
EMERGING CROSS-BORDER REGIONS AS A STEP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Experiences and Considerations from Examples in Europe and North America

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Abstract

Do processes of territorial integration facilitate or hinder the search for sustainable development? This article examines this question using empirical examples of cross-border regions on a sub-national level in Europe and North America. It will be shown that the processes of cross-border cooperation have proceeded extensively. It is therefore permissible to speak about „cross-border region building“ and „territorial integration processes.“ The essay then analyzes what interterritorial integration means for the search for sustainability, defined as cross-sectoral integration of environmental, social and economic goals and interests. It will be shown that cross-border cooperation fosters antagonistic communities and therefore must be seen primarily as an obstacle in the search for sustainability. However, the empirical evidence does indicate that some cross-border regions may provide innovative platforms for multidimensional integration processes, which are needed for more sustainable ways of living.

1. Introduction and Overview (1)

Much has been written about the question of whether free trade provides more opportunities or more risks for the environment. In this article it will be argued that this discussion is too narrowly focused. It does not provide an adequate description of the transforming processes we can observe and it is not state of the art in terms of defining good policy. Therefore, the question will be expanded towards a more comprehensive

discussion: Do processes of territorial integration facilitate or hinder the search for sustainable development?

While expanding the basic concepts of the question from the free flow of goods to the overall reduction of boundaries between territorial units, and from environmental policies to sustainable development, the political level or the territorial span from which the empirical material is drawn to address the question will be reduced. Instead of looking at the continental or global level, the focus will be on sub-national cross-border regions. Cross-border region building processes have gained momentum since the end of the eighties but they are still almost totally neglected in mainstream discourses in the social sciences.

To provide an answer to the postulated question the article pursues the following line of argument. First, the cooperative activities in two cross-border regions will be presented, with one example from Europe, and one example from North America. By describing the institutions and by providing some examples of policy accomplishments it becomes clear that cross-border activities extend far beyond free trade policies and encompass almost all policy areas. Therefore, the observed activities can be labeled „cross-border region building“ and „territorial integration processes“.

After having shown that territorial integration processes are occurring on a regional level, the paper turns to the question of what this means for the search for better policies. The opportunities that are opened up by cross-border cooperation will be highlighted. Drawing on examples from the field of environmental policy, four different functions that can be served by transboundary cooperation will be identified.

Next, the paper turns to the downside. A definition of sustainable development will be introduced, which is based on the insight that this „holistic approach“ is a reaction to the problems created by the functional and sectoral differentiation of modern societies, organizations and administrations. Therefore, sustainable development is defined as a process of integrating environmental, social and economic goals. The search for sustainable development, then, depends strongly on institutions that are able to coordinate and integrate different sectoral goals and interests and bring together the actors who represent those goals and interests. Against the background of such an expanded notion of the preconditions for the formulation of good policies, the cross-border linkages will be evaluated

again. It will be shown that cross-border or interterritorial cooperation fosters antagonistic communities and makes it more difficult to bridge intersectoral boundaries. Therefore, processes of territorial integration have to be seen as inimical to the search for sustainability.

Nevertheless, the paper ends by presenting a vision and the empirical evidence that some cross-border regions do have the potential to serve as platforms for the kind of multidimensional integration processes that are necessary to find more peaceful and sustainable ways of living.

2. The Neglected Layer Of Regional Integration: Emerging Cross-Border Regions On A Subnational Level

Until recently, cross-border co-operation on a subnational level has not gained much attention in major social science discourses. However, around the beginning of the 1990s scholars of federalism and of regional science started to trace the growing international activities of sub-national political units in Europe and North America (Michelmann & Soldatos 1990, Brown & Fry 1993, Hocking 1993a, Groen 1994 and 1995). Whereas much attention was given the „para-diplomatic“ (Soldatos 1990, 1993) or „interregional“ (Raich 1995) activities of provinces, states, Länder, Cantons and cities, the longest tradition and the most enhanced features of international activities of these units are „micro-diplomatic“ or cross-border activities (Cohn & Smith 1996, Martinez 1986, Swanson 1976). Developments in some border regions have advanced to the point that the older notion of micro-diplomacy should be replaced by one of „cross-border institution building,“ even though most of these cross-border institutions are rather „soft“, not very formalized and mostly network-like institutions.

Many reasons are offered to explain this outcome: Global economic, technological, ecological and social developments contribute to a rapid increase of interdependence across territorial boundaries and to a political process Brian Hocking (1993b) called „localizing foreign policy.“ In addition, factors within the political system, including trends toward decentralization in most western countries and, most importantly, the political processes of continental integration have created opportunities for increasingly professionalized subnational units to pursue. In Europe, the Single European Act (1987) initiated the European Internal Market. The Maastricht Treaty (1992) then set the framework for the Monetary Union. In North America, these processes were fostered by the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the U.S. (FTA 1988) and by the North

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA 1994) between the USA, Canada and Mexico. These highly visible signs of political integration can be seen as catalysts that stimulated and facilitated new cross-border activities on a sub-national level during the last eight years.

Both Europe and North America have witnessed a mushrooming in the development of cross-border region-building since the end of the 1980s. The new momentum in continental integration processes had a strong „spill over“-effect in the borderlands towards a new motivation for „Micro-Integration“. Older cross-border linkages were reinvigorated and for the first time received enough political and financial strength to fulfill some of their long proposed goals. Even more significantly, many new initiatives grew in almost every border region. Even in regions where cross-border co-operation had never been a real issue (and where there was limited socio-economic (2) or environmental interdependence), the „idea“ (3) of a common region became a salient topic at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, changing perceptions about both borders and „neighbors“. A European and a North American example will show this in greater detail.

A European example: the Lake Constance region

The first case outlines the developments in the Lake Constance (Bodensee) region. Lake Constance is the second largest lake in Central Europe and forms part of the border between Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

Cross-border co-operation in the Lake Constance region involves a variety of geographic definitions, but there is an evolving consensus that the „Euro-region“ or „Euregio Bodensee“ includes the German counties of Konstanz, Singen, Sigmaringen and Bodensee in the Land of Baden-Wuerttemberg, the Bavarian county of Lindau, the Austrian Land Vorarlberg, the Swiss Cantons of St. Gallen, Thurgau, Appenzell-Innerrhoden, Appenzell-Ausserrhoden, Schaffhausen and the Fuerstentum Liechtenstein and has about 2 million inhabitants (Leuenberger & Walker 1992).

