Theorising Cross-Border Co-operation

-Steven Van de Walle-

Promotor: Prof. Dr. F. Delmartino
Academic Year 1999-2000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION: THE EXPERIMENTAL GARDENS OF EUROPE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCING CBC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is CBC? definition of the research topic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives for CBC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTEGRATION ACROSS BORDERS: EU INTEGRATION AND CBC</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European integration theories</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of theories</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNCTIONALIST ANALYSIS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalism as a strategy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalism Vs territorialism</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spill-over concept</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elites</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalism and conflict resolution</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERGOVERNMENTAL ANALYSIS</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing non-territorial regimes under control.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC and the decentralisation debate</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rise of the EU as a CBC actor</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction: the experimental gardens of Europe

“Les zones frontalières ont certes bénéficié du processus de l’intégration européenne, dont elles sont très vite devenues une sorte de concrétisation au niveau local”

As this quote shows, one could look at the cross-border (CB) projects as if it were a kind of mini-Europes, experimental gardens of Europe, zones of co-operation that have developed following a similar logic as that of European integration. This paper wants to analyse how this geographical limited co-operation, be it as euroregions, working communities or in any other form, has come into existence, and what are the factors determining it. I want to approach the subject from a theoretical political science/international relations viewpoint, because there is very little scientific work about the subject in these fields and because most studies focus on practical aspects of cross-border co-operation (CBC)

The purpose of this paper is to indicate the theoretical debates behind the development of CBC. By doing this, it wants to investigate whether CBC is really a development challenging the existence of the nation-state by attacking its territorial foundations. I want to show evolutions, and therefore the subject will be approached from a historical perspective. Readers might thus miss a detailed treatment of contemporary CBC, but this is mainly motivated by concerns to explain the process. Furthermore, in recent years no important changes in the status of CBC have occurred, and it is also not my intention to deal with the day-to-day functioning of


CBC. Because of the aforementioned supposed similarity between the development of CBC (i.e. integration between border regions) and the EU integration process, I will start from the theoretical debate in European integration studies between intergovernmentalism and functionalism, to discover the similarities. First, I will start by introducing CBC: definition, reasons and history. Then I will give a brief overview of the evolution of integration theory. Next I will analyse CBC from the perspective of the neo-functionalist and intergovernmental paradigm. I will end by summarising and doing an attempt at placing the findings in a broader context.

**Introducing CBC**

*What is CBC? definition of the research topic*

CBC deals with the co-operation of decentralised authorities across the border. It concerns neighbouring areas, this means that these areas have a common border, and it is implied that they are part of a different country. In its INTERREG III Guidelines, the European Commission makes a difference between CBC, transnational co-operation and interregional co-operation. CBC concerns a small number of neighbouring regions, while transnational co-operation aims at promoting territorial integration of larger European regions, and can involve national, regional and local governments. Interregional co-operation stresses the networking aspect, which means a common border is not required.

CBC also deals with decentralised authorities. This is very important since national frameworks and legislation regulate CBC, while national governments can create their

---

own rules when deciding to engage in co-operation with another state. These
decentralised authorities are the co-ordinators of the CBC, which means that also
private initiative, companies and non-profit-organisations can be involved. Private
initiatives without this co-ordination by a decentralised governmental authority will
not be considered. This implies that this co-operation has to be about (semi-)
governmental activities.

**Motives for CBC**

The strong emphasis on territorial concepts when speaking about the state is not only
a consequence of the Westphalian state type in use, it is also a result of the
domestic/foreign and national/international polarities used in scientific research and
everyday speech. This partly explains why so little attention has been given to CBC:
these concepts served to obscure the interactions. Corbridge and Agnew speak about a
“territorial trap”\(^3\). Rosenau would explain this as a desire for stability, a *“longing for
certitude as to what organises and governs the course of events [...] logically
boundaries should divide domestic and foreign affairs”*\(^4\).

Historical developments and the above mentioned polarities have created a double
disadvantage for border regions. First, they have a peripheral location vis-à-vis the
centre(s) of their respective countries, and second, their links with neighbouring
regions are disturbed. Once these observations are recognised as a problem, the
decision can be taken to engage in CBC. This decision is not always inspired by an

---


altruistic wish to help these regions. Instead, the major arguments for CBC can be grouped in three categories: equity, efficiency and political arguments.

Equity argument
Border areas were in past times often disputed areas, which made investing in these areas a very unstable and uncertain investment. These investments could even contribute to the instability of the border because the border area became thus more attractive to neighbouring states. Furthermore, the border areas are those areas farthest away from the centre, which makes that they can only benefit marginally from the services, infrastructure etc. that are often concentrated at the centre. This peripheral location results in a very low level of investment, a brain drain towards the centre and insufficient transport links with the centre.

CBC offers the opportunity to co-operate with areas just across the border, resulting in less dependency on the centre. In this way CBC promotes equity not only within a country (centre-periphery), but also between countries, since the areas on both sides of the border will have the possibility to reach similar levels of development, which will create stability by reducing unwanted flows from periphery to the centre (capital, qualified labour) and between countries (smuggling, migration).

Efficiency argument
If we would represent the hinterland of a city as a circle around that city, we immediately notice that no full circle can be drawn around a border city, since the hinterland is being fenced in by the borderline. This gives border cities and areas a comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis other areas. CBC helps these areas to work
politically as well as economically on the most appropriate scale by removing obstacles to do so.

The optimal delivery of public services can be attained when there is perfect correspondence between those who decide on, pay for and profit from the public service delivery. In practice, this perfect correspondence can not be reached for all policy areas at the same time, and thus a system of co-operation has to be developed to internalise the externalities as much as possible. Furthermore, some service deliveries can be delivered more efficiently when undertaken on the correct scale. The need for dealing with externalities and for developing economies of scale shows the importance of CBC for border areas.

The theory of Natural Economic Theories (NET’s) states that economic and trade boundaries are superseding political boundaries, and that economic co-operation based solely on political motivation is bound to fail if it is not grounded in economic rationality. Economic co-operation across borders springs up from below and is difficult to constrain by government, which would run the risk of losing legitimacy if it did. The economic rationality searches its optimal scale, but to be able to function efficiently, co-operation or at least non-hindrance from the political level is required. A very strong point of this theory is its stress on informal co-operation, rather than on legally binding treaties, *the use of NET’s allows states to proceed along their own paths of economic growth and development without the need to agree on overarching*

---


regional goals". This approach emphasises the concrete bottom-up (economic) co-operation, and could be seen as a network approach to CBC.

Political argument

The political argument is a very broad one that encompasses a number of motives.

Nationalist-historical motives: There is a will to retain ties with territories previously part of the national territory, or claimed upon. This can be the result of a certain feeling of responsibility towards an area that had previously been a part of the national territory, or it can be caused by a sense of commonness felt by the people living on both sides of the border because of similar characteristics or a common past. The ratio behind this kind of co-operation is mostly emotional, but can also be strategic.

Overall integration: CBC is directly attacking one of the most visible features of a national state: borders. CBC can thus be the starting point for an envisaged integration of countries, whereby the symbolic value is more important than the concrete projects undertaken. Politicians aiming at the integration of a certain region may promote CBC in order to set an irreversible first step towards a mental and practical integration. But the border regions engaging in CBC are not only the starting points of integration; they are also the first beneficiaries of the integration8.

