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Boundary Theory

A boundary is a line, usually in space, at which a certain state of affairs is terminated and replaced by another state of affairs. In nature, boundaries mark the separation of different physical states (molecular configurations), e.g. the boundary between water and air at the surface of the sea, between wood and bark in a tree stem, or bark and air in a forest. The boundaries within an organized society are of a different character. Organization means structuration and direction, i.e. individuals and power resources are directed towards a specific, defined goal. This, in turn, requires delimitations of tasks to be done, as well as of the area in which action is to take place. The organization is defined in a competition for hegemony and markets, and with the aid of technology. But this game of definition and authority is, within the limitations prescribed by nature, governed by human beings.

Political Geography

Among the first works to address the relation between a state and its territory was Friedrich Ratzel’s *Politische Geographie* (Political Geography), published in 1897. While some aspects of his teaching today seem quite outmoded, others have an actuality that few Cold War scholars would have predicted. The concept of political geography, as defined by Ratzel, encompasses the exigency of power over terrestrial space, irrespective of scale or location. Today, many of the claims made by Ratzel and by his follower, the Swede Rudolf Kjellén, seem dated. Furthermore, both the “German” and Anglo-American schools of politics and geopolitics fell into disrepute at the end of World War II. A new emphasis was eventually placed on trans-boundary communication and the individual’s role in the territorial state, especially at ‘open’ boundaries. This pre-

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pared the ground for the revival of a revised political geography, which included not only the discipline of geography but other fields within the social sciences and humanities as well, especially if we include boundary studies on ethnicity, gender relations and cross-border co-operation³.

**Authoritative Organization**

In a modern society, the most visible type of organization is that of the political institutions. By political organization we mean a social institution that has authoritative competence, i.e. that has (been given) the power to regulate conditions within a certain subject area and/or territory⁴. Regulation can be described as the array of laws, and other societal forces, that restrict mobility and contacts. Regulation is characterized by definition and delimitation. It is expressed most clearly in a state’s border controls, but in a more general manner in censorship laws, age limits, etc. Within all organizations that demand credibility, or whose members’ influence is regulated, formal decisions must be reached, and there must be regulations or laws that, in some respects, create reasonably homogenous conditions throughout the domain.

The state is a territorial, mostly hierarchical, organization that claims monopoly on the use of force within its domain. It supplies services to its members (citizens and/or residents), e.g. by providing infrastructure, protection and education. In return, it demands loyalty, membership fees (taxation) and certain services (e.g. participation in military and civil defense). In certain respects, the independent state strives to attain homogeneity in its territory. This is especially the case with respect to laws and the rights and responsibilities of those dwelling in the domain, in most cases the state’s citizens.

Most state domains incorporate a number of sub-domains that have some measure of local self-determination, but still have to conform to state directives. Municipalities, provinces and autonomous regions form smaller domains where more specific rules apply, e.g. building permits, emission rules or official language(s). As a given function may be handled by the municipality in one state, but on the county- or even central state government level in another, cross-boundary contacts become difficult.

In the vocabulary of Torsten Hägerstrand, a domain is a (spatial) area which, in some manner, is dominated by an individual or an organization. There are thus domains of all sizes – my desk is a domain, as is the territory of a world power. Domains are regulated formally or informally. To each domain applies rules that are valid only within that domain⁵. The independent territorial state is just one level in

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a hierarchy of domains, each of which has its specific jurisdiction. Clearly, there are levels above the state, e.g. the European Union, the United Nations and other regional and international organizations. But the development of inter-state organizations has been accompanied by a growth in intra- or trans-state power as well. J. Fall speaks of a “new medievalism”, by which she means the re-appearance of conglomerate states with internal legal differences and privileges, but also formal and informal regionalism, i.e. the autonomous areas etc. This, she believes, now characterizes even ‘ordinary’ European states. The organization of public society is thus a construction in which increasingly large units are placed on top of each other, from municipalities and provinces to independent states and supra-state organizations. But the territories of the smaller units almost always add up to the outer limits of the independent state. State legislation and regulations control the reach and the movement patterns of citizens and non-citizen residents.