Cross-border co-operation has a long tradition in this region, with a first „wave“ of extensive institution building, focused mainly on water and environmental issues, emerging in the 1960s and the early 1970s. Since the

60s, environmental groups around the lake have worked together closely. In fact, the beginning of the environmental movement in Germany was very strongly connected with a cross-border issue, namely the (unsuccessful) plan to turn the River Rhine into a navigable waterway from Basle to Lake Constance (Drexler 1980, Scherer/Mueller 1994).

Until the 1960s the fisheries commission (Internationale Bevollmächtigtenkonferenz für die Bodenseefischerei - IBKF), created through a treaty in 1893, was the only intergovernmental institution in the region (Mueller-Schnegg 1994: pp. 122/ 123). In 1960, the International Commission for the Protection of Lake Constance (Internationale Gewässerschutzkommission fuer den Bodensee - IGKB) was established as the result of an international agreement between the German Laender Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bayern, the Swiss Eidgenossenschaft, the Swiss Cantons of St. Gallen and Thurgau and the Republic of Austria. This international agreement has provided a strong legal basis for a common environmental regime and has institutionalized cross-border co-operation through a commission and a variety of working groups and boards (Blatter 1994a).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, two additional cross-border commissions were created: a regulatory body for shipping on the lake (Internationale Schifffahrts-kommission fuer den Bodensee - ISKB); and a commission for spatial planning (Deutsch-Schweizerische Raumordnungskommission - DSRK). The planning commission produced a comprehensive spatial development concept („Leitbild“) for the Lake Constance area during the early 80s (Leuenberger & Walker 1992).

At the beginning of the 1970s a German Landrat (a county chief executive), encouraged by similar initiatives in other regions and proposals in the European Council, tried to initiate a cross-border regional institution comprising municipalities on the eastern end of Lake Constance (Euregio Bodamica). In response, the government of Baden-Wuerttemberg called a meeting of the political leaders of the Laender and Cantons in Konstanz in 1972. There, the International Conference of Government Leaders (Internationale Konferenz der Regierungschefs der Bodenseelaender - IBK) was founded - without any formal agreement or parliamentary ratification (Bullinger 1977).

Besides these political and administrative linkages many private cross-border contacts, often very intense and institutionalized, emerged after the Second World War. A study on cross-border linkages in the Lake Constance region identified over 200 cooperative associations with regular meetings (Mueller-Schnegg 1995). Especially important are the union of the Chambers of Commerce around the lake, the association of water utilities and the association of municipal tourist offices. There are also annual meetings and other events put on by political parties and professional organizations, as well as regular cultural, religious and sports activities (Mueller-Schnegg 1995).

The „second wave“ of political activities and institution building across the border began at the end of the 1980s. In the wake of two conferences on cross-border co-operation at the University of Constance, the Lake Constance Council (Bodenseerat) - a private association of regional leaders from the political, economic and scientific field - was founded in 1991. Clearly spurred by the process of European integration, this group has proclaimed itself to be the „voice“ of the cross-border region and has lobbied for the common region both within the region itself and in the capitals. Several working groups have been created, focusing on the following topics: economy, science, culture, environment and politics (Mueller-Schnegg 1994: pp. 216).

In reaction to the founding of the Bodenseerat, the Conference of the Government Leaders (IBK) enhanced its own activity in scale and scope. Formerly dealing almost exclusively with water issues, the IBK widened its agenda to include all major political issues, augmented their organizational structure and introduced an annual budget. A new common „Leitbild“ for the entire border region was produced and broadly spread through strong marketing efforts. They also set up an office that provides information on the „Euregio Bodensee“ to the public within and outside the region and sponsored a region-wide news service. As a consequence of this new awareness, several newspapers are now providing a special section dedicated to the „other side“ of the border. In 1995, the Electronic Mall Bodensee started its service on the Internet. It is financed mainly by the IBK and managed by three Universities around the Lake.

Environmental groups were also stimulated by the activities of the Lake Constance Council and the new awareness and public discussion on Euro-regions. They focused their co-operation in a new, more formal

structure called Environmental Council of the Lake Constance (Umweltrat Bodensee) (Scherer & Mueller 1994).

All these new activities began in the late 1980s but were given a strong „push“ when the European Union launched the INTERREG-program for border regions in 1990. In 1991-1993, nine hundred million European Currency Units (ECU) were made available to the border regions in Western Europe to promote transboundary cooperation. Border regions apply for these funds by submitting operational programs. New regional steering-committees have been established for implementation of the operational programs. They decide which projects finally will be funded. The steering-committees for the INTERREG-II-program consist mainly of regional officials, but the federal governments and the EU commission also participate.

The most recent development is the formation of an association of the municipalities around the lake (Arbeitsgemeinschaft BodenseeUferGemeinden) in 1995. There are also smaller bi-national groupings like the Borderland Conference (Grenzlandkonferenz) between the neighboring municipalities of Konstanz, Kreuzlingen and Taegerwilen (Leuenberger & Walker 1992) and larger cross-border groupings of which the units of the Lake Constance region represent only parts, as is the case with the encompassing sub-national units of the eastern part of the Alps (ARGE ALP) (Mueller-Schnegg 1994: pp. 221/222).

This broad variety of cross-border institutions and connections shows how far the integration has already gone in some cross-border regions. In the following section several examples of policies and accomplishments that have been realized within this cross-border region will be provided. This represents only a tiny part of the overall accomplishments that could be cited.

Accomplishments

During its first 20 years, the International Commission for the Protection of Lake Constance (IGKB) concentrated its efforts on the problem of organic contamination of the lake. Its remarkable endeavors - involving an expenditure of DM 6,7 billion from 1960 to 1995 for sewage treatment facilities around the lake - resulted in a significant reduction of the lake's phosphorous concentration. The joint activities to protect the

water of Lake Constance represent one of the most successful environmental regimes in the world, measured in terms of real impact. They have also been the wellspring of an innovative environmental strategy, now commonly referred to as the „ecosystem approach.“ In 1986 the Commission published a „Denkschrift“ (think-piece) in which the ecosystem approach was presented for the first time in a cross-border region in Europe (4). Therein, both the definition of the ecological problems and the range of causes for these problems were given a wider scope. No longer was water quality in a narrow sense seen as the only problem. Habitat preservation and the ecological importance of coastal areas (Flachwasserzone) were also recognized as major concerns. In 1987, the IGKB formulated new guidelines (Richtlinien) based on this new, comprehensive approach - to be implemented in the jurisdictions around the lake during the following years (IGKB 1987).

