Geopolitics of Cross-Border Cooperation at the EU's External Borders

Discourses of de-and re-bordering, territorial perceptions and actor relations within the Finnish-Russian ENI cooperation network

Katharina Koch

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Abstract

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The study of borders has confronted us with a variety of new challenges within the contemporary global political environment that is characterised by re-bordering dynamics in the form of political speeches and practices that remind us of the modern form of territorial control that the state still aims to maintain. The EU attempts to confront conflicts and political challenges in its neighbourhood by establishing a cross-border strategy based on control and surveillance as well as economic, political and social integration through cross-border cooperation (CBC) practices. Thus, CBC also reflects a border security strategy because it supports the objective of the EU to stabilise the neighbourhood. I argue that cooperation, within the current geopolitical environment, is utilised by the EU as a securitising strategy at its external borders. This research examines how the discourse on 'stable' borders, formulated by the cooperation actors at various levels, securitises cross-border cooperation. This thesis studies the way in which CBC actors discursively contribute to the EU's security strategy by analysing speech acts and practices formulated and enacted by the cooperation actors in the context of region-building, multi-level governance (MLG) and trust that are conceptualised as de-and re-bordering performativities.

The discourse on stable borders within CBC is examined in the context of the Finnish-Russian border. Finnish accession to the EU has transformed its national state border with Russia into an EU external border underlying specific requirements in accordance with the Schengen regulations. In conjunction with the establishment of the ENP in 2004, the EU has introduced a new CBC funding tool that aimed to enhance the integration of non-EU states into the cooperation frameworks. The European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI 2007−2013) and its successor, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI 2014−2020) serve as the temporal and thematic methodological focus to investigate the discourse on stable and secure borders in the context of such cross-border regional structures.

This thesis consists of three articles that each reflect a specific analytical emphasis on the de- and re-bordering practices that are under scrutiny in this thesis – region-building, MLG, and trust – to analyse how they contribute to the discursive production of security in the external cross-border regions. The research material presents a multi-dimensional perspective consisting of policy documents, semi-structured interviews and public dissemination material. The material is analysed from a critical geopolitical perspective, which focuses on the study of power relations between actors. Discourse analysis, in accordance with critical discourse analysis (CDA) and discourse theory, form the methodological basis by suggesting that both texts and practices constitute the discourse. The results show that Finnish-Russian ENI CBC represents a securitising external border policy tool with regional and multi-level governmental characteristics that serve the security interests of the EU. Nevertheless, the Finnish sub-national actors have developed strategies to address and overcome the territorialities of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC by building trustful relations not only across the border but also with the institutional stakeholders in Helsinki and Brussels that are crucial in current diplomatic relations between the EU and Russia.

The ENI CBC programmes present a spatial configuration at the external borders, which requires a careful coordination to include different actors operating at various spatial scales simultaneously. This study suggests that critical geopolitical approaches towards conceptualising the border in the context of cross-border structures benefits from the inclusion of European governance literature, which in turn, has previously neglected the spatial perspective that critical geopolitics can offer for the study of EU external CBC.

Supervisors

Professor Anssi Paasi
Geography Research Unit
University of Oulu, Finland

Docent, Dr. Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola, Senior Research Fellow
Geography Research Unit
University of Oulu, Finland

Pre-examiners

Professor Merje Kuus
Department of Geography
The University of British Columbia, Canada

Associate Professor Gabriel Popescu
Department of Political Science
Indiana University South Bend, United States of America

Official Opponent

Professor Jarmo Kortelainen
Department of Geographical and Historical Studies
University of Eastern Finland, Finland

List of original articles

Article I   Koch, K. (2015). Region-building and Security: The Multiple Borders of the Baltic Sea Region after EU Enlargement. *Geopolitics* 20, 3: 535–558.

Article II   Koch, K. (2017a). The role of territoriality in the European Union multi-level governmental cooperation framework of Finnish-Russian cross-border cooperation. *European Urban and Regional Studies* <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776417736359>

Article III   Koch, K. (2017b). The spatiality of trust in EU external cross-border cooperation. *European Planning Studies* 26: 3, 591–610.

List of abbreviations

BSR	INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
CBR	Cross-border region
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
ELARG	Directorate-General "Enlargement"
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
EUSBR	European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
FORMIN	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
JMA	Joint Management Authority
MLG	Multi-level governance
NEAR	Directorate-General "Neighbourhood and Enlargement"
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
REGIO	Directorate-General "Regional Policy"
SIS	Schengen Information System
TACIS	Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEM	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland

Acknowledgements

This section, sitting comfortably at the beginning of this work, marks the end of a journey. When I started my Ph.D., I only knew that it would require hard work, that time is of the essence and that it certainly has life-changing implications. All in all, a challenging process. Well…little else did I know what would happen between then and now. Starting a Ph.D. in a foreign country was perhaps my own "extra" challenge, particularly within the discipline of Geography in which I had no formal degree. My chosen field of study can be located within the traditions of "border studies". This particular relationship with borders has followed me throughout my life and perhaps influenced my decision to study them. This interest began with long and tedious waiting hours in the car at the German-Danish border while my parents tried to keep me entertained in the middle of the motorway; cycling numerous times in a frenzy across the Dutch-Belgian border for early-morning lectures that were not to be missed; and standing with an accelerating heartbeat in front of a grimly looking border guard at the port of entry in St. Petersburg, Russia. In this way, borders have been part of my life, consciously or not.

I have crossed state borders, disciplinary borders and extended my own personal frontiers by gaining new experiences. Choosing Finland as my new destination and Oulu as my new home had multiple reasons. Some were personal, some were professional. I knew I would become part of a network of experts in border studies. Beginning my Ph.D. at the official start of the RELATE Centre of Excellence project was perhaps a privilege in the sense that I benefitted from the work that had already been done to convince the Academy of Finland to grant the funding. Of course, the work did not end there, it had only begun.

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1 Introduction

Throughout the last three decades, global geopolitics has been marked by the end of the Cold War, the debate on globalisation and digitalisation, the advancement of surveillance technologies in the wake of the US and European terror attacks, as well as the political instability of the European Union (EU) economy and its geographical expansion through enlargement (Jones & Johnson 2016). During these years, the discourse on borders has transformed and several related concepts and topics have been included as well as discarded, both within academic and public debates. Recently, in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis (2013–2014) as well as the so-called "refugee crisis" in 2015, the EU discourse has shifted towards highlighting the importance of strong and well-guarded external borders including the re-introduction of internal border controls within the Schengen area (McConnell *et al.* 2017). Moreover, the Ukrainian crisis has been argued to revive the Cold War public discourse, not only within the EU but also on a global scale.

Political and public concern towards the meaning and functions of borders is reflected in current academic debates within human geography (see for example Decoville & Durand 2016; Varró 2016). Comparing the contemporary rhetoric utilised by EU policy-makers with the aspirations and expectations of scholars during the 1990s shows a dramatic shift in our perception and understanding of EU border management, territory and space (see Sidaway 2006; Prokkola 2013a), which is examined in this thesis from the perspectives of region-building, multi-level governance (MLG) and trust. These concepts are closely interlinked and the aim of this study is to examine their contribution for shifting the external border discourse into the policy domain of security or even transforming cross-border cooperation (CBC) into a security strategy of the EU.

The study of borders has attracted a diverse body of scholarship throughout various disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. The common goal of this scholarship has been to enhance our understanding of various processes and dynamics that transform and affect borders. Popescu (2008), for example, discussed de- and re-bordering mechanisms in the contemporary world by showing how they constitute, but also are constituted, by territorial integration, state transformation, trans-national integration and re- and de-territorialisation. Therefore, bordering practices and discourses are subject to a wide array of mechanisms and processes that Johnson (2009: 177) argues, "call into question the cloth and stitching of the Westphalian quilt of political geography – national identity and boundaries".

The '*border*' concept has been part of academic discussion for several decades and its functions and purposes, in relation to the state and *realpolitik*, has been theorised by several political geographers and political scientists, most notably perhaps Kristoff (1959), Minghi (1963) and Prescott (1965). Throughout the post-structural turn, the theorisation of borders, in other words, what is understood to constitute a border, has changed from border marks/landscapes towards institutions, practices, and discourses

(see Berg & van Houtum 2003; Newman 2006a; Paasi 1998). It has been a continuous quest for scholars to formulate a "border theory" which, as Paasi (2011a, p. 11) suggests, may be "unattainable" and "undesirable" because individual state borders are contextual with ever-changing characteristics, while deeply rooted within variegated societal, cultural, political and economic practices. An encompassing theory on borders would render them as detached and spatio-temporally fixed, working against the efforts of critical geopolitics and border researchers to study borders as *processes* (see Paasi 1998).

Indeed, such an element as volatile and ever-changing as a border presents an ontological and epistemological challenge for scholars to study. The border concept has been tackled in various ways. Balibar (2004: 1) has developed the "*borders are everywhere*" discourse because they are "no longer entirely situated at the outer limits of territories; they are dispersed a little everywhere, wherever the movement of information, people, and things is happening and is controlled". Burridge *et al.* (2017) study *polymorphic borders*, which the authors argue to depend on "site- and agent-specific contingencies". Other scholars theorise borders as *networked* (Rumford 2006) or further develop the "*borders are everywhere*" discourse by focusing on mobility, bordering practices, borderities, bordering discourses and externalised borders (Amilhat-Szary & Giraut 2015; Bialasiewicz 2012; Newman & Paasi 1998).

Scholars are perpetually considering the relevance of borders in the future; contemplating "if they will disappear or if they will be replaced by some sort of functional boundary that is permeable enough to meet the requirements of global flows" (Popescu 2008: 67). Borders and border regions are contested spaces, which must satisfy opposing interests, such as balancing economic actor's demands for free movement of capital, labour and goods with demands for border security. The functions and purposes of borders are never straightforward; they act as "instruments of state and territorial control, markers of identity and discourses manifesting themselves in legislation, diplomacy and academic or scholarly languages" (Paasi 2005: 666). This observation provides us with a first idea of the complexity of the border and reflects the various "boundary-drawing practices" to be studied if the researcher's goal is to provide a critical geopolitical analysis (O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998: 3).

We currently face a global geopolitical environment in which borders and their security remain high on the policy agendas of governments and therefore form a key topic of academic research. For example, the current US policy on "building a wall" between the US and Mexico and the so-called "refugee crisis" of 2015, resulting in the building of fences along the Hungarian-Serbian-Croatian and German-Austrian border that effectively suspended free movement within Schengen space, constitute re-bordering practices. Furthermore, various border violations across the EU-Russian border in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis of 2014 have sparked an increasingly heated debate among the public, emphasising that borders are not only an issue for policy-makers but also an important topic of electoral politics.

Nowadays, a wide array of actors participates in the shaping of border discourses, their re-production, manifestation and degradation. Contemporary geopolitical circumstances highlight the importance of studying and understanding contemporary border discourses. While "cross-border stability" is an often-mentioned concept, not only among scholars (see Carter & Poast 2015) but also used by EU officials, national politicians and the media, it remains unclear what border "stability" means to each of these groups. The EU itself has several competing instruments in place, ranging from 'hard' policy tools such as border surveillance technology for security purposes that are interacting with 'softer' policies, such as CBC for economic development. One key contribution of this thesis is, therefore, to identify the meaning of "stable borders" from the perspective of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) CBC actors. Stable borders, according to Carter and Poast (2017: 242) "are demarcations that the populations on both sides recognize and (for the most part) honor". A border is therefore unstable if "its integrity is systematically violated by a non-trivial subset of the population, thereby producing negative externalities for states" (ibid). From this perspective, stable borders refer, on the one hand, to secure borders for which effective surveillance and control regimes exist. On the other hand, the authors emphasise the impact of economic inequality that may result in cross-border crimes and violate border-crossing regulations, leading to border instability (ibid: 244). The ENI CBC funding framework is supposed to address this form of instability by establishing effective CBC programmes which may diminish economic and social inequality across the border. Therefore, in this thesis, the analysis of "stable borders" is derived from the cooperation actor's perception and interpretation of the border throughout the cooperation process.

Cross-border cooperation between the EU and its neighbours is the focus in this thesis. It concentrates on the ENI 2014–2020 which operates under the principles of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (see Beaugitte *et al.* 2015). The key argument is that CBC is a territorial security tool intended to stabilise cross-border regions (CBRs) which are defined as a "bounded territorial unit composed of territories of authorities participating in a CBC initiative" (Perkman 2003: 157). While the construction of such CBRs forms a key political aim of the EU, the ENI programmes trigger various forms of de- and re-bordering processes based on their relational characteristics, resulting in the re-territorialisation of EU space (see Moisio 2007; Sassen 2013).

The evidence for such processes is delivered based on an analysis that studies how region-building, MLG and trust-building efforts contribute to the securitisation of CBC by investigating the meaning of cross-border stability for various actors within Finnish-Russian ENI CBC. It contributes to previous research (e.g. Christiansen *et al.* 2000; Delanty 2006; O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998; Paasi 1998; Popescu 2012) that finds borders are not stable, but rather volatile processes and that these conceptualisations have found their way into how "border security" and "stability" are defined by CBC actors.

CBC as a policy tool promoting regional stability has gained much scholarly attention over the last decade. According to De Sousa (2013), cross-border cooperation can be defined as:

"any type of concerted action between public and/or private institutions of the border regions of two (or more) states, driven by geographical, economic, cultural/identity, political/leadership factors, with the objective of reinforcing the (good) neighbourhood relations, solving common problems or managing jointly resources between communities through any co-operation mechanisms available." *(De Sousa, 2013: 673)*

Authors from various disciplines have focused on EU cross-border cooperation along its external borders (Chilla *et al.* 2012; De Sousa 2013; Galbreath and Lamoreaux 2007; Khasson 2013; Scott 2006). Scott (2006) has concentrated on the role of borders and regions after the EU enlargement in 2004. The ENP established in 2004 is supposed to substitute the "fading period" of enlargement (Szolucha 2010) and to "mitigate the negative effects of the external borders" (Kuus 2011: 1145) by integrating neighbouring states into EU policy frameworks (i.e. access to the internal market). In addition, the EU has introduced the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI 2007–2013) that is succeeded by the current ENI (2014–2020). Scholars such as Lavenex (2008) and Scott (2006) have investigated the continuing effect that the EU has on the neighbouring states through the ENI CBC programmes, in particular on Russia (see Eskelinen *et al.* 2013). It has been argued (Lavenex 2004) that the EU maintains its influence across its borders through external CBC programmes and similar observations have been made in the more recent investigation of EU external border management (Prokkola 2013b).

Acknowledging the border as a *process* rather than a fixed and static line is by no means a new idea (Newman 2006a; Paasi 1998; van Houtum 2010). However, this thesis contributes to the conceptualisation of the border as a process by identifying the dominant and "hidden" bordering discourses (c.f. van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002) while scrutinising the effects of the various undisclosed de- and re-bordering processes that constitute, but also are constituted by, the ENI CBC framework. To do this, a multi-dimensional approach is used to analyse the EU actor's perception of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC in the context of border security and stability. The thesis assumes that CBC across the external borders is exploited by the EU as a tool to securitise and stabilise the EU's external border regions.

Finnish-Russian ENI CBC has remained relatively stable despite the geopolitical challenges between the EU and Russia throughout the last decade. The Ukrainian crisis significantly deteriorated EU-Russia relations; nevertheless, Finnish efforts to maintain the cooperation proved successful and activities continue despite the economic sanctions imposed by the EU. Therefore, this research provides an initial understanding on the potential of CBC activities for contributing to cross-border regional stability. Hence, the

Finnish-Russian border is the ideal site to underline the dichotomy between two seemingly opposing ideas: the border as a territorial barrier dividing EU and non-EU spaces for security purposes and the border as a relational entity enabling cooperating activities and emerging cross-border contacts.

Methodologically, the concept of "border" is analysed in the context of cooperation through policy documents, public dissemination material and interviews with ENI CBC officials and project managers. This approach provides a multi-level perspective, which considers not only the official rhetoric of the policy-makers, but also the "on-the-ground" practices used to implement cooperation projects. The four ENI CBC regions along the Finnish-Russian border (*Kolarctic; Karelia, South-East Finland – Russia; Baltic Sea Region*), analysed here, are fitting examples of regions divided by a "hard" security border that, despite underlying geopolitical tensions, are managed cooperatively.

The Finnish-Russian border serves as an example of a geographically long (1340 km), "peripheral" border region, which is loaded with geopolitical discourses reflecting the difficult past– especially since the events of the Ukrainian crisis – which had a profound effect on Finnish-Russian ENI CBC (Koch 2017a; Koch 2017b). The research materials are analysed by using the theoretical assumptions of critical geopolitics with its methodological considerations on discourse through an analysis of *texts* and *practices* (Müller 2008). Müller (2008: 334) argues that "discourse is always more than text" and therefore, texts such as policy documents, can be understood to represent policy practices and thus reflect instruments of political power (c.f. Dalby 2010a). Texts and the geopolitical/material world are closely related and their analysis serves to "engage in the critique of the reasoning practices of intellectuals of statecraft, whether in terms of formal geopolitical reasoning or the more practical versions in media and political discourse" (Dalby 2010a: 282).

In order to recognise the encompassing character of discourse, I refer to Laclau's and Mouffe's (1985) writing on discourse analysis because they do not separate between discursive and non-discursive elements. Nevertheless, this perspective requires caution because the discourse constructed by the researcher does not reflect the entire reality of the research subject. Further, it is important to establish delimitations throughout the analysis of the research material, which are guided by the theoretical positioning and the screening of pre-existing relevant literature.

The EU external border underlies political, economic and social transformations that can be characterised as a boundary with contrasting scalar forms and functions. The examination of these functions advances our understanding of CBC as a de- and re-bordering performativity by uncovering its de- and re-bordering mechanisms during the EU Commission's efforts to secure and stabilise the neighbourhood. This becomes relevant if policy-makers, and in particular regional and local stakeholders, wish to uncover the potential of CBC as a stabilising factor within CBRs. In this way, we can recognise and accept that borders and future boundary-making cannot be avoided. However, the knowledge and understanding of their discursive constitution allows cross-border practitioners to exploit the strengths and benefits of CBC to the fullest.

2 Aim and structure of the research

2.1 Research tasks and aims

The aim of this study is to increase our understanding of regional CBC structures and to study the impact of territoriality and actor relations on the discourse of borders and cooperation. The research offers a conceptual account, based on theoretical and empirical analysis, of CBC as a securitising strategy in the context of the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes. The research questions are formulated on the following three aspects that influence our understanding of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC.

First, Finnish and Russian CBRs are included into various EU-funded cooperation programmes, which effectively increase the number of borders with inclusionary and exclusionary effects for the regions and their stakeholders (Scott 2002; Galbreath & Lamoreaux 2007). Previous research has investigated the variegated meaning of the external borders within CBRs (e.g. Koch 2015; Lavenex & Schimmelfenning 2009; Mau 2006; O'Dowd 2002; Walters 2004; Zimmerbauer 2011). However, constant de- and re-bordering processes challenge researchers to formulate a conceptualisation of the border in cooperation settings. Given the various processes and mechanisms that influence borders, O'Tuathail and Dalby (1998: 4) suggest differentiating between "conceptual" and "material" borders. In contrast to the "material borders" (i.e. political borders), conceptual borders include the various boundary-producing practices, perceptions and discourses as enacted by the cooperation stakeholders.

Second, the entire Baltic Sea region experiences, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, a geopolitical situation that emphasises questions of state sovereignty, territorial control and border security (Koch 2015). The diplomatic situation between the EU and Russia in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis has strengthened the interlinkage between bordering and security discourses. The public discourse, which is greatly influenced by the media, re-formulated Cold War rhetoric by stressing the geopolitical challenges and divisions that still exist between the EU and Russia. Therefore, questions of territory and territoriality (see Murphy 2013) remain prevalent in studies on CBC despite its relational network character.

Third, the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes are characterised by an extensive multi-level governmental framework including actors from the supranational, national, and sub-national levels which increases frictions and resistance within the cooperation processes (Lepik 2009). The MLG framework of cooperation, as proposed by the EU, is supposed to form an inclusive structure in which cooperation actors participate based on a "partnership" (Khasson 2013). However, such MLG framework constitutes rather an a-territorial strategy in the sense that it fails to consider the spatial and territorial perceptions of actors in a challenging geopolitical environment (Koch 2017a).

The objective is to investigate the de- and re-bordering practices of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC by conducting a discourse analysis and thereby proposing a conceptual framework that focuses on CBC from the perspective of region-building (Article I); the territoriality of MLG (Article II), and trust among actors (Article III). The research acknowledges current geopolitical circumstances and reconsiders those conceptualisations that evaluate CBC as a 'soft' and rather unproblematic policy tool the only purpose of which is to increase economic development, deliver new avenues for political integration and to create social interaction. Rather, it is conceptualised here as a security policy that contributes to stability and security within CBRs at the EU's external borders.

The key research question is: How does the discourse on 'stable' borders, as formulated by the cooperation actors at various levels, securitise cross-border cooperation? The focus is on the Finnish-Russian border which is analysed from three different analytical lenses that are based on three individual research articles. The synopsis compiles these articles and their multi-dimensional perspective to answer the main research question. The following three sub-questions reflect the key arguments of the individual articles and support the main question:

1. How is the meaning of the Finnish-Russian external border conceptualised in the context of de- and re-bordering processes?
2. What is the role of territoriality in the multi-level governmental network of cross-border cooperation and how does it affect actor relations?
3. How does trust affect cooperation practices and contribute to cross-border regional stability?

These questions help to clarify the meaning of the EU's external border in the context of CBC, which operates within a large multi-level governmental framework with various actors and stakeholders. Furthermore, the questions also shift the focus towards the mechanisms that transform cooperation into a border securitising strategy of the EU. The analysed key elements of region-building, MLG and trust provide an understanding of the potential of CBC to maintain cross-border stability within diplomatically challenging circumstances. Nevertheless, this study also shows that these elements simultaneously contribute to the securitising discourse of cooperation. The thesis answers these questions by applying a multi-dimensional methodology that focuses on both text and practices that help to examine the discourse of cooperation and investigate the effects of de- and re-bordering processes.

2.2 Structure of the thesis

Both the empirical and theoretical sections reflect a research structure that operates within the critical geopolitical perspective on borders (see Figure 1). The conceptual framework is mainly derived from a "formal" geopolitical perspective in which research literature has helped to frame the key theoretical assumptions on borders for this research. This conceptual framework, informed by critical geopolitical theories, has helped to formulate the research questions and to develop the methodological approach which is based on three perspectives: the institutional or "public" language as presented in the policy documents; the institutional everyday rhetoric and practices used and enacted by the official policy makers who contributed and supported the policy decisions; and the cooperation practices reflected on by CBC project managers who implement the goals
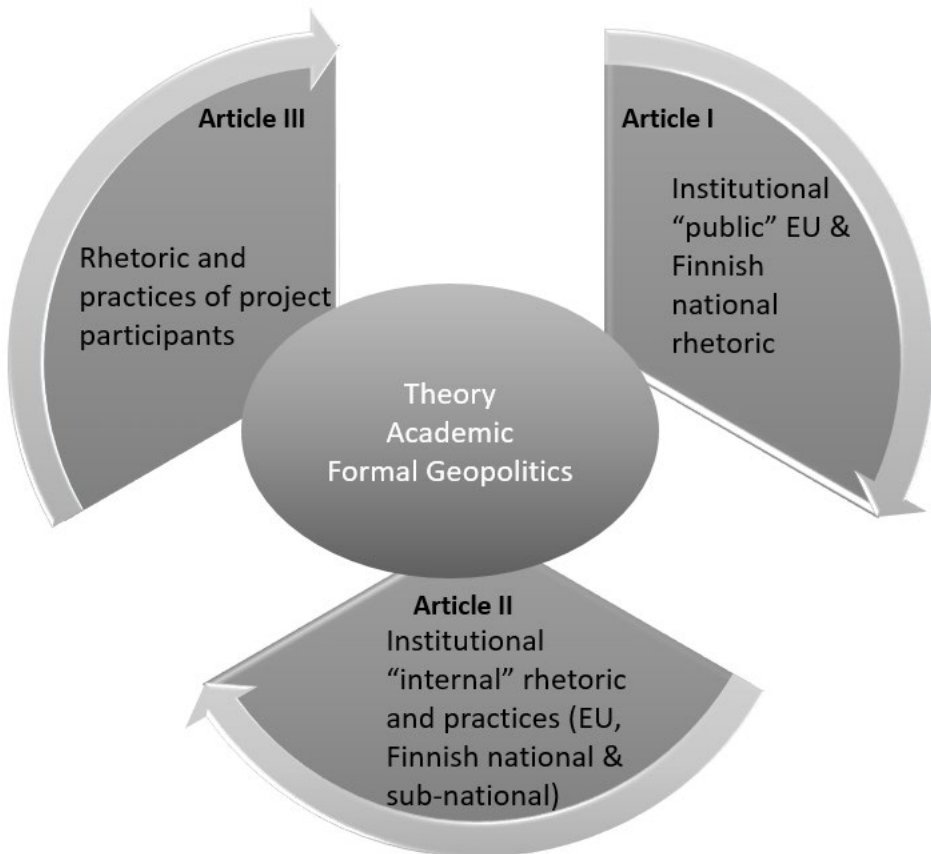
Figure 1. Visualising the multi-dimensional research approach.

set out in the policy documents. This approach allows the incorporation of various forms of texts and transcend the state-centric perspective criticised by critical geopolitics. Furthermore, the discourse analysis includes various perspectives and does not only concentrate on "speech acts" but also how cooperation practices and actor dynamics reflect Finnish-Russian ENI CBC as a security strategy. In this way, the empirical material reflects practical geopolitics in the sense that it offers a glimpse into the relations and communication channels that characterise cooperation activities. Practical geopolitics, as discussed by Kuus (2011: 1152) "does not present itself as a formal set of clear and distinct ideas; it is rather a more casual and ambiguous enterprise of assertions and doubts, metaphors and analogies, arguments and half-thoughts, anecdotes and personal vignettes". In addition, practical geopolitics is elusive, its discourses ever-changing within the political climate fluctuating with changing personnel. Therefore, my research provides a unique glimpse into the challenges cooperation actors were confronted with during the establishment and implementation of the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC 2014–2020. It shows how bureaucrats and policy officials from various governmental levels manoeuvred the rocky waters of the diplomatic crisis that unfolded in 2013 between the EU and Russia.

The focus on the three distinct perspectives (see Figure 1) offers an insight into the power relations between the cooperation actors. This helps to understand the construction of the CBC discourse(s) as perceived and represented by the different actors. In this way, the research process has followed a circular procedure with a methodological focus on the EU perspective.

