakivi, 1994).

Dictated by the treaty, the post-WW II Finnish foreign policy towards the Soviet Union was based on the principle of "official friendship." Even though the border remained heavily guarded between two separate armies, a good and trusting relationship with the Soviet Union was seen as needed in order to avoid future conflicts with an ideologically alien superpower next door. In blunt terms, allowing Soviet influence was considered to safeguard Finland's precious independence, which it has just managed to preserve through hard work and with remarkable cost. The principal architect of this doctrine, later commonly referred to as Finlandization, was J.K. Paasikivi, the president of Finland from 1946 to 1956. Before his presidency, Paasikivi had been an influential figure in Finnish politics already for decades. He began his hard-headed efforts to develop cooperation with the Soviet Union already as a Prime Minister of Finland, prior to his presidency, propped up by wide support from his coalition government, trade unions and a large number of NGOs. However, it was his successor, U.K. Kekkonen, who realized and developed the policy further. Soon, the Finnish-Soviet relations in aggregate became personified strongly with Kekkonen, who discussed the important issues directly with the Soviet leadership often with little or no consultation with the government or the parliament (Saukkonen 2006).

The friendship was not limited to intergovernmental relations, but was put in practice also through paradiplomatic links across the border. The task was taken up by various more or less official

delegations consisting of politicians, but also artists, teachers, athletes, experts of various kinds, trade union representatives and friendship groups (Koistiainen, 1998). Many of the delegations were sent by the Finnish state agencies, particularly the Ministry of Education and other organizations working for a mutual cooperation and friendship, and they received a special treatment in the USSR. These cross-border trips, Koistiainen (1999) points out, have to be understood in the context of the Finnish-Soviet special relationships. Whereas the relationships between the two countries had been exceedingly tense prior to the WW II, in the post-war world many regarded a closer relationship and increased cross-border interaction as needed.

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

The new society enjoyed strong state support and had considerably broader party-political basis than its predecessor had had as a number of key figures of the Finnish politics, Paasikivi and Kekkonen on the lead, among its founder members (Merivirta, 1998, p. 29). Even though the society was established as *non-governmental* organization, it was a rather top-down project aiming to encourage the general public to support the government's new friendship policy in the making and function along its lines. It s membership figures soared right after its establishment. By the end of year 1944, the society had 70 000 members, but already by the end of the following year the figured had increased to 170 000 (Kinnunen, 1998). However, as the initial excitement had worn off, many gave up their membership to the extent that there were only 85 000 registered members in 1946. Even though the society managed to raise its membership base again to over 100 000 by the 1970s, yet it never gained acceptance from the majority of the public as it was seen as a stooge of communism, symbolizing thus their utmost fear rather than something they wished to be a part of (Merivirta, 1998).

Despite its non-non-governmental features, the creation and activities of the society did contribute remarkably to the formations of the cross-border civil society ties. The society helped in organizing cross-border trips and provided information and services for groups and individual interested in seeing and experiencing how things actually were on the other side. In doing so, it provided thousands of ordinary Finns and Soviets with an opportunity to meet up and forge friendships (Kekkonen, 1974, p. 154-159). The society also had a great number of active local chapters in a number of towns all around Finland. It was largely these local chapters, and particularly the municipal politicians active in the local chapters, who initiated the friendship-towns system between Finland and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, which was to become the next phase of civic cooperation across the border.

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

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

The NOY ry, an association for students who had studied in the Soviet Union was founded in Helsinki in 1979. Particularly in its beginning, the association cooperated intensively with the Finland-Soviet Union society and the Finnish Ministry of Education in preparing and guiding new students heading to the Soviet Universities. The NOY participated also in law-drafting; a key achievement being the 1986 act concerning the equivalence of the higher education completed abroad, which improved the opportunities of the students who has studied in Russia to find jobs in Finland.