Where territorial states are in juxtaposition, differences between the jurisdictions of specific hierarchical levels have led to an asymmetry which produces what one could term misfits, or discords. Asymmetries have had a negative influence on authoritative organizations’ attempts to create local cross-border communities. An issue that one state treats at a certain level may be handled at a different level in the neighboring state. This, in turn, means that the issue cannot be solved locally, through

Figure 1. Hierarchical asymmetry. The political treatment of a local trans-boundary problem from local level (bottom) to European Union (top). The thick arrows denote the handling of a local trans-boundary problem at different hierarchical levels and the thin arrows indicate attempts to make lateral contacts (based on Lundén, 1973, p. 191)

State territory A  State territory B

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negotiation between officials at symmetric hierarchical levels. Instead, the matter often has to be referred upwards in the hierarchy, where it is often not prioritized\(^9\).

**The State, the Market and Society**

The state, formally characterized by regulation, stands in marked contrast to another type of organization, the *market*, defined as the free exchange of goods and services according to their trade values. Some theorists argue that the market, and even the internal structure of commercial companies, show many characteristics typical of political organizations\(^10\), while others, e.g. representatives of the public-choice school, argue that, in the free economic market, authoritative decisions are made by the individual\(^11\). As mentioned above, the market economy has, in principle, no boundaries, but every sectorial economy is strongly regulated or subsidized by each state. The fact that a given product must be transported across a boundary may raise its price significantly, even if the transportation cost is negligible. If the boundary is open, or partly open (e.g. through customs restrictions), a situation will ensue where the consumers on the one side and the suppliers on the other will benefit from trans-boundary commerce.

Society, with its mixture of markets and regulations, functions through *communication*, the distribution and exchange of information between individuals and groups. Communication is often organized, directed and structured according to political and market rules, but also according to current technological development. One of the most important means of communication is *language*. Through communication in the form of language and symbols, those common values that determine behavior and attitudes, *culture*, are mediated and reproduced. And before this plethora of facts and ideas stands the reflecting, acting, indivisible human being.

**The State and Its Residents**

The individual who lives in a given state and in a given location is, to some degree, influenced by that state’s territory of authority. The state authority is sometimes taken for granted. At other times, it is questioned. Those who live in boundary areas may encounter alternative social orders, and may thus become alert to new possibilities, but boundary populations rarely have the demographic strength or political power to influence the territorial center of the population and power.

An array of possibilities and restrictions determine the individual’s movement- and contact patterns. Civic society establishes certain configurations of behavior. As stated above, these established configurations also influence our ‘spontaneous’ behavior.

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In today’s North European welfare state, the citizen has access (reach) to public services localized in different parts of the country. The regional availability of these services often mirrors the civic administration’s hierarchy, from municipality to state territory. But in return the citizen is expected to show loyalty to the civic society and to perform his duties. This implies movement and mobility. According to Karl W. Deutsch, one criterion for the success of a ‘nation state’ is that its residents are ‘nationalized’. This means that their communication with ‘their’ state has led to their accepting that they belong to that particular ‘nation state’. This can be achieved in various ways, some voluntary and others coercive. The school curriculum, legislation, military service can serve this purpose, as can the construction of an infrastructure (transport routes, communication networks) that makes it more natural to move and make contacts within, rather than beyond, the state territory. More brutally, it can be achieved through forbidding the citizens to leave the state territory or to have contacts with the outside world. But the point that Deutsch wishes to make is really that a liberal democratic state, through its concern for its citizens, will create a surface upon which most contacts will be made, and that this, in turn, will enforce the need for further development of the domestic infrastructure. The ‘nationalizing state’, more or less consciously tries to structure itself in such a manner that its residents either assimilate into the state ‘nationality’, more or less, or choose to ‘exit’ rather than to show ‘loyalty’. Language obviously plays an important role in this communication. A ‘nationalizing state’ will use the language of the ‘nation’ (in the sense of the state-forming people) for direct communication with its inhabitants, but also as a symbol that unites the population, often at the expense of autochthonous language minorities and immigrant groups. At a state boundary it is reasonable to suppose that the intake of knowledge about the ‘own’ and ‘the other’ country is uneven, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

The Individual in a Bounded Society

In the daily life of most people, contacts and movements are a result of personal decisions, biological needs, demands made by the state and its organizations, or react-
tions to social pressure, e.g. acts motivated by pride, family honor and cultural norms. People who live at a boundary, or have other limitations imposed on them, will act under duress more often than those who live closer to the center, where decisions are made. Many civil servants, such as teachers, are attached to the career systems of the state and its chain of bread-winning positions, places and domains where individuals have to conform to certain norms in order to survive\textsuperscript{17}. Some people have the liberty to live almost anywhere within the state territory but not outside of it, while others live in a world that consists of one small village through which a state boundary runs, without that being a hindrance to their free movement.