My argument is that Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, within the institutional framework of the ENP, contributes to the EU's security agenda and therefore can be conceptualised as a de-and re-bordering performativity. This process underlies various practices, here analysed from the region-building, multi-level governmental and actor perspective, in which new borders are drawn and old borders abolished; thus, the relational actor network of cooperation continues to be influenced by territorial practices throughout challenging geopolitical circumstances. Nevertheless, sub-national actors have adapted and developed strategies to address the territoriality that influences foreign relations between the EU and Russia. Finnish-Russian ENI CBC actors constantly introduce new practices and problem-solving strategies to overcome territorial frictions and form resistance. The key problem identified in this research and connecting the three individual research articles is that although the European actors are working towards the same programme (ENI CBC), CBC practices lead to friction and resistance among actors, emphasising the relational network of territoriality in which CBC operates (c.f. Raffestin, 2012).

The synopsis acts as a concluding discussion for the three articles by expanding their methodology and framing their main findings within a coherent analysis to answer the main research question. The theoretical framework begins in chapter three with a discussion on critical geopolitics and its theoretical, as well as methodological, perspectives on the study of borders. It continues with a definition of the border in cross-border regional settings with a particular emphasis on the Finnish-Russian external border.

Chapter four introduces a critical geopolitical perspective on Finnish-Russian ENI CBC and conceptualises CBC as a security dimension, as it contributes to the EU external border strategy. Key conceptual discussions elaborate the cooperation/security nexus, the territoriality/relationality debate and its implications on the border concept. In order to understand the discourse on Finnish-Russian ENI CBC and how it has been developed into an external border security strategy, three de- and re-bordering practices are stressed that are conceptualise in the following: region-building (Casas-Cortes *et al.* 2012; Browning & Joenniemi 2008; Koch 2015; Mölder 2008; Popescu 2012); the continued relevance of territoriality in MLG settings (Chilla *et al.* 2012; Murphy 2013; Koch 2017a; Newman 2010; Raffestin 2012) and the asymmetrical power relations from the perspective of trust (Jakola & Prokkola 2017; Khasson 2013; Koch 2017b; Laine 2016a; Varró 2016). In addition, the literature (e.g. Bache & Flinders 2004; Dabrowski *et al.* 2014; Stephenson 2013) on European governance (more specifically MLG) is utilised to analyse the impact of territoriality on the actor-relations. In this way, this thesis aims to include a spatial perspective into the EU governance literature that is often perceived as a-political and a-territorial by omitting discussions on the territorial particularities in multi-level governmental settings.

The methodology chapter discusses the research context, the geographical area and the research materials consisting of policy documents, semi-structured interviews and public dissemination material (in the form of brochures and public speeches). Following the preceding discussion on critical geopolitics as a methodology (in chapter three), chapter five concentrates on the operationalisation of the discourse analysis based on Fairclough's (1995) version of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe 1985) in conjunction with theoretically informed content analysis (Hay 2016).

The empirical chapter six begins with a CDA based on Fairclough's three-step approach (1992) by considering the effects of de- and re-bordering in the context of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC (Article I). Furthermore, it traces the perception of actors on border security and stability and analyses how the cooperation/security discourse has been evolving throughout the cooperation periods (ENPI 2007–2013 and ENI 2014–2020). This section also examines the territorial perceptions within the MLG framework of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC (Article II) and investigates how sub-national actors have developed strategies to address and overcome the EU-Russia security discourse on the Baltic Sea area that was emphasised by politicians and the media in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis. The last section of the analysis investigates the role of trust (Article III) and how trust among actors affects the perception of the security discourses.

Chapter 7 provides a concluding discussion by focusing on CBC as a security strategy enacted by several cooperation stakeholders and their relational dynamics within the territorial network of cooperation.

2.3 Situating the articles

The articles constitute a linear thread throughout the research on which this synopsis is based. A comprehensive overview is provided in table 1. The first article, *Region-Building and Security: The Multiple Borders of the Baltic Sea Region after EU Enlargement*, concentrates on the region-building/security nexus and offers a critical discourse analysis of relevant EU and Baltic Sea Region (BSR) policy documents to better understand the various conceptual and material borders within the BSR programme with a focus on the Finnish-Russian border. It argues that the CBC activities within the BSR have led to de- and re-bordering mechanisms with inclusionary and exclusionary effects for cooperation actors. Furthermore, it shows the EU's ambivalent strategy towards the BSR which is divided between region-building efforts and security concerns.

The second article, *The role of territoriality in the EU multi-level governmental cooperation framework of Finnish-Russian cross-border cooperation*, is based on semi-structured interviews with policy makers from the EU, national and regional levels. It offers a conceptualisation of the MLG framework of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC from a territorial perspective. The theoretical discussion consists of both spatial and European integration perspectives by combining the territorial/relational debate with scholarship on European governance.

The third article, *The Spatiality of Trust in EU External Cross-Border Cooperation*, presents a conceptualisation of trust for human geography that helps us understand complex spatial actor-relationships within the institutionalised CBRs of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes. The research focus was directed towards project managers to understand the bottom-up perspective and to evaluate their level of impact on national and supra-national decision-making procedures.

Table 1. Article overview.

Article	I. Region-building and security: the multiple borders of the Baltic Sea Region after EU Enlargement	II. The role of territoriality in the EU multi-level governmental cooperation framework of Finnish-Russian cross-border cooperation	III. The spatiality of trust in EU external cross-border cooperation
Research Task	To contribute to the understanding of the BSR borders and bordering practices and to scrutinise their impact on the region-building process of a macro-region.	To better understand the CBC actor relationship from both a vertical and horizontal perspective and to recognise the consequences of territoriality for relationships within the cooperation network. To unveil the 'hidden' networks and alliances that inform and shape cooperation practices.	To offer a conceptualisation of trust that recognises territorial and relational aspects. Investigates the origin, meaning, and implication of trust for cooperation and explores the use of trust as a concept in human geography that can help to advance the understanding of complex spatial actor-relationships in European external CBC.
Research Questions	(1) How can the borders within and outside the BSR be understood in accordance with the policy documents and strategies? (2) How do re- and de-bordering mechanisms affect the types and functions of the borders inside the BSR? (3) How do the different borders affect region-building in the BSR?	(1) How does territoriality influence actor relations in the MLG structure of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC? (2) How do actors cope with the territoriality of ENI CBC?	(1) Why is trust important in ENI CBC at the Finnish-Russian border? (2) Which spatial attributes influence trust and undermine its formation? (3) How does trust/mistrust establish or deter the actor relationship of the cross-border practitioners?
Key Concepts	Region-building, de- and re-bordering, macro-regions, security borders, soft borders, new regionalism	Territoriality, actor-relations, MLG, relational space, power relations, cooperation	Trust, spatiality of trust, actor, actor-networks, Europeanisation of space, cooperation
Material	Policy documents from the EU & regional level, BSR Communications to the public, BSR programmes, regional spatial strategies	Semi-structured and in-depth interviews with European, Finnish national and Finnish regional official authorities, EU policy documents, statistics of the economic impact of the sanctions between EU and Russia	Semi-structured and in-depth interviews with European, Finnish national, Finnish regional official authorities, semi-structured interviews with project managers, EU Statistics about project allocation, regional cooperation programming documents

3 Critical geopolitics, border studies and cross-border cooperation

Critical geopolitics was intended as a critique to the taken-for-granted assumptions and approaches towards the relationships between space and power during the Cold War period (Dodds *et al.* 2013: 15). O'Tuathail and Agnew (1992) understand critical geopolitics as a distinct approach from traditional geopolitics that had investigated the geography of international politics by analysing the impact of the physical environment on foreign policies. This traditional approach, envisioned by geopolitical scholars such as Friedrich Ratzel (1897) and Halford MacKinder (1904), argued for the close link between the state and its territory, which requires constant expansion in order for the state and its population to survive. Such ideas were supported and adopted by several European and North American geographers throughout the first half of the 20th century, most notoriously in this context by Karl Haushofer and his application of state expansionist theories (Wolkersdorfer 1999).

Closely connected to these discussions, the study of borders was pioneered by geographers such as Friedrich Ratzel (1844−1904) who introduced the term *Lebensraum* (living space) which was tragically exploited by the German national socialist party to justify the need for territorial expansion towards the East. Ratzel understood the state as an organic entity which needed space to survive. In his view, borders required flexibility and performed as "living frontiers", thus reflecting a conception that suggests borders are ever changing, in transition and fluid (Ratzel, 1897)[1]. Following Ratzel's theories as a student, Rudolf Kjellén (1869−1922) is nowadays seen as the founder of traditional geopolitics by defining it as "the theory of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon of space" (Laine 2015: 20).

These ideas were mainly driven by the geopolitical environment in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century in which states strived to establish colonies following the expansion of the British naval empire. However, other academic approaches towards borders were developed, for example, by Walter Christaller (1893−1969) who was the founder of the "central place theory" (Christaller 1933). He intended to show that borders demarcate the physics and geometry of social relations and was concerned to define the laws which determine the size, number and distribution of towns. He argued that "just as there are economic laws, so there are special economic-geographic laws determining the arrangements of towns (Getis & Getis 1966: 222).

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[1] "Die Geographie legt das Hauptgewicht auf die Eigenschaften des Gebietes, die aus dem Leben des Staatsorganismus hervorgehen. Der lebendige Staat läßt sich nie vollständig in die toten Grenzen eines abgemessenen Flächenraums bannen. Das Vorrücken oder Zurückziehen der eigentlichen Grenze gehört zu diesen Lebenszeichen" (Ratzel 1897: 123).

In parallel to the academic developments within the discipline of geography in Germany, French geopolitics was influenced by Vidal de la Blache (1845−1918), who was strongly influenced by German thought on geopolitics. However, he adopted a regional approach to explain the link between human societies and the natural environment. In this way, his ideas differed to some extent from the environmental determinism put forward by Ratzel. Vidal de la Blache argued that geographic individuality does not derive from geological or climatic observations, but rather that landscape and nature are greatly influenced by humans and their interaction with the environment (see Vidal de la Blache 1922).

In this way, geographers and their writings on geopolitics have shaped the study of borders throughout the beginning of the 20th century until the end of World War II by arguing that they are the natural demarcations of state territorial control and ideology. Following the end of the War in 1945, geopolitics experienced a massive downfall because of its ideas that had influenced national socialist ideologies by arguing for state expansion in order for its population to survive. As a result, Harvard University abandoned the Department of Geography in 1948 and the term *geopolitics* vanished not only within academic debates, but also from public discourse for the following two decades (Mamadouh & Dijkink 2006). It was only during the late 1980s that geopolitics was revived in a post-structural fashion that presented a critique to the Cold War order of politics pioneered by O'Tuathail and Agnew (1992) and O'Tuathail's (1996) analysis of the geographies of global politics by the end of the 20th century.

Based on a post-structuralist understanding, critical geopolitics analyses the construction and social effects of geopolitical imaginations, in particular the "imaginary spatial positioning of people, regions, states and the shifting boundaries that accompany this positioning" (Müller 2008: 323). This research perspective was adopted from International Relations (IR) scholars who already, by the end of the 1980s, were focusing on border issues in the context of foreign policy discourses (see Paasi 2013: 215). Ashley (1989) adopted a post-structuralist perspective on the state by demonstrating that "the boundary itself is never there. It is always in the process of being marked, transgressed, erased and marked again" (Ashley 1989: 311). He further notes that, in order to adopt a post-structuralist perspective, researchers should investigate the practices, cultural resources, and resistances that impose and ritualise the boundary.

 The adoption of critical geopolitics as a theoretical and methodological framework in border studies was however not straightforward. Instead, Paasi (2013) demonstrates that "critical or 'dissident' IR scholars challenged the state-centric assumptions of realist IR theory and questioned the self-evidence of such divides as inside/outside, self/other, or domestic/foreign that were typically exploited in the maintenance of the discourses on 'national security'". In the following years, poststructuralist and postmodern approaches entered the language of critical geopolitics and its scholars were greatly influenced by the critical IR theory on discursive practices. As a result, critical discourse analysis became a key methodological approach to study and analyse the way in which representatives of statecraft construct ideas about places (e.g. Dittmer 2015; Dodds 2005; Kuus 2002;

O'Tuathail & Agnew 1992) because critical geopolitics "is concerned with the geographical politics involved in the everyday practice of foreign policy" (O'Tuathail 1999: 110).

The influence of critical IR on critical geopolitics did not, however, involve a strengthened focus on border studies (see Paasi 2013). While political geography circulated new research on borders to overcome the "territorial trap" (Agnew 1994), critical geopolitics was not initially contributing to the study of borders as widely as IR scholars. For critical geopolitics, borders seemed too "prosaic and material to become topical in the early accounts in critical geopolitics" (Paasi 2013: 214). However, while Dalby and O'Tuathail experienced some initial conceptual disagreements regarding geopolitics as a "boundary-producing practice" (O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998: 3–4); both authors later agreed that:

> *"Critical geopolitics pays particular attention to the boundary-drawing practices and performances that characterize the everyday life of states. In contrast to conventional geography and geopolitics, both the material borders at the edge of the state and the conceptual border designating this as a boundary between a secure inside and an anarchic outside are objects of investigation. Critical geopolitics is not about 'the outside' of the state but about the very construction of boundaries of 'inside' and 'outside', 'here' and 'there', the 'domestic' and the 'foreign'."(O'Tuathail & Dalby, 1998: 3–4)*

Reflecting on such post-structural ideas, van Houtum (2005: 672) suggests that within critical geopolitical research "the attention has moved away from the study of the evolution and changes of the territorial line to the border, more complexly understood as a site at and through which socio-spatial differences are communicated". The border is no longer a mere line on the map, but constituted by several boundary-producing processes and mechanisms which in turn influence bordering discourses and practices (see Laine 2016a; Newman 2006b; Popescu 2008; Jones *et al.* 2017).

Not only geographers are concerned with the study of borders, but similarly sociologists, political scientists, historians and anthropologists take part in the discussion and thus shape the academic discourse on borders (Newman 2003). Hence, border studies is an interdisciplinary academic field influenced by various ideas and schools of thought, which, however, makes it challenging to define a common set of theories and concepts (Parker & Adler-Nissen 2012). Paasi (2011a) aptly argues that the study of borders cannot follow one single theory and that conceptual frameworks largely depend upon the specific empirical context in which a border is studied. The variety of disciplines targeting questions on borders provides us with a large conceptual and theoretical "menu" and thus requires the researcher to make a careful decision on the literature and concepts that support and explain the results drawn from the research.

3.1 Critical geopolitics as a methodological approach in border studies

Within the post-structural tradition, scholars agree that texts are a focal element in critical geopolitical analysis (Müller 2013: 50). In the context of border studies, the way in which ideas and imaginations of the border are constructed is based on a complex assemblage comprising, for example, institutions, universities, newspapers, and social media. To make sense of the critical geopolitical representation in research, scholars have distinguished between three different forms: *formal* (academic & broader narrative perspective), *practical* (policy-making & rationales for foreign policies) and *popular* (public realm & media) (O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998: 5).

It was only in 1992 when O'Tuathail and Agnew (1992: 192) offered a critical reconceptualisation of geopolitics in the form of a discursive practice "by which intellectuals of statecraft 'spatialize' international politics in such a way as to represent it as a 'world' characterized by certain types of places, peoples and dramas". This approach, focusing on *texts* in their various forms, serves as an excellent methodological framework to study the meaning-making of the border in the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC context by utilising data from the EU and Finnish stakeholders, thus representing the *practical* critical geopolitical perspective. Nevertheless, the empirical data collection was also informed and guided by academic theorisations and conceptualisations of the ENP and Finnish-Russian ENI CBC presenting the *formal* geopolitical perspective. The empirical focus on the relationship between knowledge, expertise, authority and power is inspired by the works of Kuus (2014), who examines knowledge production and authority in European diplomacy in the context of the ENP.

The concept of 'discourse' is notorious among political geographers; indeed, it is challenging to define because – similar to borders – it has multiple meanings across the social sciences and humanities. The perpetual challenge for researchers is to agree on a definition of *discourse*; however, its meaning has transformed throughout the last decades as debates evolved within political geography and critical geopolitics (see Mamadouh & Dijkink 2006; Fairclough 2013). Dittmer (2010), for example, distinguishes between *discourse* and *Discourse* (note upper-case!), the former referring to the "language-in-use" and the "language's impact on, and constitution of, the social world" (ibid: 275). The latter, Discourse, refers to the embodiment of the "truths" established by the 'speech-acts' (also see Paltridge 2000: 13).

Gee (2011: 30) argues that discourse is a characteristic way of "saying, doing, being". Consequently, oral or written "utterances" become meaningful if they communicate "a who and what". The "who" refers to a "socially situated identity" while the "what" is a "socially situated practice" (ibid). Therefore, "it is through the recognition and interaction of the various discourses in which we are embedded that meaning is created, power is conveyed, and the world is rendered recognizable" (Dittmer 2010: 275). Discourse analysis entails the investigation of both entities, the producer and author of the "utterance" as

well as the various practices of communication. Van Dijk (1993) shows that the post-structuralist perspectives on discourse in human geography are targeted towards the analysis of power relations that result in social inequality and asymmetry. This investigation is based on the ideas of Foucault and his writings on power and knowledge (Foucault, 1972).

Foucault and his philosophical approach presented in the work '*The Archaeology of Knowledge*' (1972) emphasises the interlinkage between power and knowledge. He introduces discourse as a theoretical concept by offering a historical perspective to argue for the relationship between power and knowledge. In his archaeological works[2], Foucault studies the rules that define which statements are accepted as meaningful and true during a certain historical epoch. These rules are then opened for transformations because knowledge has "served as an empirical, unreflective basis for subsequent formalizations; it tries to rediscover the immediate experience that discourse transcribes" (Foucault 1972: 137). Therefore, knowledge not only reflects the reality but also constitutes a discursive construction of reality contingent on the historical and geopolitical environment (structure) to determine truth. Foucault has been concerned with the investigation of such structures of different regimes of knowledge and his aim was to identify the rules for what is considered true and false. The historical or archaeological approach of his research serves to investigate what is possible to say at which point in time.

Foucault does not conceptualise power as "exclusively oppressive but as productive" because it constitutes discourse, knowledge, bodies and subjectivities (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002: 91). In this way, power is responsible for both creating our social world and for the ways in which the world is formed and can be talked about, which rules out, however, alternative ways of being and talking. Power is therefore both productive and constraining. Similar to Foucault, Fairclough, in his critical approach towards discourse, defines power as 'negotiated' meaning that people act as agents that can obtain the possibility for resistance (Fairclough 2001). In his discussion on language and power, Fairclough differentiates between "power *in* discourse" in which relations of power are enacted and "power *behind* discourse" to examine how discourses are constituted by power relations (ibid: 36). Therefore, the discourse investigated by the researcher does not necessarily represent the truth or is always linked to reality but rather reflects the analytical understanding of the researcher towards the power relations which are never stable and shift throughout the discourse due to the actor's resistance against power.

During the post-structural turn, several political geographers introduced Foucault's ideas into their thinking (Selby 2007). However, conceptual and empirical shortcomings were soon detected and thus the ideas of discourse and discourse analysis as a principal investigative method in critical geopolitics had to be re-formulated to make sense of contemporary questions. O'Tuathail & Agnew (1992) conceptualise discourse as "sets of

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[2] In his book, The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972), Foucault offers his perhaps only methodological account on discursive formations (i.e. systems of thought and knowledge).

socio-cultural resources used by people in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities" (also see Müller 2008: 325). In this way, O'Tuathail conceptualises critical geopolitics as a theoretical task that explores the "existing structures of power and knowledge" (O'Tuathail 1999: 107). Such a critical geopolitical perspective helps to study the different actor perceptions towards Finnish-Russian ENI CBC in the context of power relations and offers an insight into the de- and re-bordering practices that cooperation activities entail. With a particular focus on security, critical geopolitical analysis provides an understanding on the discursive construction of "border stability" based on the CBC actor's knowledge, perceptions and activities.

The initial proposal for critical geopolitical enquiry was, based on Foucault's ideas, to analyse language, which also reflects the post-structural turn during the 1990s during which discourse began to be understood by analysing the use of language. O'Tuathail and Agnew (1992) argue that:

> *"How we understand and constitute our social world is through the socially structured use of language. Political speeches and the like afford us a means of recovering the self-understandings of influential actors in world politics." (O'Tuathail & Agnew, 1992: 191)*

Critical discourse analysis, in short, studies the relationship between language and power by transitioning between a microanalysis of textual elements and a macro-analysis of the social formations, institutions and power relations that these texts construct and reproduce (Luke 2002).

Within the last decade, there has been a shift towards understanding discourse as both *practice* and *language* (Müller 2008). In the post-structuralist tradition, the author offers a re-conceptualisation of discourse that addresses critiques suggesting that scholars applying critical discourse analysis fail to provide a "critical" account of the power relations and, from a methodological standpoint, do not provide a systematic approach to the analysis of texts[3]. Müller (2008: 324) aims to enhance the analytical strength of critical geopolitics, which he argues offers enough conceptual room to include social practices, but without realigning critical geopolitics with non-representational theory and its methodological suggestion to focus empirical research on embodiment[4]. Several critical geopolitical scholars advocate for the continued usefulness of textual analysis by broadening our understanding of discourse and including both texts and practices into the analysis (see Gee 2011; Müller 2013; van Leuwen 2008). This suggested approach has informed the critical discourse analysis of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC in this research – both textual and practical perspectives as experienced by CBC actors from various levels are presented and analysed.

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[3] For a detailed discussion on the critiques of CDA, see Breeze, 2011.

[4] Non-representational theory originates from the writings of Thrift (2008). Advocates for non-representational theory challenge scholars in the social sciences doing critical social and political research to focus their empirical data on practices, in the sense of experiences and performances. It carries the critique that representation, i.e. in the form of texts, cannot provide a comprehensive understanding of social issues (for this critique on critical discourse analysis see Dittmer & Gray 2010).

Müller (2008) proposes that discourse analysis is a useful tool for critical geopolitics by considering both language and practice as analytical foci. He draws on Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 107) who reject Foucault's distinction between discursive and non-discursive elements by arguing that the social space is entirely involved in the production of meaning and thus has a discursive character (Laclau & Mouffe, 1990). In this way, Foucault's distinction between discursivity and non-discursivity is rendered obsolete. Furthermore, Müller (2008: 330) argues "all human action is implicated and structured in discourse". Similarly, I do not distinguish between discursive and non-discursive elements, as both rhetoric as presented in policy documents, but also practices (i.e. communication) of cooperation actors, need to be included in the discourse analysis because these constitute policy practices and thus shape the discourse of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC.

The researcher's role is to "work what has actually been said or written, exploring patterns in and across the statements and identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations of reality" (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002: 21). Therefore, it is the researcher's perspective that can provide an overview or glimpse into the current constitution of society and world politics. In this way, all actions have societal, and similarly, political impact. Discourse includes policies, popular media, images, and social movements etc., that not only happen on the global, but also the local level (i.e. household) in which certain geopolitical imaginations are re-produced.

3.2 Conceptualising the 'border' in cross-border cooperation

Both cross-border regions and cross-border cooperation are closely interlinked according to Perkman (2003: 157) who understands CBRs "not only as a functional space, but as a socio-territorial unit equipped with a certain degree of strategic capacity on the basis of certain organizational arrangements" (ibid). CBR's can only be conceptualised in the context of cross-border territorial organisational arrangements and they develop out of cooperation activities that, according to Anderson and O'Dowd (1999), do not necessarily derive from regional commonalities (i.e. identity, language, living conditions). Rather, scholars have argued that CBRs resemble "new regions" (see Blatter 2001; Deas & Lord 2006; Paasi 2009; Scott 1999) which develop because of funding opportunities and general possibilities to exploit the common border in cross-regional arrangements (Popescu 2012).

Regionalisation plays a central role in the processes that create supranational structures accompanied by de- and re-bordering processes within EU space (Zimmerbauer 2013: 90). Regional CBC programmes are usually demarcated by clear territorial borders which have become a contested site in which actors represent opposing interests that can lead to frictions and resistance among actors. The interlinkage between regionalisation and CBC has been examined in the context of the EU's external borders (Casas-Cortes *et al*. 2012; Browning & Joenniemi 2008; Tassinari 2005; Mölder 2008). Zimmerbauer argues

that cross-border cooperation and region-building processes are bound to each other and that cooperation across the borders can increase leading to the emergence of a functional region (see Prokkola 2008). The supranational level (here the EU) serves as a facilitator for the adoption of regional elements that support the political infiltration of "foreign state bordering practices outside of the EU with de- and re-bordering consequences" (Koch 2015: 541).

The EU external border underlies an ambivalent meaning which is divided between security and cooperation that are, however, closely interlinked (Koch 2015; Tassinari 2005). It has been argued that the ENP has turned into an external border security tool (Bigo 2014; Celata & Coletti 2016; Christou 2010; Hennebry & Walton-Roberts 2014) and therefore, also the ENI CBC programmes can be understood to form one dimension of the EU border security strategy. Nevertheless, Zimmerbauer (2011: 212) has argued that "while much policy-oriented research has been done on the forces and consequences of CBC with an emphasis on the importance of cross-border networking and development, the meaning of borders themselves have been less intensively studied".

Indeed, few previous research studies on CBC consist of a discussion of the spatial mechanisms that constitute de- and re-bordering practices and how the various conceptualisations of the border and its discourse affects power relations between cooperation actors. A challenge inhibiting such discussions is the numerous ways to study borders in the context of cooperation because it should recognise "both the material borders at the edges of states and the conceptual borders that designate material boundaries between an apparently secure interior and an anarchic exterior" (Paasi 2011a: 13).

Berg (2000) proposes to pay attention to border-crossing practices "which aim at denaturalising borders that delimit states as well as deconstructing the mental dividing lines that separate nations" (ibid: 81). As a response to this, I argue that understanding the border within CBC is an ever-changing process because it underlies de-and re-bordering mechanisms, which are enacted through the versatile and layered activities of CBC actors. In particular, sub-national actors attempt to deconstruct the bureaucratic, political and mental dividing lines yet existent within Finnish-Russian ENI CBC while being exposed to re-bordering processes that manifest through region-building mechanisms (see Article I).

