

# 'From Spaces of Place' to 'Spaces of Flows'? Territorial and Functional Governance in Cross-border Regions in Europe and North America

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## Multi-level governance as federalization or deterritorialization

Manuel Castells (1996: 29) is not the only observer who sees revolutionary transformations taking place at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Driven by the dynamics of information technology, he envisions the 'rise of the network society', where a 'space of flows' is superseding the traditional 'spaces of place' as the dominant logic for social organizations and institutions (Castells, 1996). Whereas most IR scholars have focused on the challenge to the sovereign nation state through processes of global and continental integration, scholars of federalism have pointed to the fact that at the same time the national political systems have witnessed a process of decentralization and regionalization, which leads to a more autonomous level of governance on the subnational level (Keating, 2003). Many pointed to the interdependencies of these two processes and claimed that regionalization within the nation states is strongly influenced by regional integration on the continental level (Tömmel, 2003). In consequence, we are witnessing a multiplication of layers of governance, a process which critical geographers have called 'relativization of scales' (Brenner, 1999: 33). Scholars of European Integration use terms like 'multi-level governance' (Marks *et al.*, 1996) or 'multi-tiered system of governance' (Leibfried and Pierson, 1995). Like the geographers who are looking for new 'spatial fixes' and discover processes of 'reterritorialization' at regional levels (Brenner, 1998: 3), these political scientists are very much influenced by the European Union and keep thinking in terms of classical federalism. Those who do not focus exclusively on the European Union have introduced the neologism 'glocalization' to indicate the stronger interdependencies and interactions between local and global actors (e.g. Courchene, 1995; Robertson, 1998).<sup>1</sup>

A further shared insight seems to be that the process of functional differentiation, which is proclaimed to be the fundamental characteristic of modern societies (Schimank, 1996), is now becoming even more prominent since the logic of territorial integration and differentiation which has characterized the international world 'beyond' the boundaries of the modern national societies is being superseded by a functional logic of integration and differentiation. The proliferation of 'international regimes' (Gehring, 1990) as policy-field-specific governance mechanisms on various scales, the discovery of policy-networks as a major structural characteristic of the European Union,

1 Whereas most scholars who use the term 'glocalization' conceptualize only a 'two-level-system' (e.g. Castells, 1996; Robertson, 1998) and highlight the diminishing importance of territorial contingency for socio-economic interdependencies and interactions, others start with a 'three-level-system' and see 'glocalization' primarily as a process where subnational and supranational actors interact, more or less circumventing the national level in-between (Courchene, 1995).

and the dramatic increase of 'special-purpose government' (Foster, 1997) on the level of metropolitan areas are indicators of such a transformation from territory to function as the new basis for intensified political interaction and governance. Elkins (1995) calls the trend in which the state as an 'all-purpose' organization is being replaced by a multitude of specialized single-issue organizations 'unbundling'. Whereas Elkins' book is a mixture of positive analysis and prescription, other public-choice scholars like Frey and Eichenberger (1996) are outspokenly normative and propose a governance concept for Europe based on 'functional, overlapping and competing jurisdictions (FOCJ)'. In consequence, these concepts describe and propose a change from territory to function as the basis for social and political communities and institutions. Most recently, Lisbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks (2003) have brought together the most important literature on federalism, multi-level governance and functionalist governance. They distinguish two types of multi-level governance: Type I is founded on traditional concepts of federalism where jurisdictions are designed around communities; they bundle competencies, are stable over time, and limited in number. Type II governance, in contrast, is based on public choice and club theory and is characterized by jurisdictions which concentrate on particular policy problems; they are functionally specific, fluid over time, and can proliferate in respect to number.

A final dimension of the current transformation of the political system is captured by the phrase 'from government to governance'. At the beginning of the debate there was talk about 'governance without government' (e.g. Rosenau and Czempel, 1992) and a process of 'destatization' and 'hollowing out' of the state (Jessop, 1993). In a similar vein, as the discourse of a 'Europe of the regions' (without the nations) changed to a discourse about a 'Europe with the regions', the term 'governance' no longer excludes governmental actors but points to a strengthened collaboration between actors from the public, private and non-profit sectors, as well as to the collaboration among various levels of the politico-administrative system based on exchange and negotiation among equals (Benz, 2001). Proponents of governance usually imply a 'cooperative' style of interaction or 'horizontal relationships' (e.g. Savitch and Vogel, 2000), whereas more analytically inclined researchers find a combination of hierarchical, cooperative and competitive modes of interaction (Benz, 2001). The latter perspective is less idealistic but inhibits the danger of making 'governance' a catch-all phrase. Most importantly, the governance literature implies a purely instrumental view of political institutions and neglects the constitutional role of institutions for political actors and communities. The following empirical investigation will show that regional institution-building across national boundaries cannot only be seen as a pragmatic and instrumental approach to solving common problems (as it is usually described; see, e.g., Keating, 1999: 9). In some regions it is much more an element of reorientation and reconstitution of regional identities and regional polities. Therefore, the conceptual template used to describe and compare political cooperation across national boundaries has to be broader than the government versus governance dichotomy and at the same time it has to be more precise in respect to the modes of interaction.

We can sum up these debates in the following questions, which will guide our own empirical research:

- 1 Does the multiplication of levels of governance lead to an extended version of federalism; or are we witnessing a process of 'deterritorialization', where institutions of governance are 'unbundled' into a functionally differentiated system with variable and fuzzy geographic scales?
- 2 How far does the transformation from 'government to governance' go as regards the inclusion of actors from the private and the non-profit sectors in institutions of cross-border governance; and what ties and mechanisms hold together the actors involved?

This article provides some answers to these questions with empirical evidence from Western European and Northern American borderlands. Therefore, the next section examines why a look at border regions makes sense in order to gain answers to these questions.