Confidence Building: CBC may be used in border areas of countries previously engaged in armed conflict. Increased contacts may help to reconcile and to reduce tensions and distrust, and thus promote stability in the region. It may also contribute to the protection of ethnic and national minorities and of human rights.

---

7 Cossa Ralph A. & Khanna Jane, o.c., p. 229
8 Vedovato Giuseppe, o.c., p.1
Empowerment of subnational levels: Regional or local governments can use CBC to increase their importance vis-à-vis the central government, since engaging in CBC means an overall empowerment for these subnational governments in terms of finances, prestige, expertise etc. Local level CBC is a means to circumvent the central government and allows local government to organise its functioning in the way it wants, whereas in the past they were subordinate to the foreign affairs ministry when willing to co-operate with subnational authorities across the border.

There exists a lot of overlapping between the different motives for CBC. Whereas the difference between equity and efficiency is sometimes very clear in regional policy (supporting areas with growth potential while neglecting other areas is detrimental to equity, while supporting peripheral areas with little assets clearly follows the equity argument, but does not offer good prospects for efficient development), these arguments seem to reinforce each other in CBC. In border areas, the inequity is mostly a result of the inability to pursue an efficient policy.

The efficiency and political argument are often excluding each other since the efficiency argument only takes into account historical/national and power arguments as far as these could hinder efficiency. On other occasions there is a perfect match between efficiency and political arguments, for instance when municipalities co-operate to provide services: empowerment and local initiative goes together with a more efficient service provision (bottom-up scale enlargement). However, the

---

efficiency argument has rather recently entered the political discourse, which can make it sometimes difficult to distinguish these two arguments.

European integration is well covered in literature, both in case studies and in general theoretical discussions. This makes it easy to see the developments in these theories. Literature on CBC is however not as widely available, and it is only about the period in the beginning of the 80’ies, when the Council of Europe (CoE) Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities\textsuperscript{11} was adopted, and about recent developments that a lot of information can be found. Nevertheless, a number of stages can be discovered in CBC\textsuperscript{12}. The initial logic for CBC was a political one: building bridges in order to reconcile people after World War II. This logic is still visible in recent CBC, but from the 60’ies on more economic factors came to dominate the debate. In this period economic development gave CBC a functional logic replacing the previous idealist logic. Environmental concerns allowed CBC to gather more support, and slowly a bottom-up approach could develop, making the CBC movement stronger, until it became more of a regionalist movement. This last shift occurred in a period when the debate on the CoE Outline Convention was going on, and explains why there was so much resistance against it, as will be shown. In recent years, because of the integration of CBC in the EU INTERREG Community Initiative, the emphasis has moved to considerations of harmonic development, because of the links with structural policy.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{11} Adopted in Madrid, 21/05/1980, Council of Europe, European Treaty Series no. 106

Integration across borders: EU integration and CBC

European integration theories

In the introduction, it was mentioned that some regard CBC as European integration in miniature. Since the logic of CBC integration is described as similar to European integration, we have all reason to suppose the same integration theories can be applied to it. Therefore, this paragraph will show what were the main integration theories developed for the European integration process. Not all approaches turned out to be helpful, and thus not all have survived. There is however one constant tension present in the theorising: that between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, or described with the dominating theoretical paradigms: the tension between neo-functionalism and neo-realism. In the following chapters, I will try to analyse CBC using these two theoretical perspectives.

The idealism after the second World War strengthened the federalist movement in Europe, but despite the fact federalism gave a very clear expression of the wish to integrate European space and the start of an actual integration, we would have to wait till the fifties before encompassing integration theories emerged, even though the initiative to these theories was often given already before the war. About the same period two publications indicated the real start of integration theory. Deutsch’ work gave rise to the communications/transactions approach to integration\(^{13}\), while Haas drafted the framework for neo-functionalism, building on Mitrany’s functionalism. These two theories had quite some similarities. They both focused on regional

transactions and the gains and losses implied therein. Important in both theories was the role of elites: the verbal and symbolic communication of their expectations would help to create a mutual responsiveness. Both transactions and communications could then adequately be handled with by institutions.

Slowly, neo-functionalism would start dominating the integration discussion because of two reasons: Deutsch’ theory was a very general one with a systemic character, and gave as such little importance to specific institutions, while neo-functionalism was very attractive because of its study of bargaining styles and strategies, and was as such very close to the actors. In addition, the Deutschians slowly moved their attention to fields of study other than European integration. They began researching nationalism, local communities etc. This was a direct consequence of the concept of the theory: while neo-functionalists relied on case studies (i.e. mainly the case of European integration), and the choice of their case made their distinction between high and low politics relevant, the communications approach preferred to work with aggregate data and treated all transactions as equally salient, giving their theory little predictive power. Deutsch himself dismissed the political spill-over concept of functionalism, since it only led to a partial amalgamation, and only in some cases to an overall one, and he recalled that total amalgamation/unification has in the past not always been preceded by functional amalgamation. The general nature of the communications approach and the greater attention of neo-functionalists for the European integration process made neo-functionalism become the dominant theory on European integration in that period.

---

The empty chair crisis was the clearest indication of a slackening of the integration process, a fact the neo-functionalists had not really predicted. Functionalist theories would slowly disappear, only to resurface in the second half of the eighties, when a new dynamic in European integration could be observed. This crisis offered a chance to realist theories, until then in the background, to claim back their place. It were, among other, articles by Hoffmann\textsuperscript{17} that introduced intergovernmentalism in integration studies. From this moment on we can speak about a neo-functionalist/intergovernmentalist debate. In reality there are a lot of points of contact between these theories, and the differences can be partly reduced to methodological ones, since the concepts of integration and co-operation come from different parts of the science\textsuperscript{18}. This is also shown by attempts to integrate these two streams. Others try to avoid this debate and develop new approaches to European integration not influenced by any territorial bias. These authors base themselves on a number of concepts such as institutionalism, multi-level governance, multiperspectival polity, new mediaevalism etc.

**Choice of theories**

A number of authors on European integration have argued that Europe is a different and new concept, and that it requires therefore a separate integration theory. This explains why a number of integration theories can be discarded in this paper. Their


\textsuperscript{17} Hoffmann Stanley, “Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe”, In: *Daedelus*, vol. 95, 1966, and also other articles by the same author in 1964 in Daedelus and the Journal of Common Market Studies.

\textsuperscript{18} Christiansen Thomas, *European Integration between Political Science and IR Theory: The End of Sovereignty*, EUI Working Paper RSC no. 4, Florence, 1994
field of application is so limited, that using them on CBC would be irrelevant, or impossible without violating their basic premises. Some examples are institutionalist approaches, because the CBC institutions are not really so extended that they can play an important role. Despite its success in combining liberal (thus including neo-functionalism) theories with intergovernmentalist ones, Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism\(^{19}\) is still too much tailored for EU use, because of its legacy on institutionalist theories. Building on it would require an in depth analysis on how the state’s approach towards CBC was developed, and this is not possible in the limited scope of this paper. Anyway, it was not really the debate on CBC as such that has made the nation-states to change their opinion to become more favourable of CBC, but more the regionalist movement in general. Nevertheless, this theory offers good prospects to be used for more in-depth research on the subject.