To recognise "the EU's post-enlargement neighbourhood, the ENP recommends 'tailor-made' measures, bilateral initiatives and customised action plans for each neighbour" (Berg & Ehin 2006: 61). Sedelmeier (2002) has introduced in this context the term "*composite policy*" which Berg and Ehin (2006) develop to analyse the EU external border regime. Composite policy refers to "a broad policy framework, which draws its substance from distinctive policy decisions" that originate from various policy areas (Sedelmeier 2002 in Berg & Ehin (2006). In this sense, the EU strategies towards the external borders are influenced by various policy decisions, geopolitical circumstances and discourses that affect the governance of the external borders.

To address the external border region's heterogeneity, the EU attempts to provide context-sensitive and place-defined policy solutions that cover the entire EU neighbourhood, ranging from Lapland in the North to the Mediterranean Sea in the South. Nevertheless, the meaning and impact of the border remains understudied in such policy decisions. Martinez (1994: 3) has suggested four distinct borderlands to categorise the level of cooperation:

- alienated borderlands in which tensions prevail and the border is functionally closed; cooperation across the border is nearly or totally absent; residents act as strangers to each other (*hard* border);
- co-existent borderlands in which stability is an on-off proposition; borders remain slightly open which allows limited and institutionalised cooperation; residents deal with each other as casual acquaintances but borderlanders develop closer relationships (*porous* border);
- interdependent borderlands in which stability prevails most of the time and economic as well as social interdependence trigger increased cooperation; friendly and cooperative relationships among borderlanders (*soft* border);
- integrated borderlands as fully established cross-border regions in which stability is permanent; the economy is closely interlinked and there is constant and un-restricted open interaction among people; borderlanders as members of one social system (effectively *no* border).

These categorisations help us to understand the different characteristics of borderlands in the context of CBC. However, they can only provide an initial idea to the particular categorisation of relationships across the border. The Finnish-Russian external border could fall into several of these because it is a closed Schengen border; however, EU and Russian economies are closely interlinked and interdependent. Nevertheless, relations between borderlanders are characterised by institutionalised and economic relations (i.e. CBC activities, tourism; investments). Therefore, the external border remains elusive, fragmented and influenced by various discourses which present conceptual challenges for researchers because the EU's external borders can be *soft*, *porous* and *hard* at the same time. Paasi and Zimmerbauer (2016) have addressed this conceptual problem and introduced a new understanding of the border which they term *penumbral borders*. They argue that borders have various functions and meanings which are not static but change, overlap and dissolve depending on the contextual perspective from which the border is studied.

In addition to these characteristics, the external border underlies a constant transformation which leads to de- and re-bordering effects. Popescu (2012: 67) describes a dilemma that decision-makers are facing: "the production of border spaces in the era of globalization is driven by the demands of quick and dependable spatial mobility on the one hand and tangible societal and personal security on the other". This statement adequately explains the two dominant contemporary global discourses towards borders.

Popescu (ibid) terms them "open border" and "border securitisation" discourses which are not mutually exclusive (also see Herzog & Sohn 2016; Nicol 2011). Rather, all territorial transformations and policy-decisions in the context of CBC are located somewhere on the spectrum between these two discourses.

While Popescu (2012: 68) advocates for the possibility that such a border dilemma is not "inescapable" because they may play different roles in alternative modes of territorial organisation, I follow Murphy's (2013) and other scholars (see Agnew 2010; Popescu 2008; Murphy 2012) suggestion that we "must not underplay territory's continuing hold and ideological significance" (Murphy 2013: 1224). A re- and de-territorialisation is taking place in close conjuncture with de- and re-bordering processes in the context of EU border governance.

Schengen space promotes a de-territorialisation perspective because it aims to create "social relations escaping the straitjacket of state territoriality" (Popescu 2012: 69) across EU member states. Nevertheless, re-territorialisation happens at the external borders because previously open borders (i.e. in post-Soviet states) turn into closed and securitised barriers. The CBRs at the external borders are arranged in an inter-scalar manner with decision-making responsibility divided between institutions and actors. They create new territorial assemblages with new borders that are however unstable in time, incomplete in space and thus ever-transforming processes with different meanings for different actors (see Axford 2006; Popescu 2008; Scott 2009).

This approach helps to understand the external border in the context of CBC because it is a policy framework in which actors both re- and de-construct the border. Conceptualising the external border as a *process* captures this transformative character. I lean on the discussion offered by critical border scholars (Brunet-Jailly 2005; Newman 2003; Paasi 1998, van Houtum 2005) who define borders as "processes that exist in socio-cultural action and discourses" (Paasi 1998: 72). Paasi further points out that "one challenge is to study the changing interpretations given to boundaries and how these express inter-state ideologies and links with the international geopolitical landscape" (ibid: 79). The study of such interpretations and meanings of borders form a key objective of my study.

While the study of bordering and boundary-making throughout the last two decades advanced our understanding of de- and re-bordering processes, contemporary researchers are aware that borders are enacted and constituted by a variety of mechanisms that interlink and contribute to the discourse on borders (see Newman 2011). These de- and re-bordering mechanisms underlie discursive transformations that are influenced by various stakeholders. This conceptualisation allows us to study the border as a process which makes it possible to connect the different perceptions (i.e. cooperation/security nexus) towards Finnish-Russian ENI CBC. This also includes the analysis of the actor's combined contribution to the development of the "cooperation as security strategy"

discourse. The securitisation of CBC, further discussed in the next chapter, is a complex discursive bordering process consisting of selective openness to maintain the functioning of society and the economy (see Bigo 2001).

4 A critical geopolitical perspective on Finnish-Russian cross-border cooperation

4.1 Finnish-Russian ENI CBC in a critical geopolitical context

A critical geopolitical perspective provides an excellent research approach to study Finnish-Russian ENI CBC because it recognises "boundary-drawing practices" of various kinds: conceptual and cartographic, imaginary and actual, social and aesthetic" (O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998: 4). As discussed before, my research follows the suggestion of Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 108) who argue that the discursive and the material/practices should not be separated because "nothing exists outside of discourse". While the authors suggest that distinctions between discourse and practices exist, there is no way of comprehending non-linguistic and extra-discursive phenomena except through discursive practices (Bialasiewicz *et al.* 2007: 406). Therefore, discourses are performative because they involve "both the ideal and the material, the linguistic and the non-linguistic" which means that discourses constitute the objects of which they speak (ibid).

In this way, it is possible to talk about CBC discourse as a "performativity" in the sense that cooperation is enacted and realised through a range of discursive practices. These do not only include the language and rhetoric presented in policy documents and strategies but also the activities and relations of cooperation actors that underlie various factors (i.e. border controls; cultural differences, geopolitical circumstances, socioeconomic disparities). Finnish-Russian ENI CBC is subject to various de- and re-bordering practices, here conceptualised as region-building, MLG, and trust-building efforts, which in their own ways are constituted by, but also constitute the CBC discourse [performativity].

Literature on EU governance in the context of the ENP and its ENI CBC funding frameworks has often neglected the spatial perspective that critical geographical thinking can offer for the study of actor relations in CBC networks. Axford (2006: 177) has argued that "studies of European integration have been less influenced by geographical concepts than, for example, research on globalization, except perhaps for the often unreflective import of concepts such as 'inter' and 'supra' national". Nevertheless, European Studies scholarship, with its practice-oriented research on governance (e.g. Lavenex 2004; Lavenex & Schimmelfenning 2009) helps to understand the institutional elements that influence power relations forming the key objective of critical geopolitical inquiry. This knowledge contributes to our understanding on power relations in regional cross-border settings.

CBC constitutes the unit of analysis and is under scrutiny in this thesis. Discussions on de- and re-bordering, the territorial/relational debate and power relations between actors are included into the conceptual framework that helps to trace the geopolitical spatiality of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC and to examine the elements that maintain cooperation

practices in a challenging geopolitical environment, while serving as an EU external border security strategy. By utilising a critical geopolitical perspective on these concepts, the research focuses on the different actors within the multi-level governmental network of cooperation and the construction of discourses about the external border that are affected by geopolitical circumstances which are subsequently reflected in the actor relations.

Critical geopolitics, with its methodological focus on discourse analysis, is based on the assumption that we can understand global politics through textual evidence and that texts are not only a representation, but also actively produce world politics (Müller 2013: 49). As previously discussed, texts in various forms (including interviews) are not only a reflection of power relations but constitute geopolitical reasoning and political decision-making. In this way, the analysis of textual material not only reveals the EU policy strategy applied in the neighbourhood, but also discloses geopolitical frictions between actors in ENI CBC activities.

This study draws upon geographic ideas about the continued relevance of territory and its borders in a world of regions and regionalisation (Agnew 2010; Murphy 2013; Paasi 2009). Häkli argues, "The idea of territorial space is not defunct or redundant, but, rather, a continuously relevant form of social spatiality complementary to networked fluid spaces" (2008: 6). Similarly, Murphy (2013) proposes to distance ourselves from the 'territorial trap' and the container view of territorial space (Agnew 1994). Instead, we should find new conceptualisations of territory that take into account the interconnectedness and fluidity of the world, therefore shifting the analytical focus towards the sub- and supranational levels. At the same time, however, Murphy (2013: 1224) recognises the "territory's continuing ideological hold and practical significance" which yet determines inside/outside, internal/external, and other state territorial jurisdictions. Consequently, while acknowledging the networked character of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, governed within a multi-level governmental institutional framework that promotes sub-national decision-making, it is the state level which continues to shape foreign policies due to the lack of political integration (Major 2005).

Therefore, the relational/territorial debate (see Allen & Cochrane 2007; Harrison 2013; Paasi 2002; Varró & Lagendijk 2012) consists of important conceptual and theoretical discussions that problematise the enclosure of territorial entities by arguing that the political relations, producing such territorial entities, are not necessarily part of them. Instead, a variety of actors, connected through a broad governmental network, participate in the production of territory which, as a result, should be understood as relational (see Raffestin 2012). The role of territoriality remains an important element to study the meaning of CBC from a critical geopolitical perspective (Koch 2017a). However, a re-conceptualisation of territoriality that moves beyond the fixity of political scales is appropriate to capture the governmental structure of CBC (c.f. Marston *et al.* 2005) in the way that political levels (i.e. national, supra-national, etc.) "evolve relationally within tangled hierarchies and dispersed interscalar networks" (Brenner 2001: 605−606).

This relational approach towards territory, the state, and scale, serves as an excellent framework that enhances our understanding towards cross-border regional spaces and supports the perspective on the EU's external borders as a *process* that underlies various de- and re-bordering practices. CBC is increasingly studied in terms of rescaling governance and the re-territorialisation of state-space (e.g. Zimmerbauer, 2013) which directs the analytical focus towards the role of regions and sub-national actors (Zimmerbauer, 2011). Nevertheless, studies have shown that national imaginations and conceptions yet influence regional cross-border constructions. Prokkola (2011) suggests that the national scale remains an important dimension which must be included into studies of cross-border regionalisation and cooperation.

The basic assumption of modern geopolitical imagination represents a state-centred approach towards global space (O'Tuathail 1998: 21) which has been termed by Agnew (1994) as the 'territorial trap'. According to Agnew (1998: 51), three geographical assumptions underpin modern geopolitical reasoning which have to be re-thought by critical geopolitical research because they convey an image of state-centric power in which the space occupied by the state is forever fixed: "first, that states have an exclusive power within their territories as represented by the concept of sovereignty; second, that 'domestic' and 'foreign' affairs are essentially separate realms in which different rules obtain and third, that the boundaries of the state define the boundaries of society such that the latter is 'contained' by the former". In order to overcome this modern container perspective of territory, scholars have stepped away from state-centred research and rather suggest recognising the multiplicity of governance and to conceptualise the state as just one geopolitical actor among many which is influenced by supranational institutions and subnational formations. Therefore, scholars generally do not propose to omit the state perspective but to analyse its role within the relational network of the global and interregional structures (see Anderson & O'Dowd 1999; Agnew 2005; Brenner 2004; Prokkola 2011).

The term "state" itself is a highly contested and contextual concept within the debate on European governance because the EU is often understood to act as a 'nation' towards non-member states in foreign affairs. The EU is understood as one geopolitical actor that "actively deploys what can be termed geostrategies aimed at ordering the space beyond its borders according to its normative preferences" (Browning 2018: 107). Through the MLG structure of the ENI CBC programmes, the EU has established a governmental system that is dispersed across multiple centres of power and authority (Hooghe & Marks 2003). Similar to the critical geopolitical perspective, Hooghe and Marks argue that "centralised authority – command and control – has few advocates" (ibid: 233). In order to overcome the state-central perspective during the study of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, I conceptualise its institutional framework as a relational process consisting of several actors with different territorial agendas. These create frictions and asymmetrical relations during negotiations that are reflected in the cooperation discourse.

Critical geopolitics also offers the possibility to shift the analytical lens towards the power relations between actors. The Finnish-Russian border demarcates two distinct states; it is governed by a multiplicity of actors located in various institutional and spatial settings. The concept of *trust* and its various forms helps to trace the power relations between actors and to understand the underlying and "hidden, dissimulated structure of the everyday (Raffestin 2012: 129). Since critical geopolitics is concerned with identifying such asymmetrical power relations that partake in the making of world politics, I focus on the competing views of EU authorities towards the ENI CBC programmes. However, previous studies lack attention towards the multiplicity of interests involved in EU-funded cross-border cooperation and therefore, my analysis of the elements that shift the discourse of CBC into the realm of security, offers an important contribution to advance our understanding of the bordering discourse that is formulated by cooperation actors.

The diverse character of border studies and borders themselves should be reflected in critical studies claiming to contribute to our understanding of borders (see Brunet-Jailly 2005; Parker & Vaughan-Williams *et al.* 2009; Rumford 2012). Therefore, engaging with the variety of conceptual elaborations on the border is a key criterion for border scholars. In this thesis, the border is studied from the perspective of CBC and the theoretical framework thus reflects its regional character which also includes discussions of territoriality and relationality in the context of the multi-level governmental network in which cooperation activities take place. Furthermore, in order to analyse the impact of territoriality on the actor relations, the research includes the concept of *trust* because it constitutes but also is constituted by power relations.

4.2 CBC as a security dimension of EU external border management: conceptualising security in cross-border regions

The concepts of CBRs and CBC have been studied from a territorial security perspective in critical geopolitics (see Goodwin 2013; Koch 2015). Browning (2003) argues that region-building increases regional security. He quotes the EU Commission for External Relations who has stated, "the basic aim must be to promote security, political stability and sustainable development through enhanced cross-border cooperation between the countries in Northern Europe" (ibid: 49−50). Browning analysed this foreign policy performance, delivered as a written policy text, as a speech act of de-securitisation because it did not refer to any explicit security measures but to the added benefits of development and region-building for stabilising the external border regions. The regional character of CBC thus connects discourses on cooperation with imaginations and speeches of security which closely interlink region-building and securitisation practices [discourses] (see Koch 2015).

Therefore, CBC is conceptualised here as a security policy complementing the external border security regime under the Schengen agreement. Manners (2013) argues that the EU has created a border security regime that does not only integrate the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU but also the ENP and its ENI CBC funding tool. He further states, "this insertion of security does not occur within a discursive vacuum; EU practices of bordering and governance all interweave regional integration and globalisation processes" (ibid: 399). Indeed, previous research on border security has emphasised that traditional security strategies of the Schengen agreement do not sufficiently explain the securitisation of the external borders. Instead, CBC can be conceptualised as a de-and re-bordering performativity which is enacted through various practices that contribute to the EU external security agenda. These practices are elaborated in the next section.

De Sousa (2013: 680−681) hints at three main drivers for CBC. First, economic factors are a key incentive for cooperation and according to classical economic theory, cooperation kicks off in border regions that are characterised by a heterogeneous economy and living standards. However, in the case of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, realists could argue that it is particularly funding driven in accordance with the financial opportunities provided by the EU (see Svensson, 2013).

Second, common historical heritage and culture, and to a lesser degree language, facilitate CBC activities (De Sousa 2013: 683). While the Finnish-Russian border is marked by a common and shared – at times rather hostile – history, CBC is recognised as a powerful tool to "combat the peripherality of border regions and to integrate formerly disconnected borderlands through territorial integration" (Fritsch *et al.* 2015: 2582).

Third, geography is identified as the "most important driver to functional co-operation as it forces neighbouring authorities to negotiate, implement and administer joint infrastructural projects" (De Sousa 2013: 684). The geographical location of the Finnish-Russian border facilitates interaction on common challenges, i.e. border-crossing facilities. However, Finnish-Russian ENI CBC goes beyond infrastructural development and includes political integration. This triggers resistance and disagreement on difficult subjects that involve political and security considerations that are within the competencies of the states.

A fourth important driver for CBC, not explicitly discussed by De Sousa (2013), is security. *Security* as a concept in critical geopolitics is not limited to the understanding of territorial security that is linked exclusively to the territorial dimension of state sovereignty (Dalby 2010b). Instead, security includes the problematisation of global flows (i.e. terrorism) which blur the distinction between internal and external space (O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998). From an ontological perspective, security is understood in this research as an ideal state that is, however, impossible to obtain; rather, certain discursive practices can provide a mere perception of security.

By the end of the Cold War, the general assumption made by scholars was that "military challenges threatening the survival of the state seemed not to constitute the main security risk" (Christou *et al.* 2010: 343). Instead, the Copenhagen school conceptualises security

as a *speech act* and therefore as a discursive practice (Buzan *et al.* 1998). Buzan *et al.* (1998: 25) have argued that "the way to study securitisation is to study discourse and political constellations" and the measure to indicate securitisation is its transfer into political actions or speech acts. However, presenting a certain discourse as a threat that requires a political response is not sufficient. The action needs to be accepted by the audience (ibid). Therefore, the theory of securitisation offers an excellent approach to understand how a social threat is not only politicised but even addressed with emergency counter-measures, therefore becoming s*ecuritised* (see Megoran 2004).

Since the early 2000s however, which have been marked by the global war on terror, the Copenhagen school of security has been criticised for its focus on security as a 'speech act' because "it is possible to securitise certain problems without speech or discourse and the military and the police have known that for a long time. The practical work, discipline and expertise are as important as all forms of discourse" (Bigo 2000: 194). Material practices thus need to be examined in addition to the analysis of speech acts that constitute securitising processes. Nevertheless, discourse re-constitutes systems of knowledge and beliefs but also influences behaviour and practices (Christou *et al.* 2010). Therefore, material practices (such as establishing wired fences) form part of the discourse and this means that a conceptualisation of security needs to take into account the discourse from various perspectives (which includes practices as discussed in chapter 3).

Security studies benefit from the critical geopolitical perspective and analysis of actors and agents, participating in the construction of institutions, policies, and strategies. Therefore, as Mamadouh and Dijkink (2006: 354) suggest, "critical accounts of geopolitics in geography are also related to IR approaches that use expanded definitions of security" by considering a larger set of security discourses and representations than those studied in IR (i.e. the perspective of foreign policy makers, military decision makers, or politicians). Critical geopolitics focuses not only on certain policy instruments or strategies but expands the concept of security to represent a discourse that includes "worldviews, perceptions, and assessments of ongoing social developments in different parts of the world" (ibid) thereby expanding the practices and processes that constitute security discourse.

Manners (2013: 410) aptly argues that "when analysing the practice of EU security, bordering and governance policy agenda movements, the focus is on discourses that shift the debate out of or into the normal political sphere". However, Christou *et al.* (2010) raise the criticism that the nature of EU governance challenges researchers to identify securitisation moves and if they are indeed identified, "the relationship between that discourse and the reception, discussion, legitimization and actualization of policy proposals and changes is less clear" (Neal 2009: 336). The reason for that is the complex institutional MLG structure of the EU that makes the identification of those responsible for the securitisation more difficult. As a result, several "perceptions" and "audiences" exist on the EU level and among EU officials (see Christou *et al.* 2010: 348; Manners 2006). These various discourses also influence the perceptions of actors towards Finnish-

Russian ENI CBC which can be analysed based on the speech acts and practices of the cooperation actors.

Recent scholarship argues that "border security overrides CBC: it appears that the dual principle of security and mobility, already firmly anchored in North America, may redefine cross-border governance and CBC in Europe" (Dupeyron, 2017: 336). However, I argue that the security/cooperation nexus not only "overrides" but rather transforms CBC into a strategy that becomes an important part of the EU's internal and external security policies. Bigo has argued that, in the context of EU border controls,

> *"it is essential to avoid an approach framed solely in terms of securitisation theory, which often implies presentism by a lack of attention to the space/time structuration that rendered possible an event sensationalism linked to media pressure, decontextualisation regarding the specific social universities the security actors come from, implicit decisionism through the focus on 'exceptional events', and lack of attention to the dispositions of the agents and the contexts." (2014: 211)*

Therefore, this research provides an alternative perspective by focusing on CBC as a security strategy; however, the analysis recognises that power relations create spatial asymmetries that derive from territorialities influencing the cooperation process (see Article II).

The ENP has been conceptualised as a territorial strategy for gaining influence in the neighbourhood (Lavenex 2008; Liikanen 2013). Manners (2013) has examined the EU's strategy of bordering and governance towards the Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods and analysed how development aid has become securitised by contributing to the goal of cross-border regional stability. Similarly, the ENI CBC programmes continue to be characterised as an 'assistance' rather than a 'partnership' (Khasson 2013) as they reflect the EU's principle of conditionality. The EU aims to enforce its principles of governance, based on the 'aquis communitaire'[5], within the neighbourhood (see Lavenex 2008; Lavenex & Weichmann 2009). The transition towards a network-type and multi-level governmental framework has created novel forms of governing dynamics at the EU's external borders. These include the establishment of the ENPI/ENI CBC programmes which effectively securitise the neighbourhood through cooperation activities which reflect the EU's objective to stabilise its external cross-border regions.

Within the academic debate, scholarly ideas and imaginations about cooperation and security are constructed, re-produced and shared. The specific discourse that a researcher presents does not appear out of a conceptual or methodological vacuum, it is instead historically and spatially contingent and thus represents widely accepted 'truths'. Defining CBC in the context of security discourses is not a value-free practice and discourses are always constructed around ideological and value-based arrangements (see van Dijk 1995). We can speak of a securitisation of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC because actor perceptions

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[5] The 'aquis communitaire' is the accumulated body of EU legislations, legal acts and court decisions which constitute the body of European law (European Commission 2016).

and imaginations of CBC as a stabilising factor in the neighbourhood have introduced cooperation activities into the realm of security discourse (c.f. Buzan *et al.* 1998). The key characteristics of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, such as its regional and multi-level governmental frameworks, serve an internal and external security purpose in which the border itself is blurred. The border reflects a constant discursive process that facilitates cooperation but also represents the extra- and intra-territorial security interests of the EU and its member states.

Therefore, security in the context of external CBC also refers to questions about *extra-territorial security* (see Casas-Cortes *et al.* 2014). Extra-territoriality conceptualises the externalisation of border security measures that, according to Casas-Cortes *et al.* (2014: 26), lead to a re-articulation of bordering practices and imaginaries by transforming border control and migration management. The authors have based their analysis on the financial incentives provided by the EU for North African states (e.g. Tunisia, Libya, Morocco) to strengthen their external border controls for preventing irregular movements across the Schengen borders. The Mediterranean external borders reflect a constant state of emergency in the context of migration within the political and public discourses (Bialasiewicz *et al.* 2009; Casas-Cortes *et al.* 2012; Pinos 2014). The Eastern Neighbourhood programmes rather stress the political and economic struggles after the downfall of the USSR in 1991 and the recent geopolitical conflicts in post-Soviet space (see Ciuta 2008; Fischer 2012).

In the context of the Finnish-Russian border, extra-territorial security refers to the inclusion of Russia, as an important global geopolitical actor, into the EU border security framework. The understanding of border security in the context of the EU/ Finnish – Russian border moves beyond traditional border controls which insufficiently address contemporary cross-border threats (see Koch 2015). Rather, geographers have demonstrated that the impact of globalisation and increasing cross-border flows demand alternative governance strategies to effectively address cross-border threats (see Blatter 2004). As a result, CBC has been recognised in the past as a *stabilising* policy strategy with the goal to *de-securitise* (Browning 2003: 50) the EU neighbourhood by its explicit focus on economic and political reforms in the neighbouring countries (Juncos & Whitman 2015: 213).

Border security from an EU perspective in the Russian context relates to questions of regional stability in the form of economic exchange, energy security, well-functioning border-crossing facilities, civil society engagement and environmental protection while both the EU and Russia aim to maintain influence in the shared neighbourhood (see Averre 2009; Cadier 2014; Dias 2013). This reflects a *de-securitisation* within the perspective of the Copenhagen school because the EU attempts to not only maintain a division between traditional border security measures and CBC as a tool for border management but to move CBC as a "soft" strategy away from the domain of security (see Browning 2003).

However, Klatt and Wassenberg (2017) suggest that local and regional CBC contribute to peace-building and conflict reconciliation and therefore, they propose to label such

cooperation activities as a *secondary-foreign policy* (also see Böhm & Drápela 2017; Dupeyron 2017; McCall & Itcaina 2017; Wassenberg 2017). Secondary foreign policy, according to Klatt and Wassenberg (2017), refers to the German concept of "Nebenaußenpolitik" describing the federal governmental structure in which the Länder take the initiative to establish sub-national assemblages in Brussels with the potential to influence EU policies. The authors argue "the term thus reflects the original understanding of these activities as a new phenomenon which takes place in parallel and in addition to the traditional foreign policy" (ibid: 207) that is usually dominated by the state. This thinking refers to the broader scholarship examining non-central governments (NCSs) and non-governmental actors (NGAs) in the context of CBC and focuses on their contribution to stability and security that leads to state territorial re-structuring and de-bordering within the MLG framework of CBC (Berg 2006; Brenner 2004; O'Neill *et al.* 2004).

Wassenberg (2017: 230) argues that the ENP entails a "peace-building" objective which is closely interlinked with security and stability that results in "reinforcing the border rather than facilitating its crossing over" through CBC activities. Thus, CBC activities are *securitised* because they reflect alternative means in contrast to the traditional border surveillance measures to address cross-border challenges (Manners 2013). Throughout the last decade, the EU has been confronted with growing public concern towards its external borders and as a response, the ENI CBC framework has been increasingly used "as a tool for stability and security in Europe" (Wassenberg 2017: 232). However, the particular discursive practices that transform ENI CBC programmes into a security strategy have been less intensively studied.