## Border regions as laboratories: from 'front lines' to 'contact zones'?

Tracing the formulated questions in the field of border regions needs some justification. Border regions, seen as peripheral parts of the state territory, are normally not the vanguards in the 'glocalization' process. Saskia Sassen (1996), for example, has pointed to 'global cities' as the most important places which are becoming globally linked and disembedded from their national environment. Nevertheless, other proponents of the 'rise of the regional state' like Kenichi Ohmae (1993) take cross-border regions as examples of a future characterized by the declining importance of the nation state and the increasing relevance of 'regions', which are being shaped by intensive socio-economic interdependencies. Furthermore, many border regions are no longer 'peripheral'; quite often they are witnessing economic prosperity above the national average. At least in North America and in Western Europe, and after the fall of the Iron Curtain in Central and Eastern Europe as well, border regions are changing (or at least complementing) their character from 'front lines' of the sovereign states towards socio-economic 'contact zones' for neighbouring societies (Ratti and Reichman, 1993). The most important reason for analysing institutional change in border regions is the fact that these areas were especially 'bounded worlds' during the heyday of the sovereign state. If the postulated transformations are really taking place, we can expect a dramatic change, since both elements of 'glocalization' join forces in the borderlands: transnational integration and domestic decentralization/regionalization are challenging the dominance of national administrations in governing cross-border regions.

### Instrumental and identity-providing institutions

The most important element in my conceptual template is the differentiation between instrumental and identity-providing institutions. This differentiation is neglected in the literature on cross-border cooperation but has found a central place in the institutional theory of Gerhard Göhler (1994). The instrumental dimension sees institutions as mechanisms of control. In accordance with functionalist and rationalist theories, such a conceptualization starts with the assumptions that there is an objective interdependence between social actors and that institutions are created to serve specific purposes. Those approaches ascribe to institutions primarily the function of reducing 'transaction costs', e.g. costs of finding exchange partners and costs of monitoring and sanctioning (Williamson, 1996). Göhler calls the second dimension of political institutions the symbolic dimension, and cites Gehlen who described 'ritual representation' as symbolic activity without a specific purpose, but which creates mutual obligations among the members of a group. Political institutions based on symbolic actions influence the identities of political actors. Therefore, I call institutions which are primarily based on symbols 'identity-providing institutions'. Symbols are specific signs, which — in sharp contrast to rules — are not intended to provide correct information, but rather to stimulate emotion and empathy (Göhler, 1997). From an individual perspective, they do not reduce *uncertainty*, as do rules and norms, but they do reduce *ambiguity* by highlighting specific identities and values. Individuals share a sense of belonging to the community represented by the political institution.

Göhler views the instrumental and the identity-providing functions of political institutions as complementary dimensions, fulfilled more or less by every political institution. Here, I would like to go beyond such a holistic assumption and use the distinction for analytical purposes in order to differentiate between institutions which are primarily intended to control and institutions which are intended to provide orientation. Whereas the former institutions have to focus on the establishment of clearly defined rules and norms, the latter rely on emotional symbols for mobilization. Furthermore, there are other incompatibilities: in order to maximize individual and

**Table 1** ‘Instrumental’ and ‘identity-providing’ institutions

	<b>Instrumental</b>	<b>Identity-providing</b>
Function	Reduction of uncertainty	Reduction of ambiguity
Motivation for institution building	Material interdependencies: positive/negative external effects; synergies	Idealistic ties: mutual affection and shared values
Crucial element for collective action	Rules for interaction, especially for decision-making	Strength of ties, especially mobilizing effect of symbols

social welfare, instrumental institutions should include all actors with relevant resources; identity-providing institutions, on the other hand, include members who possess idealistic ties to each other. Table 1 sums up the differences between instrumental and identity-providing institutions.

### **Territory-centred and function-centred architectures of governance**

As already indicated in the introduction, Castells’ notion of a transformation from ‘spaces of place’ to a ‘space of flows’ is accompanied by similar observations of transformations in the governance literature. Those authors who use network analysis as a research tool focus on the structural pattern of interactions between actors in order to distinguish hierarchies and networks. Kenis and Schneider (1991: 25) define networks in contrast to the definition of hierarchies provided by Herbert Simon. Simon (1962: 477) states ‘that hierarchies have the property of near-decomposability. Intra-component linkages are generally stronger than inter-component linkages’. Networks are dominant in those cases where ‘near-decomposability’ is lacking. This means that horizontal links to actors outside the unit are present to such an extent that they cannot be ignored. These horizontal links supplement/ignore the vertical links to the upper layer of the organization. The top level of the organization, which in hierarchical organizations is the only legitimate point for outside contacts, is bypassed.

The difference in the structure of interaction between hierarchies and networks is important in respect to two dimensions: the interterritorial dimension and the intersectoral dimension. In the ideal type of territorial governance, the lines of interaction are predominantly vertical, the information flows primarily within the national units and only ‘at the top’ across the national boundary. Second, the interaction (both interest formulation and implementation) between the private/non-profit sector and the public sector takes place ‘at home’; in the cross-border institution we find only members from the public sector. In the ideal-type of functional governance, though, both boundaries, the territorial and the sectoral, are blurred. In this case, we expect direct contacts between subnational actors of various types as well as the inclusion of non-public-sector organizations in trans-boundary institutions.

I follow Hooghe and Marks (2003) in adding the following elements for distinguishing territorial governance from functional governance (see Table 2). Territorial governance bundles many tasks within one or a few jurisdictions, as a consequence of which the geographic scales of these tasks are congruent and the boundaries between the jurisdictions are quite clear. Furthermore, territorial governance is rather formalized and quite stable with respect to time and space. Functional governance is characterized by the opposite features.

**Table 2** Different architectures of governance

	<b>Territorial governance (spaces of place)</b>	<b>Functional governance: (spaces of flows)</b>
Structural pattern of interaction	Hierarchy: monocentricity	Network: polycentricity
Sectoral differentiation	Separation of public and private/non-profit sectors	Integration of public and private/non-profit sectors
Functional scope	Broad (all/many tasks)	Narrow (one/few tasks)
Geographic scale	Bundled/clear-cut scales: congruent boundaries	Multiple/fuzzy scales: variable geometry
Institutional stability	Stable/rigid with respect to time and space	Fluid/flexible with respect to time and space

### Ideal types of cross-border political institutions

As a next step, I combine the two analytical dimensions and distinguish four ideal types of cross-border political institutions (see Table 3).