Using discourse-oriented theories would be of little help since the discussions on CBC have since their beginning always been of a very problem-oriented character. Nevertheless, these theories could be very helpful if one would engage in examining the differences between the various CBC projects. I have also chosen not to go into a score of new theories, since these are not yet sufficiently developed to be used without a lot of reserves in a case study. I will thus analyse the developments in CBC using the classical tension neo-functionalism/intergovernmentalism. In a first part I will apply some basic concepts of functionalist theories, and at moments broadened to integration theories as a whole, to CBC, because many students and practitioners of CBC refer to a functional logic that is steering the CBC activity. In this analysis already some critical remarks will be made that hint at the fact that functionalism as

---

such can not function as sole explaining factor. Therefore, I will turn in a second part to intergovernmental explanations. To conclude I will try to draw some conclusions based on this double analysis.

**Functionalist analysis**

**Introduction**

Although this chapter will focus on the use of the functional logic to explain CBC, it is necessary to go back to the very starting period of CBC to show that the first steps were not concerned with a functional co-operation, but with idealistic motives. A French-German reconciliation movement following the Second World War gave the start to CBC. The war experience was a very strong motivation to engage in CBC, making it easier to give up nationalist and political considerations. A similar process can be observed with regard to CBC at the outer borders of the EU. The memory of communism and the wish to become part of the EU were good stimuli to engage in CBC. These first steps were not at all organised following a functional logic, but served mainly to prepare the field mentally.

In the second wave of CBC in the 1960’s, the need to co-operate in the field of e.g. land-use planning, economic co-operation etc. was recognised. This co-operation can be described as functional in its purest form. Once funding from the EU became available, a large number of the democratising and cultural aims of CBC projects became economised\(^\text{20}\), thus bringing CBC more and more into the functional logic.

---

Even though the functional logic was applied in a very early stage by the CBC entities, on the international level this only became clear once the EU got involved. The EU promoted an integration of structures, and hoped to use this to integrate the minds. Earlier, the CoE was dealing with CBC, and this organisation placed a greater emphasis on an integration of minds, and treated structures only as things of minor importance. This limited emphasis on the supranational structure as such does in fact contradict the functional approach followed at basic level. Probably this helps to explain why CBC happened to a large extent outside the CoE framework: on the one hand a number of border regions were engaging in CBC following the functional logic, and on the other hand the CoE was making declarations and putting pressure on the states, without these two processes having much influence on each other, be it that the CoE never ceased to support the local initiatives. It is only since the EU took the lead in CBC that all CBC projects became integrated within a general strategy.

**Functionalism as a strategy**

It is said that functionalism has a built-in bias towards supranationalism and against the nation-state. To that extent the choice of functional integration logic to explain CBC may be suggested by a belief of the CBC proponents that borders are artificial and should be overcome. One could thus say that functionalism was put forward as a theory explaining CBC in order to benefit from the political spill-over effects, and not because of the functional co-operation itself, since it was said that there did not really exist borders in these fields, the political border (and the connected legal-administrative one) being the only one. The functional co-operation was thus not a learning process but a deliberate strategy. Or even a necessity to counter resistance
from the central state “*Die meisten Zusammenschlüsse sind bestrebt, auf rechtliche Fragen nicht einzugehen und ihre Kooperation als technisch und fachbezogen darzustellen, um denkbaren Widerständen der Zentralregierungen zuvorkommen*”\(^2^1\).

**Functionalism Vs territorialism**

In the starting period of European integration, a tension existed between those who wanted to organise European space following a functional logic and those in favour of a federal organisation. Both methods have their advantages, but a main difference exists in terms of processes and ends. Indeed, the shortcoming of federalism is that it does not help us in explaining how integrative forces and processes arise and proceed. It only provides a strategy for the final stage of integration\(^2^2\). Neo-functionalism on the other hand focuses on the process, emphasising co-operation between elites, learning processes etc., while it is not really offering an end. µ

The distinction between both approaches should not be so black-white, since for instance classical functionalism regarded the process only as secondary, giving prime importance to ends, be it not in the shape of a European Union or a national political entity but in the shape of a “working peace system” and the like. Furthermore, neo-functionalism has a build-in inclination towards supranationality. Similarly, this black-white approach disregards evolutions in federal theory more focusing on the federalising praxis and processes.

\(^2^1\) Lang Wilfried, *“Die Normative Qualität Grenzüberschreitende Regionen Zum Begriff der ‘Soft Institution’”*, In: *Archiv des Völkerrechts*, vol. 27, 1989, p. 283
As mentioned before, it was the federal logic that came to dominate the European integration discourse, while CBC was defined mainly in functional terms. However, the use of functionalism to explain CBC can be criticised, as will be shown in the remainder of this chapter and in the next chapter, focusing on intergovernmentalist influences. Similarly, federalism should not be excluded when dealing with CBC, as it is a very clear model that has influenced the practical organisation of a number of CBC bodies.

Specific theories have been developed to explain European integration as if it was a totally different integration process. Claiming that European integration has its own specific end often defends this. The federalist stream is especially known for this, offering an organisational model for a future Europe. This teleological approach was specific for most theories gaining strength just after WWII. Peaceful co-operation was the end, be it on a European level (the European federalists) or on world level (the classic functionalists). Similar teleological approaches come back in CBC: creating an area without borders, re-integrating a region. Sometimes there is even discussion on the creation of a cross-border identity. To this end sometimes a number of bodies are founded taking up some tasks framed in a division of tasks between the CBC entity and the participating municipalities/regions, which shows CBC is strongly influenced by federalist ideas and that CBC thinking is still heavily influenced by the laws of organisation of a nation state: the CBC organ becomes an entity functioning on a certain territory with an assembly and executive.

The inherent logic of integration in functionalism has been criticised, certainly after the empty chair crisis. The refinement of the theory in neo-functionalism made it possible to explain spill-back in the integration process. Functionalist theory became less and less concerned with ends, and became known as a theory describing a
procedural logic. In current use of functionalist theory, its teleological content has totally disappeared and the theory is interpreted as a process theory.

Nowadays the federalist-functionalist discussion is being continued when dealing with the area in which the functional co-operation should take place. It is common to present functional co-operation as co-operation without any borders. Co-operation is organised between sectors of society, and the form of the territory in which this co-operation should happen is determined by the character of the task -form follows function. The original aim of functionalism was to prevent that any borders would hinder the functional co-operation, and this is the reason why Mitrany promoted co-operation on world level. This also explains his reluctance to accept regional co-operation, since he did not see any reason why e.g. a European framework would be just fitting for functional co-operation. A European framework would only offer the same hindrances to functionalism as the national states did before. Nevertheless, Mitrany accepted that sometimes it was necessary to choose one single area in which to integrate a programme of sectoral projects, because without this one could never come to a general approach to a problem. It is surprising that while Mitrany opposed territorial subdivisions, at the same time he cited the Tennessee Valley Authority as one of the big examples for functionalism, which is such an integrated programme in a defined area. It remains a fact that despite the crystallisation of many CBC projects in organisations operating in a certain region, they are often an amalgam of separate projects not always encompassing the same regional actors or territories. Some

regions are even part of more than one CBC organ\textsuperscript{24}. It is true that the shape of CBC projects is heavily influenced by preconditions for organisation and funding. CBC, supposed to function in a purely functional logic, has in fact a pre-given shape, since it functions within existing administrative entities. We see however that projects within these administrative entities are mostly located in those areas directly at the border.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will highlight three important aspects of neo-functionalist theory. First, it is a process theory, in which concepts such as spillover and spillback play an important role. Second, the actors in this approach are the elites, and finally, neo-functionalism helps to create mutual understanding by creating multiple loyalties.