Previous studies on CBRs and CBC at the EU's external borders have been focusing on policy-oriented research tracing the impact of the ENP and its funding tool for CBC in terms of governance and actors (see Ágh 2010; Lavenex 2008; Varró 2014) and the EU's normative power in the neighbourhood (Averre 2016; Boedeltje & van Houtum 2011; Cottey 2012; Dias 2013). The Finnish-Russian border is generally perceived by the EU, as well as Finnish policy officials, as a relatively stable cross-border region in which institutionalised cooperation programmes are generally "kept free of historical baggage and geopolitical questions" (Fritsch *et al.* 2015: 2584). While the Finnish-Russian border has been considered by the EU as a role model for CBC activities in various policy domains, the geopolitical impact on Finnish-Russian ENI CBC in the context of deteriorating EU-Russia relations during the Ukrainian crisis has greatly transformed the diplomatic environment between the EU and Russia. The clashing geopolitical interests manifest in the neighbourhood because the Ukrainian crisis emphasised the ideological and political division between Russia and the EU regarding the idea of "regional security governance" (Averre 2016: 718).

The Ukrainian crisis is therefore also a result of the conflict between Russia's sphere of influence and the clash of interests with the ENP (see Averre 2016; Browning & Christou 2010; Dias 2013; Kangas 2011)[6]. Indeed, a scholarly discussion emerged about

[6] For further discussion on the Ukrainian crisis and its impact on EU-Russia relations in the context of the

whether the ENP can be understood as a securitising tool in the neighbourhood (Tassinari 2005; Galbreath & Lamoreaux 2007) by examining the self-declared goal of the EU to integrate neighbouring states into a variety of EU policy domains (Barbé *et al.* 2009) and to transfer EU rules of governance into the neighbourhood (Lavenex 2008). Cottey (2012: 376) argues, "it is usually hoped that the attractive power of the Union and the sticks and carrots available to it will give it the ability to facilitate new models of cooperation in the regions on its periphery, even to transform these regions". Cross-border security is thus also understood from the perspective of a stability paradox. Region-building processes, MLG and trust have contributed to the continued stability of CBC activities despite the challenging geopolitical environment between the EU and Russia. However, this also underlines the potential of CBC as a border security strategy for the EU in the neighbourhood.

4.3 Cross-border security and stability through the lenses of MLG and trust

An analysis of the external border requires a reflection on the multiplicity of the involved actors and institutions that participate in the creation and re-production of the external border security discourse (see Boman & Berg 2007). It has been previously noted that the external borders lie "at the intersection of distinctive policy paradigms and different actors advance conflicting policy arguments and divergent assessments of opportunities and threats" (Berg & Ehin 2006: 56). The authors furthermore state that the external border creates numerous policy objectives to be addressed by complex institutional settings, policy-paradigms and decision-making forums in which various actors from different governmental levels operate. This underlines the multi-level governmental character of CBRs.

MLG as a concept was introduced by Marks *et al.* (1993; 1996) after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which established new governmental structures by dividing the EU institutional framework into intergovernmental and supra-national areas, therefore dividing the competences among the member states and the EU institutions. MLG developed as an academic concept to help unveil political tensions between the national governments and the EU institutions (Dabrowski *et al.* 2014). However, its ideas entered the speech of EU policy-makers throughout the 1990s that were marked by new aspirations towards global governance and increased political integration (see Bache & Flinders 2004; Stephenson 2013).

Another phenomenon inspired the discussion on the multiplicity of actors involved in the regional framework of the EU. The establishment of the Committee of the Regions in 1994 and the increased involvement of sub-national actors in EU policy-making emphasised the need to reconceptualise EU governance and to analyse the impact of

European Neighbourhood, see Auer 2015; Browning 2018; Korosteleva 2016.

various national, sub-national and supra-national actors on EU legislation. Research has been aiming to understand how the European governmental system is constantly (re-) negotiated between the actors who represent different territorial tiers (Bache & Jones 2000). In this context, Marks (1993) has argued that decision-making power is delegated from the national to the sub- and supra-national levels leading to debates on the role of regionalism and territoriality in MLG structures (see Gualini 2003 & Chilla *et al.* 2012; Murphy 2008; Koch 2017a).

The recent discourse on MLG and the multiplicity of governance reflects the dispersion and diffusion of central political authority which allegedly results in a non-hierarchical and network-like structure of policy-making – particularly in the policy domain of cross-border regional governance and cooperation (see Nadalutti 2013; Perkman 2007). However, a multi-level governmental approach towards CBC does not prevent the occurrence of hierarchical structures, nor does it suggest the redundancy of the state as a geopolitical actor (see Faludi 2012; Koch 2017a). Brunet-Jailly (2011) has argued that MLG as a process transforms the state in the following manner:

> *"Decentralisation and downloading of policies progressively empower local and regional actors, and economic, social and political asymmetries develop. These processes are visible in borderland regions where economic, social, and political asymmetries either serve, or come in conflict with, the recent security agenda of states." (ibid: 2–3)*

The EU aims to create a governance framework of CBC which is unaffected by political, economic, and social differences to create a non-hierarchical structure; however, this perspective is reflecting an a-political and a-territorial approach in the sense that it fails to consider the impact of territorial sensitivities deriving from political relations. Territoriality is conceptualised in this research from an actor-focused perspective (see Raffestin 2012) and therefore, Finnish-Russian ENI CBC "follows a particular territorial logic in which political powers influence but also derive from actor relations" (Koch 2017a:14). The EU makes efforts to create an equal partnership but the diplomatic relations between states can work against the efforts of the regional actors to include all participants equally into the decision-making process. Therefore, EU governance strategies are not only political but also territorial when challenged by the geopolitical environment.

Few studies have applied the MLG perspective on the research of CBC, perhaps because MLG as a concept remains flawed and challenging to apply (see Alcantara *et al.* 2016; Faludi 2012; Murphy 2008). Nevertheless, MLG offers an insight into the workings of power relations by allowing the researcher to move beyond the state-centric perspective that is so often criticised by critical geopolitics. Murphy (2008: 16) argues, "to the extent that "balanced multi-level governance" is an attainable goal, we clearly need to understand better the types of territorial arrangements that are offering meaningful alternatives to the spatial imperatives of the state system". Therefore, the underlying arrangements of power relations, influenced by questions of territoriality, require being

included into the discussion if MLG is truly to be investigated from the perspective of territorial cooperation settings.

Chilla *et al.* (2012: 965) argue further that "territoriality in a European multi-level governance system is more complex and cannot reduce territoriality to one level" meaning that power relations and territoriality are not a zero-sum game with one loser and one winner; instead, territoriality is enacted and resisted at various levels. In this analysis, territoriality is defined according to the various levels (supranational; national; sub-national) involved in cooperation practices and its key elements are communication channels, decision-making procedures, and flexibility of cooperation procedures within national territorial jurisdictions. Therefore, the research represents a *scalar* perspective which, however, requires some theoretical clarification. Scale in itself is a problematic concept in Human Geography and while some authors argue we should get rid of it altogether (Marston *et al.* 2005: 420), others are calling for a reconceptualisation of scale by studying it from the perspective of *performativity* (Kaiser & Nikiforova 2008). In this research, scale is understood as a fluid process, meaning that the different political actors and their institutions are overlapping and constituted by decisions taken on other political levels.

Prokkola (2011: 1205–1206) demonstrates that the national scale remains an important dimension in CBC activities across the Finnish-Swedish border. She argues "instead of studying cross-border cooperation as a one-way process, resulting in border removal, we should approach cooperation as a set of institutional and non-institutional practices which simultaneously remove and reconstruct political borders and which are constructed on multiple scales". This perspective is well in line with the previous theoretical discussion on the relational networks in which scales are viewed as entangled and dispersed across hierarchies (Brenner 2001).

The MLG approach forms an important part of the (re-)securitisation of the EU's external borders because it develops a form of border stability and security triggered through the multiplicity of actors participating in cross-border decision-making processes. This governmental structure contributes to the stabilisation of CBRs through the variety of interests existing in the border regions in the context of cooperation. However, resistance and conflict are triggered through the various views from the different institutional levels. Therefore, the discourse on CBC is influenced by a variety of interests towards the border. MLG is always territorial and immediately involved in the creation and de-construction of conceptual borders (Koch 2017a; 2017b).

The multi-level governmental framework of cooperation does, however, not sufficiently explain the continuation of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC amid geopolitical challenges. Indeed, the promotion of sub-national interests facilitates cross-border relations (see Koch 2017b). However, relations between the EU and Russia are still balanced "between cooperation and conflict" (Dias 2013: 265) and actor relations are challenged by newly established discourses of hostility and inequality promoted by the media and re-produced by the public (Haukkala 2015). Nevertheless, cooperation practices between Finland and

Russia under the ENI have remained relatively stable and therefore, I argue that the role of *trust*, contributing to the formation of social capital within the CBR, contributes to the stability of the cooperation network (see Koch 2017b). In this regard, Axford (2006: 166) has argued that networks "are sustained by shared norms and trust rather than contractual relationships and bureaucratic rules".

As previously discussed, the Finnish state remains in a key role within the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC framework which is reflected by the involvement of the European Council (consisting of the heads of EU member states) in steering and setting the political goals of the ENI CBC programmes. The heads of states present their security interests, in the context of a stable neighbourhood, and therefore advocate for a maintenance of the borders with the status quo in the neighbourhood. However, these efforts have been recently threatened by the Ukrainian crisis which endangered the stability and EU-Russian diplomatic relations. Due to the dominant role of state interests, authors (e.g. Klatt & Wassenberg 2017) have argued that regional interests regarding the CBRs are neglected and therefore shifted into a "secondary" position.

Nevertheless, this secondary position plays a crucial role in the sense that while the EU promotes a MLG framework for cooperation, regional and local actors can operate from a bottom-up perspective to maintain stability within the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC by promoting a sustainable relationship between cooperation actors on the ground. The regional cooperation network, that is largely created and maintained by sub-national actors, is particularly significant as it realises the goals set out by the EU and its member states. A trustful relationship between regional actors that is based on common interests, while requiring more effort, has a more long-term effect than the reliance on institutional trust between the EU and its member states with the Russian government and its ministries. Therefore, inter-actor trust, based on personal relations and common objectives, greatly contributes to stability in the Finnish-Russian CBRs.

Trust is a significant factor in cooperation activities (see Article III). However, research shows that institutional norms and formal contracts significantly contribute to the perception of trust among cooperation actors (see Koch 2017b). Trust-building processes and social capital have been studied in the context of EU internal CBC, for example at the Finnish-Swedish border (Häkli 2009; Jakola & Prokkola 2017). The Finnish-Russian border, however, underlies different dynamics as an external Schengen border; imposing challenges for trust-formation (see Koch 2017b). It has been noted by Princen *et al.* (2016) that the examination of CBC requires a systematic analysis of intra-governmental dynamics and therefore, the study of trust and its varieties help to investigate stable cross-border relations throughout challenging geopolitical circumstances.

While trust is an elusive concept, hard to pin down and impossible to measure, Saari (2011a: 217) suggests that "trust like distrust has different dimensions, logics, and degrees, which all have to be singled out and analysed". Therefore, based on the model utilised by Laurian (2009), Article III scrutinises four different forms of trust: the *rational-personal*; *socio-cultural*; *general-personal and historic-institutional* (Koch 2017b). These four forms were

analysed from a spatial perspective by showing how actor-dynamics are influenced by both relational and territorial aspects that "may exist concomitantly" (Paasi 2008: 408) and contribute to a stable cross-border relationship.

5 Research design

5.1 Research context, material and method of analysis

After Finnish independence in 1917, the previously open border regime between Finland and Russia underwent a major transformation as it turned into a securitised and militarised closed border. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Finnish-Russian relations were marked by a period of 'hate' which Paasi (1996: 98) conceptualises as a "new geopolitical code" in which relations between the Soviet Union and Finland diminished significantly. Previous political connections were severed in the years following World War I because of the Finnish nation-state building process. Some scholars argue that the Finnish hostility and aversion towards Russia and Russianness between 1918 and 1944 was "instrumental for furthering certain ideological or political interests" and supported the Finnish nation-building process (Kangas 2011: 42).

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the Finnish-Russian border has been a contested site marked by conflicts and wars. The geographical position of Finland was widely perceived as a gatekeeper to the West, shielding Western European states from Russian invasion. This discourse also affected Finnish everyday lives and politics of bordering. The Finnish state promoted the Soviet Union as a geopolitical threat to its own independence which created a fluid perception towards the neighbour which constantly shifted between open hostility and cautious rapprochement backed up by careful foreign policies (Luostarinen 1989; Moisio 1998). Nevertheless, the Finnish-Russian border transformed into a "concrete physical location" which turned it into a symbol of the East-West distinction (Prokkola 2013a: 83).

Already during the 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev introduced extensive reforms in Russia which included plans for restructuring the Soviet Union's political and economic system under his perestroika policy. The collapse of the Soviet Union a few years later changed the Finnish-Russian border regime and "the termination of the policies of official delegations and joint communiqués was greeted with enthusiastic anticipation" in the realm of civil society organisations and their cross-border relations (Laine 2016b: 225; Liikanen 2013). Following Sweden's example in 1994, Finland applied for EU membership after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Finnish-Russian bilateral CBC was formally established by the 'Neighbourhood Area Cooperation framework' in 1992 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland 2009: 2). This agreement regulated Finnish-Russian cross-border activities before Finnish accession to

the EU in 1995 after which it was included into the INTERREG[7] and TACIS[8] (Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States) programmes. Eskelinen (2013) argues that the multi-level patterned bilateral regime of the early 1990s reflects a mixture of state territoriality and – after Finland's accession to the EU – also an "emerging European territoriality" (ibid 57). Thus, the EU incorporated the Finnish-Russian CBRs into its own institutional external CBC framework with the aim to empower regional actors and provide a novel form of multi-level and trans-national governance.

Finnish EU membership in 1995 and its preceding inclusion into the Schengen area (2001) transformed the geopolitical constitution of the Finnish-Russian border by developing its political spatiality into an external border of the EU. While the geographical focus of this research is directed towards the Finnish-Russian border, it is the institutional agenda of ENI CBC which is under scrutiny in this thesis. The ENI CBC is an EU-led financing tool providing EU institutions in Brussels with major decision-making responsibilities. Therefore, this research focuses on the EU perspective towards Finnish-Russian ENI CBC. The Finnish-Russian border has a length of approximately 1340 km and is covered by three ENI CBC programmes (from North to South: Kolarctic; Karelia; South-East Finland – Russia) (see Figure 2). These programmes are the analytical focus in research Articles II and III. In addition, Article I served as an introductory study that problematises region-building and security along the EU-Russia border. It focuses on the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme (see Figure 3) because its geographical area has been experiencing a re-securitisation during the Ukrainian crisis in 2013. Article I concentrated on the different meanings of the borders within the Baltic Sea Region programme, however, studying its layers specifically in the Finnish-Russian context.

The Finnish-Russian border is generally recognised by the EU as a frontrunner for effective border management because it has been praised for its surveillance methods and stable collaboration between Finnish and Russian border guards (Prokkola 2011). Nevertheless, challenges arise within the Finnish-Russian border regions due to the high socio-economic disparity. The northern municipalities of Lapland within the Kolarctic programme are sparsely populated which poses challenges to transport and infrastructure. The geographical area of the Karelian programme is confronted with similar infrastructural problems. In addition, it faces economic issues that result out of the high unemployment rate in Eastern Finland which leads to demographic challenges within Finnish state space (Moisio & Paasi 2013). The South-East Finland – Russia programme includes the Helsinki – St. Petersburg corridor and thus contains the most frequented

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[7] The INTERREG programmes were established in 1989 to promote cooperation between regions in the EU funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). INTERREG has three strands (cross-border cooperation; transnational cooperation; and interregional cooperation). It includes all EU member states, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland as well as 18 neighbouring non-EU states who financially contribute to INTERREG programmes.

[8] The TACIS programmes provided grant-financed technical assistance to 12 Eastern European and Central Asian states that was supposed to support their transition into a democratic market-oriented economy. Russia was among the beneficiaries until the programme was replaced by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) in 2007.
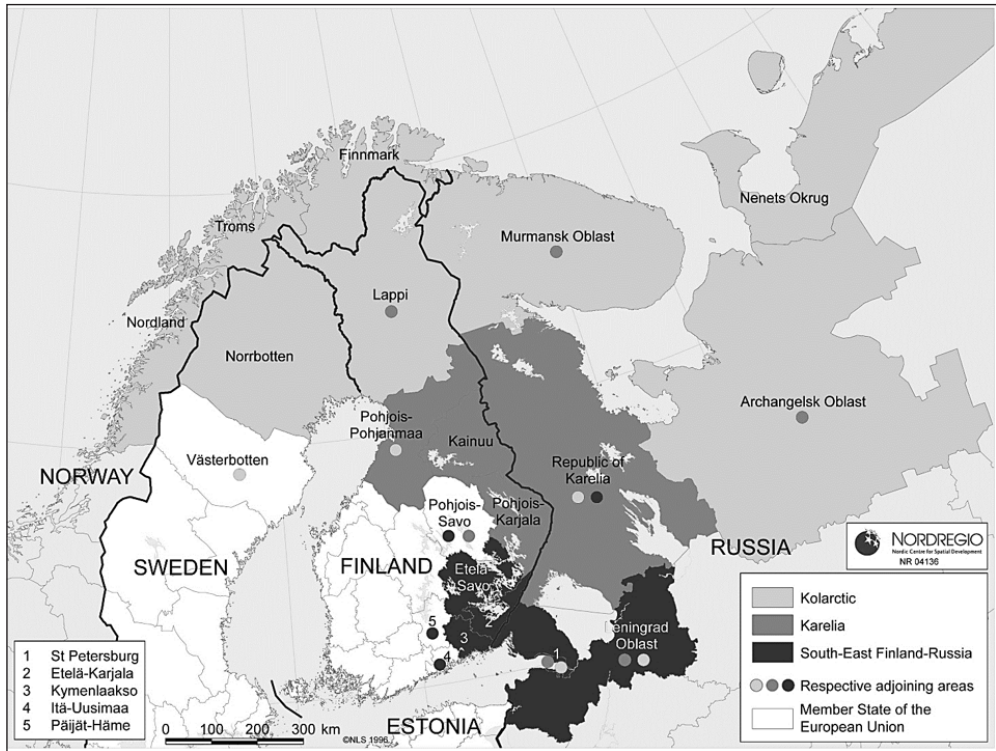
Figure 2. Finnish-Russian ENI CBC Programmes 2007–2013/ 2014–2020. Source: NordRegio 2007.

border-crossing points where border-crossers often experience long queues and waiting times for people and goods to cross the Schengen border. These challenges are targeted by large-scale ENI CBC projects for increasing border-crossing facilities. The INTERREG Baltic Sea region programme reflects a vast territorial area with several environmental, infrastructural, economic and social challenges that are targeted by developing projects promoting the sustainable use of the Baltic Sea for all participating countries. Table 2 provides an overview of the analysed ENI CBC programmes.

Examples of ENPI CBC projects[9] in the Kolarctic programme include the "Enhancement of Oil Spill Response System by establishing Oil database". This project, running from 2012–2013, included partners from Russia, Finland and Norway to address the environmental hazard of oil spills in the Arctic and to implement an early warning and response system in emergencies. Another project of the Kolarctic ENPI CBC is the "Kolarctic Salmon" (2011–2013) project. It focused on the protection of the Atlantic salmon population in the Barents region, including the implementation of a knowledge-based harvesting regime that preserves fishing traditions and coastal cultures. In the

[9] The full project database of all three Finnish-Russian ENPI CBC programmes can be found here: http://www.cbcprojects.eu/

Figure 3. Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014–2020. Source: NordRegio, 2015.

Table 2. Analysed ENI CBC 2014–2020 Programmes.

	Kolarctic	Karelia	South-East Finland – Russia	Baltic Sea Region
Countries	Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden	Finland, Russia	Finland, Russia	DK, DE, NO, S, FI, RU, BY, PL, EE, LV, LT
Core Regions	8	4	4	9 countries + German & Russian regions
Population	2,4 million	1,2 million	7,5 million	n.a.
Land Area	1,2 million km2	263,667 km2	117,175 km2	n.a.
Budget EU + National	€24,7m (EU); €14m (NO); €12,39m (FI & S); €12,39m (RU).	€21,5m (EU); €10,7m (FI); €10,7m (RU).	€36,1m (EU); €18m (FI); €18m (RU).	€263,8m (ERDF); €8,8m (ENI)*; €6,6m (NO).
Thematic Objective	1. Business & SME development 2. Environmental protection 3. Accessibility to the region, transport & infrastructure 4. Border management & security	1. Business & SME development 2. Promotion local culture & historical heritage 3. Environmental protection 4. Border management & security	1. Business & SME development 2. Education, research, technological innovation 3. Environmental protection 4. Border management & security	1. Capacity for innovation 2. Management of natural resources 3. Sustainable transport 4. Strategy support (EUSBSR).
JMA Location	Rovaniemi, Finland	Oulu, Finland	Lappeenranta, Finland	Kiel, Rostock (Germany Riga (Latvia)

* financing agreements between the EU and Russia not signed according to the available data at the time of concluding this thesis

Karelian ENPI CBC programme region, projects included for example the "Green cities and settlements - Sustainable spatial development in remote border areas" project (2011–2014), led by Finland and encouraged the development of green cities and settlements in remote border areas with the support of Russian partners. A key deliverable of the project was the collection of data and to prepare proposals for best practices to be presented to local city planners. The goal was to increase the attractiveness of the region and to develop a plan for the efficient use of energy resources within border towns.

In the South-East Finland – Russia ENPI CBC programme, projects included for example the "Castle-to-Castle" (2011–2014) project, which had the aim to promote and preserve the common heritage and regional identity by developing cultural tourism that focuses in particular on Finnish and Russian castles that would strengthen the network of tourism operators. Another project, focusing on the border-crossing infrastructure,

was the "Imatra Border Crossing Development" (2013−2014) that improved the design, construction, and reconstruction of the Imatra road border crossing point.

The European external CBC framework of the ENI in Finland is marked by a decentralised management in the sense that it is a multi-level governmental framework displaying the dynamics between various involved actors. Decision-making and implementation tasks towards the ENI CBC programmes are divided in a multi-scalar way in which the EU and the European Commission (Directorate-General REGIO and Directorate-General NEAR) are responsible for the establishment and approval of the ENI CBC programmes. The Joint Management Authorities (JMAs) under the jurisdiction of the regional councils in Rovaniemi, Oulu and Lappeenranta are tasked with the practical implementation and management of the projects in conjunction with the Finnish ministries in Helsinki. The ministries approve the projects selected by the JMAs and communicate cooperation results and objectives to the responsible directorate-generals (DGs) of the EU Commission in Brussels.

5.1.1 Policy documents

As discussed in the preceding theoretical sections, texts are the core of critical geopolitical enquiry. Policy documents are one major component of the research material which represents a *triangulation*[10] approach utilising policy documents, interviews, and public dissemination material in the form of public speeches and brochures in order to validate the evidence obtained from each set of material. The analysis of policy documents offers the advantage to "capture representation of space in language and images, and reveals some of the power relations that contest these representations" (Jensen & Richardson 2004: 63). The statements, ideas and imaginations presented by decision-makers have helped to analyse the discourse of ENI CBC and its interlinkage with security speeches which emphasises the potential of cooperation activities as stabilising forces in CBRs. Article I shows that, as research material, policy documents function as an indicator of changing paradigms within policy traditions and their analysis helps to identify recurrent themes within the discourse.

Discourse is often understood by researchers as "the sum of communicative interactions" (Sharp & Richardson 2001: 395). In this way, we can understand policy documents as the discursive result of speeches, meetings and consultations (both within the public sphere or behind closed doors) and thus provide us with a glimpse into the decision-making processes that manifest in the form of "*discourse as text*" (ibid). However, we must also be aware that policy documents are only the *representation* of long international negotiations and arguments that often take place over an extensive period of time and with the involvement of several actors from different political levels (Koch 2017a). Therefore, the researcher must recognise that the discourse extracted from policy

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[10] For further discussion of the triangulation research approach, see Howarth 2004.

documents is a spatio-temporal fix prone to change and transformation. Nevertheless, focusing the discourse analysis of policy documents on a pre-determined period allows the researcher to interpret the texts while considering their production within the broader geopolitical circumstances.

Policy documents have multiple meanings and reflect competing sets of discourses, especially when a range of documents is under scrutiny. Thus, they help to direct the analytical lens towards the change of power relations which reflects a key objective of critical geopolitics. Therefore, policy documents are an important body of research material on which critical geopolitical inquiry can be based (see Prokkola, 2011). The document analysis in this research has fulfilled five purposes based on Bowen's (2009) suggestion to identify the rationale behind document analysis. In this research, policy documents have:

1. Provided data on the context, background and historical accounts;
2. Helped to elaborate research questions and to pay attention to certain situations in the context of cross-border cooperation;
3. Extended the knowledge base and provided new information;
4. Assisted in tracking change and development in policy decisions with regard to geopolitical transformation;
5. Offered a tool to verify research results derived from interviews.

The corpus[11] of studied policy documents offered a broad range of applicability for analysis by not only providing an initial overview but also supporting the formulation of questions for the potential interviewees. Furthermore, the discourse analysis helped to understand the power relations between actors and institutions by tracing related document material throughout the pre-established time frame. Similarly to Sharp and Richardson (2001: 196), I understand discourse as multiple and competing sets of ideas that comprise both *text* and *practice*. My objective however, is not to make a distinction between texts and practices as they both constitute each other and form the discourse. I propose that in order to present a critical geopolitical analysis, we need to utilise a data set comprised of different materials, such as policy documents and interviews, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the discourse on a certain subject (i.e. multi-dimensional perspective).

Non-representational theorists (Thrift, 2008) criticise that such analysis can only offer a representation of the real world. However, Kuus (2012) has shown in her extensive study on foreign policy bureaucracies in Brussels that ethnographic approaches require caution because critical policy studies pose methodological challenges to the embodied and experienced analysis of certain institutional practices. Therefore, I conceptualise *practices* rather as the verbalised form of actions/practices and experiences (i.e. through

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[11] For a selective overview of the corpus of EU documents studied for this thesis, see appendix 1.

interviews) but also include the observation of proceedings during public meetings and speeches. In this way, it is possible to overcome the criticism of practice theory towards critical discourse analysis[12]. The texts and metaphors written in policy documents represent policy practices; independent of their realisation into concrete policy strategies. Nevertheless, Khasson (2013) shows that a comparison between speech/text and practice is an important factor influencing the discourse, as it reveals contradictions, clash of interests and resistance between actors.