#### Commissions

A first ideal type for cross-border cooperation is called a *Commission* — referring to Swanson’s definition of this term. Swanson (1978) compiled a comprehensive overview of the contacts between US-American states and Canadian provinces and differentiated between Commissions and Committees. The former are formally created by an international treaty which clearly defines their specific tasks, competencies and geographic scope. They are characterized by a scientific, technical or judicial approach in order to ‘depoliticize’ cross-border issues and disputes (Swanson, 1978: 145–6). Such an institution is set up as a formal instrument of the nation states in order to find solutions for problematic cross-border interdependencies. Indicators for such institutions are national delegations and votes. The members of a Commission are appointed by national governments, and the delegations are typically led by the national foreign

**Table 3** Four ideal types of cross-border political institutions

	<b>Territorial governance</b>	<b>Functional governance</b>
Instrumental/ control	<p><b>COMMISSION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actors from the national government</li> <li>● Large scale: national boundaries determine geographic area of cooperation</li> <li>● Broad scope: all-purpose institution, many tasks</li> <li>● Objective interdependencies, material spill-over</li> <li>● Experts: lawyers and engineers</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONNECTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actors from various levels and sectors</li> <li>● Multiple scales: variable geometry, functional economics of scale determine area of cooperation</li> <li>● Narrow scope: single-purpose institutions, few tasks</li> <li>● Subjective synergies, useful combination of resources</li> <li>● Brokers: planners, developers</li> </ul>
Identity-providing/ orientation	<p><b>CONSOCIATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regional actors</li> <li>● Cascading scales: federalized architecture</li> <li>● Broad scope: all-purpose institution, many tasks</li> <li>● Shared identities, emotional ties</li> <li>● Integrators: charismatic leaders</li> </ul>	<p><b>COALITION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actors from various levels and sectors</li> <li>● Fuzzy scale: no specified geographic demarcation</li> <li>● Narrow scope: policy-field specific goals</li> <li>● Shared beliefs and values</li> <li>● Mobilizer: parties and interest groups</li> </ul>

ministry. Ideally, a Commission can be used for all or at least a broad range of topics within the entire bi-national border area. Experts deduce the 'best possible', 'necessary' or 'appropriate' measures and projects on the basis of scientific-technical knowledge or based on the principles and norms of international law. Therefore, the leading members of Commissions are typically engineers and/or lawyers.

#### Connection

The label *Connection* was introduced by Rosenau (1993) for the relations between Mexico and California. Whereas Rosenau (1993: 3) has called this term 'usefully ambiguous', I prefer to introduce a more specific definition which nevertheless is in accordance with Rosenau's conception. Connections are, like Commissions, instruments created to serve specific purposes. But in contrast to the latter, Connections do not attempt to solve the problems of collective action by deducing the 'correct' solution with the assistance of scientific-technical or judicial expertise. Instead, Connections help to overcome obstacles which hinder the exploitation of positive externalities and synergies. In this case, information does not indicate the 'objective necessity' for coordinated action, but it does reduce transaction costs. Resources are used not for controlling and monitoring, but, rather, for transforming joint activities into positive-sum games. Typical actors, therefore, are not technical or legal experts, but instead 'brokers' such as planners and developers. Connections are focused on specific tasks and projects; therefore, their geographical space is determined by functional considerations. According to the practical bottom-up approach of including all actors with relevant resources, administrative units from all levels as well as private-sector participants are included in Connections on an equal basis. Connections are informal and loosely coupled institutions — they have no (or just a weak) legal basis and few internal regulations and procedures. Therefore, they can be created and adjusted in flexible ways and are fluid institutions with respect to time and space.

#### Coalition

The phrase 'coalition-building' has been used by Groen (1994) to describe the international activities of the Canadian provinces. The motive for cooperation within a Coalition is not an 'objective necessity' or an awareness of material interdependence across the border. Instead, by building Coalitions political actors arrange to join forces in disputes and conflicts with other political actors at home or in the cross-border arena. In contrast to the concept of Groen, my definition is closely connected to Sabatier's *advocacy coalition* approach (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1999). According to this approach, political actors do not choose coalition partners on the basis of material interdependencies or by calculating the most profitable interaction; instead they choose coalition partners on the basis of idealistic affinity. A shared belief system and common values are the glue that holds together the allies within a Coalition. Typical actors within Coalitions are representatives of political parties and interest groups. Coalitions share many commonalities with Connections: they are dominated by horizontal linkages between various partners and no specific geographic demarcation exists.

#### Consociation

The fourth ideal type of cross-border institution combines idealistic ties with the logic of spaces of place. In accordance with Duchacek (1984), we will call this form of cross-border collaboration *Consociation*. A Consociation influences individual behaviour not by providing organizational rules and procedures, as is the case with Commissions, but by symbolizing ideas which shape identities and contain an encompassing 'image' of a cross-border political community. Community-building means that this type of cooperation tries to influence or to mobilize the identity of people in a holistic and affective way. Typical symbols are flags, logos, maps and names for the common region. Consociations aim not at defining rules for collective decision-making, as is the case with Commissions, but, rather, at mobilizing public and private actors for cross-border activities. Therefore, not technocrats, but leading regional politicians with charismatic appeal are the major actors in cross-border Consociations. A Consociation

is not based on an international treaty, but is created by a highly visible symbolic event. Consociations are concerned with a broad range of policies. Furthermore, they have a territorial base, expressed in maps of the common region. Nevertheless, this spatial scale is not seen as exclusive, which means that the cross-border region is embedded in other spatial scales and this can also mean that the cross-border region itself is conceptualized as a multi-tier system where local spaces of cooperation coexist with a larger cross-border regional level. In contrast to Commissions, territorial identities are not seen as monistic but as multiple and overlapping, which opens up the opportunity to see cross-border regionalism not as a first step to secession.

## Political institution-building in European and North American border regions

The following section presents some results of a comparative study on the development of cross-border institution-building in four border regions during the twentieth century (Blatter, 2000). Two of these border regions are located in Western Europe. One is the Upper Rhine Valley with the neighbouring states of France, Germany and Switzerland. This cross-border region is characterized by strong socio-economic interdependencies, e.g. 100,000 people commute every day across the border and many companies have branches on various sides of the border. On the other hand, there exist vast differences in the politico-administrative structure between the two federal states and the still quite centralized system in France. A second region of investigation is the Lake Constance region, where the federal states of Germany, Switzerland and Austria share common borders. Here, we find very low socio-economic interdependencies, e.g. only a few thousand commuters. The other two border regions are both located on the West Coast of North America. One region will be referred to as The Californias, a cross-border interaction space on the US-Mexican border centred around the San Diego–Tijuana agglomeration. This border region features strong socio-economic interdependencies, but very distinct political systems. Here, we find not only the ‘busiest border crossing in the world’ with about 70 million entries in the US per year, but also strong clusters of the maquiladora industry which combines US-capital with Mexican labour and produced 118,000 jobs in Tijuana in 1996. The other region is called Cascadia and includes various initiatives across the US-Canadian border in the Pacific Northwest — centred on the Cascadia corridor from Vancouver to Seattle and Portland. As in the Lake Constance region, the situation in Cascadia is characterized by low socio-economic interdependencies (Sparke, 2002) and comparatively similar political systems. Cross-border traffic is induced not by the very limited number of commuters, but by long-distance transportation and ‘gasoline tourism’ (Evenden and Turbeville, 1992).