Within a very short time in 1993/94, a new, convenient and efficient direct railway link (length: 70 km) was planned and installed over existing tracks from the German town of Engen to the Swiss town of Wil (which crosses the border at Konstanz/Kreuzlingen). This was possible because the growing awareness of the other side of the border that had been fostered by the increased discourse on regional, cross-border cooperation made it obvious that the small Swiss railway corporation „Mittelthurgau-Bahn“ and the German county of Konstanz had synergetic needs and means (Schnell 1994). Finally, in summer of 1997 a new ferry across the lake, which was co-financed by the sub-national governments, started operations.

A North American example: Cascadia

An example of a young but dynamic cross-border region in North America is „Cascadia“, at the western edge of the U.S.-Canadian border. Depending on the interests and agendas involved, different „boundaries“ of Cascadia are constructed. They range from a conceptualization that includes only the watershed of the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound to one called „Main Street Cascadia“ (the Vancouver, Seattle, Portland Corridor), to a definition that includes Washington State and British Columbia and sometimes even Oregon. The widest approach sees the cross-border entity as a „Pacific Northwest Economic Region“ encompassing five states, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska, and two provinces, British Columbia and Alberta (5).

Until the 1980s, the main institution dealing with border issues in the Pacific Northwest was the International Joint Commission (IJC), established by the federal governments in 1909 to deal with border-related problems along the entire U.S.-Canadian border. Over the years, local governments have played an increasingly important role. In the famous Trail Smelter Case (during 1926-34; see Murray 1972), the subnational jurisdictions were not involved at all (and Canada acted independently from London in international affairs for the first time). In the 1961 Columbia River Treaty case B.C.'s Premier Bennett was a major player, but the cross-border negotiations and the signing of the resulting treaty remained a federal matter (Swainson 1979). Since the 1980s however, the subnational units have played the major roles in water-related cross-border activities (Quinn 1991, Alper & Monahan 1986).

In general, political, non-technical activities of sub-national cross-border units are much more recent in the Pacific Northwest than those in other areas of the US-Canadian border (6) but they have gained a strong momentum during the last years (7).

During the initial era of cross-border linkage creation in Europe, British Columbia rejected attempts from Washington State legislatures to establish formal cross-border contacts (Rutan 1981 and 1985). The dominant cross-border perception has historically been one of distance and economic competition, due to limited sozio-economic interdependence and similarities in natural resources.

A drastic change occurred in the last quarter of the 1980s. In 1988, the year the U.S.-Canadian Free Trade Agreement was signed, British Columbia signed an agreement with Washington State called the „Pacific Northwest Economic Partnership,“ to encourage communication among various private-sector business people in the two jurisdictions (Goddard & Smith 1993: pp. 10). Similar, though less successful, agreements were signed by the British Columbian government with Oregon, California and Alaska. An Energy Co-operation Agreement between British Columbia and Washington followed in 1989 (Alper 1996, Sparke 1997).

In December 1988, a tanker accident off the Washington coast caused an oil spill on the Olympic Peninsula and on Vancouver Island. Expressing strong dissatisfaction with the response of federal authorities, the British Columbian government initiated, despite federal resistance, the

International Oil Spill Task Force, which encompassed British Columbia and the American states of Washington, Oregon, Alaska and California (Groen 1991: pp. 218-246).

Initiated as the „Pacific Northwest Legislative Leadership Forum“ in October 1989, a meeting of legislators in the region resulted in the founding of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) in 1991. With the ratification of co-operation agreements in the sub-national legislatures, the incorporation of the governors and premiers into the association and the support and participation of many private companies, the PNWER has become a comprehensive political institution designed to promote economic development and trade abroad and within the border-spanning region as well. It has a sophisticated organizational structure, with an Executive Director, an Executive Committee, a Delegate Council and several working groups (on agriculture, environmental technology, exports, forest products, government procurements, recycling, telecommunications and tourism). In 1994 PNWER formally established a Private Sector Council.

There exists, however, an ecological vision of the Pacific Northwest that boasts a longer history. In 1975, Ernest Callenbach envisioned in his novel *Ecotopia* an independent ecological state in the Pacific Northwest. *Washington Post* journalist Joel Garreau, in his book *The Nine Nations of North America* (1981), drew the boundaries of a nation of the same name along the West Coast from Northern California to Alaska, encompassing the western parts of Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. But it was not until recently that this vision started gaining real momentum, established deeper ideological foundation and produced some institutional impact. Among ecologists, there is an emerging model based on „bioregions“, in which regions are defined by watersheds. One of the intellectual designers of this idea is David McCloskey, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Seattle. He founded the „Cascadia Institute“ and created a map of Cascadia based on watersheds, which turned out to be very similar to Garreau’s delineation of Ecotopia. In 1996, the Cascadia Times, an independent monthly newspaper for the Pacific Northwest, published in Portland, Oregon, went on the Internet. According to its own statement, it is covering the bioregion defined by the range of the pacific salmon.

Real cross-border institution building among environmental NGOs started in the early 1990s. After the formation of regional environmental associations on both sides of the border, the Seattle-based „People For

Puget Sound“ and the British Columbian „Georgia Strait Alliance“ signed the „Sound and Straits ‘92 Agreement“ and increased their interaction very significantly (Alper 1996).

In 1991, Canadian Member of Parliament Robert L. Wenman (Conservative Party, British Columbia) and U.S. Congressman John Miller (Republican Party, Washington State) prepared a proposal that envisioned a „metro corridor“ stretching from Vancouver, B.C. to Portland, Oregon as an „urban demonstration project,“ to be showcased at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 (Alper 1996). The „Cascadia Corridor Commission“ was to be an „advisory“ body with the authority to establish a forum to co-ordinate consideration of regional issues by local, state, provincial, regional, and national governments. It was also to develop a strategic plan for environmentally sound economic development in the Cascadia region. The concept of a Cascadia Corridor Commission gained immediate support in the Pacific Northwest and in Washington, D.C. and a bill that laid the legal and financial foundation for such a commission passed the U.S. House and Senate. However, the new British Columbia government and the Washington State government backed out and the initiative failed. The New Democratic Party that now formed the B.C. government opposed free trade agreements and was suspicious of the Cascadia idea, which they saw as an attempt to make B.C. a part of the U.S (8). State and provincial officials both feared a too-strong federal involvement (Alley 1995).