The policy documents range from the establishment of the ENP in 2004 until the recent policy decisions towards the ENI in 2016. The choice of documents is based on three factors: time, scope and actorness. First, the body of documents covers the entire period of the ENP (established in 2004). The corpus of studied documents reflects a linear temporal thread, following the period of geopolitical conflicts in the neighbourhood (i.e. Georgia crisis of 2008); the establishment of the two major funding instruments (ENPI in 2006 & ENI in 2014); the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009; the Arab Spring in 2011; the transition towards a new understanding of the ENI CBC (2014); the transformation of populist political regimes within Western European States; the re-consolidation of internal border controls after the so-called 'refugee-crisis' in 2015; and finally, the diplomatic impact of the Ukrainian crisis (2013–2014) and the resulting economic sanctions against Russia that are in force presently (see Figure 4).

This temporal perspective, while covering more than a decade, allows the researcher to provide an interpretation of the current discourse that, while fixed at this moment in time, will impact future decision-making processes.

Second, the documents are chosen based on their thematic scope. While numerous regulations, proceedings and policy recommendations are constantly published regarding the ENI CBC programmes, a careful selection of key documents was made based on preceding studies about influential EU policy-decisions in the ENP context (e.g. Beaugitte *et al.* 2015; Kuus 2014; Scott 2006). The research concentrates on the connection between CBC and security imaginations as reflected in the policy documents. The key documents were analysed and in addition, policy proceedings in the form of implementation reports and follow-up analysis were included into the discourse analysis in order to compare the policy suggestions with the practical implementation on the sub-national level. This procedure has allowed for a comparison between speech acts and practices reflecting the different perception of the border according to the various cooperation actors. The legal frameworks for ENI CBC, in the form of regulations published in the Official Journal of the EU, have served as a contextual framework in order to trace linguistic particularities discarded or re-produced from the initial policy recommendations by the European Commission.

Third, the corpus of documents includes a variety of material from different political levels. In order to analyse them according to their production, it was necessary to follow a context-sensitive approach which recognised the origin of each document. As I have

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[12] See Thrift (2008) for his critique on critical discourse analysis in comparison to non-representational theory.

limited the range of documents to EU contextual material, sub-national ENI CBC programming documents were collected that are intended to report implementation and programme results within the guidelines of the EU. The ENI CBC programmes are operating under EU policies (see Metzger, 2012); therefore, the EU is a key actor and publishes a majority of the policy regulations and directives regarding the implementation of the different cross-border programmes within the states. In addition, material from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as well as the regional ENI CBC programmes, have provided insight into the CBC objectives as interpreted by Finnish national and sub-national actors. The documents help understanding the EU discourse towards Finnish-Russian ENI CBC as they reflect policy decisions targeted for a certain audience. The analysis of the author-audience relationship is one main goal during a discourse analysis, as it sheds light on text consumption but also on their relations with other texts; therefore, forming a key objective of critical discourse analysis.
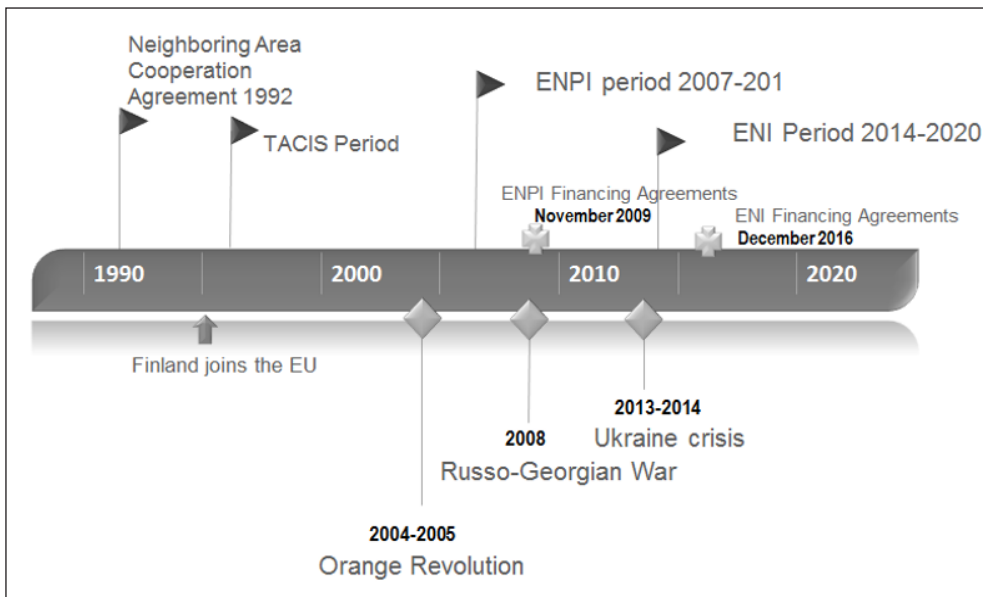

Figure 4. Timeline of geopolitical events and development of ENI CBC programmes. Originally published in European Planning Studies (Koch 2017b).

5.1.2 In-depth interviews

The second major part of the material consists of 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews[13] conducted by the author with key actors responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes. The benefits of in-depth interviews as a methodological form of inquiry have been explored in the context of discourse analysis in critical geopolitics (see Howarth 2004; Hansen & Sorensen 2004). Howarth (2004: 338) argues, for example, that qualitative interviewing "stresses the importance of subjectivity in explaining social reality, and which seeks to provide 'thick descriptions' of events and processes which are not readily achievable from a purely positivistic point of view". While interviews are a core source to generate primary material to be utilised in a discourse analysis, there are certain theoretical considerations and limitations which need to be highlighted in the context of this research. As discussed in the previous chapter, discourse analysis reflects a spatio-temporal fix, and while policy documents have the benefit of providing a broader temporal perspective (see Bowen, 2009), interviews represent a contingent and situated specific context in which the statements were made.

Traditionally, human geographers who engage in research of those with power have characterised their interview material stemming from an 'elite' perspective (see Kuus 2016; Smith 2005). Debates on *power relations* encountered during interview settings have been the focus of methodological studies emphasising the challenges of 'researching up' (Desmond 2004: 265). For example, Harvey (2011) elaborates on his own experiences doing elite interviews and he highlights specific characteristics, such as building rapport, time constraints and confidential issues. While these factors are relevant for any type of interview, elite interviews often carry issues that start at the planning stage and may reflect in the flexibility towards the dissemination of the research results (Smith 2005: 644). Certain statements may not be allowed to be utilised in the research and this can significantly alter the analysis of the material.

The choice of interviewees for this research is justified by their long-term experience within the cooperation framework; most of the interviewees from the governmental perspective were already familiar with the TACIS structures under which Finnish-Russian CBC was funded until 2006. Kuus (2014: 48) based her justification of interviewees on "policy conceptualisation and long-term institutional dynamics". Similarly, this research required the insight of individuals with long-term experiences and certain managerial tasks that provide them with a certain influence and decision-making responsibility within the programmes and projects. In this way, I consider my interviews from a "bureaucratic elite" perspective which has certain implications for the critical discourse analysis conducted for this research, as it does not reflect the view of those subjects for whom the cooperation programmes and projects were designed.

The notion of 'elite' and the distinction between those who possess power with those considered 'marginalised' or 'disenfranchised' has not been without criticism (see Smith

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[13] The list of interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

2005; Lancaster 2011). Smith (2005) argues that "the identification of individuals as 'elite' often relies on structural notions of power which have been usefully critiqued elsewhere in geography". She does not detest the concept of power in studying the dynamics of interviewing; however, she suggests applying a post-structural perspective in the sense that the power we associate with individuals in one context is not necessarily transferred into other spaces. The interviewer should avoid assuming that the power he/she perceives in the interview encounter will also display itself in the interview setting.

Smith even introduces the notion of 'vulnerable elites' (2005: 650) to refer to the type of power the interviewer may hold over the interviewee (i.e. in terms of authorship and reflecting the voices of the researched). However, Lancaster (2011: 265) also argues that "the researcher is dependent on the cooperation of a relatively small number of people with specialised knowledge, and not usually a potential emancipator or oppressor". While 'researching up', I suggest acknowledging potential power imbalances but also to exercise caution in asserting these too much influence as it can create pre-conceived perspectives or expectations.

Two key aspects have influenced the choice and setting of interviews. First, the interviews took place between the years 2014−2016, which reflects the peak trajectory of the Ukrainian crisis and its diplomatic consequences for foreign relations between the EU and Russia. Furthermore, financing agreements for the Finnish-Russian ENI programmes were not yet finalised[14], therefore, the interviews reflect also a retro-perspective on the ENPI programmes that officially ran from 2007−2013. Second, as identified from the policy documents, the main actors for Finnish-Russian ENI CBC are located in the JMAs which are incorporated into the Finnish regional councils. These actors, while holding certain decision-making powers, are operating under the aegis of the national ministries in Helsinki.

Russian interview actors are absent due to two key factors: first, the institutional frameworks of ENI CBC programmes are exclusively administered by EU institutions and managed by the EU member states. Therefore, only EU actors are involved in the establishment and management of the programmes. Second, the majority of lead project partners are from Finland, therefore, perceptions and expectations of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC are majorly influenced by Finnish actors (see Koch 2017a). Nevertheless, the methodological and empirical implications of the missing Russian view have been also considered by emphasising that this thesis presents an EU actor perspective, thus building on the perceptions of EU and Finnish actors towards Finnish-Russian cooperation and reflecting experiences and impressions of Finnish ENI CBC actors who cooperate with Russian partners. This perspective has been considered throughout the analysis by recognising the particular spatial and institutional position of the interviewees.

A snowballing sampling strategy was applied that helped in identifying relevant interview participants. First, key informants were interviewed from the JMAs representing

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[14] The financing agreements for the three Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes were signed in December 2016.

the Kolarctic (Rovaniemi), Karelia (Oulu) and South-East Finland – Russia (Lappeenranta) programmes. In addition, an interview took place with a member of the Joint Secretariat in Riga which represents the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme. These respondents were asked to identify key contacts in the Finnish ministries (Helsinki) and within the EU institutions (Brussels). In this way, it was possible to gain a distance from the central state perspective; however, the Finnish state does hold major decision-making authority within the ENI CBC programmes according to their administrative structure of governance. In addition, project managers from the Finnish-Russian ENPI 2007–2013 programmes were interviewed. This facilitated tracing the relational network of the actors and providing a distinct perspective of each involved actor-level, comprised of the project, sub-national, national and supra-national perspectives.

The formulations of questions for the interviews is based on the policy document analysis that has generated a list of key terms by utilising a theoretically informed content analysis. This has served as a predecessor of the discourse analysis, both of which are operationalised in the next section. The interviews focused on subjects such as cooperation practices on a day-to-day basis, communication, decision-making influence, cross-border work experiences, the transformation of cross-border cooperation through the last decade, and the challenging geopolitical environment following the Ukrainian crisis.

The interviews provide an additional perspective to the policy documents. They offer insight into the day-to-day interactions, challenges and ad-hoc solutions that are not presented in the official policy documents. Therefore, interviews capture the hidden interactions and problem-solving interactions, which help us to gain further insight into the de- and re-bordering discourses. Similar to the methodological approach of Pinos (2014: 134), who has analysed externalisation of border management policies in the context of the external border between Spain and Morocco, the interviews for this thesis have been scrutinised and compared with each other to disclose the relational and territorial aspects of the actor-network. The views and statements provided by the interviewees are considered particularly relevant to gain insight into certain critical issues, such as current EU-Russia relations, and their impact on Finnish-Russian ENI CBC.

Each interview lasted one hour on average (but in some instances the recorded interviews exceeded two hours) and most of them have been recorded and transcribed, except for three interviews. In those instances, where recording was not possible due to the external circumstances (meeting in a busy café), handwritten notes and the key elements discussed in the interview were documented immediately afterwards. In some cases, the discussion began before or continued after the "official" interview, i.e. during a coffee break or while explaining my own background as a doctoral student. The information gathered from such "unofficial" discussions was treated as "informal" information which I evaluated accordingly during the analysis and only with the permission of the interviewees.

I wish to take the opportunity to talk about some challenging aspects while interviewing EU bureaucrats in Brussels. The increased risk of Islamic terror attacks in Europe included the deployment of the military in the city and all public institutions. While visiting the

EEAS in May 2015, visitors had to enter the building through security scanners. As I was waiting in the lobby for my interviewee to pick me up and guide me through the security channel (I was not allowed to enter without a "host"), a large group of visitors entered the building. My respondent arrived shortly afterwards, but seeing the large group of people assembling in front of the security scanners (20+ people), we decided to conduct the interview in a near-by café which was busy due to the lunchtime hour. I attempted to record the interview but the background noise was clearly audible and at times exceeded our spoken conversation. I have experienced such challenges mainly while visiting high-profile institutions (EEAS and Finnish Foreign Ministry) and such incidents, while anticipated, cannot be avoided. Therefore, it required me to be flexible and to prepare as much as beforehand (i.e. alternative recording strategies) to gain the greatest benefit from the interview, including follow-up e-mails with questions that required further clarifications.

The temporal scope discussed during the interviews included mainly the period between 2004 and 2016, to obtain a comprehensive overview that matches the scope of analysed policy documents. However, some interviewees had previous working experiences with the former EU TACIS programmes and, in addition, they elaborated on those experiences gathered during the early 2000s. In one case, the interviewee already worked with the TACIS programme since its establishment in 1991, which led to an invaluable insight into Cold War cross-border relations between Finland and Russia.

5.1.3 Public presentations, workshops and dissemination material

In addition to the official policy documents that are mostly intended for an expert audience, the research also includes various public dissemination materials in the form of brochures, leaflets, and news material. Furthermore, public presentations and speeches, some of them available online, were either watched or attended on the spot and included into the discourse analysis. The material was collected from official institutional websites, the archives of the EU in Brussels available to the public and on-site during the interviews. The material includes, for example, publications by the European Commission Publications Office and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland that can be found online. Furthermore, it includes various leaflets and information brochures that were handed to me during the interviews and that I collected while visiting the respective institutions. In addition, I attended various public presentations in Brussels on matters regarding ENI CBC programmes and observed workshops, for example, from the Committee on Regional Development on macro-regional strategies in summer 2017.

Most of the material collected from the Finnish ministries and from the JMAs was co-published with the EU Commission. The collected material was categorised, scrutinised and analysed as part of the critical discourse analysis. In this way, it was possible to conduct a discourse analysis which would not only consider the policy documents which are usually the polished results of negotiations among several stakeholders and face-to-face

interviews, but also the material distributed to the interested public including observations of the day-to-day practices of ENI CBC decision-makers.

5.2 Theoretically informed content analysis

Before elaborating on the operationalisation of discourse analysis in the next section, it is necessary to discuss theoretically informed content analysis which served as the initial tool to make sense of the research material. Content analysis is a quantitative and qualitative method to find meaning in research material. It is often applied from a realist perspective which helps to identify key themes from the content of the data and to investigate their relations and identify certain patterns (Hay 2016: 173). A distinction is being made between *manifest* and *latent* content analysis. Manifest content analysis scrutinises the text (i.e. interviews) for key words and their frequency. In this way, it is possible for the researcher to recognise recurring themes or topics as well as the specific pattern in which these appear. Latent content analysis includes determining certain themes from the material by searching for underlying meaning from the text (ibid). Therefore, latent content analysis provides a more-detailed and rigorous perspective.

Content analysis is a useful method to scrutinise interviews and policy documents from a realist viewpoint. It studies how the talk of, for example interview participants, reflects their opinions, thoughts, and experiences. However, it has been criticised to neglect the broader context of a certain phenomenon by omitting the wider geopolitical and social environment in which the interview took place. Nevertheless, content analysis can provide a useful initial screening regarding the research topic which can then be complemented by a deeper contextual discourse analysis (see Feltham-King & Macleod 2016).

Content analysis provides a first perspective on the key themes found in the research material. However, it is not sufficient to extract the meaning of the border from the material. It does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the broader societal and political circumstances as well as the discursive practices of the material (*text production/ text consumption*). Hay (2016: 303) suggests that content analysis can serve as a starting point for discourse analysis because it helps to quantify keywords, word clusters and lines to one particular statement. An empirical example of the usefulness of content analysis is provided by McFarlane and Hay (2003) who exploit the qualitative and quantitative rigour of this approach. They uncover and analyse, by means of counting and deconstruction of newspaper articles, the myths, discourses and stereotypes employed by a newspaper regarding the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999.

Surprisingly, the way in which content analysis can enrich and serve as a pre-screening method ahead of discourse analysis has not been discussed in the field of qualitative methods in human geography; the discussion of these methods is usually kept apart. However, Feltham-King and Macleod (2016) show how the quantification in content

analysis can enrich the well-established methodology of discourse analysis. The authors pay attention to the strengths of content analysis as a method to "track the multiplicity, variety, instability, and historical contingency of the discursive constructions" (ibid: 3) rather than the similarities among predetermined categories. In this way, the authors utilise content analysis as a pre-analytical step to the Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) they chose in their methodological framework.

The way I have utilised theoretically informed content analysis was to first quantify occurring patterns and keywords within the analysed policy documents. The concepts and definitions scrutinised were derived from the literature review in which scholars have already identified recurring issues within the policy documents (i.e. the ENP as a border security strategy through the "wider Europe" discourse). In addition, the content analysis helped to trace the choice of language throughout the targeted study period (2004–2016). Furthermore, it facilitated the formulation of the interview questions by including the key issues defined in the policy documents into the interview settings. Manifest content analysis was used to get a general overview of recurring phrases, patterns and choice of wording utilised by the interviewees. Latent content analysis helped to identify the underlying meaning of the identified keywords and patterns that made it possible to study them in the context of the geopolitical climate in which the interviews took place.

Nevertheless, this analysis did not provide material for an interpretation of the discourse that would be backed up by the evidence. Content analysis did establish meaning within the material but failed to deduce the underlying issues and power relations of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC within the wider geopolitical context. Therefore, it is a suitable method to provide a preliminary coding which helps to extract recurring themes and to start thinking about their explanations. It is envisaged here as a starting point; the occurrence and frequency of certain words helps identifying shared understandings but fails to provide insights into how certain sets of ideas are developed that maintain statements as taken-for-granted or "true".

5.3 Critical discourse analysis and discourse theory

Discourse analysis as a method of enquiry has gained popularity in the field of critical geopolitics and the concept of discourse has brought attention to the contexts of the geopolitical construction of meaning. Discourse analysis focuses on the link between text and its context, which means that texts are not containers of self-referential meaning, but the recorded trace of discourse activity which, however, can never be completely reduced to text. Criticism has been raised that previous studies have failed to rigorously engage in discourse analysis and furthermore lack an explication of their methodology (Breeze, 2011). It has been criticised that scholars fail or avoid explicitly describing and justifying the sources and techniques they use to reconstitute discourse, thus falling into the trap of delivering interpretations that lack transparency (Checkel, 2004).

While discourse analysis involves an interpretative approach, scholars have raised the need to open the discussion on undertaking discourse analysis of geopolitical reasoning and foreign policy (Dalby, 1991; Dittmer, 2010; Larsen, 1997). In this way, researchers can ensure transparency, rigor and validity of their research results. Discourse analysis forces the researcher to acknowledge the multiple and overlapping contexts within the material and thus delivers the task to contextualise the problem perpetually. The discourse analysis for this research is operationalised based on the ideas of Fairclough (1992) who developed critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method of inquiry. CDA studies the link between text and its context and it allows the critical interpretation of social realities and relations as suggested by Dias (2013). CDA was developed by Fairclough (1992), who has drawn his ideas regarding discourse from post-structural approaches towards language and linguistic analysis. CDA argues for a strong relation between linguistic and social structure and refers to ideologies as linguistically produced in attempts to form a collective political will and to govern society. Fairclough (1992) provides perhaps the most applicable framework of discourse analysis (see Figure 5).
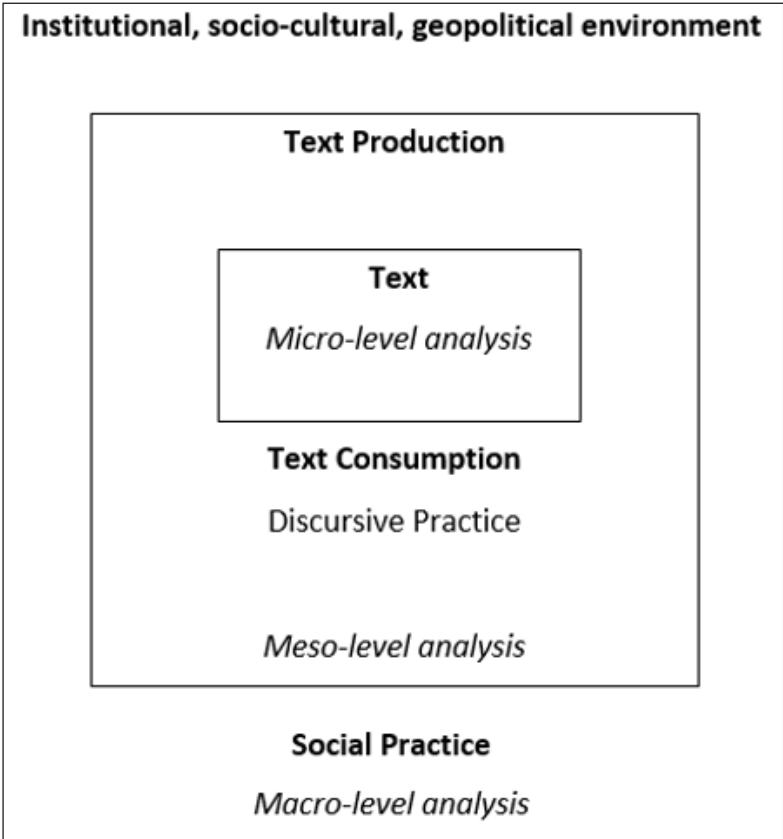

Figure 5. Critical Discourse Analysis based on Fairclough (1992: 73).

Fairclough's three perspectives on discourse analysis consist of three levels, here the micro (text/rhetoric); meso (intertextual); and macro (wider geopolitical environment) levels. The micro-level includes the text-based analysis with a focus on language, stylistic devices, wording, metaphors and grammar (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002: 22-34). The meso-level scrutinises the texts in a way that demonstrates their relationship with each other and clarifies the perspective of the document's publishers. The analysis of the discursive practice often remains understudied during the CDA and therefore, the analysis in this thesis considers the production of texts including their effects on the intended audience by distinguishing policy documents and public dissemination material. In this way, it is possible to grasp the production and the wider contextual conditions in which the particular text was formulated (Fairclough 1995). Furthermore, this stage of the analysis also takes into account the ways in which readers consume and interpret the texts (ibid). On the macro-level, the wider historical and political situation is considered in order to grasp the societal and geopolitical environment in which the text was produced and consumed. This provides further insight into the social practice and power relations intended to be studied by CDA.

CDA understands both the written and the spoken discourse as a form of social practice (Fairclough & Wodak 1997; Weiss & Wodak 2013; Titscher *et al.* 1998). The analysis is based on the assumption that a dialectical relationship exists between certain discursive events and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded. Therefore, the institutional and social contexts shape and affect discourse, however discourses also influence social and political reality. This means that discourses constitute social practices while being constituted by them. Beaugitte *et al.* (2015: 858) suggest that CDA is relevant to study EU actors and their relations because it "scrutinises visible and opaque structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control that occur in discourse, aiming at the critical exploration of social structuring revealed in the use of language". In this way, the objective of critical geopolitics, to discover asymmetrical power relations and their underlying processes, is addressed by CDA.

In addition to CDA, the discourse analysis conducted for this research also draws on Discourse Theory as developed by Laclau and Mouffe (1985; 1990) in order to address certain conceptual issues of CDA. CDA makes a distinction between discursive and non-discursive elements because it is argued that discourse analysis cannot be applied to all aspects of the social world because they underlie other mechanisms (i.e. economic market logics or institutionalisation processes) which have to be studied with different analytical tools. However, Laclau and Mouffe do not make a distinction between discursive and non-discursive processes, therefore, discourse itself is material and thus all processes and entities (i.e. the economy, infrastructure, institutions) form parts of the discourse (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002). Regarding the study of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, this means that texts in the form of policy documents, interviews and public speeches and other materials, constitute the practices of cooperation. Therefore, also the material reflecting practices needs to be analysed as part of the discourse analysis that seeks to

understand the meaning of cooperation in the context of the "open" yet "securitised" border discourse (Popescu 2008: 67).

Throughout the two cross-border cooperation funding periods that are the key spatio-temporal fixes of my research, different discourses and political speeches emerged, disappeared and re-emerged depending on national interests and geopolitical circumstances (my analytical focus is on *security*). De- and re-bordering processes that constitute CBC as an EU external border strategy are analysed utilising CDA that allows a critical interpretation of social (political) realities and relations between cooperation actors. While I refer to CDA as a method to analyse power relations, which is the key aim of critical geopolitics, I utilise Laclau's and Mouffe's (1990) argument to include both the policy documents and public dissemination material, but also the practices as conveyed by the policy-actors during the interviews. In this way, I follow Müllers (2008) suggestion to recognise both text and practice as parts of the discourse and to recognise the discourse as a de- and re-bordering performativity in the context of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC (c.f. Bialasiewicz *et al.* 2007).

The discourse analysis, following the preceding content analysis earlier discussed, provides a deeper interpretation and analysis of the recurring statements and patterns within policy documents, interviews and public dissemination material. It does not only allow for a textual analysis of the choice of words but also includes an intertextual analysis by concentrating on the relationship between the various materials. This includes a careful selection of key statements that were related to my key identifiers for de- and re-bordering practices: region-building, MLG and trust.

The interview statements in particular were analysed within the broader geopolitical background reflecting the "crisis" talk in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis. The policy documents however, provide a more reflective analysis of the cooperation that considers the development of the cooperation programmes until the Ukrainian crisis. However, here is where the particular characteristics of my interviewees play an important role. All participants were able to reflect not only on the current ENI CBC but also to evaluate past cooperation programmes and their development; in some cases, even until the early 1990s. This means that I was able to combine the knowledge acquired from the interviews and compare it directly to the rhetoric utilised in policy documents. The analysis of the public dissemination material requires a different approach because attending meetings and workshops reflects specifically the current situation, similar to informational brochures distributed to the public. Therefore, such materials rather provide an understanding of the immediate discourse but not sufficient reflective insight into the development of the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes.