Communication between the individual and the surrounding society (in a very wide sense) plays an important role. Individuals have to relate to the surrounding world by moving around, by forming daily, annual and life-time trajectories in time-space\textsuperscript{18}. The individual contact and movement field is composed of voluntary acts, such as meeting friends and going shopping and mandatory acts, such as going to school, doing military service and paying taxes to the state and/or local municipality. In the everyday life of most people, and under ordinary conditions, acts, contacts and movements are a mixture of individual decisions, biological necessities and involuntary acts, imposed either by the state and its organizations, or by “social compulsion”, e.g. family matters and cultural norms. M. Schack, among others, has pointed out that different groups may form different networks, thus creating separate ‘regions’, but within each group there will also be different networks, depending on the type of action or communication, e.g. economical, regulatory, social or cultural\textsuperscript{19}. But the various individual and communal projects must be coordinated to fit in with the time and space constraints of the individual lifelines, and different types of networks therefore influence each other\textsuperscript{20}. In a state boundary area, the state territory and its organizational and behavioral implications play a particularly important role in determining the individual’s choice of lifeline\textsuperscript{21}. Obviously, people with a life history of migration, or who belong to an ethnic, social or religious minority, may have a reach that is very skewed. Such groups have developed “virtual checkpoints, boundary markers and monitoring devices that their members employ in order to project the essentiality and primacy of the group’s own boundaries”\textsuperscript{22}. We

\textsuperscript{17} T. Lundén, Linguistic minorities in boundary areas. The case of Northern Europe, in: B. De Marchi, A.M. Boileau (eds), Boundaries and minorities in Western Europe, Milano 1982, pp. 149-163.
\textsuperscript{18} T. Hägerstrand, Space, time..., op. cit.
\textsuperscript{20} T. Lundén, The domain in Time Geography..., op. cit., p. 270ff.
might talk about a differentiation between a homogenizing and a nearness principle. The former unites individuals according to kinship ties or other similarities, irrespective of geographical distance, while the latter unites them according to geographical proximity\(^{23}\). In Hägerstrand’s words, “every large group of human beings is subjected to a tension between two principles of integration, the territorial and the functional modes. In the first mode, nearness is the supreme category. Thinking, loyalty and acting are highly place-bound. In the functional mode of integration, similarity is the supreme category”. “Thinking loyalty and action become of a ‘non-place’ kind and unite what is similar in function over wide geographical areas”\(^{24}\). Even if all societies are a mixture of both modes, it is clear that the process, over a long period of time, has favored the functional over the territorial mode. And in this process, technological development and the increasing intervention of formal regulation have been major forces. The latter has been related to the integrating force of the state. Even at a very ‘open’ boundary, it is considered natural to send students far away to a school in their ‘own’ country rather than to an adjacent school on the other side of the boundary\(^{25}\).

This is also the case for public services. In certain exceptional cases, students may get their education on the other side of the boundary, but in these cases the children are almost always of a ‘mixed’ background – or there are other, very specific reasons.

**Figure 2. The territorial and the functional principle as theoretical examples.**

The thin lines are state boundaries

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The State, the Individual and the Boundary Situation

At a state boundary, loyalty towards the state is of extreme importance, and there is always a possible conflict between state and individual, even in cases when the boundary is not contested. The state and its subordinate organizations must try to use the border location to the advantage of its citizens, and preferably to the advantage of the neighboring population as well. On the state level, this can be done through co-operation with the neighbor state in order to improve living conditions at the border. Municipalities and local organizations must work ‘upwards’ in the authoritative hierarchy in order to accomplish this, but also ‘downwards’, for and with its residents. This is in order to make the boundary area into an attractive region, and thus secure the loyalty of its residents.