However, the Cascadia idea continued to be promoted in a more modest form on both sides of the border. On the U.S. side, the then retired Senator John Miller brought the idea to the Discovery Institute, a conservative think tank in Seattle. There, he started a Cascadia Program focusing on „The Four T’s“ - Transportation, Trade, Tourism and Technology - throughout the corridor (Schell and Hamer 1995: pp. 154). A „Cascadia Task Force“ including, among others, the mayors of the major cities along „Main Street Cascadia“ and a „Cascadia Economic Council“ that includes leading private corporations, were set up.

The discussion about a Cascadia Corridor Commission was followed by another activity that resulted in the signing of an Environmental Co-operation Agreement between Washington State and British Columbia in May 1992 and in the building of a sophisticated structure for regular and comprehensive co-operation on environmental issues. The agreement established an Environmental Co-operation Council.

The Council's members are British Columbia's Deputy Minister of the Environment, Lands and Parks and the Director of the Washington Department of Ecology (Alley 1996).

The signing of the Growth Management Agreement and the Transportation Co-operation Agreement between British Columbia and Washington in September 1994 further facilitated transgovernmental co-operation, although both agreements functioned merely as legal frameworks for activities already under way.

As in the Lake Constance region, the most recent development is the establishment of more formal and comprehensive linkages between the municipalities. Major cities were already very actively participating in the Cascadia Project and since March 1994 the three metropolitan regions of Portland, Seattle and Vancouver have met as the Cascadia Metropolitan Caucus to develop a cooperative agenda on environmental issues, land use and transportation planning. The smaller municipalities at the border had always enjoyed many informal contacts but recently focused and formalized these contacts through the founding of the Association of Border Communities (Artibise 1996).

As with the foregoing example of the Lake Constance region, this discussion of Cascadia can also be complemented with some examples of accomplishments resulting from cross-border cooperation.

Accomplishments

The above mentioned oil-spill did not result in a cross-border conflict, as was very likely given that the U.S. reaction to protect their own coast line by pulling the leaking tanker onto the high seas had the consequence of polluting the coast of Canada's Vancouver Island. Instead, the subnational units reacted immediately to co-ordinate and strengthen their protection efforts. The Oil Spill Task Force provided very comprehensive recommendations that ranged from risk prevention to joint infrastructure development (Groen 1991: pp. 228-235).

Under the auspices of the British Columbia-Washington State Environmental Co-operation Council an International Marine Science Panel comprised of American and Canadian scientists was appointed in July 1993. The Marine Science Panel produced a report that contained high-priority recommendations. As a next step, a detailed action plan was formulated that

has now to be implemented by the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin International Task Force. Further, the activities of the Council and its subgroups have resulted in cross-border interagency Memorandums of Understanding in which cross-border information and participation in the permitting processes is assured. Such an MOU has already been signed in the field of air pollution permits and is in preparation in the fields of water pollution permits and Environmental Assessment Procedures. Several recommendations of the Marine Science Panel are now in the process of being implemented on both sides of the border (9).

An early success of the Cascadia activists was the restoration of a Seattle to Vancouver train link that had ceased operation 13 years previously. AMTRAK revived this connection in May 1995 by inaugurating one daily round-trip train (Kelly 1995). In addition, rail services in Washington and Oregon were extended. These successes are even more remarkable since they occurred at a time when AMTRAK was reducing its service in most other parts of the United States due to budget cuts handed down by the new, Republican-dominated United States Congress (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 17.2.95). This newly restored Seattle-Vancouver connection is seen as a first step to a high-speed train corridor from Oregon to Vancouver (Alper 1996: pp. 7; Mazza 1995a). As a last example of cross-border cooperation, many efforts are underway in the tourism industry to promote the common region as a place for a two-nation vacation.

Overall, these two cross-border regions represent a general trend of cross-border region building with the development of a broad variety of cross-border linkages mainly in the form of inter-organizational informal networks and „soft institutions“ (Lang 1989).

3. Functions of cross-border cooperation for better policies

The following analytical description will focus first on the opportunities opened up by cross-border institutions. Four important functions of cross-border co-operation can be distinguished:

- Establishing a „regulatory regime“
- Functioning as a „transfer hinge“
- Creating an „innovation pole“
- Facilitating cross-border „coalition building“

In reality these functions often overlap; the differentiation is merely analytical but useful in highlighting various elements. These functions have different disciplinary origins. Whereas the first function represents the dominant legalistic and normative approach, the next two result from economic considerations and the last represents a typical political science approach. The following examples of these functions are drawn from the field of environmental policy, but these roles can be applied to all policy areas and goals.

Establishing a regulatory regime

In the absence of an encompassing authority to deal with externalities in common pool situations, the only way to reduce the typical resulting problems is to build an environmental „regime“. Regimes can be defined as „a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given arena of international relations“ (Krasner 1983: pp. 2). The main goals of such a regime are to reduce uncertainty, harmonize standards and policies and to ensure compliance through monitoring. The building of such environmental regimes started in border regions like Lake Constance in Europe (Prittwitz 1984) and the Great Lakes in North America. In the 1980s, continental and global environmental regimes emerged to deal with various issues. The water commission at Lake Constance represents one „classic“ example, whereas the B.C./Washington Environmental Cooperation Council is a late but dynamic example of such a regime. Substantial literature on the characteristics and functions of such regimes has developed (for example: Haas, Keohane and Levy 1995). Less attention has been given to the following functions, which can emerge within regimes but which do not need a full regime approach since no consensus among the participating jurisdictions on potentially restricting norms is necessary.

Functioning as a transfer hinge

There are many examples of useful cross-border institutional learning. One notable example is an effort to integrate all regional public transportation systems through the introduction of a simple and very reasonably priced monthly pass, or „ecoticket“ labeled „Umweltkarte.“ This approach, combined with a high profile public awareness campaign, was first implemented in Basle, Switzerland. Basle shared its „Umweltkarte“ concept with its cross-border co-operation partner, the neighboring German

city of Freiburg. The „Umweltkarte“ concept spread later from Freiburg throughout Germany (Blatter 1995).

Creating an innovation pole

An example of cross-border co-operation based on an effective use of synergy is the cross-border rail connection mentioned earlier. The rapid emplacement of a new cross-border rail link was made possible because the small Swiss railway corporation „Mittelthurgau-Bahn“ and the German county of Konstanz had synergetic needs and means and they co-operated in a very personal and non-bureaucratic manner. The results were impressive - a 40% increase in passengers on the German side in the first year of service. This sort of new alliance in public transportation became a highly recognized model in Germany and Switzerland, because in both countries the railway systems are in the process of re-structuring (Schnell 1994). Because of the cross-border model, the „Mittelthurgau-Bahn“ made a successful bid for the take-over of another railway connection on the Swiss side of the Lake Constance region, one that had formerly been provided by the national railway company.