The Institute for Cultural Relations between Finland and the USSR was established after World War II for the purpose of coordinating and undertaking Soviet Union related research and advancing the Finno-Soviet scientific and educational cooperation in the spirit of good-neighborly relations. Authentic Sovietology was never in vogue in Finland, at least formally, as the Finland's official foreign policy stance was to not to irritate its eastern neighbor (Vihavainen, 2002). Research on the Soviet Union consisted rather on forwarding and interpreting information from the Soviets source. The Institute's most important interest groups were the Finland-Soviet Union Society and, particularly during the first years, the Ministry of Education in Finland and the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, together with several libraries, in the Soviet Union (Ibid).

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

The FCA treaty formed also the basis of a variety of complementary agreements, such as the agreement on scientific and technological cooperation in 1955 and a decree on economic cooperation in 1967 – both the first of their kind between a socialist and a capitalist country. An agreement on economic, technical, and industrial cooperation followed in 1971, and in 1973 Finland became the first capitalist country to cooperate closely with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, an economic organization comprising the countries of the Eastern Bloc and other communist states (Kekkonen, 1974; Solsten & Meditz, 1988).

The more profound contractual basis fuelled the links between the twin cities and scientific cooperation.

A good example of this is the nature conservation cooperation, which began in the 1970s. One of the main impetus for the cooperation, now possible due to the 1971 agreement, was to work together in order to conserve the dark green belt of old-growth forest on the Finnish-Russian border, which had so far endured due to the highly restricted access to the border zone. Joint activities were organized on both sides of the border, and the work brought together ministries, civil service departments, research institutions, universities and environmental NGOs. This initial cooperation eventually led Finland and Soviet Union to conclude an agreement on environmental protection in 1985, on the basis of which a joint Finno-Soviet Working Group on Nature Conservation was established.

The great changes, which began to shake the Soviet Union during the 1980, coagulated also the bilateral, concerted cooperation structures (Pernaa, 2002). On the Finnish side, a clear shift away from bilateralism was taken by president Kekkonen's successor, Mauno Koivisto, who abandoned his predecessor logic and moved the focus of the Finnish Foreign Policy, for the first times since the wars, towards multilateral politics. The policies of official delegations and joint *communiqués* came finally to an end with the demise of the Soviet Union. After 1991, the border has gradually become more permeable, enabling more direct, local interaction between new emerging Russian voluntary associations and the Finnish CSOs.

The dramatic changes in all spheres of social, economic and political life took an enormous toll on the nation, but had the greatest negative impact on those who occupied the most precarious positions in terms of social welfare and health. The burgeoning civil society in Russia played an important role as a shock absorber, but was, handicapped by the Soviet legacy, largely toothless when confronted with a multitude of issues previously sheltered under the Communist doctrine. Accordingly, the social welfare and public health sector came to dominate the Finnish-Russian CBC, which in turn helped to alleviate the consequences of political transformation.

Given the nature of the situation, particularly in the early 1990s, interaction across the border was certainly closer to humanitarian work based on goodwill rather than cooperation between equal partners to the advance of both. At this point of time, many Finnish CSOs focus their efforts in rather on pragmatic problem solving, offering diverse financial and material assistance. However, as Russian civil society developed towards more institutional forms, Finnish CSOs began to engage also in the practical training of Russian actors that would help them to develop their own organizational skills and increase their effectiveness in the new, internationalizing environment.
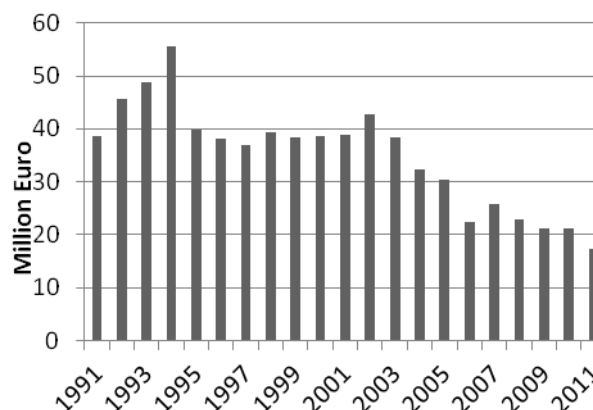
Neighboring Area Cooperation

In addition to the pure forms of humanitarian aid and relief work, the Finnish government initiated its "neighboring area cooperation" program, which then became an integral part of Finland's foreign policy and served as a practical manifestation of the 1992 treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation. The cooperation is founded on the neighboring area cooperation strategy, adopted by the Government of Finland in 1993, 1996, 1999, 2000 and 2004 respectively. It is participated by all Finnish government ministries and several government departments and agencies, yet the activities are coordinated and supervised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which is also is in charge of elaborating, updating, implementing the strategy and prioritizing of support.