To its inhabitant, the boundary town presents a very special situation in which the ‘national’ idea of unquestioned allegiance to the state and its territory can be questioned. While some of the above-mentioned factors will work in favor of a homogenous state territory with no supplies or attractions outside of its boundaries, others will emphasize proximities to supplies and attractions beyond that territory. Obviously regulation factors, including the state laws, the election system and boundary controls, will work predominantly in favor of the state of domicile. Technical infrastructure is moreover often attuned to the state territory. The economic and communicative activities have no boundaries, in principle, but in reality they are often restricted by state regulation. Furthermore, the ‘national’s’ systems of education and mass communication have a cultural influence that may work to the advantage of the state of residence.

Estonia’s Borderlands: Eastern Conflict and Southern Indifference

From a geopolitical point of view, Estonia and its neighbors represent different realities. Estonia has two land boundaries, one towards the Russian Federation and one towards Latvia. Although both of these were established as state boundaries in 1991, their historical and geopolitical situations differ greatly. In the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920, the boundary towards Russia was drawn east of the Narva River, leaving the Narva suburb of Ivangoord/Jaanilinn in Estonia. After Soviet occupation and annexation in 1940 and the German occupation in 1941, the Soviet Union recaptured the area in 1944, and the internal republic boundary was moved to the river, making Ivangoord part of the Russian SFSR. This partition had little impact on the living conditions of the population, until it became a real line of separation with Estonia’s independence in 1991. However, as Estonia considered its independence in 1991 a return to the 1920 Tartu Peace after the Soviet Union’s occupation and illegal annexation, it saw the Narva River boundary as established de facto, as merely awaiting a new boundary treaty. After informally having recognized the river boundary, the Russian Federation rejected it, accusing Estonia of adding
a ‘preamble’ that referred to the legality of the Tartu Peace. While both sides accept
the present delineation, there is still no formal treaty between the two states.

When the republics of Estonia and Latvia became independent in 1918-1920, the
Estonian boundary with Latvia was delineated on ethnic grounds. The only real
problem with this division was the railway junction town of Valga/Valka, which
had a mixed population of Estonians, Latvians, Russians and others. In 1920, the
town was divided according to a British arbitrage, which left Estonia with most of
the town, including the railway-station area. This Estonian region protruded into
the surrounding Latvian suburbia and countryside (as described by the Estonian
geographer Edgar Kant in 1932). During the Soviet era, the boundary between the
two Soviet republics was kept intact, but in reality the town was integrated and its
services coordinated.

Estonia and Latvia have a three-tier structure. Estonia has 15 counties, which are
divided into municipalities with fairly great autonomy. The eastern border area,
north of Peipsi Lake, is entirely within the County (Estonian: maakond) of Ida-Virumaa,
which has around 170,000 inhabitants of which an estimated 70% speak Russian.
The county is subdivided into municipalities. There are 6 urban municipalities
(Estonian: linnad – towns) and 16 rural municipalities (Estonian: vallad – parishes) in
Ida-Viru County. The boundary area consists of two towns, Narva and Narva-Jõesuu,
plus three rural municipalities. Valga county, which borders on the Republic of Lat-
via, has some 35,000 inhabitants and is divided into 13 municipalities. The town of
Valga, with around 15,000 inhabitants, is one of two urban municipalities.

The Russian Federation comprises 83 federal subjects. These, however, differ
with respect to autonomy: 46 oblasts (provinces), 21 republics, nine krais, four au-
tonomous okrugi, one autonomous oblast, and two federal cities, Moscow and
St. Petersburg). Leningrad Oblast contains 17 districts (районы) and 31 cities/towns
(города). The town of Ivangoord is in the district Kingsisepp, which has 9 volosts
under its jurisdiction, whereas the southern part of the Narva River belongs to the
district of Slantsy, which has 7 volosts under its jurisdiction. In this system, munici-
palities of larger cities and rayons report to the regional government (smaller cities
could also be included in the rayon category). Financial dealings with federal govern-
ment agencies (transfer of funds and redistribution of tax revenues) are executed by
branches of the regional governments. This pattern is typical of most Russian regions.

Latvia’s administrative division is also complicated, having, on the intermediate
level, 26 county municipalities or rajons – and 7 city (Latvian: pilsētas) municipalities.