## Institutional profiles of four cross-border regions

In all border regions I have found a variety of cross-border institutions, all of which can be classified using my categories of institutional ideal types. Limited space makes it necessary to present just the summarized results for the four border regions. The following description refers to the situation in the second half of the 1990s.

### Upper Rhine Valley

In the Upper Rhine Valley there is a broad variety of active cross-border institutions. Here we find important intergovernmental Commissions like the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine River, an international organization which was created by the revisionist regimes at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 in order to demonstrate their ability to organize infrastructure for economic development. Further Commissions are

the *Oberrhein-Ausbaukommission* which was established in 1969 by the French and German governments in order to build and regulate joint power plants on the River Rhine and the International Commission for the Protection of the River Rhine, an intergovernmental institution which has made much progress in cleaning up the Rhine since its establishment in 1960. We find also Coalitions like the *Badisch-Elsässische Bürgerinitiativen*, an umbrella organization of environmental NGOs in the German border region of Baden and the French border region of Alsace which was founded at the beginning of the 1970s to mobilize against the construction of nuclear power plants and against the industrialization of the Upper Rhine. The two Interreg-programmes<sup>2</sup> which cover the Upper-Rhine Valley can be classified as Connections because in the steering committees we find members from all governmental levels and the projects which are financed by these programs include a strong involvement of private sector and non-profit sector organizations. A broad variety of local actors joins forces across the national boundaries in order to get financial resources from the European Union for their projects. Finally, we find quite sophisticated examples of Consociations. One of those is the *Regiorat*, a public-private organization established by the Swiss, French and German 'regio-associations' with a broad political agenda, but territorially limited to the southern part of the Upper Rhine Valley (the region around Basle). The other one is the *Oberrheinkonferenz* which is the successor of the Swiss-German-French intergovernmental commission for border affairs which was created in 1975. Nowadays, it is dominated by the leading regional executives and includes representatives of the larger municipalities. The national governments have been retreating into the role of observers. This organization is strongly institutionalized with its own personnel and budget, a broad agenda and many subcommittees. How strongly this cross-border region has been institutionalized is expressed by the creation of a cross-border parliament (*Oberrheinrat*) whose members are delegated by regional and local parliaments from the neighbouring states.

All these institutions operate with very divergent logics of interaction and possess quite typical features of the institutional ideal types defined in the theoretical part of this article. Nevertheless, in comparison to other border regions, a regulatory and rather centralized element still dominates the overall cross-border cooperation. The national governments created a detailed framework for cross-border cooperation on a subnational level with an international treaty (*Karlsruher Übereinkommen*) signed in 1998, and in addition, in all cross-border institutions we find comparatively detailed, explicit rules and regulations as well as clearly specified geographic demarcations.

The outputs and impacts of the various cross-border institutions are also quite impressive and extensive. They include the joint construction and management of hydroelectric plants, the clean-up of the River Rhine, the facilitation of socio-economic exchanges in a highly integrated region, the creation of an integrated public-transport system and the foundation of a variety of joint institutes (like the Institute for Regional Cooperation and European Administration in Kehl, for example). This cooperation has also gone beyond projects with direct impacts and has fostered mutual identification. Thus, a common economic regional-development strategy has been developed. Furthermore, German regional leaders strongly opposed any national/local retaliation when firms moved from the German side of the border to the French side to take advantage of high French subsidies. They argued both on the basis of self-interest ('Better they go to Alsace than to Poland'), but also on the basis of a common identity ('If we take the common cross-border region seriously, we cannot object to such a move') (translation from Blatter, 2000: 255).

2 The Commission of the European Community in 1990 launched a Community Initiative INTERREG to promote cross-border collaboration. The border regions are obligated to formulate a joint development programme and have to create steering committees for these programmes. These steering committees comprise administrative representatives from the European Commission, the national and the regional governments.



### The Lake Constance region

The Lake Constance region also has a broad variety of cross-border institutions, but here the range is not as broad and overall there is a different focal point. In the Lake Constance area there are also Commissions like the International Water Conservation Commission for Lake Constance which was established in 1960. In this region we find many very influential Coalitions like the *Umweltrat Bodensee*, the umbrella organization of the environmental NGOs around the lake, and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Wasserwerke Bodensee-Rhein*, an international lobbying organization of waterworks. As in the Upper-Rhine Valley at Lake Constance Connections are represented in the INTERREG-programme, stimulated and financed by the European Union. It has to be stressed that all of these institutions show strong elements of Consociations in their actual performance, e.g. the interactions in the steering committee of the INTERREG-programme are much less formalistic and nationalistic in comparison to those in the Upper-Rhine Valley. Furthermore, the strongest indicators for a consociational core of cross-border cooperation are the comprehensive *Leitbilder* (development programmes). The first of these was produced in 1982 by the joint land-use planning commission and the second one in 1995 by the *Internationale Bodenseekonferenz*, the cross-border institution of the government leaders from the *Länder* and cantons around the lake. These comprehensive development programs proved to be extraordinarily early and powerful symbols for a common identity within the cross-border region and stimulated much cross-border activity in the public sector and in the civil societies around the lake.

Regional cross-border cooperation around Lake Constance has not only led to one of the earliest and certainly most successful water conservation regimes in the world, but has also resulted in the production of joint infrastructure, even when there was no pressing need. The politicians around the lake not only set up a highly attractive cross-border train service and financed a new ferry, they also induced stronger economic integration by providing information and platforms like the 'Electronic Mall Bodensee'. Newspapers around the lake have expanded their coverage of events from 'the other side' continually. By 1995 there were 262 cross-border public associations and institutions for cooperation (Regio-Büro Bodensee, 1996).