In these examples, the border regions fulfilled the role of „contact zones“ (Ratti 1993a/ 1993b). In the first example, cross-border co-operation serves as a transfer hinge, because an innovative concept was transferred from one country to another through the contact of border towns. In the latter example the cross-border co-operation was an innovation pole, because innovative models for both countries were born in that co-operation.

Facilitating cross-border coalition building

In the foregoing discussion the way to progress has been seen as inter-territorial coordination or as transfer and creation of innovations. This might be adequate for many projects and measures, but often changes towards better policies can only be reached against the routines and perceived interests of groups and political actors. The result is a conflict between „advocacy coalitions“ (Sabatier 1991, 1993) or, in administrative terms, a competition or conflict between sectoral departments or agencies. International and cross-border political pressure can help to overcome resistance or to win a contested policy issue. However, external pressure is often problematic because it can result in adverse reactions and because it

makes it easy to discredit „foreign“ demand for changes as imperialistic behavior. Such was the case in 1992 when B.C.'s Forestry Minister said: „From my point of view, Vice-President-elect Gore has nothing to say in any kind of administrative sense about what happens in B.C.“ (Smith 1992/93: pp. 8). More helpful is a situation wherein domestic actors can use their cross-border connections to strengthen their position in cross-sectoral disputes. Joint statements, proclaimed goals and ratified plans provide normative obligations for governments that can be used in interdepartmental conflicts or in implementation processes. These techniques exemplify the concept of „coalition building“ that Keohane and Nye (1976) introduced into the theory of transnational and transgovernmental relations. Coalition building is described as follows: „To improve their chances of policy success, governmental sub-units may attempt to bring actors from other governments into their own decision-making processes as allies“ (Keohane and Nye 1976: pp. 10). Central for this concept is its recognition of the multidimensionality of political interrelations and arenas (10). However, the concept focused on the relationship between the international activities of subnational actors and the intergovernmental relations within a federation. Coalition-building should include not only the whole range of political actors (politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs) and of potential connected political arenas (especially the intersectoral arena) but also the whole variety of „political resources“ (e.g. knowledge, binding or non-binding normative proclamations, reputation, money) that an actor can gain from cross-border co-operation and use in political processes in other arenas.

Four examples illustrate the wide range of situations that can be included by the notion of cross-border coalition-building. The first example relates to the Oil Spill Task Force described earlier. The Oil Spill Task Force and cross-border public awareness were used by British Columbia's Minister for the Environment against its Minister for Energy's attempt to sign an offshore drilling accord with the federal government. The Minister of the Environment announced a 5-year drilling moratorium „in order to complement the work of the B.C.-Washington-Alaska Task Force on Oil Spills“. Energy Minister Davis noted glumly: „While the province and the federal government jointly carried out some very extensive studies... I don't think either Ottawa or Victoria wants to parade this one forward for final resolution right now.“ (Original citations from Groen 1991: pp. 237). Groen stressed: „The search for an accord, a twenty-five year old federal-provincial issue, has been delayed out of concern for trans-border sensitivities“ (Groen 1991: pp. 237/238). Even more important than the

provincial-federal dimension was the inter-sectoral arena in which cross-border linkages were put to use. The Minister for the Environment obviously used the cross-border linkage to stop the developmental goals of his cabinet colleague.

An example from the Lake Constance area shows the mechanism that an established cross-border advocacy-coalition can use against problematic projects in border regions. At the beginning of the 90s there were plans to build new hydroelectric power plants along the Alpine River Rhine in Switzerland. The Alpine River Rhine is the main inflow into Lake Constance, so concerns were raised about possible negative impacts on the lake. The IGKB used the following, already routinized, mechanism to handle the problem: The scientific board prepared a report on the possible impacts; the commission passed a resolution against the plans and the delegations from Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bavaria drew up official submissions to the Swiss federal agency responsible for the permissions. The water-protection agencies of the Swiss Cantons used their domestic contacts to prevent the construction of the hydropower plants (Blatter 1994a).

There are also examples which show the limitations of cross-border coalition-building. In 1993, environmental groups in the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound area had developed the idea of establishing a cooperative International Biosphere Reserve comprised of a Northwest Straits Sanctuary in northern Puget Sound on the Washington side and the British Columbian Strait of Juan de Fuca (11). When resistance against the Sanctuary on the U.S. side occurred, the environmental advocacy coalition tried hard to use cross-border coalition-building strategies to overcome the hurdles: Meetings „brought together the most active players in marine conservation from government (at provincial, state and federal levels) and non-governmental organizations from BC and Washington State, and provided fertile ground for information sharing, brainstorming and a heightened sense of inspiration.“ (SGS newsletter August-October 1995). In August 1995, *Sans Boundary News* reported that Canadian federal and provincial agencies had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with substantial commitments for a National Marine Conservation Area adjoining the U.S. border. „An important point was made in the MOU to propose to the United States to create similar areas on Washington’s side of the border.“ But the British Columbia/Washington Environmental Cooperation Council refused to endorse a commitment to the proposed

Common Conservation Area, fearing that losing such a first attempt would discredit the Council. Today, the chances for the project seem poor (SGS newsletter Spring 1996).

The regulation of motor-boats on Lake Constance is another example of cross-border coalition building. The rapidly increasing number of motor boats on Lake Constance since the 1950s was the background for a long-term battle regarding international regulations from the late 1960s until the beginning of the 1990s. Attempts of the environmental „advocacy coalition“ around the lake to implement restrictions on motor boats resulted in the creation and fostering of an equivalent user oriented „advocacy coalition“. In the center of these advocacy coalitions were the transgovernmental commissions - the water commission (IGKB) on the one side and the shipping commission (ISKB) on the other side. After a very confrontational round of public battles and rather unsuccessful negotiations in the 1970s, the Conference of the Government Leaders (IBK) established a sub-commission in which members of the other commissions participated. This integrating sub-commission then played an successful mediating role in the conflict. The most remarkable result was the binding introduction of a new standard for motor boat exhausts that was unique in the world (Blatter 1994a).

The last example clearly shows that the distinction between the functions of cross-border co-operation is simply an analytical one. In the case of the motor boats, cross-border co-operation provided three functions. It created a regulatory regime, produced a new, innovative standard and demonstrated the extended use of coalition-building strategies.

4. Consequences for the search for sustainability

While cross-boundary co-operation has been found to serve important functions in furthering policy goals, this does not necessarily mean that cross-border cooperation helps to promote sustainable development based solutions. The preconditions that promote sustainable development may be summarized as the existence of institutions that help to overcome intersectoral cleavages. Cross-border linkages, it will be shown, make it harder to create such preconditions.