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26 L. Mälksoo, Which Continuity: The Tartu Peace Treaty of 2 February 1920, the Estonian–Russian
Border Treaties of 18 May 2005, and the Legal Debate about Estonia’s Status in International Law,
“Juridica International” 1 ISSN 1406-1082, 2005, pp. 144-149.
27 Arbitration Convention between the Estonian and Latvian Governments, signed at Walk,
453 rural (pagasts) municipalities, and 20 novads, amalgamated rural and urban municipalities. The city municipalities perform both the basic and intermediate functions. Compared to Estonia, the local government has less autonomy vis-à-vis the central authorities. A municipal reform that called for the merger of smaller municipalities has been postponed. The Valka district has about 32,000 inhabitants, the town of Valka around 6,000.

**EU – Russia; Narva –Ivangorod**

Narva is a town of approximately 70,000 inhabitants, located on the western bank of the Narva River in north-eastern Estonia. On the opposite bank of the Narva river, in the Russian Federation, lies the town of Ivangorod with its 10,000 inhabitants. At the reestablishment of the Estonian Soviet Republic in 1944, Narva was designated an important union center for textile production, furniture and metal industry, and the extraction of oil shales for the Leningrad market. Russians and other ethnic groups from the Soviet Union replaced the original population. This led to an almost total russification of language use in Narva and the rest of the Ida-Virumaa province. As a result of Russia’s economic decline, and complications in communication with Narva, Ivangorod has lost almost all its industry. Narva was also severely affected by the collapse of the command economy that had been characteristic of the entire Soviet Union.

Narva and its environs are replete with symbols that refer to the many upheavals the city has undergone. Monuments, graveyards and buildings in e.g. Stalin-era style remind inhabitants and visitors of different, often contradictory, interpretations of the past.

The inhabitants of Narva can be divided into three categories of about equal size according to citizenship. One third has acquired Estonian citizenship, another third is Russian subjects while the last third consists of those who are considered aliens. The latter are required to have a special permit which, until recently, also functioned as a valid entry permit at the boundary. According to interviews, many Narvaites see little advantage in acquiring Estonian citizenship. Russian citizens have access

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to free basic medical care in Ivangoord; and until recently, it was easier for a Russian citizen to cross the boundary. Now that Estonia must conform to European Union standards, a visa is required. A number of multi-visit visas were distributed free of charge to a (limited) number of residents, but to get one of these one had to possess a valid passport. However, it is also difficult to be an “alien”. The alien must apply for work and residence permits, and the application procedure is slow and tedious. An

alien’s action radius is circumscribed; it is difficult to travel abroad, to invite relatives to Estonia, to do business and to acquire land in border areas, including, of course, the Narva area. During the Soviet era, criminals were often deported to areas other than their home oblast’ after their release. Narva was just beyond the Leningrad oblast’ and therefore attracted persons from that region. Available statistics show that the rate of violent crime is proportionally high in the north-eastern parts of Estonia. This is not unexpected in an area with border traffic, high unemployment and a class structure characterized by certain types of “visible” crime.

With one exception, all schools teach Russian as the first language. Some schools have begun teaching in Estonian, but there is a great lack of Estonian-speaking teachers, in spite of vigorous recruitment attempts on part of both municipality and state. The Narva schools do not cooperate with those of Ivangoord.

In principle, the population of Narva has access to Estonian- and Russian language media, broadcasting from Estonia and Russia. Most people watch Russian TV, and this includes the Russian news. Local Narva radio stations’ (FM) broadcasts are mostly in Russian; they try to cover Ivangoord news, as well. Narva has some local newspapers, all in Russian, but the younger people usually do not read newspapers31.

Trans-Boundary Interaction

In their analysis of Russian-Estonian border relations, Kolosov and Borodulina mention three factors that necessitate at least a minimal level of co-operation32:

1) Territorial proximity of the urban settlements;
2) A common interest in the maintenance of the transport infrastructure;
3) The prevention of natural and technological disasters that might result from harnessing the water of the Peipus Lake and Narva River, which border on both states.