\textbf{Spill-over concept}

Originally, only a concept of spillover (or social learning) was used in the theorising. This meant that one saw an inherent logic in the integration. It was supposed that the integration would continue in a steady process, leading to a certain end - total integration. In the meantime, it has been recognised that these integration processes can slow down or can even be reversed. In practice, we see in many CBC projects a spillover. In a speech on CBC in the Benelux, H. Balthazar remarks that the “attention and programmes of the different border regions have over time moved from the so-called soft sector to the hard sector”\textsuperscript{25}. Most CBC started as co-operation

\textsuperscript{24} E.g. a number of regions are part of Alp Adria \textendash{} and Arge Alp, c.f. O’Dowd Liam & Wilson Thomas M. (Eds.), \textit{Borders, Nations and States}, Avebury; Aldershot, 1996, p. 64
\textsuperscript{25} Balthazar H., “Benelux-grensregio’s: Van de Periferie naar het Centrum”, In: \textit{Benelux Dossier 93/1: Grensoverschrijdende Ruimtelijke Ordening}, p. 48 (own translation)
in the field of emergency services, environmental problems and the planning of land use, and has gradually evolved to co-operation in more economic fields and even in the political field. Several authors have distinguished stages in the CBC process, indicating an ongoing strengthening of CBC. These phases are very similar to those describing the development of networks. Charles Ricq distinguishes 5 stages: information, consultation, co-operation, harmonisation and integration, while Soeters\textsuperscript{26} only indicates 4: expression, information-exchange, joint production of goods and services and (re)distribution of power, resources, influence and competencies.

Important to mention is the spill-over that has occurred on the international level, in the international fora in which CBC entities are represented. \textit{“Rather than focusing on the solution of concrete everyday problems, their objective is the representation of the interests of a particular group of regions or of the cause of regionalisation as such...”}\textsuperscript{27}. This shows a certain spill-over to high-politics.

These examples of successful spill-over do not mean that spillover has always occurred. Because of the fact that a lot of projects are only starting up, and that often a large number of municipalities are involved, co-operation often depends on a limited number of people. The decision to engage in CBC often depends on the personal interest of a major, municipality CEO etc., which makes these projects vulnerable to standstill or spill-back. If these projects are only supported by a limited number of people in the start-up period, small changes in political or administrative staff can bring a municipality back into CBC inactivity. Funding by the EU however has also

\textsuperscript{27} Weyand Sabine, “Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration Process”, In: Regional and federal Studies, vol. 6, 1996, no. 2, p. 174
given the CBC a more serious character. CBC has evolved to a full-fledged part of the administrative work, while until the 80’ies CBC was often regarded as a hobby for local administrators\textsuperscript{28}.

Since the EU got involved in CBC, the funding available for projects is often one of the main motives to engage in CBC. Here the problem can occur that many projects do not go beyond the mere execution of a programme during a pre-scheduled period. Once the funding stops, the CBC is not able to function on its own since the separate projects have not spilled over into new projects and certainly not into the building of a cross-border community or supranational institution. These projects are not always self-sustaining, and this is because there was no sufficient base for it in the local and regional communities. Many projects therefore remain stuck in the first, informative phase. A good example is the Carpathian Euroregion\textsuperscript{29}, which was in fact founded by an initiative of the respective central governments, without there being sufficient support from below.

**Elites**

A difference between functionalism and neo-functionalism is that while functionalism strives to form a social-psychological consensus at the popular level, neo-functionalism only wants to bring about elite socialisation. This gives neo-functionalism a more pluralist character as compared to functionalism because it still leaves some space for conflict. While functionalism wanted to achieve substantial community, neo-functionalism limited itself to a procedural consensus. This elite

socialisation is achieved via a process of engrenage - bureaucratic interpenetration. This last term should however be defined in a broad sense, since it not only concerns the political bureaucratic elites, but also social and economic elites. And when speaking about a political elite, this only concerns political elites operating on a decentralised level. National political and administrative elites are no longer the principal agents of change\(^{30}\). Instead, the new elite is a local one: politicians, bureaucrats, businesspersons and societal groups directly facing the day-to-day problems.

As mentioned before, the peripheral location of border regions is one of the main problems. These regions are located far from the centre of a country and this has influenced the composition of the local elite. First, the peripheral location and the broken links with (foreign) neighbouring regions make border regions on average more backward and economically less developed. This makes elites and potential elites leave the region, and it certainly does not attract any new elites, since these regions can not offer new chances. Secondly, this is further strengthened by the fact that elites are attracted by a country’s capital, what makes that there is always a certain part of the elite that would leave the border region anyway, even if this region would be in a good economic condition. These two mutual re-enforcing processes leave the border region behind with a very small -and often low-ranking- elite. This explains why it took CBC so long to be recognised by the central state and why CBC often depends on a limited number of people, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. The limited number and low rank of this elite and the original disinterest of the central state for these regions makes CBC a good case-study for the functional theories, since

\(^{29}\) The Carpathian Euroregion is a CBC project involving Hungary, Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia. It is conceived as an international organisation composed of a number of large regions.

the initiation of CBC could so be described as achieved by a bottom up effort of local elites, and not by a top-down approach, at least in the starting period of CBC. In the previous paragraph we have seen that some of the newer CBC projects are being initiated and implemented in a top-down approach. The result of such an approach is not always brilliant, and therefore the European Commission has in the INTERREG 2000-2006 planning period broadened the partnership principle from regional and local authorities and economic and social partners to all kinds of relevant organisations, in order to enable as much activity as possible in these regions with a limited elite.

Engaging in CBC does not only offer the region new possibilities, it also has an influence on the attitudes of the elites within their proper organisations. Very often, the stimulus for CBC comes from one partner, and this helps the other partner to overcome inertia to change. Kessen regards spill-overs in the fields of co-operation only as the second most important effect of CBC. He emphasises the possibilities it carries for administrative renewal\(^\text{31}\). A good example is the introduction of a more project-oriented way of functioning in the province of West-Flanders in order to be able to cope with the administrative demands of the INTERREG-project in which the province was involved. This is an example of how the functional spillover can become a cultural one.