The NAC Action Plan for 2009-2011 shifted the focus of cooperation more towards wide-ranging economic cooperation. The previously strong social and health sector, which allowed strong participation by NGOs, is now only one priority sector among nine others[1]. However, civil society has been brought up in connection with education as a priority sector of their own. The Action Plan also acknowledges that the bilateral cooperation is now increasingly linked with a wider platform of cooperation within the framework of the ENP, the Northern Dimension in the external and cross-border policies of the EU, and the EU's policy on Russia. An intergovernmental neighboring area cooperation development group has been established to coordinate cooperation. The regional groups operate as permanent working bodies of the development group and are assigned of drawing up regional programs based on the Action Plan. An attempt is made to avoid duplication of projects and to seek their co-ordination to achieve synergy benefits.

From 1990 to 2012, a total of EUR 326 million has been allocated to cooperation with Russia (Figure 1). In 2011, a total of EUR 17.2 million, a clear reduction from the EUR 26.3 million in 2007, has been reserved for this purpose.[2] In the Budget for 2012, the sum had been reduced already to EUR 6 million under the main title of expenditure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (item 24.20.66; Neighboring area cooperation). Given the EUR 3.7 million allocated to NAC in other ministries'

main titles of expenditure, the total amount of funds for NAC in 2012 amounts to EUR 9.7 million (EUR 21.1 million in 2010 and EUR 17.2 million in 2011).

Figure 1. Gratuitous aid, so-called project funding, under the main title of expenditure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (item 24.20.66; Neighboring Area Cooperation) and funds allocated to NAC in other ministries' main titles of expenditure. Excludes loans and bonds. Data Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Unit for Regional Cooperation.

Five per cent or 320 000 EUR was reserved of project carried out by NGOs: EUR 1.5 million in 2010 and EUR 1.2 million in 2012 (Figure 2). In addition to the diminished budget, the fact that there had been a wide spectrum of targets to be funded through the various spheres of authority of sectoral ministries, the budgets of individual projects had often been modest.
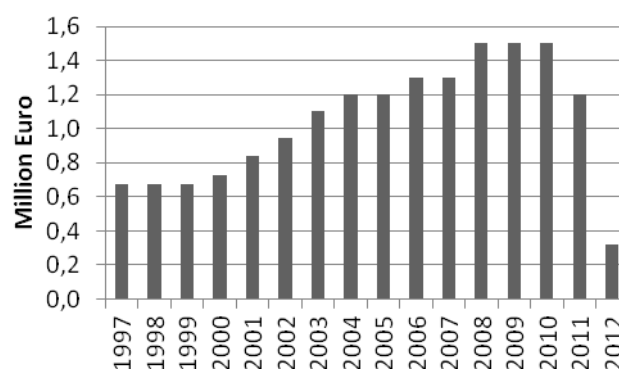
Figure 2. Gratuitous aid for NGOs. Data Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Unit for Regional Cooperation.

The descending trend has been going on for years – largely due to the increased opportunities provided by the EU-Russia cross-border cooperation programs (now ENPI CBC). For example, in the 2009 rules of procedure for the NAC clear efforts were made to connect the EU funding and NAC to each other. Forms

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[1] The Action Plan priorities are: 1) Economic matters, 2) transportation and communications, 3) energy (including nuclear plant security), 4) agriculture and forestry, 5) environment, 6) social and heath care, 7) education and civil society, 8) local government, 9) rescue services, and 10) matter of law and law enforcement.