### The Californias

The cross-border cooperation of the Californias is based almost entirely on an instrumental logic. Still very important are formal Commissions like the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), a technocratic organization with two national branches led by engineers who are appointed by the Mexican and the American presidents. Connections across the border are not only characteristic for the many synergetic business relationships but can be found also in the public sector. One example is the San Diego-Tijuana Binational Planning and Coordinating Committee which was established through a Letter of Agreement in 1993. It has established ten working groups but real cooperation only emerged in those policy-fields where the two cities have synergetic means and needs (e.g. recycling). Another Connection is the Border Governors Conference which started in 1980 as an attempt to lobby for the common border region in the national centres but changed its character in the 1990s into a loosely-coupled institution that promotes infrastructure investments in order to facilitate trans-boundary trade and investment.

The twin institution, the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC)/North American Development Bank (NADBank), which was created by adding side-agreements to NAFTA, is also a mixture of Commission and Connection. The task of these twin institutions is to improve the environmental infrastructure in the border region by providing financial help and technical expertise. Their establishment has to be seen as an element to reduce the negative side-effects of the free-trade regime — or, to put it differently, to make the growth of economic Connections possible. Nevertheless, those infrastructure projects do not have to be joint projects, they only have to be located in the border area. The NADBank in particular is still clearly an instrument of the national governments. Relevant Coalitions could not be established, however,

basically due to the weakness of Mexican civil society. Attempts to create Consociations have failed; these institutions have adapted to the situation and been transformed into Connections. The San Diego Dialogue, for example, had to abandon its initial goals of instituting a regulatory border authority and creating a common identity in the cross-border metropolis and has shifted its centre of activity towards the production and distribution of information for the business community.

Due to national legislation, but also to the many informal Connections in a region 'where North meets South' (Herzog, 1990), there has been a phenomenal economic boom in the border zone. Thousands of maquiladoras have been created, despite the fact that efforts to construct joint infrastructure have been hampered by mutual distrust and lack of confidence. After decades of negotiation, a joint sewage-treatment plant has been built under the auspices of the IBWC.

### Cascadia

Cascadia also lacks a comprehensive set of cross-border institutions. Here, we find many Coalitions promoting divergent visions of the common future for the Pacific Northwest. The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) is an organization set up by legislators and business groups from the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia and the US states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. A second group is the Cascadia Project, a public-private initiative set up by academics and politicians focusing on 'The Four T's' — Transportation, Trade, Tourism and Technology — in the corridor from Vancouver to Seattle and Portland (Schell and Hamer, 1995: 154). Against these growth-promoting Coalitions, politicians and environmentalist have formed competing Coalitions like the British Columbia-Washington State Environmental Cooperation Council, which was established by the two subnational governments in 1992, and the Sounds and Straits Coalition, a coalition of environmental NGOs (Alper, 1996). Only to a very limited extent have Coalitions developed into Connections and Consociations as was originally envisioned. PNWER was able to officially integrate the governments of these provinces and states as members of this organization; nevertheless, after the government of British Columbia withdrew its support, PNWER had to turn to the private sector as its primary supporter and it had to focus its attention on promoting free trade. In the Pacific Northwest, nation-state dominated Commissions like the International Joint Commission have been bypassed in recent times.

The influence of transnational Coalitions has been especially obvious in the joint struggle of environmentalists against unsustainable timber-harvesting practices in the forests of British Columbia. Environmentalists have joined forces in other conservation efforts as well (Levesque, 2000). But the free traders have also been able to help each other in domestic policy struggles. For example, on both sides they were able to block a proposed border-crossing fee. But neither of these Coalitions has been successful when it comes to conflicts involving material cross-border interdependencies. Neither the environmentalists nor the free traders have been able to overcome the national cleavages in the field of salmon fishery. Instead, the conflict over salmon turned into a 'fishery war' and interrupted all attempts to build a common cross-border region.

### Institutional profiles of the four regions

Based on the importance I ascribe to symbols in this study, the differences between the four regions are presented in a visualized form (Figure 1). The four institutional profiles are defined not only by their location within the matrix of institutional ideal types; they are also highlighted by symbols which represent these profiles. The almost completely institutionalized cross-border Upper Rhine region is shown as a square. Cross-border cooperation in the Lake Constance region, characterized by harmony and a common identity, is represented by a circle. Political cooperation in the San Diego-Tijuana region (The Californias), with its clear focus on instrumental institutions, is typified by a semi-permeable rectangle; and for the antagonistic Coalitions in Cascadia a wedge has been chosen.