**Functionalism and conflict resolution**

CBC came into existence via a number of reconciliation projects. CBC was initiated because of its capability to reduce tensions that existed between the two sides of the border. Following the functional logic meant creating a number of crosscutting cleavages. The main difference with other strategies such as federalism or consociationalism is that functionalist theories develop a socio-psychological community, and does not only try to accommodate cleavages. This partly explains the success of functionalism in the 50′ies and 60′ies: it was a period in which the real political bargaining on European level was not yet as present or visible as it would become later, and there was less importance given to regional identities and cultural values in that period. And it also explains why neo-functionalism is out of favour nowadays, since it is said it does not give enough consideration to local differences and identities and that its democratic legitimacy is weak. Functionalist approaches have a more subtle way to come to political arrangements, and it does not only help to accommodate tension on both sides of the borders, but also to accommodate tensions between the central governments and local and regional authorities. “Federalism continually reminds politicians of what it is they are being asked to yield: political arrangements are necessary in order to get beyond existing political arrangements [...] Functionalism, on the other hand, disposes actors towards more subtle methods: it involves changing the criteria in terms of which decisions about political importance are made. Why remind governments that something of value is being taken from them? The political significance of such questions as economic integration

---

should be played down rather than amplified, and governments are to be approached in such a way that they are not continuously reminded of their own importance.\footnote{33} While many criticize question functionalism because of its importance given to technical issues, it is in the formation of attitudes and of a community that its real value lies. An author remarks that if one would ask functionaries in the Alps-Adria working community what were the most important achievements, they would stress the experience of co-operation per se rather than the substantive content of the projects accomplished\footnote{34}. This shows that local and regional elites are not only the initiators of the CBC projects, but that there is a two-way process: the co-operation also helps to develop a co-operative culture and mutual understanding.

The processes described in the preceding paragraphs of a circumventing of nation-states, and an increasing co-operation between border regions had not gone unnoticed for the central states, and obviously they were not so happy with this erosion of their territory, and implicated in this, of their powers. The functional logic was seen as a process that worked to a certain extent, the main hindrances being the lack of legal frameworks and possibilities, support from above and funding. In the following chapter, we shall see how the states tried to involve themselves more and more in CBC. Especially their role in the organisation of the INTERREG programme and their role in the countering of local and regionalist tendencies will be highlighted.


\footnote{34}{O’Dowd Liam & Wilson Thomas M. (Eds.), Borders, Nations and States, Avebury, Aldershot, 1996, p. 61}
**Intergovernmental analysis**

**Introduction**

When there is discussion on the neo-functionalism/intergovernmentalism debate, the term realism is sometimes used instead of intergovernmentalism. To my opinion, this is not right. Interstate bargaining is often not so much a result of inherent characteristics of these states (actor approach), but more often it has to be seen within win-win negotiation games. This hints at a more structuralist approach, making the term neo-realism more suitable than realism. Neo-realism has a more empirical approach to interstate relations, as the use of games, of balancing, of an analysis of state preference formation etc. shows. Classic realism departed from an ethico-philosophical view on human nature and on the nature of states. The removal of these basic assumptions from the theory has opened the possibility for a rapprochement with neo-functionalism that had in the meantime also thrown overboard its moral assumptions. Theorising on the interest formation of states has in the meantime become more and more influenced by institutionalist theories, emphasising an interaction between state and -in this case- the EU. For these reasons, I have opted for the somewhat more general term intergovernmentalism.

**Bringing non-territorial regimes under control.**

An argument often mentioned by students of CBC is that the nation-state is less and less able to deal with a number of issues of transnational and cross-border importance, because of a growing internationalisation, globalisation and mobility. Even without
globalisation, the nation-state was not able to cope with a number of problems, such as transfrontier workers, pollution and infrastructure, but it is only in recent decades that these issues have received the attention they deserve. The engagement in CBC is thus not only a result of globalisation, but also of a growing demand for policy in new areas, despite the reigning liberal discourse about a withdrawing state.

Once it is noticed that the traditional nation-state is not able to cope with these new demands, its legitimacy might be questioned to the benefit of other bodies and levels that seem to be more competent. Being afraid of losing competencies and legitimacy the nation-state tries to safeguard itself from irrelevance by transferring authority to these new institutions, networks and regions. The territorial well-being of the state can be safeguarded by institutionalising adequate nonterritorial regimes. By transferring competencies to other actors the relevant problems can be tackled better and as such legitimacy is restored because the nation-state can take the credit for it since it has strategically decided to transfer the authority at the right moment. Tendencies are being institutionalised in order to control them. Transferring competencies to lower levels can also be a method to depoliticise hot issues. In this way, sovereignty is gradually dispersed over a large number of actors. But this transfer of sovereignty is steered by the state, which can control these tendencies and use those parts that seem to be helpful. If the state does not do this, “resistant governments will be left to reign over traditional political territories as all


This process is very similar to that described by Alan S. Milward in his book “The European Rescue of the Nation-State” where he claims that the nation-state might well not have retained the allegiance and support of its citizens without European integration, because it was faced with a number of issues that could only be dealt with efficiently on a European level\footnote{Milward Alan S., \textit{The European Rescue of the Nation-State}, Routledge, London, 1994, p. 3}. This approach can be described as functional, because it argues for the appropriate level/form for the appropriate task/function, but despite it following a problem-oriented approach, it is not functionalism. There are two reasons for this: First, the logic for co-operation, be it on the European level or be it between subnational entities is not the enhanced possibility to solve the problem, but is self-preservation. Second, in Milwards approach, integration is only just one solution for dealing with the problem, and whether to initiate integration depends on a political choice, which can be reversed. Functionalism on the other hand speaks about a logic of integration, a continuing process leading to more and more integration via a learning process. For Milward European integration was only necessary in order to be able to deal with a number of big problems. The problems we are faced with today, among others in the field of CBC, maybe no longer require a European level integration, but just local level solutions\footnote{Milward Alan S., “The Frontiers of National Sovereignty”, In: Gustavsson Sverker & Lewin Leif, \textit{The Future of the Nation-State: Essays on Cultural Pluralism and Political Integration}, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 149-168}. Functional approaches to problems localised on lower levels might even undermine the European integration process because it is seen as irrelevant to the solution of these problems.
In what follows I will show how the nation-state interests and characteristics have influenced the debate on CBC, and how a new actor, the EU, has entered the debate by taking actions to safeguard its relevance in the field of CBC.

**CBC and the decentralisation debate**

What looks like functional co-operation between municipalities and regions having more or less similar tasks is in fact a delicate balancing of different systems of local self-government. Every state has through history created its own discourse on foreign affairs, decentralisation and the role of the state, and these discourses now have to be synchronised in order to enable CBC. More, it is not only a question of reducing obstacles to CBC, it is also, or even more so, a question of an acceptance in principle of CBC. Accepting CBC is a big psychological step: the state has to accept a certain degree of decentralisation. CBC forces the central state to recognise the importance of local authorities and the foreign ministry loses its monopoly over foreign affairs.

The foreign affairs monopoly is being attacked from below: CBC would require an extension of the powers of decentralised bodies, because they would be able to conclude agreements with other bodies situated in another country. This monopoly is also questioned from above because the CoE Outline Convention gives the possibility to engage in CBC without interference from foreign affairs. Here an international body takes decisions directly influencing/limiting the state’s foreign policy options.