[2] While in 2007 approximately 70 percent of the funds were targeted to projects carried out in Russia. In 2008, Russia's share was already 95 percent and in 2011 practically 100 percent

of CBC with Russia have has been updated and developed towards more equal partnership. Granted that the present form of neighboring area cooperation was designed for a period of transition, it has now been jointly agreed that the bilateral neighboring area cooperation, as it is today, will be terminated by the end of 2012. As of 2013, the Foreign Ministry's neighboring area cooperation funds will be targeted primarily to multilateral regional cooperation, such as the Northern Dimension and the Arctic, the Baltic Sea and the Barents cooperation, that support the objectives of the government program. The main source of financing for regional cross-border projects will in the future be the EU-Russia CBC programs.

Europe as a New Frame for Cooperation

The operational preconditions of civil society remain linked with the operations of broader society surrounding it, but the is no reason to claim that ought to always be understood in the frame of a nation-state. This is very different from suggesting that the sovereignty and territoriality of the state would be threatened. As Häkli (2008) argues, the bounded and very tangible territorial space now occupied by the Finnish nation-state has no clear alternatives when it comes to the organization of the state's juridical and administrative powers. While nation-states with their territorial sovereignty continue to form one of the leading principles upon which international relations are based, transnational relations are run by actors and organizations whose ability to function do not stop at the border. Thanks to the changes in the governance modes, the state is no longer is the primary actor, nor is the nation-state the only conception of space that can be applied in explaining human interaction.

In order to manage the transnational space, which the EU would like to see extend beyond its external borders, a previously unseen premium has been placed on the role of civil society co-operation in addition to the more conventional political and economic aspects. EU documents and position statements have praised the role of CSOs one after another. As Finland has been closely monitoring and following the EU policies, the perceived value of civil society has risen again in the eyes of decision-makers. In mitigating the effects of both old and new dividing lines, the CSOs have proven their value in the EU attempts seeking to bring the neighbors closer to the union. As a result, CSOs have become to play a key role in cross-border relations also at the external EU border.

Civil society fit well in governance-beyond-the-state system. Instead of focusing on trying to change policies of the state, it will be more productive to put more energy into making changes at the local level, while continuing to think if not globally, at least

transnationally. In fact, one of the main reasons why the traditional, hierarchical governments structures have been loosing their power to various civil society actors lies in the aptitude of the latter to organize themselves into sprawling cooperative networks. Networked borders have given state borders spatial mobility; due to their multitier organizational structures and cross-sectoral partnerships, CSOs have also been able navigate between EU, the state and regional/local levels. The restructuring of the nation-state has now made it possible not just to disaggregate the state and the border, but also to question the also sacred link between civil society and the state. In other words, as the state has been redefined, so too can be done to the civil society.

The role CSOs can or could play is also utterly dependent on the understanding and future development of the EU itself. Different conceptions of the EU allow differ role for civil society. As both the EU and the civil society sector itself are undergoing far-reaching changes, the relationship between the two is hard to predict. Before we can even start talking about a European civil society, we need to have an idea what the EU is. The role of civil society looks very different depending on whether the EU we talk about is understood as a society, a welfare regime, a political system, a mode of government, a state-like structure or something else.

At present, it is hard not to see the EU, first and foremost, as regulatory state, which function very differently, say, from the Scandinavian welfare state model, into which many CSOs in this context are embedded in. Some has taken this to indicate that due to its limited functional-regulatory mandate the EU should not be even be judged in terms of democracy. On these grounds, Moravcik (2004), for example, questions the entire call for more democratic 'bottom up' involvement, and Follesdal (2006) proposes that the EU as *sui generis* project is not bound to normative expectations of popular participation and accountability that have been established for member state governments.

By incorporating civil society in the EU policy and decision-making, the EU is able to use its transformative power and EUropanize the various European civil societies closer to what may one day be a European civil society. Given the in many countries, the civil society structures remain embedded to their respective national frames, the goal sounds somewhat far-fetched, but on the other hand, to expect anything less would be even more ungrounded as in the other arenas of society, in the spheres of political institutions and the market, cooperation across borders and joint decision making have already become reality.