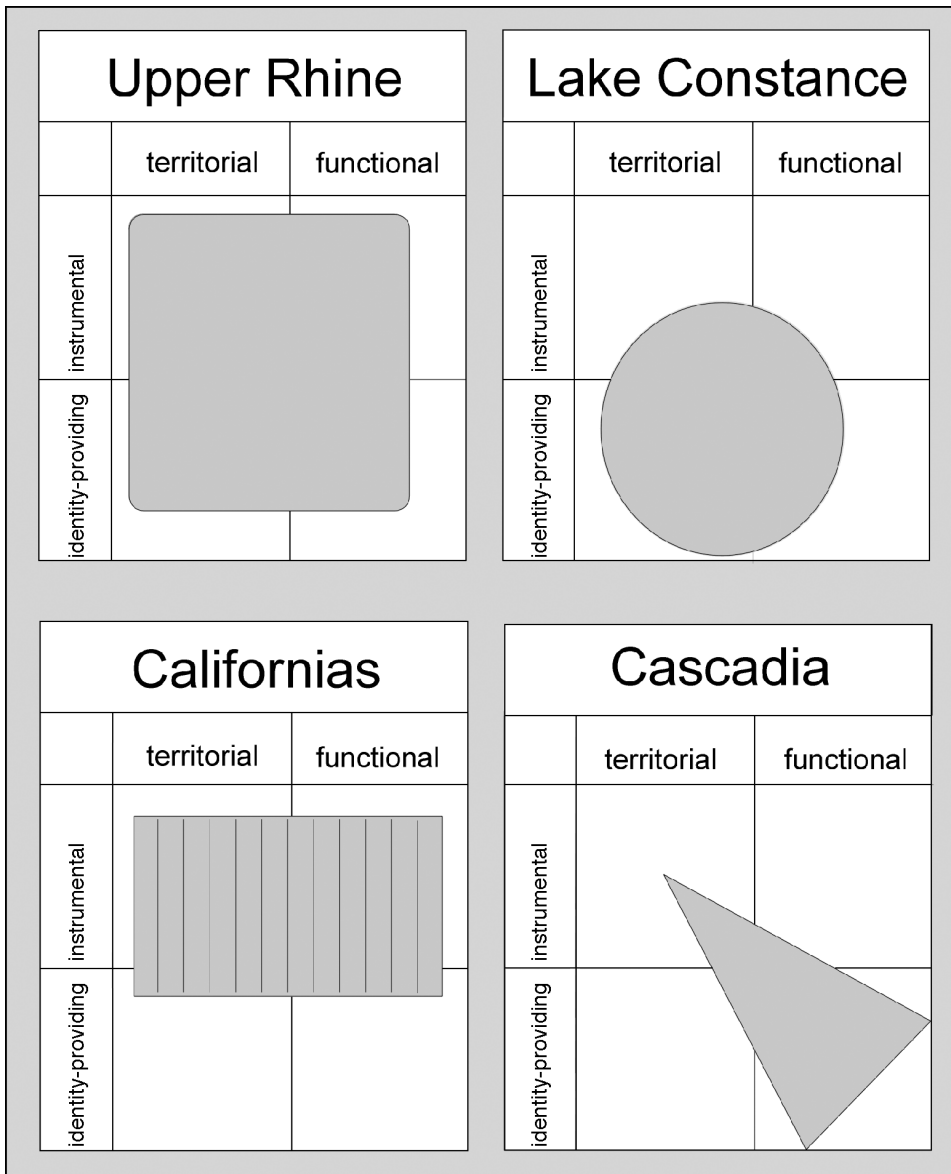


Figure 1 Dominant institutional characteristics in four cross-border regions

### Deterritorialization? Differences between Europe and North America

In this section of the article I will demonstrate that fundamental differences exist in respect to processes of ‘deterritorialization’ between the European and the North American cross-border regions.

#### Included sectors (public, private, non-profit)

There are clear differences between European and North American cross-border cooperation. Whereas in Europe the most important institutions (*Oberrhein*konferenz, *Bodensee*konferenz) are purely intergovernmental and complemented by institutiona-

lized meetings of legislators, North American institutions are much more open for direct involvement by private and non-profit actors: the Commission of the Californias does not consist of parliamentarians, but it does include a broad array of appointed civil society representatives; the Pacific Northwest Economic Region has both a Public and a Private Council and had to switch its predominant centre of activity from the former to the latter. In contrast to the steering committees of the INTERREG-programmes, the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission not only cooperates intensively with private actors for specific projects, but also includes non-state members on its board of directors. On the US side, the non-governmental member has been a representative of the environmental NGOs; on the Mexican side, the first member has been a leading regional scholar. Comparing the cross-border associations on a local level, we get the same picture. Although in all institutions we find public, private and non-profit representatives, in the *Regiorat* and in the *Bodenseerat* politicians clearly dominate. In contrast to this, the politicians in the San Diego Dialogue and the Cascadia Project reduced their activity significantly after an initial euphoric start, and these institutions rely much more on activists from the academic and business spheres.

We can conclude that in Europe cross-border cooperation is still dominated by public representatives (but national representatives have been replaced and supplemented by regional ones), whereas in North America institutionalized cross-border cooperation relies much more on private and non-profit involvement.

### **Geographic scales: clear-cut definitions and congruence versus fuzziness and overlaps**

With respect to this indicator, the greatest differences appear between the European and the North American border regions as well. Whereas all European institutions have defined their spatial scale of activity and developed maps to demarcate their turf, this is not the case with some North American institutions (e.g. San Diego Dialogue, Cascadia Project). Furthermore, in Europe the various institutions within a cross-border region share a common geographical definition of the border region (except for the INTERREG programmes, which were introduced 'top-down' by the EU), and the geographic spaces reclaimed by more local initiatives sum up to the geographic spaces of the wider regional institutions. In contrast to this, in the North American border regions we find geographical overlaps and no congruence between the various institutions. For example, the Mexican state of Baja California Sur is a member of the smaller Commission of the Californias (covering a rather long north-south axis), but not a member of the more encompassing Border Governors Conference (covering the whole border area in an east-west axis). In Cascadia, the various institutions do not resemble each other geographically in the European way, in which the sum of the smaller units is equal to the larger unit, but they follow the logic of 'concentric circles': the smallest institutions (in terms of geographical scale) focus on Mainstreet Cascadia (the metropolitan corridor of Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland); the Pacific Northwest Economic Partnership includes British Columbia and Washington State; whereas the Pacific Northwest Economic Region embraces Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta, the Yukon Territory, Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho.

### **Functional scope: universal versus specific goals and tasks**

Another indicator which points to differences between European and North American ways of cross-border institution-building is the breadth of goals and tasks included in cross-border institutions. Here, the variance is most obvious when we examine developments over time. Whereas in Europe subnational cross-border institutions have developed almost encompassing programs and activities in many policy fields, e.g. in the 1990s the *Bodenseekonferenz* widened its scope of activities from mainly water-oriented policies towards economic and cultural activities, the corresponding institutions in North America (Border Governors Conference, San Diego Dialogue,

PNWER, Cascadia Project), which all started with similar broad aspirations, had to narrow their activities basically to offering services for economic development and business contacts.

The nation states in Europe created Commissions for their border regions with potentially encompassing functional scope in the 1970s following a recommendation of the First Meeting of the Ministries responsible for Regional Planning under the auspices of the Council of Europe (von Malchus, 1975). In contrast to this, the Commissions in North America (IJC and IBWC) have only marginally expanded their fields of activity to include a broader array of environmental problems. The IJC has been much more open to this than the IBWC. This is one reason why a new institution has been created here: the BECC/NADBank. In these border regions no single institution has been created which can potentially address issues in all policy fields. Lastly, the same picture emerges if one looks at the policy scope of the INTERREG programs in comparison to those of BECC/NADBank. The former has been steadily expanded to include almost all possible policy fields and all kinds of projects, whereas the latter is restricted to environmental and health infrastructure.