The idea of discourse theory is that social phenomena are never finished or total, thus they experience constant transition and change. The notion of *change* is one important keyword in the study of discourse analysis in a post-structural tradition. Post-structuralists argue that the meaning of social structures can never be fixed, therefore the entire social sphere is considered to underlie processes in which people create meaning through

discourse. This meaning is at the core of discourse analysis and post-structuralists offer a critique to the Saussurian[15] way of understanding meaning: it cannot be fixed and therefore is always subject to change. The aim behind discourse analysis, according to Laclau and Mouffe, is

> *"to map out the processes in which we struggle about the way in which the meaning of signs is to be fixed, and the processes by which some fixations of meaning become so conventionalised that we think of them as natural." (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002: 26)*

Laclau and Mouffe conceptualise discourse as the fixation of meaning within a certain tempo-spatial domain. The emphasis here should be on the fact that while a discourse can be fixed for a moment in time it is, however, ever changing and transforming. Therefore, it depends on the perspective of the researcher to analyse discourse as a temporary closure and to specify what it constitutes while raising awareness towards what it excludes. Discourse analysis cannot provide a sense of meaning that is fixed in this way forever, similarly to my conceptualisation of the border as an ever-changing process underlying discursive actor practices that include materialist manifestations.

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[15] Ferdinand De Saussure, a representative of structuralism, has argued that the principles of the organisation of language can be fully determined and described, therefore fixing its meaning (for further discussion on the structuralist and post-structuralist understanding of language and discourse, see Radford & Radford 2005).

6 [Geopolitical] discourses on borders, territories and actors in Finnish-Russian cross-border cooperation under the ENI CBC

6.1 De- and re-bordering processes in the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes

The discourse analysis conducted for Article I examines the various meanings of the external borders in the BSR programme which has an ENI CBC component attached making Russia, Norway, and Belarus eligible for funding[16]. However, for the purpose of this synopsis, this section focuses on the de- and re-bordering effects at the Finnish-Russian border not only in the context of the BSR, but including the Kolarctic, Karelian, and South-East Finland – Russia programmes. The material is presented in a streamlined way, meaning that the analysis utilises material consisting of EU policy documents (Article I), interview statements from EU and Finnish national and regional officials (Article II) as well as public dissemination material provided by the JMAs, the Finnish Foreign Ministry and the EU Commission (DG REGIO and DG NEAR). Further accounts are included from the project level (see Article III), therefore providing a multi-governmental perspective ranging from the supra- to the sub-national level. The analysis offers a comparative perspective in accordance with Müller (2008), who suggests a critical discourse analysis based on both texts (rhetoric) and practiced experiences (communicated through interviews).

To understand the mechanisms that constitute de- and re-bordering practices (O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998; Paasi 2013), it is necessary to reflect on the challenging characteristics of the Finnish-Russian border, conceptualised in this research as a *process* and therefore continuously in transition. The analysis focuses on three periods: the establishment of the ENP in 2004, the beginning of the first funding period (ENPI) in 2007 and the beginning of the second ENI funding period in 2014. The thematic scope of the discourse analysis is directed towards the perception of the border since the beginning of the ENP and to which extent, for example, geopolitical challenges are reflected in the policy documents and interpreted by cooperation actors. Furthermore, the analysis focuses on the situations in which the border was experienced as either a barrier or facilitator for cooperation to evaluate the extent to which the discourse on cooperation reflects a de- and re-bordering performativity.

Borders do not have the same effect and meaning for all cooperation actors; this means that at times the Finnish-Russian border facilitates cooperation but at other times imposes

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[16] The BSR programme is a territorial co-operation programme involving 9 EU members (Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia) and 3 non-EU members (Norway, Russia and Belarus). While the EU member states are receiving funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Russia and Belarus are eligible for funding from the ENI. Norway contributes with its own funds.

challenges, i.e. at customs controls (see Koch, 2017b). Furthermore, the perception of cooperation actors towards the border contributes to their formation, re-production and deconstruction – their actions and reactions can thus be understood as de-and re bordering practices. Since the ENI CBC programmes are funded by the EU and established by the European Commission, their institutional policy recommendations and decisions reflect the EU discourse on the external borders. Perhaps one of the most notable objectives of the EU in the context of the ENP was to

> *"...avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union. It [Copenhagen European Council 2002][17] reaffirmed that enlargement will serve to strengthen relations with Russia..." (European Commission 2003: 4)*

This quote shows that the EU has sought strategies to address foreign relations with its new neighbours and emphasised the positive effects enlargement will have on EU-Russia relations. The EU Commission rhetoric emphasises the special relationship between the EU and Russia by highlighting Russia's independent and somewhat separate geopolitical position in comparison to the other neighbouring states that are formally included into the ENP. With this discourse, the EU attempts to establish a partnership character between the EU and Russia while also presenting the neighbourhood as a territorial area in which both the EU and Russia aim to maintain their "sphere of influence" (Browning 2018; Natorski & Pomorska 2016).

As previously discussed, borders no longer demarcate state sovereignty. Rather, they are conceptualised as "multi-faceted semiotic, symbolic, and political-economic practices through which state power is articulated and contested" (Brenner 2004: 71). In this way, borders form a process which constantly transforms and changes its meaning depending on the various actors involved in cooperation. The region-building process of such CBRs equip the territorial state border with several purposes and introduces new borders in the forms of regional boundaries (Anderson & O'Dowd 1999; Allmendinger *et al.* 2015).

Reflecting on the theoretical discussion that emphasises the continued relevance of borders and territory, the Finnish-Russian border, even though it is subject to regionalisation processes that are promoted by sub-national and civil society actors (see Laine, 2016b), remains significant not only in terms of security but also from an identity perspective. This is not only from a territorial viewpoint, which divides between EU and non-EU space, but rather from a relational perspective in which cooperation actors emphasise the "mental" boundaries that accompany the cooperation process. Popescu (2008) argues that CBC practices are supposed to initiate and maintain cross-border contacts among sub-national actors and civil society actors. In this regard, the EU identified that the institutional framework of the various CBC instruments (i.e. TACIS) in the external border area was creating unnecessary obstacles interfering with the cooperation between non-EU and the new EU member states after the enlargement of 2004:

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[17] The Copenhagen European Council meeting on 12 and 13 December 2002 concluded the negotiations with the ten new EU member states and confirmed the date of accession.

"For Russia and the WNIS (Western Newly Independent States), constrains on coordination between the existing EU instruments create obstacles to cross-border and sub-regional activities." (European Commission 2003: 14)

This quote shows that the EU is aware of the potential constrains that the Eastern Enlargement of 2004 imposes on Russia and the WNIS after which post-Soviet states (i.e. Poland, Czech Republic, and the Baltic States) share a hard Schengen border with Russia which was an open border before the enlargement. However, while the enlargement period of 2004 resulted in a re-bordering process along the Eastern external borders, the EU institutions maintain a discourse in which potential benefits for the neighbouring states are highlighted and the new external borders rhetorically relativised. Nevertheless, at the same time, the Finnish Foreign Ministry rather focuses on the relations with Russia and maintains a strong public position by emphasising the challenging geopolitical situation at the external border towards Russia:

"The Commission will report to the Council on the preparation of the Wider Europe Neighbourhood Policy and the subsequent Union's new financial instrument for cross-border cooperation. Finland emphasises that the Wider Europe Neighbourhood Policy should primarily be focused on the Union's new eastern neighbours Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Finland also stresses Russia's special position as the EU's strategic partner." (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland 2003)

Therefore, the positions between the EU institutions and the Finnish state towards the external border with Russia are quite similar in the sense that both emphasise the "special relationship" with Russia. However, the Finnish national ministries also emphasise that Russia is a strong geopolitical actor which does not accept a spatio-political positioning as a "neighbour" in the "Wider Europe" initiative. This is also reflected in the interviews held with personnel of the Foreign Ministry who highlight that:

"…the Russian economy found a possibility to finance the programmes [CBC programmes], politics changed, and also the willingness to accept technical assistance vanished. The Russians wanted to underline the equal partnership and I believe this is a backbone of Russian thinking." (FI 5/ FORMIN/2015)

The EU Commission drew attention to the shifting borders of EU territory in 2004 because enlargement would shift its territory closer to "troubled areas" thereby feeding into the security discourse that surrounds the European neighbourhood (see Browning & Christou 2010; Juncos & Whitman 2015; Silander & Nilsson 2014) and EU-Russia relations (see Browning 2018; Etzold & Haukkala 2011; Fischer 2012). On the one hand, the Commission highlighted the role of Russia as a key partner in its immediate neighbourhood. However, the discourse rather focuses on the special relationship and the potential benefits for the EU member states that Russia's participation in the cooperation framework provides. On the other hand, Finland attempts to maintain a discourse in

which Russia remains to be acknowledged as a separate powerful geopolitical actor, clearly distinguished from the rest of the neighbouring countries that are fully involved in the ENP. From a political perspective, this discourse also explains the choice of Russia to opt out of the ENP and the establishment of the strategic partnership that the EU and Russia have based on four common spaces[18].

The Russian decision to opt-out of the ENP already marked the formation of "new dividing lines" before the ENP came officially into force and that the EU originally intended to avoid. Scholars agree that the ENP "would have threatened Russian dominance over the other Eastern neighbourhood states: Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine" (McCall 2015: 190). As a response to the ENP, several scholars (O'Dowd 2003; Scott 2013; Lavenex 2008) reacted to the "partnership rhetoric" by defining the EU's Schengen border policies as an "externalisation of border management strategies" (Casas-Cortes *et al.* 2012) and conceptualised the EU's neighbourhood strategy as creating a "Fortress of Europe" (Bigo & Guild 2005). The withdrawal of Russian ENP membership placed it "outside" the official ENP rhetoric while it is yet included in the ENPI/ENI cooperation programmes; therefore, highlighting the careful foreign policy decisions the EU makes towards Russia (also see Kolosov & Sebentsov 2015). The external border between Russia and the EU, in the context of the ENP, was thus reinforced from a geopolitical perspective. Nevertheless, the EU also decided to transform the funding structure for regional CBC activities by acknowledging the previous excluding character of the funding instruments that were in force until 2006 (i.e. TACIS programmes).

Together with the ENPI, the EU has created an instrument in which Russia is eligible for funding and therefore, at least unofficially, included in the ENP discourse, and integrated into the ENI cooperation programmes which, as "new regions" are the "results of power relations, institutional structures and subject to different kinds of processes that give rise and ultimately create the region" (Koch 2015: 540). Nevertheless, despite the decision to establish a more inclusive funding tool in which the neighbouring countries would be increasingly seen as 'partners', the EU emphasises the special role of Russia within the ENP to acknowledge the geopolitical relation between them:

"Greater regional co-operation in Eastern Europe will bring substantial benefits. The participation of the Russian Federation as a partner in regional cooperation, on the basis of mutual interests and common will, should be encouraged." (European Commission 2004: 20)

The EU broadly summarises the task it faces in the neighbourhood by arguing that it consists of "troubled areas" requiring assistance to establish a democratic profile. The EU however yet defines its relations with Russia based on "mutual interests" and "good will" which shows that the EU attempts to soften its discourse that is usually applied to neighbouring states based on the principle of conditionality (Boedeltje & van Houtum 2011; Lavenex 2008).

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[18] The EU-Russia relations are based on the common spaces of economics, freedom, security, justice, external security, research and education (European Commission 2004).

Boedeltje and van Houtum (2011: 135) argue, "treating Russia as one other partner would be a "significant slap in the face for Russia" (also see Browning & Joenniemi 2003). The ENP in its current form 'might rather be interpreted as nothing short of EU neo-imperialist encroachment upon Russia's zone of geopolitical influence" (ibid: 475). The EU's goal of foreign relations with Russia during the initial years of the ENP is to clarify – at least verbally – the role of Russia as a regional EU neighbour. Furthermore, special emphasis is placed upon Finland as a strategic geopolitical actor:

> "For example, the long experience of CBC between Russia and Finland has served as a model for the development of CBC operations elsewhere. Specific legislation relating to CBC is currently being prepared in Russia, and the newly established (2004) Ministry of Regional Development in Russia is taking a particular interest in this topic." (European Commission 2007: 6).

From a geopolitical perspective, the beginning of the ENPI CBC programmes in 2007 was marked by the Georgia Crisis (2008) which greatly affected EU-Russia foreign relations. For example, the successor of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is yet to be determined; however, negotiations have been stalled due to ongoing geopolitical conflicts in the neighbourhood in which both the EU and Russia are on conflicting sides (Raik 2017). Nonetheless, foreign relations between the EU and Russia are influenced by Finnish interests and its attempts to overcome geopolitical struggles:

> ""In the end, we decided that negotiations can be started at the EU-Russia Summit." According to Foreign Minister Stubb, the decision has great importance for the entire foreign policy of the European Union. Owing to the Georgian crisis, the EU Heads of State postponed the launching of partnership negotiations in early September. The agreement to be negotiated with Russia is intended to replace the PCA now in force, and its aim is to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and Russia." (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland 2008)

Similarly, it was noted by an ENI CBC programme manager that the geopolitical conflicts in the neighbourhood (the Orange Revolution 2004; Georgia crisis 2008; Ukrainian crisis 2014) have impacted the diplomatic tone within the multi-level governmental CBC network. The unique funding structure has been argued to have influenced the lengthy financing agreement negotiations:

> "That was one topic and of course, some political challenges at that time as well. The Orange Revolution and Georgian crisis both had an influence on our activities. First, at that time when we were starting to convert the INTERREG programme to the neighbourhood programme – and then at that point, when we wanted to launch the ENPI programme; it had an impact on the financing agreements. The Russo-Georgia crisis had an influence when we wanted to launch the ENPI programmes. So, history is here again, at the moment we are working with the new ENI CBC programmes. And again. we are in this type of political crisis." (ENI CBC 1/JMA/2014)

From a critical geopolitical perspective, the EU attempts to manage the Finnish-Russian border by traditional border security means; however, the socio-economic differences potentially leading to cross-border crimes are to be addressed by CBC. On the one hand, the EU is removing barriers for trading and economic cooperation. On the other hand, new borders are established through the ENI CBC administrative structures; in particular, creating a discourse in which Russia remains an "outsider" in cooperation structures and as a potential threatening geopolitical actor in the shared neighbourhood (Averre 2016; Cadier 2014; Dias 2013). The impact of crises in the neighbourhood has deterred EU-Russia relations from an economic perspective with the introduction of sanctions (Dreyer & Popescu 2014; Haukkala 2015).

The public discourse towards the EU-Russian border, even within Finland, returned to a discourse resembling Cold War rhetoric starting from 2014 which collided with the introduction of the new ENI funding period potentially endangering the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes. Nevertheless, Finnish lobbying on the EU level maintained Finnish-Russian ENI CBC; therefore, granting continuation of activities across the border that were funded jointly by the EU, Finland and Russia. The Finnish ministerial level in Helsinki was activated under the influence of the JMAs for not letting the EU Commission include cooperation activities funded by the ENI into the sanctions list:

"We had a meeting in Helsinki with the ministries and all three ENI CBC programmes with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Economy and Employment. And at that time, we already saw the possibility that the EU might fully stop the cross-border cooperation, in accordance with the sanctions. The diplomatic level started to work immediately and started to have contacts with other EU member states, trying to convince that this cooperation is something we [The Finns] do not want to include in the list of the sanctions."(ENI CBC 1/JMA/2014)

Nevertheless, the official Baltic Sea Region programming document included the following statement:

"As regard to cooperation with Russia, there is a risk that in light of the role played by Russia in the crisis in Ukraine, the EU may adopt new restrictive measures or revise existing ones, with possible consequences for programmes, including cooperation with it." (INTERREG Baltic Sea Region 2014: 3)

Funding agreements for cross-border projects have not been obtained in the past two funding periods for the Baltic Sea Region programme. Therefore, Russia's role is more participatory in the case of the three Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes (Kolarctic; Karelia; South-East Finland – Russia) in which it participates with own funding and carries out a certain influence on decision-making procedures on the project level (i.e. in the formulation of programme objectives). Therefore, the meaning of the EU-Russian border, if studied from the perspective of EU-led funding programmes, changes in accordance with Russia's role within them. In certain new regional structures, such as

the BSR macro-region, Russia is a passive observer. At other times, for example within the three Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes (note: Kolarctic includes also Sweden and Norway), Russia is considered an active member.

Combining these different views requires an analysis which traces the reasons and mechanisms that lead to such complex de- and re-bordering dynamics. Based on the various administrative borders identified within the ENI CBC programmes (see Article I) which, among other reasons, derive from Russia's opt-outs from the ENP and the EU's perception of the "wider neighbourhood" rhetoric, the external EU-Russia border is comprised of various boundaries that change in accordance with geopolitical circumstances and underlie various discursive de- and re-bordering performativities. Region-building transforms the border in the sense that under certain circumstances it is highly permeable but closed in others. The following section traces the meaning of a "secure" border in the EU/Finnish – Russian context and compares the various perceptions of cross-border stability among ENI CBC actors.

6.2 'Talking security' – tracing security discourses within Finnish-Russian cross-border cooperation

Similar to the critical discourse analysis conducted in the previous section, this examination begins with an investigation of language as presented in the EU policy documents. However, the focus will be on the interview material (utilised in Article II) in order to scrutinise the meaning of "a stable border" in accordance with the different cooperation actors in Brussels, Helsinki and the Finnish JMAs in the regional councils of Rovaniemi, Oulu, and Lappeenranta. A distinction is made between the different governmental levels (EU; Finnish national; sub-national) to analyse the perception regarding the purpose of CBC and to examine to which extent actors identify ENI CBC as an external border security strategy. With respect to the EU Commission, the current discourse on the ENP is presented in the following:

"It was also once again a year of crises, reflecting political instability and continuing difficult socio-economic conditions across a number of countries in the neighbourhood. Security challenges – both domestic and regional – increased and, in some countries, partly reversed democratic reform achievements of previous years and stunted prospects for economic recovery." (European Commission 2014: 2)

The quote above shows that the ENP, also a decade after its introduction, is struggling to fulfil its main objective which is to promote and maintain stability in the external border regions. Previous research has highlighted that the ENP has failed to uphold its ideals of good governance in the neighbourhood, especially in the period of 2014 that was characterised mainly by the Ukrainian crisis (Juncos & Whitman 2015). The

authors conclude that "the EU's capacity for crisis management, and most especially the institutions created by the Lisbon Treaty, proved to be insufficiently capable of responding in spirit or substance to a neighbourhood which is being remade largely without the influence of the EU" (ibid: 212–213). Instead of the EU, it was rather the individual member states (i.e. Germany and Finland) which have shaped the course of action in response to Russia's annexation of the Crimea. Particularly Finnish foreign policy has influenced the EU's approach towards Russia in the context of the sanctions by lobbying for the continuation of the ENI CBC programmes thus serving as a stabilising force for Finnish /EU – Russia relations in general.

Evidence from the interviews held with policy-makers in Helsinki, but also with the JMAs, show that the Finnish state level remains an important *mediator* or *broker* (Stoffelen *et al.* 2017) between the sub- and supra-national levels as explained by an official working for the Ministry of Employment and the Economy:

> *"We are, at the national level, basically the responsible authority. We are doing everything together with the [Finnish] Ministry for Foreign Affairs but they are not directly involved or responsible for the implementation of the programmes. They are having a broader perspective, from a political point of view, for example, the foreign relations with Russia and towards the EU. Of course, we are also involved directly with the EU and Russian authorities but more from the cooperation than the foreign policy aspect." (FI6/TEM/2015)*

While there are different responsibilities towards the ENI CBC programmes on the Finnish ministerial level, it can be argued that the state remains an important actor in the institutional cooperation framework of the ENI despite the EU's objective to shift major decision-making responsibilities to the sub-national levels. However, foreign and security policies remain a competence of the Finnish state and therefore continues to influence the foreign relations with Russia and shape the geopolitical environment.

As discussed in the theoretical section, the discourse on the EU's external borders evolves around two key aspects that are closely interlinked: security and cooperation (see Christou 2010; Silander & Nilsson 2014; Lynch 2005). However, border security is a concept entailing various meanings for the different ENI CBC actors. In the context of cross-border security, the EU creates a discourse which closely interlinks security and CBC:

> *"The EU has several kinds of instruments for cooperation with non-EU countries in the area for security. These consist of political instruments (bilateral and regional policy dialogues and action plans and security strategies [...], legal instruments (such as international conventions [...], EU civilian missions in non-EU countries [...] and financial support and capacity-building under the EU external cooperation instruments." (European Commission 2014: 11)*

While the EU Commission highlights these assistance and cooperation programmes as valuable additions to the internal security strategy, the CBC programmes display a certain vulnerability towards geopolitical conflicts because of their risk of being exploited as

political leverage, for example, against Russia in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis (Averre 2016; Koch 2017a). The ENI CBC programmes thus transform into a politicised tool that can be utilised to apply pressure on the neighbouring states, including Russia, by threatening to suspend cooperation activities. However, the EU's reluctance to include the ENI CBC programmes into the sanctions list results, on the one hand, from the Finnish lobbying efforts in Brussels, but on the other hand, also on the potential damage that the suspension of cooperation activities can have for the EU member states and EU-Russia relations in general. An EEAS representative mentioned that:

"The Ukrainian crisis certainly has an impact, topics dealing with Russia need to be discussed more carefully and in particular transport is one crucial issue since the introduction of the sanctions [impact on for example road transport]." (EU 2/EEAS/2015)

The EU made efforts, throughout the ENPI and ENI CBC periods, to address identified shortcomings within the cooperation programmes (i.e. increased decision-making responsibilities to the sub-national actors) in the hope to "exert influence beyond its borders and control its neighbourhood" (Browning 2018: 112) and to overcome any further attempts of neighbouring states that would undermine the EU. Nevertheless, although the cooperation programmes are supposed to reflect a partnership, Russian behaviour suggests that they yet demand to be involved in crucial decision-making procedures, particularly since the financing structure changed in 2007 after which they contributed with their own funds as highlighted by a JMA representative:

"It is cooperation between the member states and also Russia and Brussels because the rules are determined in Brussels mainly…naturally we also have the national law, but the Russians also try to influence because they contribute with their own funds so they like to have some influence into the decision-making procedure of the programmes." (ENI CBC 3/JMA/2015)

The institutional structure of the ENI CBC programmes, yet forming a part of the ENP framework and fulfilling its objectives, characterises Russia as an outsider within the cooperation programmes. One main reason for the reluctance of the EU to invite non-EU states into the establishment process of the programmes is the ENP's political rationale to contribute to the EU's external security policy. This emphasises the conflicting policy objectives that the ENP and the ENI CBC programmes represent. Moreover, Russia decided to opt out of the ENP framework because of the EU's political rationale to gain and maintain influence in the neighbourhood. This however challenges Russia's further integration into the ENI CBC programmes.

Therefore, I agree with Wassenberg (2017) and others (Dupeyron 2017; Klatt & Wassenberg 2017) that the ENP rather serves as an EU strategy to *stabilise and securitise* the neighbourhood (c.f. Browning & Joenniemi 2003). Such securitising tendencies in the form of speech acts can be observed in particular throughout geopolitical crises. For the EU, institutional actors, cross-border security and stability in the context of the ENP

relates to the political alignment through political reforms in neighbouring states in order to match the EU programmes:

> *"Of course, some reforms are necessary within the partner countries in order to align the rules with EU programmes. However, this should be a common goal of EU member states and the neighbouring states." (EU 2/EEAS/2015)*

The rhetoric emphasises the principle of conditionality with which the EU attempts to maintain control and influence through rule transfers into the neighbouring countries. However, this process has not been fully investigated in the past because "it was found that a certain rule transfer takes place under the ENP, but that it is strikingly partial, selective and uneven, both over countries and sectors" (Casier 2011: 49). Casier (2011) shows that some countries in the neighbourhood (i.e. Morocco, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine) have been considered more successful by the EU at adopting legislations (i.e. democratic elections). However, other neighbouring countries (i.e. Tunisia) were rated less successful and less aligned with EU rules.

Such evaluations emphasise the sensitivity of the ENP with regard to Russia. Foreign affairs between the EU and Russia are based on power relations that shape the political and economic constitution of the entire Eastern neighbourhood and were recently displayed in the developments leading to the Ukrainian crisis. Ademmer (2015: 674) claims that "high sensitivity interdependence with Russia is likely to support EU-demanded policy change" because neighbouring states may be inclined to seek EU support in the wake of, for example, increasing Russian gas prices (ibid). Nevertheless, unstable and asymmetrical power relations between the EU and Russia are a destabilising factor for EU relations with third countries in the shared neighbourhood.

The EU and Russia thus exist in a closely connected relationship that is based on interdependence. The EU is highly dependent on Russian oil and gas, while EU member states, especially Finland, serve as key export markets for Russia. Nevertheless, Zimin (2013) discusses the security dimension of this interdependence in the form that Russia's energy policy has a geopolitical dimension. He argues that "prevailing geopolitical interpretations in Western countries hold that a revanchist Russia, having been defeated in the Cold War, is attempting to restore its sphere of influence in territories of the former Soviet Union and in Europe at large" (ibid: 119). Such interpretations greatly influence the political and public discourse towards Russia in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis.

Therefore, geopolitical conflicts, such as the Ukrainian crisis, forces the EU to react in the form of economic sanctions as suggested by the international community (i.e. United Nations). These impose a difficult situation for the EU's perception as a promoter of democratic values and the rule of law because the ENP has been associated with a "neo-imperialist" strategy in the past (Beaugitte *et al.* 2015). The ENP has been conceptualised as the "external dimension of internal EU policies or as extended sectoral policy regimes" (Lavenex 2008: 945) consequently emphasising the EU-dominated decision-making

procedure for the ENI cooperation programmes. However, Russian governmental partners have made attempts to counterbalance the EU's prevalent role with regard to the BSR programme which also offers seed funding for the EUSBSR[19]. Russian partners demanded to include their North-West strategy into the programming document:

> *"A Russian diplomat said during negotiations "if you are mentioning the EUSBSR, you also have to mention the Russian North-West strategy because our objective is to participate in this programme and not to implement your strategy but to implement our strategy. We can however do it by developing joint programmes because they contribute to your strategy and to ours." (EU 1/DGREGIO/2015)*

Finnish-Russian ENI CBC has the goal of stabilising relations across the external borders in the long-term. However, this process can in fact contribute to the destabilisation of foreign relations as shown by Fischer (2012: 37) who argues that "for Russian liberals this interest-based approach was a betrayal of the values that the EU claims to promote in its foreign policy". Despite the research analysing the EU's normative power in the neighbourhood (see Haukkala 2008), various scholars have claimed that "compared to Russia, the US or NATO, the EU is perceived as a rather weak player in the geopolitical narrative" (Fischer 2012: 37; also see Browning & Christou 2010; Juncos & Whitman 2015). This has developed a discourse in which the EU is considered to create a new security problem instead of a "ring of friends with established democracies and security in the eastern neighbourhood" (Silander & Nilsson 2014: 473) and this has been underlined by the EU's perception of Russia as a "superpower" (Laine 2014: 71).