The central point of reference in current debates on sustainable development is the declaration that was signed at the Earth Summit in Rio

de Janeiro in 1992. The official definition of sustainable development is: „Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs“ (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

In attempts to operationalize this goal, one procedural principle gained central importance: the need for cross-sectoral integration. As Thierstein and Walser (1997) put it: „The strengths lie in its cross sectional character which integrates economics, ecology and social aspects.“ The Rio Declaration states that peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible (Principle 25). Sustainable development is comprised of three problem dimensions that should be analyzed in parallel (Daly 1992 according to Thierstein/Walser 1997):

- Economic Dimension: The problem of efficiency dictates the necessary optimal possibility for the use of all resources: the focus is on allocation;
- Ecological Dimension: The contingency problem describes the necessity to limit the total amount of overall non-sustainable resource use: the focus is on scale;
- Social Dimension: The problem of distribution clearly defines the necessity of a relatively equal distribution of all resources, so that social and spatial cohesion is guaranteed: the focus is on distribution.

Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) states: „As we focus on sustainable development, a more holistic approach is needed...“ (Dowdeswell 1995: pp. 5). For scholars of international environmental law the „Principle of Integration“ is one of the four legal principles sustainable development entails (Sands 1995: pp. 61). Furthermore, others stressed that „...the most essential principle of international law for sustainable development is the principle, be it legal or otherwise, of integration“ (Mann 1995: pp. 71).

The need for integrated social, economic and ecological goals not only is reflected in international law, but has also attracted a good deal of attention in regional planning, resulting in the evolvment of integrative development plans. One example is the report of the B.C. Commission on Resources and Environment, „Finding Common Ground: A Shared Vision For Land Use In British Columbia“ (1994: pp. 11) that states: „Land use planning and management shall be cross-sectoral, comprehensive and

integrated. The processes will address the full range of environmental, social and economic concerns and values.“

The institutional reaction to „Rio“ was the creation of integrative Round Tables, Commissions, or Interagency Task Forces on the national and regional level in many countries (for Canadian experiences see: „National Round Table Review“; for Switzerland: Thierstein & Walser 1997). It is exactly this institutional dimension of, or institutional precondition for, sustainable development on which we must focus. Although there are other meaningful definitions and indicators for sustainable development (a very comprehensive overview provides: Pezzoli 1997a and 1997b), there are good reasons to focus on such an institutional definition.

First, within Political Science the „New Institutionalism“ (March & Olsen 1989, Powell & DiMaggio 1991, Keck 1991, Lowndes 1996, Scharpf 1997) brought new attention to the fact, that policy and politics are strongly influenced by the institutional setting. Institutions are not reduced to organizations and formal rules. The sociological branch of the New Institutionalism includes routines, symbols and leitmotivs as important aspects of the institutional setting (Göhler 1994, Immergut 1997).

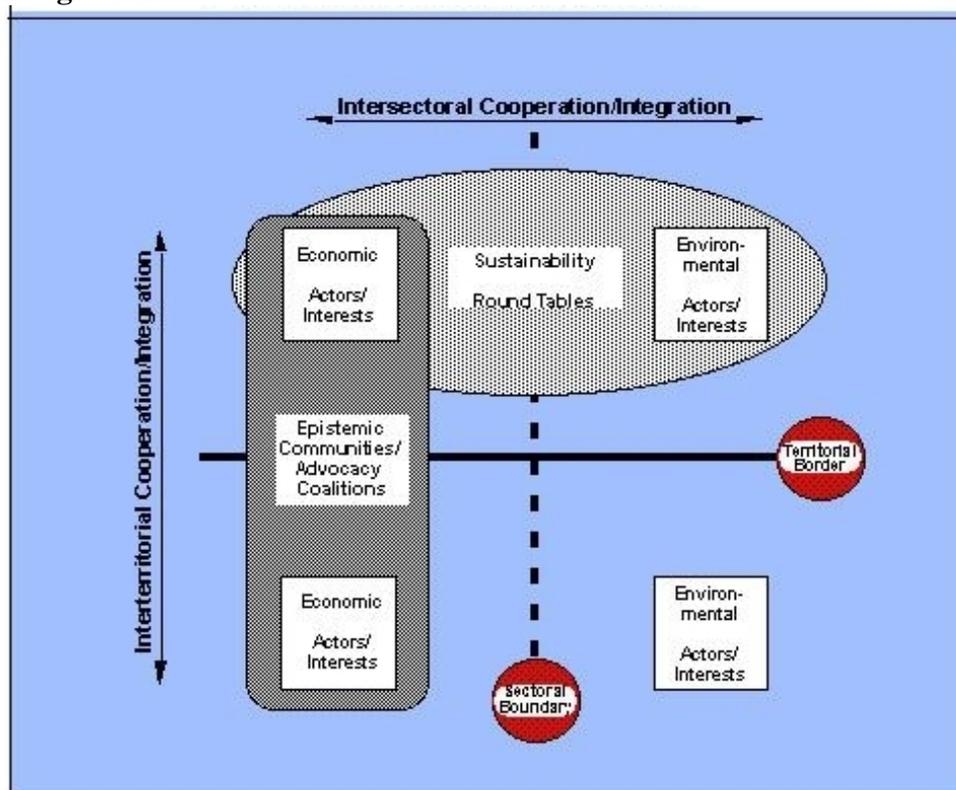
Second, an institutional criteria for sustainable development reflects new approaches in urban and regional planning: It is not comprehensive plans with detailed indicators but the planning process embedded in institutional settings that is the most important element of successful planning. Intersectoral communication and cooperation, round tables and forums are seen as crucial elements towards innovative and sustainable development (Sinning 1995, Kräft 1995, Knieling 1994) (12).

The next step is to apply this definition of sustainability to the emerging cross-border regions. A striking characteristic of cross-border regions is that the linkages across the border are almost always centered around sectoral focal points. We can see this sectoral differentiation in the process of cross-border region building on different levels:

- The formation of various selective “policy networks” (Marin & Mayntz 1991),
- The existence and relevance of antagonistic „epistemic communities“ (Haas 1987), and

- The appearance of antagonistic „visions“ in respect to what the cross-border region is intended to accomplish.