### Temporal stability

The cross-border collaboration shows a longer tradition and much more continuity with respect to subnational activities in the European border regions in comparison to those in North America. The contrast is not very strong if we look at the international Commissions. The Europeans started a little earlier (1815) with the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine River, but at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, strong and important Commissions were created for borders in North America. Both the International Joint Commission and the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) are examples of continuity and stability — even rigidity if we consider the stubborn refusal of the IBWC to adjust to environmental demands before a competing institution was created (Blatter and Ingram, 2000: 463).

Nevertheless, the contrast is quite stark if we look at the subnational activities. In the European border regions those institutions which were created in the first wave of cross-border regionalism at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s have been continually working and had already established capacity and trust when the second wave of cross-border regionalism hit the borderlands at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In contrast to this, the early attempts to work together circumventing the national level in both North American border regions failed, and during the 1980s there was almost no institutionalized cross-border collaboration anymore. This changed dramatically when the discourse about continental free-trade agreements stimulated subnational Coalition- and Connection-building across the borders. In Cascadia six new initiatives and institutions emerged during this time geared to dominate the newly emerging political space. Nevertheless, all of these subnational initiatives suffered a serious blow when the ‘fishery war’ between British Columbia and the neighbouring US-states escalated in 1996, undermining the cooperative atmosphere in the Pacific Northwest and resulting in reduced involvement of actors from the public sector in the cross-border endeavours. In contrast to this, the financial resources provided by the INTERREG initiative of the European Union did not only stimulate a broader array of regional actors from all sectors to participate in cross-border activities but made it possible for the major cross-border institutions to become more formalized institutions with their own staff and budget — a precondition for continuous work and policy production.

### Visions and leitmotifs: European spaces of place and North American spaces of flows

In addition to the specific indicators developed from the political science literature, I found different visions and leitmotifs in the discourses on cross-border institution-

building in Europe and North America, which correspond rather directly to Castells' spaces of place and space of flows. First, the difference shows up in the concepts and activities of environmentalists. In the Lake Constance region, environmentalists evaluated a broad array of policies of the riparian municipalities; based on this evaluation an 'environmental capital city of the Lake Constance region' was chosen. Here, a holistic, multifunctional approach is combined with a territorial definition of the relevant space. This differs quite markedly from the bioregional concepts found in North America. Bioregions are demarcated according to specific natural flows like watersheds or the migratory routes of salmon or other wildlife. Examples of institution-building based on such a concept include the Georgia Basin Initiative, launched by the government of British Columbia, and the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound Task Force created under the auspices of the BC-Washington Environmental Cooperation Council. The relevance of such a perspective is suggested by further cases. The environmental organization Northwest Environment Watch has demarcated the boundaries of the Pacific Northwest on a watershed basis (Northwest Environment Watch, 1994), and the Internet-magazine *Cascadia Times* defines its area of concern in terms of the migratory space of salmon.

Those differences can be traced not only by comparing the concepts of environmentalists; they show up in a similar way if we look at the discourses of business groups and developers. Whereas in Europe, developers describe their cross-border regions as a 'place in the centre of Europe', North Americans talk about 'ports of entry', 'corridors' and 'gateways' (e.g. Schell and Hamer, 1995; Artibise *et al.*, 1997).

The mono-functional approach which accompanies the notion of space of flows contrasts sharply with the encompassing holistic approach based on spaces of place. The following quote typifies the thinking of 'the believers' in cross-border cooperation in North America:

Cascadia is neither a place nor a feeling. It is a rite of passage, a sign of maturity. To see this braver, newer world, a British Columbian would look not on a map, not in his shrivened or competitive heart, but in his bank account — economic man's most sacred place (*British Columbia Business*, September 1992: 37).

Quite contrasting are the following statements from the conference at which the *Bodenseerat* was founded:

Professor Timmermann has shown the interdependencies between the economic, political and socio-cultural spheres. In the long run it is impossible to adjust only one sphere to Europe (Thomas Onken, Member of the Swiss Upper House [*Ständerat*], quoted in Maus *et al.*, 1990: 181; author's translation).

The Lake Constance region [should] develop into a common unit of the Alemans within Europe that is taking part in creating Europe from the bottom up. We have found that there are already a multiplicity of cross-border institutions, attesting to the proclaimed Spirit of Lake Constance . . . What is missing is a focal point, the *bundling* into a common voice, into a common organization (Robert Maus, Chief Executive of the County of Konstanz and Member of Parliament in Baden-Württemberg, founder of the Council of Lake Constance, quoted in Maus *et al.*, 1990: 187; author's translation).

In sum, the postulated trends towards deterritorialization are rather limited and quite different in Europe and North America. In Europe, the cross-border institution certainly has an element of unbundling, since another layer of political decision-making and identity formation is created, but this layer is again territorially-defined and quite comprehensive with respect to functional scope and institutional variety. As on the continental level, unbundling means here the multiplication of levels of governance towards an extended version of federalism. The North American border regions, in contrast, show much stronger elements of deterritorialization. The territorial dimension of politics is weak because of the great influence of private and non-profit actors; because the institutions are limited in their functional scope, they do not have clear-cut territorial demarcations and the subnational institutions have much less continuity in

comparison to their European counterparts. Finally, the leitmotifs of the advocates of cross-border cooperation point towards a logic of 'space of flows' as the guiding idea behind processes of micro-integration on this continent.

### Beyond unspecified 'functions' and 'space of flows'

The empirical case studies make it quite obvious that we have to overcome unspecified notions like 'from territory towards function' and to look more closely at the specific ties and links which are crucial for defining the new institutions of governance based on a logic of space of flows. The two North American border regions represent quite different alternatives to the 'territorial imperative' as a basis for creating social cohesion and for building political institutions:

- Socio-economic exchanges and ecological interdependencies (*material flows*), or
- Shared visions, beliefs and ideologies (*flows of ideas*).