---

Although the explanatory report explicitly states that the CoE Outline Convention does not confer an international character on transfrontier relations⁴¹, “It is awfully difficult to get the idea of transfrontier co-operation into the heads of foreign office officials”⁴². This partly explains why the Convention is very vague, and only mentions a possibility to co-operate. In the entry into force was prescribed, that there should be a minimum number of states under the signatories having a common border. This tends to reduce the international character of the Convention, making it a collection of bilateral treaties⁴³. CBC would only be recognised as a right in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985)⁴⁴. Because of this reluctance, the application of the Convention was in many cases made subordinate to the signing of inter-state agreements, a practice that continues today. However, most of these inter-state agreements are of a very general nature, and only specify the stipulations of the Convention, without restricting the possibilities for CBC, and have therefore more of a psychological importance and do hardly have any practical importance in the preservation of the state monopoly of foreign affairs.

The discussion on CBC was partly triggered by the observation that the border regions were often among the poorest regions of a country. In social and economic geography many studies were done about this subject, which spread the awareness of the problem. Border regions were disadvantaged both by their peripheral location vis-à-vis the capital and by their lack of full infrastructure, since their natural hinterland was closed off by the border. CBC could contribute to their development by creating

⁴² Van Walsum, Dutch member of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, 20th session, official report of debates, 3rd sitting, 17/10/1985, p. 165
⁴³ Decaux Emmanuel, o.c., p. 590
infrastructural links, or even by creating new centres. The least developed border regions can be found in the most centralised states, such as France and Portugal\footnote{Council of Europe, European Charter of Local Self-Government, Strasbourg, 15/10/1985, ETS no. 22, art. 10/3}. The centralist tradition in a number of states has prevented CBC for a long time. It is no coincidence that the first real CB projects could be found back among less centralised states, e.g. between the Netherlands and Germany. Admitted, there were also a number of CB projects involving states with a centralist tradition, especially France, but these were in the beginning mainly motivated by the French-German reconciliation movement, or by the necessity for spatial planning co-ordination of the central government\footnote{Mestre Christian, “Les Incidences de L’Achèvement du Marché Unique sur les Régions Frontalières”, In: Coopération Transfrontalière en Europe, no. 2, Conseil d’Europe, Strasbourg, 1992, p. 21}. It is therefore not surprising that the decentralisation debate would become intrinsically linked with the CBC debate. The influence was even mutual: it was not only by decentralising that CBC would become more practical, very soon it became clear that CBC could strengthen local authorities\footnote{Brunn Gerhard & Schmitt-Egner Peter, “Die Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit von regionen in Europa als Feld der Integrationspolitik und Gegenstand der Forschung”, In: Brunn Gerhard & Schmitt-Egner Peter (eds.), o.c., p. 8}.

The discourse about CBC in the CoE would also make that CBC would forever be linked with decentralisation. When debates about CBC began in the mid 60’ies, functionalism was still a leading theory, and in this perspective “form follows function” was a dominant maxim. Since CBC was then mainly dealing with problems located in small areas, it followed that it had to be these small areas that would engage in CBC to solve the problem, and not the central state. If the central state would deal with these problems, they would not be solved efficiently, since they were being dealt

\footnote{See for instance the remark in the evaluation-report of the co-operation between West Flanders and Nord-Pas de Calais “...that INTERREG has lead to a strengthening of the position of the province that was responsible for the general co-ordination...”, De Rynck Filip, Struyven Ludo, Wouters Linda, et al., Grensoverschrijdende Samenwerking van West-Vlaanderen met Nord-Pas de Calais: Tussentijdse evaluatie van het INTERREG I-Programma, Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid, Leuven, 1994, p. 45}
with on the wrong scale, and more specifically, because this would politicise pure technical problems. The ultimate aim of the CoE -uniting Europe- also gave the organisation a certain bias against the nation-state. Also important was the role played by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe (CLRAE). Although less outspoken on regional and local issues compared to e.g. ARE, it could take innovative steps in the promotion of local and regional interests because it was not very visible and had a limited political influence. The CoE itself has become an organisation of reference when dealing with local authorities, and it may be clear that this characteristic has influenced the CBC debate. In the debates preceding the adoption of the Outline Convention, one of the participants thought the Convention could stop the erosion of the powers of local authorities: “Cette nouvelle convention, même si elle est timide, peut permettre de surmonter ce qui, jusqu’à présent, constituait un des obstacles institutionnels à la coopération entre les autorités des régions situées de part et d’autre d’une frontière: le zèle immoderé de la part de certains gouvernements à conserver des prérogatives excessives et parfois même aberrantes qui prétendent convertir tous les pouvoirs locaux en simples exécutants, sans aucune initiative, des décisions du pouvoir central” 48.

Because of the promotion of local and regional power by an international organisation, it looks as if both levels co-operate in a strategy against the nation-state, or as Mestre states it: “Une entente objective se formera donc entre les collectivités locales (ou entités fédérées) et la Commission des Communautés pour réduire le monopole étatique. La coopération transfrontalière constitue, dans cette perspective, le premier pas vers l’union politique, elle représente peut-être le pilier de la future

48 Mr. Verde, in the discussions on the Framework Convention, Assemblée Parlementaire du Conseil de l’Europe, 31ième session ordinaire, compte rendu officiel, 19ième séance, 11/10/1979, p. 685
According to me, such a statement is exaggerated, or at least wishful thinking. In the following paragraph, I will show how the European states have been able to stop this alliance from taking shape by conferring its CBC policy upon the EU. This enabled to de-link CBC and decentralisation, and it made the EU the main actor in CBC, leaving the CoE only a marginal influence. This does not mean that the decentralisation issue disappeared from the debate. Indeed, when CBC policy was integrated in EU policy, this organisation was fully trying to cope with rising regionalist power and demands, and the principles of subsidiarity and participation were gaining strength. Making a detour via the EU was thus only an action trying to postpone the most harmful effects CBC could have for the continued existence of the nation-state.

**The rise of the EU as a CBC actor**

Attention given to CBC by the CoE has led in 1980 to an Ouline Convention on CBC. Even though this Convention was an important step in making CBC acceptable for national policy-makers and by giving it a legal framework, the real stimulus for CBC came only by the end of the 80’ies when more and more funds became available via EU programmes. Until then, CBC was a quasi-monopoly of the CoE. Here we should ask the question why it was the EU that became the main actor in CBC and not the CoE or the states via own funding programmes.

There are in my opinion two reasons why it was not the CoE that was allowed to take the lead in funding CBC programmes. First, CBC is mainly a task of local and regional authorities, and as such CBC is seen as a challenge to the foreign policy

---

monopoly of the state. At that moment, the power of the regions was not yet as important as it is now, and the state tried to avoid giving these regions more power. Organising financial support within a CoE framework would not be a good idea, since this organisation is known as an organisation that is very open to the lamentations of local authorities. Furthermore, it was the European Conference of Local Authorities, the current CLRAE, that gave the start for the campaign to promote CBC, and it is still an influential actor in CBC. From the beginning on, the debate on CBC was linked with a demand for further decentralisation. The strong importance the CoE gives to local and regional authorities is probably also one of the reasons why the adoption of the Outline Convention has taken such a long time. Giving the authority to steer the CBC programmes to the CoE would give the local and regional authorities an important ally, and it may be clear that the nation-states were not willing to contribute to their own erosion.