FIGURE 1: Inter-Territorial And Inter-Sectoral Co-Operation And Integration



The existence of two different cross-border sectoral “policy networks” in the Lake Constance area became very obvious in light of events that occurred at the University of Constance in Spring of 1995. In April 1995 there was an international meeting called „Environmental policy in border regions: Lake Constance - a model for Europe?“ It was financed by the environmental subcommission of the Conference of Government Leaders (IBK) and attended by scientists, politicians, bureaucrats, consultants and members of non-governmental organizations involved in environmental policies from all jurisdictions around the lake. Two weeks later, a book presentation also brought together a broad variety of politicians, bureaucrats and business people from the Euregio Bodensee. In a common cross-border effort, a guide to all private companies in the bordering

jurisdictions was published. No one attended both meetings. The connections and network links of the environmental actors are clearly emerging in parallel to the links of the business groups. Both groups are investing more and more time and resources for better communication across the border - the same cannot be said for their efforts to communicate with each other (13).

But it is not just the fact that time and resources are redirected by cross-border activities. Sectoral and antagonistic world view and beliefs get reinforced by the communication with similar minded people from the other side of the border. Peter M. Haas' notion of „epistemic communities“ (14) draw attention to those processes where experts from various countries share specific beliefs and are trying to influence the policy of their national governments. He pointed to the positive effects of those epistemic communities towards international cooperation. Again, what is helpful for interterritorial coordination and integration seems to have negative side-effects for the search for cross-sectoral coordination. The problematic consequences of the existence of epistemic communities can be illustrated very clearly in the example of the disputed motor boat regulations on Lake Constance which has been discussed earlier. The two advocacy coalitions (15) - the environmentalists on one side and the boaters on the other side, along with „their“ respective transgovernmental commissions - had totally different perceptions of the problem. For the environmentalists, the negative impact of the boats on the environment was obvious; their argument relied strongly on the number of boats on the Lake (over 50 thousand). On the other side, the boaters denied that the boats were a serious threat; they perceived the problem mainly as an artificial statistical problem created by the (German) boat permission regulations, which force all boat owners to register their boats even if they are used only once a year. The cross-border linkages and communications that exist almost exclusively among people within one community reinforced these different perceptions and made it very difficult to bridge the cleavages and to find a compromise (Blatter 1994a).

The formation of antagonistic advocacy coalitions and epistemic communities in border regions is not limited to specific controversial issues. Indeed, it is a central characteristic of emerging cross-border regions and it is underpinned by the existence of ideas that function as stimulating visions (16) for the diversity of actors within these groups. The two dominant coalitions or communities are the environmental and the business groups.

The cleavage between these vision-based (17) communities is most obvious in the Pacific Northwest. Here, the different visions for cross-border regions are clearly contoured: The initiator of the PNWER, Senator Bluechel, made his view very clear in the headline of an article: „Reaping profit from the new world order“ (Bluechel 1991). Another pronouncement states: „PNWER’s objective is to put together the necessary critical mass for the region to become a major player in the new global economy“ (PNWER-Web-Site). This view is also very present in the Discovery Institute’s publication „International Seattle: Creating a Globally Competitive Community,“ which was the starting point for their engagement into the Cascadia Project (Hamer/Chapman 1993). This vision refers to the notions of „region states“ in a „borderless world“ (Ohmae 1993).

The environmentalist actors all refer to the notion of a common cross-border „bioregion“. In their view, „place“ - connectedness through a common watershed (and airshed) - is the essential bond between people in a community (Henkel 1993, McCloskey 1995). Witness the following statement: „The coming Cascadia may even prefigure a form of biologically rooted, ecological self-governance that transcends and essentially replaces the reign of nation-states“ (Mazza 1995c:1).

Whereas both communities are united in downplaying the future importance of the nation-state, their visions for Cascadia are diametrically opposed. Belief in the need for adaptation to the rules of the space- and border-less global economy on the one side is pitted against the vision of self-governance in accordance with inherent biological and cultural characteristics on the other side (Mazza 1995b, Henkel 1993).

How important cognitive aspects like symbols and names are in the struggle towards building cross-border regions, can be highlighted by some examples: At Lake Constance, the environmental groups established a foundation for Lake Constance (Bodenseestiftung) in 1995 primarily because they feared the Bodenseerat would have the same idea and would capture the name. When the business-oriented Bodenseerat came up with a logo for the common cross-border region the governmental organization IBK reacted with the promotion of an official logo for the „Euregio Bodensee“. In the Pacific Northwest region there has been a dispute about the name „Cascadia Institute“ between Prof. McCloskey, Seattle and Prof. Artibise, Vancouver. Both are the most important designers of the different

concepts about Cascadia and are in the center of the rivalrous epistemic communities in this cross-border region (Times Colonist, 12.4. 1995).

There is almost no communication across the conceptual boundaries between these communities. Enhanced cross-border communication makes this general problem more inevitable, because in order to bridge cross-border institutional and cultural differences the actors rely on their sectoral philosophical and professional commonalities which lay the ground for their shared visions. Investing time in interterritorial understanding and cooperation reduces the possibilities for cross-sectoral communication and coordination.

In summary, territorial integration results in the fostering of antagonistic communities and networks that make bridging the cleavages between those groups even more complicated. Therefore, it seems that the search for sustainability is not facilitated but constrained by the processes of cross-border institution building. What we have demonstrated here by using examples from the field of border regions seems to be a general result of territorial integration processes. Bollens (1997) has shown for metropolitan areas that fragmentation and compartmentalization of regional governance is the price to be paid for that intermunicipal coordination and cooperation occurs at all. One of the central characteristics of governance in the European Union is a strong functional (sectoral) segmentation (among others: Eising & Kohler-Koch 1994: pp. 187). (Environmental) regimes are not only as a scientific concept per definition „sectoral legal systems“ (Gehring 1991) but in fact almost always strictly limited towards sectoral policy goals.

5. Dialectic innovation: An avenue for Multidimensional integration?

There is some evidence that this sectoral differentiation is not the inevitable outcome of interterritorial integration processes. Cross-border regions also provide examples of their potential to fulfill the next necessary step in the differentiation-integration dialectic.

In both cross-border regions which have been described, the larger country delivers most of the prerequisites for cross-border integration:

- The first essential ingredient is the conceptual framework. It is no coincidence that the ideas which facilitate inter-territorial co-operation (both the idea of a bioregion and the idea of an economic region) were generated in the U.S..

- The second essential ingredient is money. It is a U.S. foundation which provides British Columbia's „Georgia Strait Alliance“ with the money for its cross-border activities. Clearly, most of the money for PNWER and the Cascadia Project came from the U.S. side. At Lake Constance, the resource-rich and powerful German ENGOs are the motors of cross-border co-operation on environmental issues.