Provided the geopolitical circumstances that the Foreign Ministry of Finland keeps emphasising in the context of the ENI CBC programmes, the Finnish JMAs present a particular view on the factors and elements that constitute border security and border stability towards Russia. Table 3 compares the visions of the three analysed ENI CBC programmes in the context of the thematic objective "promotion of border management and border security, mobility and migration management" as described in their programming documents.

The programmes share a common view towards the meaning of border security in the Finnish-Russian context. While the Kolarctic programme focuses on the rather vague common goal (shared also by Karelia and South-East Finland – Russia programme) to strengthen economic security within foreign trade and capacity-building in Russia, the Karelian programme emphasises the role of well-functioning and regulated border-crossing points. Therefore, cross-border regional security is understood by the regional authorities in terms of border traffic safety, which refers to the prevention of irregular border-crossings (such as human and drug trafficking). The South-East Finland – Russia programme stresses the importance of well-functioning border-crossing points because long queues may negatively affect economic interaction. The sub-national perspective, as

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[19] The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is a macro-regional strategy including EU member states. It is an entirely EU internal strategy. However, it received seed funding from the BSR programme to which Russia, Belarus, and Norway contribute funding (if funding agreements are achieved).

Table 3. Thematic Objective: Promotion of border management and security according to the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes.

Interpretation Thematic Objective: Promotion of border management and border security, mobility and migration management	
Kolarctic ENI CBC ENI CBC 2014–2020	"The priority shall help Russia resolve some issues mentioned in the "Federal law on customs regulation of the Russian Federation" such as ensuring economic security of the country within foreign trade and capacity building of the state administration in the field of customs" (Kolarctic ENI CBC, 2015: 38).
Karelia ENI CBC 2014–2020	"The priority shall focus on the development of infrastructure, facilities and working procedures, especially at international border-crossing points and their immediate proximity on both sides of the border. These activities shall increase the functionality of border-crossing and the safety of border traffic. Easy border-crossing also facilitates cross-border business cooperation which has a straight impact on regional economy" (Karelia ENI CBC, 2014: 19).
South-East Finland – Russia ENI CBC 2014–2020	"The priority is based, on the one hand, on the need for security and, on the other hand, on the need for efficiency of border-crossings and of mobility. 80 % of the border-crossings between Finland and Russia happen via the border-crossing points situated in the programme area. If the border-crossings form a bottleneck, this impacts the economies on both sides of the border. By creating conditions for fluent and safe border traffic, the programme will have a wide impact on the economic and social development of the programme area" (South-East Finland – Russia, 2014: 44).

presented by the Finnish regional JMAs, reflects on border security and management in the context of infrastructure and border-crossing facilities, a view that was also supported by the interviewees who referred to administrative and border-crossing challenges during the cooperation process (ENI CBC 4/Secretariat/2015).

Border security, in the sense of the Copenhagen school of securitisation, is envisioned here as a speech act which focuses on the benefits of economic activities and infrastructural developments to enhance the border-crossing facilities. Therefore, border security at the Finnish-Russian border is mainly concerned with cross-border *stability* as highlighted by an official working for the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy who mentioned the benefits of Finnish accession to the EU in terms of Finnish-Russian cross-border cooperation that served as an early model for the current ENI CBC programmes (FI/TEM/2013).

Therefore, cross-border security for the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes translates into economic, social, and infrastructural development with the goal to achieve cross-border regional stability as reflected in the EU discourse. This perspective is

supported by the EU because its security discourse includes questions on cross-border and inter-regional issues. Christou *et al.* (2010: 356) have hinted that the European security governance literature "lacks a more complex understanding of the variegated meaning of security and security logics" because, as shown in the analysis above, questions on security need to include all the variegated perspectives of security. 'Security' is hence discursively constructed within the policy domain of external CBC and results in certain practices towards Russia that can be analysed further by examining the governmental structure and the actor relations within the cooperation network.

This was the objective of Article II which applies an actor-focused perspective to understand the underlying territorial characteristics of the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes which unveils the frictions of territorialities as imagined by the various institutional actors (supra-national; national; sub-national). Therefore, the next section focuses on the various territorial perceptions of the actors within the MLG framework of ENI CBC, which is rather an a-territorial approach envisioned by the EU to overcome hierarchies and asymmetrical power relations (see Koch 2017a). Cross-border security, discursively practiced in the form of regional stability, is therefore also constituted by the MLG framework which can thus be categorised as a de- and re-bordering performativity.

6.2.1 Territorial perceptions in the multi-level governmental framework of cooperation

Although the ENI CBC programmes are marked by a relational multi-level governmental framework, it underlies territorial influences. Accordingly, "cross-border cooperation is producing its own territoriality and in doing so is reterritorializing state borders" (Popescu 2012: 122). In this regard, Milio (2014: 387) applies the concept of "contested multi-level governance to indicate that relations between the participants in MLG are frequently keenly disputed and that the problems centre on policy development, resource distribution, power and accountability" (see also Boland 1999). Milio (2014) claims that MLG sometimes contributes to rivalry and conflict at the territorial level between regional and central authorities (also see Marks *et al.* 1996). These rivalries and conflicts are the object of discursive investigation in this section and they become apparent through asymmetrical power relations and frictions between actors.

A key objective of Article II has been to trace the role of territoriality in the MLG framework of cooperation by focusing on the power relations between EU actors. This section contributes to the second sub-question: *What is the role of territoriality in the multi-level governmental network of cross-border cooperation and how does it affect actor relations?*. The following section provides a streamlined analysis by utilising interview statements from EU, Finnish national, regional and project managers in the context of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC. Furthermore, the document analysis for Article I supported the discourse analysis of the interviews by providing an initial perspective on the role of borders and territory from a MLG perspective.

Previously, MLG has been criticised to reflect an a-political and a-territorial strategy by failing to consider spatial characteristics and territorial sensitivities that lead to power imbalances between actors. Indeed, as shown in Article II, the MLG framework envisioned for Finnish-Russian ENI CBC by the EU does not diminish territorial frictions and power asymmetries between the participating actors:

> *"While the EU promotes the MLG framework of cooperation in policy documents, the efficiency of MLG as a structure for ENI CBC has to be reconsidered, particularly in crisis situations. Finnish-Russian ENI CBC follows a particular territorial logic in which political powers influence but also derive from actor relations." (Koch 2017a: 14)*

As discussed in the preceding theoretical framework, territoriality is understood in this thesis from a relational perspective (see Raffestin 2012). By adopting this understanding, the aim is to methodologically transcend the territorial/relational divide that has dominated the research on borders and territoriality (see Allmendinger *et al.* 2014; Paasi 2012). This also means that the focus of analysis is directed towards the actor relations within the cooperation network, thereby offering a critical geopolitical analysis of power relations. The interview analysis in this section examines the relational characteristics of cooperation (i.e. communication channels, distribution of decision-making responsibilities; perceived influence of individual actors) in which national legislation and jurisdiction can inhibit cooperation activities. These are conceptualised in the following as de- and re-bordering practices through which the conceptual borders of the cooperation network and its territoriality are materialised.

The material border between Finland [EU] and Russia is a site where cooperation activities are not as visible as, for example, in the Dutch-German borderland (c.f. Princen *et al.* 2016). Although the Finnish-Russian border reaches a total length of 1,340 km, most of the border is densely covered by forest (see Figure 6) and border-crossings are restricted to nine international border-crossing points[20] and few cross-border exchanges take place in the direct geographical vicinity of the border. Kolosov and Scott (2013: 195) suggest that "the Finnish-Russian border has, in many ways, remained a hard, separating border, albeit definitely more permeable since the elimination of the Soviet-era travel restrictions".

While the "material" border between Finland and Russia remains a "hard" security border, it is rather the conceptual border(s) between Finland [EU] and Russia in the context of cooperation that is the focus in this analysis. The Finnish-Russian ENI CBC network is based on a multi-level governmental framework in which several stakeholders from various levels are involved and attempt to represent their interests. Such large actor-networks however, can create "potential bottlenecks" with damaging effects for the actor relations within the cooperation network (see Dabrowski *et al.* 2014: 357).

Finnish-Russian ENI CBC underlies various territorial aspects that continue to influence actor relations (Koch 2017a). Cooperation activities are managed and implemented

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[20] Permanent international border-crossing points at the Finnish-Russian land border are located in: Imatra, Kuusamo, Niirala, Nuijamaa, Rajajooseppi, Salla, Vaalimaa, Vainikkala and Vartius (Rajavartiolaitos 2018).

Figure 6. Finnish [EU Schengen] − Russian border zone near Näränkä, Kuusamo, Finland. Source: Author.

with key decisions taken in the JMAs located in Rovaniemi, Oulu, and Lappeenranta[21]. Cooperation projects are organised within expert networks operating across the border which are based in different governmental institutions and think tanks across Finland, Russia and other EU member states (including Brussels).

The Finnish-Russian border is subject to EU integration processes, especially after Finland was absorbed into the Schengen area, involving the shift of border management into the EU-wide perspective with numerous stakeholders operating on various scalar dimensions. Therefore, the MLG framework of cooperation requires a problematisation of the spatial parameters and the geographical contexts in which these relations occur. Axford (2006: 166) argues that such networks and network metaphors "are de-stabilizing Euclidean geometry, rendering borders much less of a topological presupposition and showing that what appears to be natural or given in the order of the world, is in fact produced through networks that enact a quite different kind of spatiality".

Territoriality in the context of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC remains a key factor in the formation and organisation of inter-actor relations is closely interlinked with various

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[21] The closest Finnish-Russian border-crossing points according to geographical distance: Rovaniemi –Salla (150km); Oulu – Kuusamo (220km); Lappeenranta – Imatra/ Vainikkala (30/25 km).

emergent spatial forms – therefore, rendering cross-border regions as a territorial structure underlying spatial characteristics that arise from within the network and impose a barrier for cooperation activities. In this regard, particularly sub-national interviewees, representing the JMAs and the cooperation projects, have considered the Finnish-Russian border rather a "mental boundary" than a physical barrier to cooperation (see Koch 2017a: 12; Laine 2014: 68).

The EU formally incorporated the Finnish-Russian CBRs into its regional cooperation framework (the ENI), which in accordance to Paasi's (2011b) discussion on new regionalism, relies on actions that would be implemented and realised by regional actors. Furthermore, Scott (2005: 433) argues that "the ongoing construction of a European Union has blurred distinctions between domestic and international affairs and 'collectivised national security'". This has created a novel form of multi-level and trans-national governance promoting the participation of sub-national institutions in decision-making procedures within Finnish-Russian ENI CBC discourse:

> *"One policy element of critical importance for the successful implementation of CBC programmes is the institutional capacity of local and regional authorities in the EU's partner countries to take part in this type of cooperation. In this context, questions of local government reform are of particular importance, and are often part of national reform agendas as reflected in the ENP Action Plans."* (European Commission, 2007: 6)

However, on the question of whether the JMAs operating on the Finnish regional level have the impression that they are able to influence decisions regarding the establishment of the ENI framework also on the supra-national level in Brussels, a spokesperson for the Kolarctic ENI CBC stated the following:

> *"We have our contact person in the European Commission, that works very well. On the upper level, I do not know if we can affect those [policy] issues. But of course, if we are working together and cooperating with the other Finnish programmes we can put more pressure on the EU Commission to inform them about our ideas. We work very intensively with the Foreign Ministry of Finland and the Ministry of the Economy and Employment and together we can address some issues to the Commission if there are some needs." (ENI CBC 2/JMA/ 2014)*

The capacity to influence decision-making procedures in Brussels was mainly indicated from a Finnish perspective by the JMAs. Indeed, it has been highlighted by officials working in the Finnish national ministries that the Russians do not possess decision-making influence on the EU level. Therefore, it was mostly expected from the Finnish national and regional actors to lobby on the EU level against, for example, the inclusion of the ENI CBC programmes into the sanctions list (FI 6/TEM/2015). However, the JMAs rather emphasised the cooperation with Russian ministry officials and that they were indeed actively participating and providing their opinions during meetings with the

JMAs. Therefore, the decision-making influence of Russian actors on the cooperation programmes may be higher than expected on the EU level because the Finnish sub-national actors are making a particular effort to seek dialogue with Russian actors, especially at the beginning of the funding period that was overshadowed by the Ukrainian crisis. A programme manager highlighted that during the transition phase from the TACIS to the ENPI, the new financing arrangement which included Russian funding, changed the actor dynamics within the CBC programmes:

"So, this was a completely new situation. Cooperation with Russia was previously under the TACIS which means technical assistance to the partner countries and this was the earlier model that Russia did not want. And this is, in my opinion, the biggest reason why it took so long [during the ENPI period] to sign the financing agreements: they wanted to be equal partners." (ENI CBC 1/JMA/2014)

The equal partnership discourse has been emphasised throughout the establishment of the ENPI/ENI CBC programmes in various policy documents, in particular from 2004 onwards, during which the EU transitioned towards the ENPI. The term "partnership" appeared 30 times on 35 pages in the strategy paper of the ENP (European Commission 2004) as well as 30 times in the ENPI strategy paper of 33 pages in 2007 (European Commission 2007). In comparison to that, the term "assistance" appeared 28 times in the ENP strategy paper of 2004 (European Commission 2004) but only four times in the ENPI strategy for cross-border cooperation (European Commission 2007). This change of rhetoric suggests an attempt by the EU to transform the discourse towards acknowledging the neighbouring states as partners. The previous "assistance" character, promoted by the EU until the early 2000s, was to be substituted by an impression of "partnership" based on common goals. However, Khasson (2013: 339) concludes that the ENPI CBC "has not yet been translated into the new, partnership-type of cooperation". Although the institutional border between the EU and neighbouring states was lowered with the introduction of the ENPI, it was not sufficient to convey a partnership character for all actors.

This observation, derived from the analysis of policy documents, is in accordance with the analysis of interview statements. The ENI CBC programme managers working on the Finnish regional level, as well as the Finnish ministry officials, have emphasised the importance of Russian participation in the cooperation programmes. In addition, Finnish actors shared the perception that Russian governmental actors wish to be included in the initial establishment and implementation phase because the ENP conveys the image to represent the EU's geopolitical interests in the wider neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the contemporary geopolitical climate between Russia and the EU has inhibited the development of a partnership in the ENI CBC context. While Russia has refrained from including the cooperation programmes into their own sanctions against the EU (Fritsch *et al.* 2015), the influence of the Ukrainian crisis has highlighted once more the territorial division between EU and non-EU actors in Finnish-Russian ENI CBC:

"We have had the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland as a more central role and we had a high-ranking official from the Russian foreign ministry. He has been involved all the time and attended very frequently. I think he has been attending all the preparatory meetings we had during this year, so he really made a point of coming to the meetings and sometimes when we had more specific interventions, it became quite clear that he had done his homework. Then now, I mean with the current crisis [Ukrainian] he chose a little bit lower profile but still came to the meetings." (FI 7/2015/TEM)

It was emphasised several times during the interviews with Finnish ministry officials, and also by the JMAs on the regional level, that the representatives of the Russian ministries were actively involved in and participated in the sub-national meetings that established the individual cooperation programmes (note that the overall ENI CBC framework, including its objectives, are however decided in Brussels). However, the discourse yet reflects the "special" role of Russian actors in a way that the participation of Russian actors has been perceived almost as a "surprise" even by Finnish national and sub-national actors and was not self-evident despite the EU's efforts to create an inclusive cooperation programme.

However, from a project-level perspective, the institutional and territorial barriers to cooperation between Finnish and Russian partners were perceived more strongly. Almost all interviewed Finnish project managers, who were in direct contact with Russian partners and implemented the cooperation in practice, highlighted that the Russian project partners would turn towards the Finnish for "leadership" because they displayed the perception that Finnish partners "know better the institutional structures of the EU, and therefore can better communicate with the JMAs and grasp what the EU institutions require" (PROJECT 1/ENPI CBC/2015). Finnish project managers highlighted that often Russian partners would "look to them for leadership" in the sense that they "know better the institutional structures of the ENI CBC programmes" (PROJECT 3/ENPI CBC/2016). Therefore, although Fritsch *et al.* (2015: 2593) argue that the ENI CBC funding instrument has eradicated some power imbalances between actors and "successful steps towards a more integrated approach have been taken", it remains to be seen in the current ongoing projects if these can be translated also on the practical level within the cooperation projects.

Furthermore, the Finnish ministries are acting as important mediators through which the JMAs have greater potential to influence decision-making procedures in Brussels (see Koch 2017a: 15). Consequently, national interests, in the form of foreign policies, yet dominate the decision-making procedures regarding the ENI CBC programmes, in particular during geopolitical challenges such as the Ukrainian crisis "in which the CBC programmes were exploited by both the EU and Russia as possible leverage and were threatened with interruption by including them in the sanctions list" (Koch 2017a: 15). Nevertheless, it was noticed that despite the economic pressure of the EU, the Russians did not resolve to "bring up CBC as a potential pawn in its counter reactions towards the

EU and at the regional and local levels, particularly in the current conditions of severe economic and financial crisis CBC is met by rising support" (Fritsch *et al.* 2015: 2589). Therefore, the authors argue that "for now, the relative immunity of CBC against the geopolitical discords is illustrated by the fact that the negotiations and preparations for the upcoming ENI 2014–2020 programme are, despite the usual delays, well on track". This "immunity" is the focus in the next section because the analysis has indicated that Finnish sub-national actors have adopted certain strategies to overcome the territorial and geopolitical challenges that the current foreign relations impose on their efforts to maintain a stable cooperation with Russian partners.

6.2.2 Overcoming the security discourse: voices of the Finnish regional (JMAs) actors

This section focuses on the role of the Finnish Joint Management Authorities (JMAs) and Finnish project managers within the ENI CBC programmes. Based on the analysis above, which traces the territorial perceptions among actors in the context of the MLG framework in which cooperation operates, this analysis demonstrates how sub-national governmental and project managers cope with the security discourse of the ENP and its ENI CBC funding programmes. This also includes a discussion about the extent to which these actors are affected by foreign relations and which strategies they have developed to address the geopolitical spatiality of EU-Russian relations. Thus, this analysis concentrates on the strategies of Finnish sub-national actors (the regional JMAs and project managers) to examine the impact of power imbalances constituted by the MLG framework of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC.

Previous research in the context of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC has argued that "the relationships especially between regional level officials and authorities on the two sides of the border have improved" (Laine 2014: 75). However, the preceding analysis and discussion rather demonstrates the "hidden" and underlying impact that geopolitical circumstances have on the often-perceived "a-political" MLG framework of cooperation (see Article II). In this context, it is important to reflect on the fact that the "political autonomy of regions varies enormously across European countries" and that regional governments often do not do not always have political leadership (Svensson 2013: 411). Nevertheless, the JMAs have, on numerous occasions, struggled but successfully maintained a stable cooperation across the Finnish-Russian border as it was also indicated during the interviews with the ENI CBC programme managers. This proves the continued support the programmes receive from not only the Finnish state, but also the EU institutions.

After Finland's accession to the EU, the Finnish-Russian cross-border regions were incorporated into the EU framework of external cross-border cooperation which created a novel form of multi-level and trans-national governance relying on sub-national institutions. In Finland, the regional councils acting as the JMA's for the Finnish-Russian

ENI CBC programmes (with the exception of the BSR) represent the combined interests of EU and non-EU states. A regional programme manager (JMA Karelia) explained:

"These [cooperation] programmes were always region-based. And this is different in comparison to many other programmes. The national level is of course the key player in both countries [Finland and Russia] but in these Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes, they are very much based on the regional level because responsibilities have been assigned from the EU to the joint management authorities regarding the implementation and strategy-building." (ENI CBC 1/JMA/2014 as presented in Koch 2017a: 9)

This region-based perspective, reflected in the MLG structure of cooperation, was designed to counter territorial divisions between actors (c.f. Milio 2014) within the relational actor network. The EU's objective was to shift the state-centred perspective (Bache and Flinders 2004) towards the sub-national level. Nevertheless, the "Finnish government structure is characterised by a highly centralised system of appointed regional authorities in addition to strong municipal authorities voted for by the Finnish population" (Koch 2017a: 9). As a result, the JMAs, which are attached to the regional councils in Finland, can be argued to act in the interests of the central governmental authority in Helsinki.

Therefore, despite the Finnish Foreign Ministry's claim that "the regions are in the driver seats" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland 2014), the central state authorities remain key actors in relation to the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC process. Most decisions during the establishment phase are taken by the European Commission representing also the combined interests of all EU member states. Accordingly, the decision not to include the ENI CBC programmes into the sanctions list was not only a decision carried by the EU but advocated for by several member states, i.e. Finland. Therefore, regional actors in Finland, including the JMAs, are directly influenced by the decisions taken by the EU Council and Commission regarding foreign relations and "high" political decisions. This can lead to power imbalances within the programmes between EU and non-EU states such as Russia, and create an asymmetrical relationship constituted by the differing territorial interests. Nevertheless, the JMAs and also the project managers have adopted strategies to address these power asymmetries and are equipped to present their common interests in Brussels:

"We have our contact person in the European Commission, that works very well. On the upper level, I do not know if we can affect those issues. But of course, if we are working together and cooperating with the other Finnish programmes we can put more pressure on the Commission to inform them about our ideas." (ENI CBC 2/JMA/2014)

This quote shows that an important strategy of the JMAs to address the EU institutions with certain issues is the communication and cooperation between the three Finnish-Russian cooperation programmes (Kolarctic, Karelia, South-East Finland – Russia).

Furthermore, interviewees were emphasising the role of the Finnish state and how the Ministries, in particular the Finnish ministry of the Economy and Employment, are facilitating the communication between the regional and the EU level. While the regional programmes acknowledged the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on the cooperation programmes, a JMA official mentioned that the work is clearly divided between the different political levels in the sense that efforts were made, from both Finnish and Russian actors, to not allow the newly established security discourse within the Baltic Sea region to influence the work of the JMAs that are responsible for the practical implementation of the programmes.

This suggests that the Finnish sub-national authorities have a great interest to continue the cooperation, including the Russian authorities. It is this commitment of the sub-national authorities that provides the cooperation programmes with the potential to act as a stabilising force amid the EU-Russian discourse that rather reflects a Cold War rhetoric at the moment. However, this aspect was challenged recently as reflected on by the Finnish Foreign Ministry which raised critical views on the heavy reliance of cooperation partners on EU funding. As there was no ENI CBC funding in 2015 and 2016, the question was raised if "this means the immediate interruption of activities and contacts?" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland 2014).

While project managers enacting the cooperation in practice do not have direct contact with the EU or Finnish and Russian national authorities, it is their commitment towards the cooperation as well that influences relations within the actor network that maintains the cooperation in practice. However, key issues, also previously identified by Svensson (2015) are the motivation of local and private actors to participate in the EU-funded cooperation. The interview analysis suggests that funding opportunities are a major incentive for potential projects to apply for the cooperation programmes. However, on the question of whether individual projects also contribute to the maintenance of the Finnish-Russian actor-network after their funding period has ended, a project manager answered:

"Not anymore, I must admit. The issue was the lack of funding opportunities because there were no more opportunities that would allow us to continue working on these issues." (PROJECT 1/ ENPI CBC/2015)

Therefore, while the JMA's have found strategies to negotiate with the current discourse on EU-Russia relations, the project level is extremely vulnerable towards any funding delays that may happen as a result of foreign policy decisions made in Brussels. The financing agreements were finally signed in December 2016; therefore, no cooperation activities were taking place through the years 2015 and 2016, effectively terminating practical cooperation between the actors on the ground.

6.3 Trust in Finnish-Russian ENI CBC as a stabilising factor

The role of trust in CBC structures has been rarely addressed in the literature. However, previous studies (i.e. Häkli 2009) have shown how the border often transforms into an object around which cooperation relations are created and maintained. This "boundary-as-object", utilised by Häkli as a tool to investigate the creation of trust, is particularly applicable in circumstances where the border is imposed on a geographical landmark, such as a river or mountain range, which implies the involvement of several stakeholders who wish to maintain access to the infrastructural benefits these landmarks can offer for trading, energy supply, or fishery.

However, the Finnish-Russian border reflects a superimposed border (c.f. Newman 2017) which has not been created based on certain landmarks, geographical formations, or infrastructural objects. Rather, the border is a result of geopolitical struggles throughout the first half of the 20th century. After World War II, Finnish-Russian borders were consolidated in accordance with the geopolitical situation of early 1941 including, for example, the loss of the Petsamo region which effectively removed Finnish access to the Arctic Ocean. The shift of borders and the decrease of state territory caused an evacuation of 407,000 Karelian Finns living in the ceded regions and a total number of 430,000 people were displaced to move inside the new Finnish territorial borders and state space (Kuusisto-Arponen 2009: 545) after which any type of personal interaction across the border ceased.

The difficult history between Finland and Russia has created a distance between the populations and this has greatly affected the trust-building process. Häkli (2009: 208) shows that previous "empirical studies on trust have shown almost unequivocally that, when asked, people report diminishing degrees of trust when social distance between the trusting person and the target of trust grows". Nevertheless, trust is an important factor in the context of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, which however is challenging to establish and even more difficult to maintain. Before the establishment of the ENPI/ENI funding structures for CBC, scholars have been criticising that the reality of cooperation often does not match the rhetoric used in policy documents and statements. Indeed, in the context of Euroregions, it was criticised that EU-funded cooperation:

"reveals insufficient resources, mismatched competencies, duplication of effort, 'back-to- back' rather than genuinely integrated projects, inter-agency conflicts over resource allocation, erratic funding patterns and excessive emphasis on physical infrastructure and 'hard' economic outcomes, rather than on 'soft factors' like social capital and trust." (O'Dowd, 2003: 24)

Trust is therefore a significant element that affects the stability and security within CBRs; especially if the cooperation has a territorial character as it takes places within a CBR that is divided by a 'hard' security border. However, the analytical challenge is to interpret the varieties of trust and how they contribute to cross-border security – or, in case of

its absence, pose a risk towards stability. In the context of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, different governmental and non-governmental actors are involved in various relations towards each other that are based on institutional, personal, and cultural characteristics. Therefore, based on Laurian (2009) and Switzer *et al.* (2013), I have differentiated between four forms of trust in Article III (see Koch 2017b): the rational-personal decision to cooperate based on a cost/benefit analysis, social-cultural awareness, general-personal relations, and the historical-institutional perspective of trust to recognise the impact of foreign relations (Dias 2013), geopolitics (Popescu 2008) and the institutional path-dependency (Jakola 2016; Tennberg 2007) on the formation of trust.