Second, the approach of the CoE to CBC was one that was based in idealism and functionalism. Engaging in CBC, as it was defined then, would mean that very practical issues would be dealt with at the local level, such as transfrontier television, nature conservation, disaster relief etc. A functional approach to these issues without regard to the interstate borders would quickly show that these problems could easily be solved without interference from the national level, thereby giving the ultimate proof of the advantages of decentralisation. Furthermore, the CoE was founded in the period immediately following the Second World War, and it still has the idealistic vocation that all borders should be eliminated.

The EU on the other hand was an organisation that had gone through a number of crises and had become more receptive to national interests. Giving the EU the
authority to deal with CBC had advantages for the states as well as for the EU. The states now could work with an organisation that had learned to deal with national sensitivities, and they would furthermore be able to influence the allocation of the funding. For the EU, it meant a further extension of its responsibilities. But this meant that the definition of CBC had to be changed. Whereas the CoE had a rather functional view of CBC, namely to deal with the problems at the appropriate scale, the definition of CBC became more economic once the EU began to deal with it. On the one hand, this was because of the economic character the EU has, and on the other hand, this allowed redefining CBC in terms of harmonious development. Once there was a direct link between CBC and harmonious development of the European area, it became easy to integrate CBC policy into the structural funds. The creation of this clear link made the EU an indisputable actor, since it was generally accepted that structural policy was an EU task. Furthermore, the CoE was never an organisation that could dispose over large funds, while for the EU the extra funds for CBC were only a small increase, and would as such not require radical changes in its organisation. This redefinition of CBC came not as a surprise, since the EU had shown in the past hardly any interest for CBC. Admitted, from 1975 on, one of the criteria for receiving funding from the ERDF was the cross-border impact of the proposed project, but still these projects remained mainly national. Several reports ordered by the European Parliament spoke about the importance of CBC, and all were adopted, but no practical consequences were ever given to them\textsuperscript{50}.

The following table shows the financial allocations for the INTERREG programme in the period 2000-2006. A purely functional approach to CBC would show a relation between the length of the borders of the member states and the financial allocation these countries receive, since the more borders a country has, the more it has to cope with border related problems, and the more opportunities exist for engaging in CBC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INTERREG allocation 2000-2006 (million Euro)</th>
<th>structural fund allocation 2000-2006 (million Euro)</th>
<th>land borders (km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>1385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>28156</td>
<td>3621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>20961</td>
<td>1210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>43087</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>14620</td>
<td>2892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRL</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>28484</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>2635</td>
<td>1027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1473</td>
<td>2562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>19029</td>
<td>1214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIN</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>2628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>2205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>15635</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUR15</td>
<td>4825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4875</td>
<td>183564</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To find out whether the INTERREG allocation is influenced by the total length of land borders, I will apply a simple linear regression to the data. Because of the existence of a number of small countries, which logically get less of the money, calculating a correlation is not appropriate, since this would require correction to harmonise these outliers. The results of this regression analysis shows that the variable length of land borders does not influence the INTERREG allocation.
To be complete however I should not forget to mention that there are also a number of CBC projects situated along sea borders, while sea borders are not included in the calculations. This however only concerns a limited number of projects, so it can be expected that the observation will not be dramatically changed. An allocation of 900 million Euro to Spain is a lot if one looks at the Spanish borders, but can still be defended in a functional logic, but this amount is no longer conform needs knowing that Spain is not a country specifically known for its activity in CBC.

Since the total length of land borders can not explain the allocation of funds, I will try to see whether the allocation might be influenced by the Structural Funds allocation.

One of the reasons for testing this hypothesis is the observation that a lot of similarities exist between these two kinds of funding. In the INTERREG guidelines, it is explicitly mentioned that priority will be given to areas that fall under the structural funds objectives 1, 2 and 5b, in INTERREG III objectives 1, 2 and 3.²

When we compare the INTERREG allocations with the allocation to the structural funds, we find a very similar pattern: countries receiving a lot of money from the structural funds, also receive a lot from the INTERREG programme.

---

This shows that the current financial allocation to CBC is not so much concerned with the original -functional- logic CBC had, but with its integration into the existing structural fund framework. Were in the beginning of this paper it was shown that the main logic to engage in CBC was to restore links with neighbouring regions and to promote the position of decentralised authorities, here it becomes clear that the central governments put their emphasis differently: on the need to alleviate the consequences of the peripheral location of these areas. The distribution of funds is then not based on an objective need for the CBC projects, but is a result of the interstate bargaining for structural funds. What is determining is not the backwardness of border region vis-à-vis the centre of the country or vis-à-vis the adjacent border region of the neighbouring country, but the absolute backwardness of the region in the EU as a whole, the situation of the border regions often being even worse than that of the respective poorer countries as a whole.

This linkage of INTERREG with the structural funds has not been without consequences for the approach to CBC, and has also caused a number of problems as

52 More specific in articles 8 and 9 of the Commission Communication in the INTERREG I guidelines, art. 19 in INTERREG II, and art. 7 in INTERREG III.
the evaluation of the CBC project between West Flanders and Nord-Pas de Calais shows: “On the one hand, one wanted to stimulate the development of cross-border networks, on the other hand the importance of regional economic development was emphasised....”\textsuperscript{53}. This created a number of problems, since the actors involved had different perceptions and expectations when co-operating. The introduction of INTERREG made also disappear a number of existing informal CBC projects, since the demand for co-funding made that there was no longer money available for small projects not integrated in an INTERREG programme.

Analysis of the consequent INTERREG regulations shows a certain evolution over time. First, there is an evolution away from the purely functional and topical co-operation and solution of practical problems directly linked with the presence of the border to a co-operation on a broad range of issues aiming at integrating the area in order to strengthen the economic and social cohesion in the EU. Second there is an evolution away from cross-border co-operation to interregional co-operation. In the INTERREG II guidelines, mention is made of certain maritime areas. This still concerns CBC, but it shows that the development of peripheral areas becomes important. The same is true about the in article 18 mentioned energy-networks: the main concern here is the integration of peripheral areas, and not co-operation across borders. It should however be mentioned that only a limited amount of money is reserved for this action, and that what was originally understood under CBC remains an important part of the INTERREG II programme. INTERREG II C, dealing with spatial planning has as a prime objective the strengthening of economic and social

\textsuperscript{53} De Rynck Filip, Struyven Ludo, Wouters Linda et al., \textit{Grensoverschrijdende Samenwerking van West-Vlaanderen met Nord-Pas de Calais: Tussentijdse Evaluatie van het INTERREG I programma}, Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid, Leuven, 1994, p. 25, own translation
cohesion, and the co-operation between authorities in the concerned countries is only of secondary importance. This initiative also no longer deals with regions along borders, but rather with larger areas. In article 14n of the INTERREG II guidelines transeuropean networks are mentioned, what shows that the actions supported by INTERREG II go beyond the interests of the border regions. This evolution to transnational and interregional co-operation becomes totally clear with the introduction of INTERREG III, where what was originally understood by cross-border co-operation is now just one part of the new guidelines. This extension to interregional co-operation is an indicator of the increased power of the regional authorities. When the CoE Outline Convention was signed, the explanatory report still explicitly ruled out this interregional co-operation, it even speaks about “unjustified requests from municipalities or regions not having any ‘neighbourhood’ problems to settle with municipalities or regions on the other side of the frontier”\textsuperscript{54}. In the second protocol added to the Outline Convention in 1998, its application was however broadened to interterritorial co-operation\textsuperscript{55}.