- The same picture applies with respect to the third ingredient: administrative and scientific capacity. In the Lake Constance area, the much bigger administration of the German Laender was the driving force in initialization and institutionalization of cross-border linkages. The principal scientific institution involved in the ecological discussions around the lake is the Institute for Marine Biology of the Land of Baden-Wuerttemberg (Blatter 1994a: pp. 26/27). In the economic realm, it is no accident that the „Euregio-Bureau“ is located in and sponsored mainly by the county administration of Konstanz. In Cascadia, the more active institutions working on economic co-operation are all located in Seattle.

In contrast to this picture, the „potentials“ to bridge intersectoral boundaries are found on the side of the smaller and more consensus-oriented countries:

- In the case of the motor boats, after the advocacy coalitions expertly promoted their antagonistic positions by consulting German institutes, it was the Swiss members of the water and the shipping commission who found a common understanding and smoothed the way to the final compromise (Blatter 1994a).

- In contrast to the polarizing concepts on the American side, the differences between Canadian approaches formulated in the Georgia Basin Initiative and the approaches of the Institute for Sustainable Cities/Cascadia Institute (B.C.) are not very substantial. Ironically, the reason why there has been no successful synthesis in this region may lay in the stressed cultural similarities of the West. British Columbia has a rather populist and polarized political culture, which makes it more similar to the U.S. than to the rest of Canada (Morley 1990). This might

be one reason why the British Columbian actors have not been able to play the bridging role between the different cross-border communities (until now).

Finally, there remains the hope that the dialectic process of modernization has the potential to lead to the necessary third synthetical step: After thesis (cross-border economic region) and antithesis (cross-border bioregion) there might be a synthesis (sustainable region). The last examples offer some support for the proposition that it is not similarity or homogeneity, but complementarity, that will be the key to successful multidimensional integration processes. Cross-border regions might be ideal platforms where the power and dynamics of differentiated systems can be fruitfully brought together with systems which possess the ability to find ways and means for compromise and integration.

Notes

(1) I would like to thank Suzanne Cornwell and Helen Ingram for their help. A further thank-you belongs to the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, Bonn, and the Gottfried Daimler und Karl Benz Stiftung, Ladenburg, for their financial support of my research on cross-border co-operation in Europe and North America.

(2) In both examples described below there is limited economic interdependence between the sub-regions. The proponents of cross-border cooperation turn this argument around and contend that this is a result of the border and therefore a reason for cooperation (Goldberg & Levi 1992/93). However, recent research has shown that even in cross-border regions, with a long tradition of cooperation at the German-Dutch border, 30 years of cross-border political cooperation has not created very much economic cooperation between the sub-regions (Hamm 1996).

(3) Note that the phrase „idea“ is used in this essay not in the sense that rational choice approaches apply as a focal point in moments of uncertainty or multiple Nash equilibrium (see for example: Garret & Weingast 1993) but more fundamentally in a constructivist sense: ideas are independent factors which shape the identities and preferences of political actors. In this case, the new awareness of continental integration and enhanced competition changed the identities of border region from „national periphery“ to „European heartlands“ for example. Furthermore, political

actors in border areas changed their perception toward their neighbors across the national boundary line from neglect toward potential cooperation partner and allies. The new willingness to cooperate across boundaries cannot be seen and does not need a change in interaction orientation (Scharpf 1997), the change in preferences simple occurs because new options have been discovered through the discourse about integration. The „spill over“ from the continental level should be conceptualized as „ideal“ or „perceptual“ because the initiatives in the border regions started very often clearly before there have been policy programs and funds for the border regions - as will be demonstrated in the following examples.

(4) At the River Rhine it took about ten years longer to introduce an „eco-system approach (Villeneuve 1996). However, at the Great Lakes the ecosystem approach has already officially been adopted in 1978 (Dworsky 1993).

(5) For a map showing the various geographic definitions, see: [http://www.cascadianet.com /images/cascadia.map.gif](http://www.cascadianet.com/images/cascadia.map.gif).

(6) Descriptions of developments in other US-Canadian border regions can be found in: Feldman & Gardner Feldman 1984 and 1990, Alper 1986, Fanjoy 1990.

(7) It remains to be seen whether this momentum of cooperation survives the hostilities of the current (summer 1997) fishery war.

(8) Interview with the former Premier of British Columbia, Mike Harcourt, 11.8. 1996.

(9) Interviews with officials in the administrations of British Columbia and Washington State in autumn 1996.

(10) For example the relation between the different levels of government, the public and the private sector, the executive and the legislative branch; for a comprehensive discussion on this point: Blatter 1997.

(11) Saving Georgia Strait (SGS), newsletter published by the ‘Georgia Strait Alliance,’ June 1995.

(12) Additionally, because the focus of this essay is on the institutions of cross-border or interterritorial integration, the need for coherence dictates that sustainability is defined in institutional terms as well.

(13) It shall be noted that the generalization of this event is not based on a solid network analysis but only on impressions the author received during the 6 years he was observing the cross-border activities in his home region.

(14) Haas defines "epistemic communities" as "a specific community of experts sharing a belief in a common set of cause-and-effect relationships as well as common values to which policies governing these relationships will be applied" (Haas 1989: 384).

(15) Advocacy coalitions and epistemic communities are used here interchangeable because the core of both concepts is that the members of these groups share a belief system and it is about cognitive convergence (Scharpf 1997: 42). Haas' concept of epistemic communities fits here as far as it focuses on cognitive factors in international relations (Haas 1989); Sabatier' concept of advocacy coalitions is closer in two aspects: there is not one but two rivalrous communities and these groups are not only bound by normative and causal beliefs but also by material interests (Sabatier 1993).

(16) The word „vision“ will be used here instead of „idea“ because the conceptualization of idea in political science seems to be already as broad as it is the case with „institution“ which makes it less useful (Blyth 1997). Especially important is the distinction from the conceptualization of „ideas“ in the rational choice approaches (Barry and Weingast 1993).

(17) The word "vision" can be found very often in the statements and writings of these actors. Visions should be seen as a mixture between „ideology“ and „mission“. Visions are almost as fundamental and deep as ideologies but they are not as encompassing since they are only bound to one project and not to politics in general. Mission is a phrase from the management literature which stresses the stimulating aspect of a common endeavor. Visions for (cross-border) regions embody three aspects: a label (here: region-state versus bio-region); a point of reference (here: global market place versus natural carrying capacity); and an ontological basis (anarchic competition versus holistic harmony).

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