These different forms of trust, identified within the analysis of the interviews, contribute greatly to the general "culture of trust" (FI 5/FORMIN/2015) which is argued by the interviewees to create cross-border regional stability in the long-term and help to stabilise actor-actor relations based on a "learning effect" (Kroeger 2011: 753). Indeed, as argued by Saari (2011b: 333), "building trust enhances fragile stability and security and encourages peaceful cooperation between different actors". She further highlights that a "lack of institutionalised trust creates significant risks and instability" (ibid: 336) and therefore, a path-dependent trajectory of institutions greatly contributes to trust (Kroeger 2011: 753). This form of trust represents an institutionalised perspective in which the EU adopts the role of a 'broker' (see Stoffelen & Vanneste 2017: 1029; Stoffelen *et al.* 2017: 136) for facilitating CBC activities through the ENI framework in which funding is provided. It was highlighted by the different Finnish institutional representatives (Ministries and JMA's) that "a basic amount of trust" must exist between the various European actors because the ENI CBC programmes involve such a large number of projects and this includes shared responsibilities among many stakeholders (FI 7/TEM/2015). Institutional distrust among policy-officials can disrupt the entire regional cooperation network and inhibit cooperation activities on the ground.

The interlinkage of region-building and trust has been analysed by Tassinari (2011) who has argued that region-building greatly contributes to trust-building efforts because it encourages closer integration between the cooperation actors. He builds on the idea that region-building, which is often institutionally orchestrated by the EU (see Metzger 2013), enhances security through the establishment of multi-level governmental settings in which the actors can exchange information and knowledge. The idea is that it would counteract the continued "othering" of Russia in the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes. The process however, of establishing a MLG framework of cooperation, is dominated by the EU rather than sub-national involvement and within this process, the Finnish national ministries represent 'mediators' or 'brokers' defined in the literature as "actors in the network that transfer knowledge between organizations that are not linked directly" (Kauffeld-Monz & Fritsch 2013: 670).

Throughout the interviews with the JMA's, Finnish national ministries were perceived to facilitate the contact between the ENI CBC programme managers and the EU actors

working for the European Commission in Brussels. The Ukrainian crisis triggered a situation in which the Finnish Foreign Ministry and the former Finnish Prime Minister Stubb lobbied for Finnish-Russian ENI CBC on the EU level with the support of reports and communications provided by the JMAs during the summer of 2014:

"I had planned that I will concentrate on the new [ENI CBC] programme, so that I will write the programme document when it is peaceful and no one is disturbing me. Then I noticed "Oh, during this month of July, I will only deliver information to Helsinki and to Brussels and to everyone" so that we can avoid these sanctions at all costs for the ENI CBC programmes." (ENI CBC 3/ JMA/2015)

Therefore, the EU's efforts to enhance sub-national decision-making responsibilities through the ENPI/ENI periods have changed the institutional actor dynamics as explained by a JMA representative for the South-East Finland – Russia programme:

"Now these responsibilities changed and we have experienced some difficulties regarding the positioning of the regional councils [Finnish regional councils] *as we are the joint management authority for this programme. The Russian institutional actors do not know this kind of organisational body at all. They are not used to giving the decision-making power to the regions. Therefore, at the beginning, we had some difficulties because all the information went first to our national ministries and from there, it came to us. But now we have established a certain kind of trust with the ministries in Russia; they are now contacting us directly." (ENI CBC 3/ JMA/ 2015)*

While there is a widespread recognition of regional actors within the EU and its member states (Trippl 2010), challenges were experienced while introducing the involvement of sub-national regional actors to the Russian government. However, the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC actors experience a 'learning effect' (see Saari 2011b) which has been also officially recognised within the official ENPI 2007–2013 regulation that acknowledges the importance of sub-national decision making, including the involvement of actors within the projects at "field level":

"Coordination shall involve regular consultations and frequent exchanges of relevant information during the different phases of the assistance cycle, in particular at field level, and shall constitute a key step in the programming processes of the Member States and the Community." (Council regulation, 1638/2006: 5)

Here, the EU rhetorically promotes the importance of equal knowledge and information exchange between all actors within the cooperation network. The representatives of the JMAs have emphasised during the interviews that a trustful relationship is strengthened through personal interaction. For them, trust also means "learning from another's culture" (ENI CBC 2/ JMA/ 2014). The analysis hints that institutional and inter-personal trust greatly contribute to security and stability in cross-border regions. Indeed, the rational form of trust, that is based on a cost-benefit analysis, has been criticised by Saari (2011a)

who argues that such rationalist conceptualisations of trust are limited which she illustrates with the Russian proverb "Trust but verify" ('Doveryai, no proveryai') (ibid: 218).

Indeed, from a bottom-up perspective, the asymmetrical relationship between Finnish and Russian actors was yet emphasised because Finnish project managers were often regarded by the Russian partners as "the person who knows everything. They expected me to know everything and to check on their work and progress" (PROJECT 1/ ENPI CBC/ 2015). Several Finnish project managers reported the same experience and therefore, it can be argued that for the project level, personal interactions and the social-cultural trust are important indicators for a stable relationship across the border (see Article III). However, social-cultural trust depends "on the ability to adapt to different working methods and ethics across the border" (Koch 2017b: 601) and this was perceived sometimes as a challenging process for the Finnish project participants. However, this type of trust strengthens the relational actor-network and increases social capital that contributes to security in the long-term.

Decision-making processes in the Finnish-Russian ENI cooperation programmes continue to be largely characterised by institutional norms and problem-solving behaviour in which interactions are guided by mutual trust with the objective to avoid the politicisation of conflicts. However, during crisis situations in which geopolitical challenges dominate foreign policy relations, it is often observed that the heads of states take over (see Benz 2000) and the JMAs must negotiate with the consequences on the sub-national level. Personal trust is an important factor for sub-national actors to ensure stable relations; however, it is the institutionalised trust developed through path-dependency (Jakola 2016) that shapes the perception of cross-border stability on the national and supra-national levels.

It has been argued by Saari (2011b: 334) that "the significant asymmetries in power and the Russian fear of losing its grip on the states in the region certainly do not make trust-building an easy task" and this statement has been supported by the evidence in this research on Finnish-Russian ENI CBC. Nevertheless, trust is an aspect that promotes stable actor relations which result in sustainable cooperation even throughout challenging geopolitical circumstances. Therefore, trust among actors, and in particular sub-national authorities and project participants, can lower the 'mental' border between the EU and Russia that is so often experienced in the EU neighbourhood context (see Liikanen 1998). However, while the EU rhetorically emphasises equal knowledge exchange within the MLG framework of ENI CBC, the experiences and perceptions towards the practices of cooperation rather show to which extent the discourse on the Finnish-Russian border yet inhibits cooperation activities; especially as a "mental" boundary and division rather than by the political Schengen border and its requirements.

7 Conclusion

Finnish-Russian ENI CBC contributes to the security agenda of the EU by transforming it into a security strategy through de- and re-bordering practices analysed in this research from the perspective of region-building, MLG, and trust-building efforts between cooperation actors. While cross-border interaction between Finland [EU] and Russia increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the border remained a "hard" but stable Schengen security border. Nevertheless, despite the EU's efforts to establish an ENI CBC framework that is based on a partnership, cooperation activities have kept an assistance character with the objective to create and maintain stability in the shared neighbourhood. As a result, the contemporary discourse on external borders and Finnish-Russian relations, which has deteriorated in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis of 2014, suggests that cooperation itself is a de- and re-bordering performativity due to the EU's objective to utilise it as a stabilising factor within the neighbourhood.

The previous theoretical discussion and empirical analysis have shown that actor relations within Finnish-Russian ENI CBC continue to be characterised by territorial aspects within the relational framework of cooperation, which enforces state territorial interests and the EU's external border security strategy. Such spatial perspective on the actor-relations provides a unique insight into the elements that constitute the meaning of the border for the various cooperation actors and offers an understanding of the power relations not only between Finnish [EU] and Russian actors, but also between the different governmental and non-governmental levels involved in the establishment and implementation of the cooperation programmes (i.e. EU, Finnish national, regional (JMAs) and project levels).

Power imbalances between the EU and Russia lead to frictions and resistance in the neighbourhood. For example, Russia's refusal to join the ENP is one result of the neo-imperial character with which the ENP has been previously described (Browning & Joenniemi 2003). Yet, the EU insists on utilising a terminology that underlines the "partnership" character of the ENPI and ENI within related policy documents. However, the analysis of the practices of cooperation actors discloses that their actions continue to contribute to the power asymmetries between actors, in particular the uneven decision-making influence between EU and Russian actors. Nevertheless, sub-national actors, with their direct and frequent contact across the border, also undermine these power imbalances by creating trust-relationships which contribute to the stability of the border regions along the Finnish-Russian border. Therefore, the institutional and administrative aspects of the cooperation framework do not promote an equal partnership between all cooperation actors. Instead, the frequent dialogue between the Finnish and Russian programme and project participants helps to stabilise diplomatic relations also on the political level. Finnish sub-national actors have been crucial in this process by insisting

and supporting the Finnish ministries in Brussels to lobby for the maintenance of the cooperation even throughout challenging geopolitical circumstances (i.e. Ukrainian crisis).

The main research question in this thesis is formulated as follows: *How does the discourse on 'stable' borders, formulated by the cooperation actors at different levels, securitise cross-border cooperation?* This question is answered in this concluding section by providing a comprehensive discussion utilising the theoretical arguments that define borders as a *process* and, in this context, the discourse on CBC as a de- and re-bordering performativity constituted by the individual speech acts, rhetorical choices, practices and activities derived from the various analysed research materials. Finnish-Russian ENI CBC can be conceptualised as a de- and re-bordering performativity in the sense that actors, operating within the relational MLG framework of cooperation, abolish borders with their efforts to maintain cooperation activities. However, re-bordering is taking place in the wake of geopolitical challenges, because Finnish-Russian ENI CBC is yet influenced by territorial perceptions as well as various material borders (i.e. Schengen) developing new or reinforcing old material and conceptual barriers for cooperation actors.

The activities of CBC actors, constantly influenced by the transforming discourses and perceptions of the external border, contribute to the securitisation of cooperation because *security* reflects an ideological perception, however impossible to obtain. The concept of security, analysed from the perspective of speech acts and practices, presents a discourse that is derived from, but also constitutes, cooperation practices which are influenced by de- and re-bordering mechanisms such as region-building, MLG and trust-building efforts. Discourse was earlier defined as a performativity as it consists of both speech acts and practices, which means that there is no distinction between discursive and non-discursive elements thereby being re-constituted as a *performativity*. Applying a critical geopolitical approach to analyse cross-border cooperation discourses, implies studying the de- and re-bordering performativity because such approach pays attention to power relations and asymmetries between cooperation actors.

External EU border security is closely interlinked with the discourse on cross-border cooperation under the ENP (see Christou 2010; Koch 2015; Kuus 2011; McCall 2013; Tassinari 2005). Therefore, security can be argued to contribute to the de- and re-bordering performativity that constitutes cooperation. During this discursive process, cooperation actors have a prevalent role in shaping and transforming the conceptual and material borders of the territorial space in which cooperation takes place. Following Raffestin's (2012) suggestion to understand territoriality from a relational perspective, Finnish-Russian ENI CBC actors are key agents that actively formulate de- and re-bordering practices with their activities. Critical geopolitical analysis furthermore encourages the researcher to shift the focus of analysis towards the multiplicity of actors which means conceptualising the state as just one geopolitical actor. Therefore, this analysis has been paying attention to the strategies of sub-national actors (JMAs) to overcome territorialities that yet challenge cooperation activities.

For the representatives of the JMAs as well as the project managers, the Finnish-Russian border can be rather conceptualised as a 'politicised mental boundary' (c.f. Liikanen 1998). The "deep divide" that has shaped Finnish-Russian relations throughout the last century is nowadays still prevalent in the form of trust issues that emerge due to socio-cultural differences as well as institutional particularities that emphasise the "otherness" of Russian partners within the ENI CBC framework. The cooperation process itself creates new borders (i.e. decision-making procedures) that define the extent of Russian participation in the ENI CBC programmes challenging therefore the full inclusion of Russian partners. Furthermore, despite the EUs efforts to establish a MLG framework in which sub-national actors have a key decision-making role, particularly in the wake of geopolitical challenges, the JMAs are yet dependent on the foreign policy decisions of the heads of states (i.e. regarding economic sanctions) that can greatly affect their activities.

The Finnish-Russian border represents a 'hard' security border because it underlies the Schengen requirements. However, at the same time it is perceived by the cooperation actors to facilitate activities across the border. For project managers, the border is a great financial incentive to develop and implement projects that will ultimately improve the stability between Finland [EU] and Russia. Therefore, trust between cooperation actors, especially from a grassroots perspective, is crucial to develop expert networks that realise cooperation objectives in practice. Nevertheless, while the border facilitates interaction, the de-bordering performativity aimed at lowering barriers for cooperation (i.e. through region-building, MLG and trust) underlie various territorial aspects (see Article II and III) that challenge the actor relations in the context of the Ukrainian crisis which has highlighted problematics within the diplomatic relationship between the EU and Russia in the neighbourhood (see Natorski & Pomorska 2016). This has caused concern for the JMAs implementing the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes.

It was previously argued that borders in the Euroregion context continue to influence the territorial cohesion process within the EU (see Haselsberger & Benneworth 2010). The authors argue that the varying visions among EU actors towards planning in CBRs yet inhibit regional development (ibid). This research has focused on the external border regions in which a common vision is even more challenging to achieve. The governance of EU external border regions includes questions of security, irregular border-crossings and border management. Although Finnish-Russian border security did not receive the same political attention as the Mediterranean region in the wake of the so-called 'refugee crisis', the Ukrainian crisis has once more emphasised the geopolitical and territorial sensitivities that still exist between the EU and Russia. Furthermore, it has triggered a Cold War rhetoric, re-cycled by politicians and the media and re-produced by the public, that is influencing not only the public discourse on EU-Russian relations, but also the power relations between cooperation actors, resulting in direct consequences for cooperation practices. After the initial integration of Russian actors into the ENI CBC programmes (see Fritsch *et al.* 2015), Russian actors are, within the Finnish perception, again placed

into the background. This immediately affects the EU's discursive struggle to establish a 'partnership' with Russia in the neighbourhood (c.f. Khasson 2013).

The border between Finland and Russia therefore remains a "mental" barrier for cooperation actors (especially on the project level) which even imposes a greater impact than the "stable" political Schengen border on cross-border interactions. Browning (2003: 48) argued 15 years ago that "Russia, in fact, often continues to occupy negative positions in the underlying discourses of region-building projects that serve to re-inscribe Russia's difference from the 'West' European 'us' in negative terms". The new ENPI and ENI CBC programmes were developed by the EU to address this "negative" perception by reflecting an inclusive character which would no longer distinguish between EU and non-EU participants. However, the CDA, in accordance with Fairclough's (2010) framework for analysis, has helped to identify the power relations and struggles constituting cooperation practices and impacting upon activities. These struggles may otherwise stay hidden but the encompassing perspective on discourse, by including both rhetoric and practices (c.f. Mueller 2008) into the study of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, provides a perspective on the asymmetrical power relations that are shaping de- and re-bordering discourses [performativities].

In this way, CDA provides a useful methodological approach to investigate the security dimension of the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes and to examine processes of securitisation, influenced by the different EU cooperation actors. According to Christou *et al.* (2010), who has argued for a more variegated perspective on EU security governance, this research recognised how the MLG framework of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC, as well as trust between cooperation actors, contribute to the perceived stability of EU-Russia relations even within challenging geopolitical circumstances. In this way, while conceptualising EU border security as a performativity and an extra-territorial strategy which includes Russia into the EU external border framework, cooperation as a policy tool is securitised in the sense that the ENI CBC framework is utilised by the EU to stabilise the neighbourhood.

In particular the region-building process, greatly dominated by actors from all governmental levels (i.e. EU; Finnish national and sub-national), creates a larger interdependence between the EU and Russia. This is not only based on trading and energy supply but also on the cooperation activities in the CBRs, which transforms them, in accordance with Martinez (1994) categorisation, into interdependent borderlands in which stability prevails most of the time allowing relationships to develop across the border. Therefore, trust between cooperation actors (here project managers) serves perhaps as the main stabilising and securitising force in the Finnish-Russian CBRs as they establish cooperative relationships which are maintaining activities.

Nevertheless, the "hard" Schengen border, with its Schengen Information System (SIS) requirements for border surveillance (see European Commission 2017), yet undisputedly challenges smooth interaction and cooperation that actors continue to face in the form of practical border-crossing challenges (i.e. customs controls; denied visa applications).

Therefore, even though operating within a relational framework, CBC is influenced by territorial considerations and sensitivities that shape EU-Russian relations. Region-building dynamics within the Finnish-Russian ENI CBC programmes remain trapped between the different logics of the EU and Russian security policies towards the neighbourhood as well as the deterioration of foreign relations due to geopolitical circumstances. CBC is a relational phenomenon that transcends state borders and territories by incorporating a multitude of actors which are not necessarily linked to its territorial entity (see Amin 2004) and involved directly within the CBR (i.e. ENI CBC representatives in Brussels). The actor's various perceptions and definitions of regional stability, underlined by processes of region-building, MLG and trust, constitute, however, de- and re-bordering performativities thereby transforming the cooperation discourse and shifting it into the domain of security.

While the analysis of the EU documents, published by the European Commission, and the interviews with EU, Finnish national, regional, and project actors, provides mainly an EU perspective, it exemplifies a discourse [performativity] of CBC as envisioned and perceived according to EU actors. The further development of these ENI CBC programmes benefits from analytical approaches, such as critical geopolitics, which considers the various functions of borders as well as the different perceptions of actors that influence the cooperation across them. Furthermore, scholarship investigating European governance benefits from a critical geopolitical perspective by recognising the spatial sensitivities that remain often blurred in the a-territorial, multi-level governmental framework of cooperation.

A key focus of the research has been to understand the role of territoriality (see Article II and III) within the relational framework of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC. Scholars have argued for the continued relevance of territoriality in our contemporary world of flows (e.g. Murphy 2013). Raffestin (2012: 126) understands territoriality in the context of relations by arguing that "the relational system is just as important as the material realm, if not more so, because territory, in my conception, is the result of the production of actors". Article II has unveiled the variegated territorialities as perceived by the different institutional actors. While the EU rhetorically promotes the MLG framework of cooperation (as presented in the policy documents published by the EU Commission), the spatial characteristics of the MLG framework must be reconsidered by the European governance literature.

This thesis shows that Finnish-Russian ENI CBC "follows a particular territorial logic in which political powers influence but also derive from actor relations" (Koch 2017a: 14). The various cooperation actors contribute to the territoriality of Finnish-Russian ENI CBC through power relations that are highly versatile and dynamic, especially in the context of EU-Russia relations that were greatly affected by the Ukrainian crisis. The study of borders, in the context of critical geopolitics, requires a more careful analysis of the cooperation/security nexus, two elements that greatly influence the meaning of borders in the 21st century. The impact of cooperation activities, influenced by contemporary

discourses on security interests, needs to be analysed to understand its stabilising impact on actor relations in CBRs.

Critical geopolitics aptly forces us to pay attention to the multitude of actors as agents, because post-structural influences in border studies has emphasised the role of sub-national actors. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the analysis of the variegated meaning of security and securitisation, by offering an alternative perspective on the de- and re-bordering performativities that all cooperation actors, from various governmental levels, have an impact on. For the future, an understanding of the EU's impact on Russia's domestic policies can contribute a comprehensive framework that helps policy-makers and other cooperation stakeholders to understand the territorial and relational dynamics. These factors not only affect their activities and relations, but also allow recognition of the extent to which they can make an impact as agents that actively influence the discourse of CBC and thereby, constitute de- and re-bordering performativities. This will allow them to exploit the full potential of CBC in a global setting in which cooperation and security yet seem to be contradictory, but closely interlinked as ENI CBC already supports the EU's external border security strategy.

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Zimmerbauer, K. (2013). Unusual regionalism in Northern Europe: The Barents Region in the making. *Regional Studies* 47: 1, 89–103.

Appendix 1

Issuing Institution	Title	Publication Date
European Commission	Communication on Cross-Border Cooperation within the framework of the TACIS programme. <https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2013/11/11/3df91de6-b75f-492b-9e59-002d109bba2b/publishable_en.pdf>	May 1997
EU Parliament & Council	Council Regulation concerning the provision of assistance to the Partner States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32000R0099&from=EN>	December 1999
Court of Auditors	Special report concerning the TACIS cross-border cooperation programme together with the Commission's replies. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52001SA0011&from=EN	November 2001
EU Commission	Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours. <http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf>	March 2003
EU Council	European Security Strategy. <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/european-security-strategy-secure-europe-better-world>	December 2003
EU Commission	**European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy Paper**. >https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/2004_communication_from_the_commission_-_european_neighbourhood_policy_-_strategy_paper.pdf>	May 2004
EU Commission	**Implementing and promoting the European Neighbourhood Policy.** Available in Hard Copy.	November 2005
EU Parliament & Council	Regulation establishing the ENPI. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R1638&from=EN>	November 2006
European Commission	**European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy Paper 2007–2013**. Available in hard copy.	November 2006
EU Commission	Communication of Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-06-1676_en.htm?locale=en>	December 2006

EU Commission	**European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument – Strategy Paper on Cross-Border Cooperation**. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/ sites/near/files/neighbourhood/pdf/enpi_cbc_sp_ ip_2007-2013_final_en.pdf>	2007
EU Commission	A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-07-1843_ en.htm?locale=en>	December 2007
Council of the European Union	Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy. <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/report-implementation-european-security-strategy-providing-security-changing-world>	December 2008
EU Commission	European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/ docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com_baltic_ en.pdf>	June 2009
Council of the European Union	Draft – Internal Security Strategy for the European Union: "Towards a European Security Model". <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/ srv?l=EN&f=ST%205842%202010%20REV%20 2>	February 2010
EU Commission	The Internal Security Strategy	March 2010
European Council	The Stockholm Programme – An Open and Secure Europe Serving and Protecting Citizens <http://www.eurojust.europa.eu/doclibrary/ EU-framework/EUframeworkgeneral/The%20 Stockholm%20Programme%202010/Stockholm-Programme-2010-EN.pdf>	May 2010
European Commission	Communication concerning the EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five Steps towards a more secure Europe. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/ PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0673&from=EN>	November 2010
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security & EU Commission	A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A Review of European Neighbourhood Policy. <https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/1_avrupa_ birligi/1_9_komsuluk_politikalari/A_review_of_ European_Neighbourhood_Policy.pdf>	May 2011
EU Commission	Proposal for establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/com/com_ com(2011)0839_/com_com(2011)0839_en.pdf>	December 2011

Committee of the Regions	Building a European Culture of Multilevel Governance: Follow-Up to the Committee of the Region's White Paper. https://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/governance/ Documents/vdb-opinion-mlg/cdr273-2011_fin_ ac_en.pdf	February 2012
EU Commission	Communication concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/ docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com_ baltic_2012_en.pdf>	March 2012
EU Commission	Delivering on a New European Neighbourhood Policy. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/ PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012JC0014&from=EN>	May 2012
EU Commission	Speech: 2013 ENP Package. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_ SPEECH-14-264_en.htm>	March 2013
EU Commission	Working towards a Stronger Partnership. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/ PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013JC0004&from=EN>	March 2013
FRONTEX	Eastern Borders Annual Risk Analysis	July 2013
EU Parliament & Council	Regulation establishing the ENI. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/ PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0232&from=EN>	March 2014
European Commission	Neighbourhood at the Cross-Roads: Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013. <http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/ pdf/2014/joint_communication_en.pdf>	March 2014
Council of the EU	Fact Sheet: EU restrictive measures. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ media/24503/135804.pdf>	April 2014
European Commission	Report concerning the convergence of macro-regional strategies. <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/ cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/gov_macro_ strat_en.pdf>	May 2014
European Council	Special Meeting of the European Council *(on Ukraine issue)*. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/ european-council/2014/07/16/>	July 2014

EU Commission	Governance of Macro-Regional Strategies. <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/gov_macro_strat_en.pdf>	May 2014
EU Commission	Presentation to AFET committee European Parliament – 2013 ENP Package. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-264_en.htm>	March 2014
EU Commission & EEAS	Commission implementing decision for adopting a programming document for EU support to ENI Cross-border Cooperation for the period 2014–2020. <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/decision-programming-cbc-2014-7172-annex_en.pdf>	October 2014
EU Council	Council Regulation concerning the restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0692&from=EN>	June 2014
EU Council	Council Regulation concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilizing the situation in Ukraine. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0833&from=en>	July 2014
European Commission	Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy 2014. <http://www.parliament.bg/pub/ECD/176228JOIN_2015_9_EN_ACTE_f.pdf>	March 2015
European Commission	Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy. <http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf>	November 2015
Council of the EU	Council conclusions on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/12/14/conclusions-european-neighbourhood/pdf>	December 2015
European Commission	Revised European Neighbourhood Policy: supporting stabilisation, resilience, security. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1334_en.htm>	May 2017
European Parliament	Fact Sheet: The European Neighbourhood Policy. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.5.4.html>	September 2017
European Parliament	Fact Sheet: Russia. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.6.3.html>	September 2017

Appendix 2

EU Officials		
EU 1	External Action Service (EEAS)	Brussels, May 2015
EU 2	External Action Service (EEAS)	Brussels, May 2015
EU 3	DG REGIO	Brussels, May 2015
EU 4	DG NEAR	Brussels, May 2015
Finnish Ministry Officials		
FI 1	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Helsinki, April 2013
FI 2	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Helsinki, April 2013
FI 3	Ministry of the Interior	Helsinki, May 2013
FI 4	Foreign Ministry	Helsinki, March 2015
FI 5	Foreign Ministry	Helsinki, March 2015
FI 6	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Helsinki, February 2015
FI 7	Ministry of Employment and the Economy	Helsinki, March 2015
ENI CBC Programmes		
ENI CBC 1	Karelia ENI CBC	Oulu, August 2014
ENI CBC 2	Kolarctic ENI CBC	Rovaniemi, September 2014
ENI CBC 3	South-East-Finland - Russia ENI CBC	Oulu, January 2015 (Lappeenranta)*
ENI CBC 4	Baltic Sea Region Programme	Brussels, May 2015 (Riga)*
Projects		
PROJECT1	Kolarctic & Karelia	November 2015
PROJECT2	Karelia & Kolarctic	December 2015
PROJECT3	South-East Finland - Russia	February 2016
PROJECT4	South-East Finland – Russia & Kolarctic	April 2016
PROJECT5	South-East Finland – Russia	May 2016