The struggle of the border regions for recognition and aid took a very long time, and was gradually taken over by a growing regionalist movement which had more influence and power since it did not concern peripheral and backward areas. While the CBC movement was gradually institutionalised by the central government in the structural funds and slowly annihilated, this was not the case with the regionalist movement, which was stronger and smarter by not directly attacking the nation state.

\textsuperscript{54} Council of Europe, \textit{Explanatory Report on the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities}, Strasbourg, 1980, p. 11

\textsuperscript{55} Council of Europe, \textit{Protocol no. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities Concerning Interterritorial Co-operation}, Strasbourg, 5/5/1998, ETS no. 169
The way the border regions approached the problem was seen as a threat by the nation-states, but the central governments could also profit from the CBC efforts to receive funds to stimulate the development of backward regions in general, and not only of the border regions. For border regions is thus also true what is the case for the regions in general: If they have increased their power, then this is not at the expense of the state, since that state has been able to increase its influence at the European level, in this case by its decision power about the structural funds. What was originally an attack on the state could be channelled in a direction profitable for the state by giving it a more balanced development of its territory, but this could not be done without giving more powers to the regional level. Without such an institutionalisation of CBC in the structural funds however the central state would have been faced by a far greater attack from below, which could have been resulted in a larger increase of local and regional power.

Conclusion

In the introduction it was stated that it would be my aim to analyse whether CBC projects could be regarded as mini-Europes, this is, whether the integration happening at the cross-border decentralised level followed the same logic as European integration. This has been analysed in this paper by using the neo-functionalist/intergovernmentalist tension existing in the theoretical study of European integration.

---

Quite some similarities can be discovered. CBC was in the beginning steered by a functional logic. Originally there was a disinterest for border regions by the central state, leaving the initiative to the decentralised authorities. Also, the emerging CBC projects dealt with very limited and localised problems. Gradually, the border regions managed to come out of this somewhat gray zone of co-operation, and their case met with a wider response. The projects became more and more visible, and the actions became linked to the decentralisation -and later regionalisation- debate. From this moment on, CBC was regarded as a challenge to the nation-state, and it forced the nation states to take appropriate action.

Just as had been the case with European integration, the functional integration logic was given free hand, but only up to a limited extent. At a certain moment, the process was internalised to enable control over it. The difference is that in the European integration process the challenge came from above, from an emerging supranational institution. Here the challenge came from below, from a movement promoting decentralisation. A normal decentralisation process could have been controlled and steered easily by the central state, but in this case a cross-border element was involved, requiring a European solution. CBC was not forbidden, since it was a tendency that was difficult to reverse, and furthermore, the regionalist movement was gaining strength. Instead everything was done to prevent it from further questioning the national territory.

The focus of CBC has remained one of problem-solving, but the emphasis has moved from overcoming borderlines to developing border regions. Not the presence of the border was important, but the often backward situation national border regions were in, as the analysis of the relation between the INTERREG and Structural Funds allocation has shown. As long as CBC followed a functional logic, focusing on a
number of projects not really (visibly) harmful to the nation-state, or even on projects
helping the nation-state to overcome problems it could no longer deal with, is was
welcomed, and eventually even supported. But once it became too outspoken, it was
quickly called to order.

Just as European integration, CBC challenges the view of a domestic-foreign polarity.
But CBC shows even more. It shows that just handing over power to a supranational
institute or to regional/local bodies is not a solution, since areas engaging in CBC
are part of different countries. The area in which a certain policy should be
undertaken constantly shifts, depending on what issue is being dealt with, or even
depending on the state of execution of this policy. It is therefore strange that the
national governments still opt for federalist or consociationalist approaches to
accommodate their differences. A creation of cross-cutting cleavages would be more
suitable to deal with the constantly changing situation, but it seems that the only
cleavage that still can not be erased is that of the national borders. Functionalist spill-
over and creation of a socio-psychological community can only when this is not seen
as threatening.

The discussions referred to in this paper all deal with the question how political space
has to be reconceptualised, and how one has to deal with constantly shifting
boundaries. The bottom-up, not institutionalised ad-hoc co-operation witnessed in the
first spontaneous CBC had some possibilities to adapt itself to the constantly changing
realities, be it that it was hindered by a lack of professionalism and the power struggle
of decentralised authorities. Since the institutionalisation of CBC, it has become more
static and no longer able to deal with the changes, which shows that the influence of
territorial approaches to politics is still very strong. CBC has given additional
evidence that this territorial approach is not sustainable on the long term, but it is not sure whether it can offer a viable alternative. Functional co-operation, networking etc. are good alternatives for executing policies, but don’t they exclude politics?

Bibliography


Cossa Ralph A. & Khanna Jane, "East Asia: Economic Interdependence and Regional Security", In: *International Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2, 1997, pp. 219-234

Council of Europe, *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial
Theorising Cross-Border Co-operation

Council of Europe, Explanatory Report on the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, Strasbourg, 1980

Council of Europe, Protocol no. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities, ETS no. 169, Strasbourg, 5/5/1998


De Rynck Filip, Struyven Ludo, Wouters Linda et al., Grensoverschrijdende samenwerking van West-Vlaanderen met Nord-Pas de Calais: Tussentijdse Evaluatie van het INTERREG I Programme, Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid, Leuven, 1994


European Commission, "Mededeling C(90) 1562/3 aan de lidstaten tot vaststelling van de richtsnoeren voor operationele programma's van de Lidstaten in het kader van een initiatief van de Gemeenschap betreffende grensgebieden (INTERREG)", In: Official Journal, C 215/04, 30/08/1990

European Commission, "Mededeling aan de lidstaten tot vaststelling van de richtsnoeren voor operationele programma's van de Lidstaten in het kader van een initiatief van de Gemeenschap betreffende grensgebieden (INTERREG II)", In: Official Journal, C 180/13, 1/07/1994


EUR-OP News, no. 1, 2000


Haas Ernst B., The Uniting of Europe, Stanford University Press, 1958


Hoffmann Stanley, "Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe", In: Daedalus, vol. 95, 1966


Kessen Antoine A.L.G.M., Bestuurlijke Vernieuwing in Grensgebieden: Intergemeentelijke grensoverschrijdende samenwerking, Doctoral dissertation, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1992


Milward Alan S., Lynch Frances M.B. et al., The Frontier of National Sovereignty: History and
Oates W., Fiscal Federalism, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1972
Seerden René, Publiekrechterlijke Grensoverschrijdende samenwerking tussen Centrale Overheden, Maklu uitgevers, 1993, pp. 40-53
Weyand Sabine, "Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration Process", In: Regional and Federal Studies, vol. 6, 1996, no. 2, pp. 166-182