Even though the Narva River constituted a boundary between the two Soviet Republics, much of the local infrastructure was managed jointly. In 1991, after the dissolution of the USSR, most of these services were discontinued, starting with public transportation in 1992 and telephone service in 1994. Two years later, the slate-oil powered Baltic Electricity plant near Narva stopped providing Ivangoord with heat33. Urban planning has been started in Narva, in compliance with Estonian legislation. There is no co-operation with Ivangoord on this issue, one reason being that the sister town lacks organized city planning. Narva is supplied with water and sewage treatment from a local plant that used to supply Ivangoord as well, but the local water supplier cut off supplies to Ivangoord in November 1998, after sending repeated reminders of overdue payments, and after Ivangoord had been provided with development funding from the EU and Estonia. Eventually, even sewage treat-

33 J. Jauhiainen, T. Pikner, Narva-Ivangorod..., op. cit., p. 9 (also in Pikner, 2008).
ment and purification was discontinued, which meant that the effluents were dispersed in the river. This situation has been eased somewhat by the sad fact that most industries on the Russia side now lie idle. A new plant has recently been built, with financial help from Danish development assistance.

The Narva hospital has no contact with its counterpart in Russia. On the Russian side, hospitals receive many Russian citizens from Estonia for treatment. This is because they have a right to free care in Russia, whereas the Estonian system requires that they, as aliens, pay a substantial sum for health care insurance. This, together with other real and imagined benefits, explains why so many Estonian Russians have chosen Russian citizenship. To Ivangorod this is a financial problem, another cause of cross-boundary tension.

Narva politicians fully accept the fact that the city belongs to Estonia, but complain that the Central Government ignores Narva and that the Estonian Russians are seen as an “alien mass”. Narva’s intellectuals often express bitterness over Estonia’s language legislation, which they (wrongly) consider to be in violation of the Council of Europe National Minority Rights. Even if Narva and Ivangorod form a historical unit and are forced to cooperate on some technical issues (water, cross-border traffic), their coexistence is marked by an absence of official co-operation. This is partly due to hierarchical asymmetries (misfits or discords), partly to frosty relations on the national level.

Baltic Europe: Valga-Valka

Valga (Estonia) and Valka (Latvia) are legally two towns. Morphologically, and to some degree functionally, however, they constitute one unit that is divided by a state boundary. In the Soviet era, Valga/Valka functioned as one city when it came to issues such as health care, planning and the development of infrastructure. During the first years of independence, this situation was reversed. All co-operation was abandoned. Today, access to health care is strictly determined by a person’s country of residence. Some years after Estonia’s independence, Valga opened its own hospital. Today the Valka hospital is over-dimensioned, which leads to severe problems for an already stressed economy. Both towns have had problems with the quality of their drinking water and they have each constructed their own sewage-treatment plant. Each of these plants is large enough to serve both towns, and both sides have expressed a wish to supply the other side with clean water, as well – which, of course, is now impossible.

34 Ibidem.
The education systems in Estonia and Latvia have roughly the same structure. A few pupils cross the border every day to go to school on the other side, but all of these are Estonian or Latvian citizens, so they encounter no problems at the border. There were Russian-language schools in Valga and Valka that had good contacts with the majority schools on the same side, and which were becoming integrated with the ‘national’ schools. Contacts between Estonian- and Latvian-language schools across the state boundary are rare, but, it seems that they are non-existent between Russian-language schools. These do not have contacts with schools in Russia either.

Even though Valga/Valka is a twin-town situated on the border, its media are divided into Estonian and Latvian media respectively. Today Latvian pupils, to some extent, use the sports arena and swimming pool in Valga. Apart from the difficulties caused by visa requirements (see below) and language differences, the waiting time at the boundary has been a great problem, especially for non-citizens. When Estonia and Latvia became members of the EU, and particularly after the two had joined the Schengen Union, most of these problems were eliminated. Paradoxically, Valga/Valka is today the ‘open’ city that it was in during the Soviet era, at least on the surface. But each part is, of course, subjected to the laws, regulations and plan-
ning systems of the state to which it belongs, and many of the infrastructural initiatives that were taken separately after independence in 1991 still shape the daily lives of its inhabitants37.