The EU's motivation to engage with the civil society organizations is not only based on the CSOs input

(such as lobbying, providing information and knowledge), or on their 'throughput' in the Parliament's Committees, Commission's consultations or DG's working groups, but increasingly on the output channels they provide in terms of mediating all things EU to the local level; i.e. their ability to import Europeanness. Due to their transnational networks and multitier organizational structures, the CSOs are, at least in principle, suitable for transporting, even exporting ideas and practices from the EU level to their constituents at the local level and again further to their partners.

The mediating role of CSOs has now been understood also in cross-border context in the European neighborhood, particularly regarding Russia. Due to Russia's increased self-confidence and its restrictive influence on the EU's attempts to street the Russia development thought conventional governmental relations, the CSOs, which are often freer to move back and forth across the international border, have become deemed as to provide an alternate avenue to have a say and channel assistance to Russia. In so doing, the EU – furtively yet purposefully – bypasses the Russian state and act in the absence of its consent building on the underlying assumption that small non-political changes will eventually lead to larger political changes. The situation is certainly far from that simple; the Kremlin has made it more than clear that it is displeased also with foreign CSOs becoming excessively involved in promoting democracy and civil society in Russia, especially so after the so-called color revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia that caused much angst in Moscow.

Conclusions

Civil society plays a crucial role the Finnish society. Its core remained is voluntary organization through which Finns have built their own and common well-being, in so doing developing the society as a whole. Civil society forms also a public sphere where issues of common concern can be discussed, citizenship expressed and where Finnish participatory democracy is acted out from bottom up. CSOs have all the potential strengthen citizen participation, increase mutual trust and to transmit needs and expertise from the ground to decision-making. Civil society can thus do many things, but this is not to say that it necessarily will. It offers excellent preconditions for a range of activities, but accomplishes little without active participation of its citizenry. A mere membership does not equal an active citizen.

The situation changes, however, remarkably when the civil society activities are extended beyond their respective national frame. While CSO encompass a number of qualities, which emphasize their aptitude

for CBC, their operational basis changes if the work carried out gets too detached from their constituents. Be it obvious or not, it is essential to remember that the primary focus of most Finnish CSOs lies on the Finnish side of the border, as that is where their constituency is. Engaging in cross-border cooperation, in turn, is usually something to be done if and when the resources and time allow. There seems to be a coherent understanding among CSO actors that CBC could yield considerable benefits, but that it also involves substantial costs and risks. Any collaborative effort involves considerable transaction costs in terms of resources and time spent in negotiating and carrying out co-operative activities. These costs are increased dramatically by the border. Without supportive networks, or for-the-purpose external funding, resources and time might have a better rate of return if invested internally or for a relationship with an organization on the same side of the border.

The CSOs increased role in international relations can be largely attributed to the rise of transnational networks – enabled by multilevel governance. This has extended the CSOs space for action and made it increasingly transnational, rather than nation-state bound. As a result, they bridge the gaps created by borders and bordering by reacting fast and effectively to practical problems they imply. While governments have fixed views of national borders, as that is where their jurisdiction stops, CSOs have become concerned with issues that extend beyond the physical borders of nation-states. CSOs are not only less restricted from entering into transnational cooperative relationships, but also more suitable for promoting civil society as any foreign state led campaign on civil society could easily be seen as involving an agenda of reshaping also the state institutions, making it less acceptable in recipient country.

When the links across a border have been made, the ensuing cross-border civil society has the potential to address bi-/transnational problems either directly by themselves or by pushing governments toward binational solutions by articulating policy alternatives, providing applicable knowhow, required research, and supportable arguments for preferred options, creating pilot projects and mobilizing support for adopting policies. Given that, in principle, civil society reflects societal forces that operate largely independent from the state interests, in cases it has been necessary for sub-national organization to skip the state level altogether in seeking new allies directly from higher levels or from the same level across the border.

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