The Californias is a primary example of a new form of regional governance that is highly integrated in a very selective way (only by many public-private networks for economic development) and shows a high degree of material flows. Nevertheless, all attempts to widen this selective path of micro-integration into a more comprehensive political region have failed. Neither on the US nor on the Mexican side has the idea of a common identity of this cross-border metropolis gained enough support to overcome long-standing negative attitudes. Therefore, cooperation can only emerge in those cases in which the enormous material benefits gained by synergetic exchanges can overcome all barriers. Nevertheless, this selective form of integration has tremendous outputs and impacts. It serves as one of the most dynamic economic development poles for North America, and the 'exchanges' within the Connections are significantly altering the involved nation states. The impact on the Mexican side is already quite revolutionary: The capitalist spirit and the money which accompanied the 'maquiladora' boom in the borderlands led to the growth of a middle class, which in turn served as the basis for the rise of the opposition party Partido Acción Nacional (PAN). The PAN started its successful challenge to the oldest ruling party in the world, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), in the late 1980s in the border cities, then won governorships in several border states (the first was Baja California). In the year 2000, finally, the election of PAN candidate Vincente Fox as president of Mexico represented the peak of revolutionary transformations in this nation state. But also the USA faces tremendous challenges caused by the flows of people across the US-Mexican border (this flow is supported and sustained by cross-border Connections). It took a long time, but in the 1990s the *cultural browning* of the American Southwest (Fernandez, 1989: 30) was followed by elements of *political browning*. The Mexamericans can no longer be ignored by political parties and candidates and play an increasingly powerful political role in the border states. This has led to some talk (in the East) about a Mexican *requoncista* (*Atlantic Monthly*, November 1996: 68). In sum, the US-Mexican border Connection has neither a common identity, nor has it turned into a formal political institution, but it is already a structure with extraordinary political consequences.

In sharp contrast, the cross-border region called *Cascadia* has until now been integrated almost exclusively by shared ideas (Sparke, 2002). Here, visions of the 'rise of the region state' (Ohmae, 1993) have found intellectual harbingers and have taken root in the political process on both sides. Two antagonistic world views with distinct ontological bases have been developed and publicly expressed in a radical and single-minded way which is probably unique. The *free traders* propose a borderless society in order to adapt to the globalized economy (Bluechel, 1991); the *bio-regionalists* advocate local communities which adapt to their natural environments (Mazza, 1995). Both visionary Coalitions are united in downplaying the modern, sovereign nation state, and

have been able to mobilize people and resources on both sides of the border to further their goals in domestic policy processes. Furthermore, this cross-border region with its visionary ideas is a fertile ground for new social/political actors and concepts which are propelling the world into a postmodern era. Cascadia has not only seen the most sophisticated elaborations of 'bioregional governance', but also the founding of Greenpeace in Vancouver. Washington State-based Boeing Aircraft and Microsoft are not only two of the most important global companies; their products are major facilitators of the process of globalization. Last, but not least, it seems no accident that the highly successful mystery series on TV, the 'X-files', which is an ongoing challenge to the modern belief in instrumental rationality and state control, is produced in Vancouver (with American investment). Nowhere are the fundamental ideas of the two cross-border Coalitions, the 'free-traders' and the 'bioregionalists', more clearly and radically articulated than in the Pacific Northwest. And — making Cascadia a politically-relevant 'space of flows' — these ideas refer to flows (free trade, natural flows) that are specified in the cross-border region in the Northwest (by maps, concepts, governmental programmes, think-tanks and political institutions) but also have wider implications beyond the cross-border region, since the anti-modernist ideas promulgated in the Pacific Northwest have spread around the world. Therefore, it seems no accident that the first spectacular clash between free-traders and anti-globalization groups took place in Seattle. These Coalitions have not been able, though, to overcome territorial identities and loyalties in policy disputes which are characterized by high material interdependencies (e.g. in the case of the salmon fishery).

In sum, governance in both cross-border regions in North America is quite limited with respect to functional scope. Both are only able to invent and implement 'developmental policies' (positive-sum games), whereas neither can fulfil (re)distributive tasks. Nevertheless, once again the logic of functional differentiation and specialization seems to work: the functional specialization of the polities has led to 'high performance' in their specific fields. Such 'high performance' in specific fields seems to outweigh the total failure in respect of cross-border cooperation in fields with (re)distributive effects. The negative externalities produced by such a narrow form of synergetic cooperation are delegated to the (inter)national level. The dynamic created by such specialized forms of regional governance might make them a viable alternative to the comprehensive forms we are witnessing in Europe.

## **Conclusion: complementing the territorial state by a multiplicity of spaces of place or by a variety of spaces of flows?**

We can conclude that in the four border regions in Europe and North America there exists indeed a trend towards 'glocalization'. The institutionalized links between subnational actors and the official inclusion of subnational actors in cross-border institutions are undermining the exclusive gate-keeper role which national executives held during most of the twentieth century. The modern political system which separated the world into neatly separated *spaces of place* is becoming transformed. *Spaces of place* like territorial states are no longer the only imaginable basis for creating and defining primary political communities and institutions. Nevertheless, it would be too easy to 'write off' the nation state or the territorial basis of politics in general. In Europe, the process of regional cross-border institution-building shows the quite typical modern features of institutions with a dominance of public sector actors, a clear-cut geographic scale, a multifunctional scope and temporal stability. The European system of 'multi-level governance' is being complemented by another — rather weak but comprehensive — layer of institutions of governance and identity formation. In contrast to this, in North America regional cross-border cooperation follows much more the logics (plural!) of *spaces of flows*. The new institutions, which are quite 'fluid' with respect to geographic space and time, are not strong enough to play a significant role in



policy conflicts with distributive consequences across national borders. In these cases 'old' territorial identities and loyalties prevail. Therefore, we conclude that here 'unbundling' means complementing the single territorial polity (nation state) with a variety of political *spaces of flows* which are relevant only to specific policy dimensions, but have a significant mobilizing capacity and a tremendous transformational power. But even in North America it is not Castell's single logic of a global space of flows which is the underlying rationale for trans-boundary interaction and institution-building. Instead, quite different flows, material and ideational flows, have been identified as the ties that bind together.

Finally, on both continents we can observe a transition from 'government to governance' on the scale of cross-border regions. Nevertheless, there exist not only significant differences in respect to the integration and the role of private and non-profit actors in regional governance. A closer look at the ties that bind the actors together in institutions of governance makes clear that we have to overcome functionalist approaches which assume that these transformations are necessary adjustments of the political system to changing technical and socio-economic features or natural/environmental imperatives. There exist very different stimuli for political institution-building across national boundaries and it is time to get beyond simple dichotomies.

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