**Savieniiba**38

As mentioned above, citizens who had been deported were not allowed to return to their original domicile. On their return form Siberia, some Valga Estonians therefore chose to settle in Latvia, on a street that was, in fact, nothing more than an extension of the Põhja road, close to the center of the town. Savieniiba is nothing but a small road flanked by a few houses, but it has played an important role in serious negotiations between Latvia and Estonia, which have been without results. Whoever moved to Savieniiba would have known that there was an old boundary running through the area, but they would not have been able to imagine that the importance of this boundary would become apparent so soon. Until the implementation of the Schengen regime in late 2007, the people in Savieniiba Street had to choose between three official stations when they wanted to cross the border. This caused great inconvenience. The authorities in Valga/Valka therefore agreed to issue a special permit to cross the part of the border that ran through the street. This permit would be issued to people who had their permanent addresses on Savieniiba. The problem is, however, that several of the street’s inhabitants have their permanent address somewhere else on the Estonian side, even if they are actually living in Savieniiba. This means that they cannot get the special permit. There are several reasons why these Estonian residents in Savieniiba prefer to have a permanent address in Estonia, insurance and labor issues ranking high among these.

Ten years after the independence of Latvia and Estonia, some thirty-five people lived in Savieniiba, in nine houses. Of these, twenty-six were Estonian citizens, seven were Latvian citizens and two were so-called non-citizens. Of the seven Latvian citizens, two are of Estonian origin. These have taken Latvian citizenship in order to make life easier, but they still consider themselves Estonian by nationality. The average age of the Savieniiba population is relatively high, and there are no school children in the group.

The Estonians in Savieniiba have been faced with other problems, such as inadequate electricity supply, telephone service, road maintenance and emergency health care. Electricity used to be provided from the Estonian side, but for rather obvious reasons the Latvian authority wants to take over its distribution. The price of electricity is much lower in Estonia than in Latvia, so the Savieniiba population does not want this change. The telephone system is Latvian, which means that the Estonians make international calls every time they call someone in downtown Valga. They have therefore chosen to have no telephones at all. Some may now have cellular phones, as the Estonian system dominates even in Valka. Road maintenance is con-

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37 T. Lundén, D. Zalamans, ‘National Allegiance’..., op. cit., pp. 188f, 189ff.
spicuous by its absence. Neither Estonian nor Latvian authorities maintain the road. The Estonian side sees no reason to cross the state border to do so, and the Latvian side is obviously not interested. Any Estonian on Savienība who needs emergency health care, must cross the border into Valga to receive it. This may lead to fatal delays at the border. A doctor who has to make a house call from Valga to Valka encounters the same problem.

The ownership of land is also a source of uncertainty. It is unclear who owns the land and houses in Savienība. Legally the land belongs to a Latvian citizen who left Valka a long time ago. If this owner should want to sell his land, another problem would arise. According to Latvian law, no foreigner may own land within a two-kilometer zone along the Latvian border. This means that the Estonians in Savienība never will be able to own the land on which they are living. They can only own their houses. Some Estonians on Savienība have, reluctantly, considered selling their houses and moving to Valga, but Savienība is in the ‘periphery’ of Valka, a ‘problem-area’ that, apparently, no Latvians wish to move to. The area covered by Savienība, a mere 2.6 acres, seems to be an extremely difficult problem to solve. This unkempt little street with its tidy one-family houses has proven an insoluble problem for the municipalities, the counties and the two states. An exchange of territory has been discussed, and seems reasonable enough, but this is against Latvia’s laws. The two presidents had a meeting in the twin towns, and promised to reach a solution, but so far nothing has happened.

Conclusions

Two Baltic Border Towns: Attempt at a Classification

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<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Unit/mixed</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narva/Ivang. Change</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two divided cities can be characterized according to process, political permeability, physical permeability, ethnicity, ethnicity in relation to nation state, and to political cross-border co-operation.

Compared to other twin towns in Europe, Valg/Valka is unique in that its two majority populations clearly differ with respect to nationally, while both cities have a large minority of ethnic Russians. On the advice of the Haparanda/Tornio administrations, Valga and Valka have entered a program of contacts and communication that have as their object improved living conditions at and across the boundary. Several difficulties have been reported, however. In most cases, local intentions clash with state legislation and with the ‘estonification’ or ‘latvification’ policy of

39 T. Lundén, 2004, _On the boundary…, op. cit._, p. 160f; see also Ch. Waack, _Stadträume und Staatsgrenzen…, op. cit._
each country. To most of the town’s inhabitants, the border does seem an important obstacle, as they see few opportunities on the other side. The ethnic Russians and other Russian speakers appear to be the only group that really has a cross-boundary contact network.

Even if two neighboring municipalities, separated by a state boundary, wish to cooperate and are legally able to do so, they often find that they differ so much with respect to legal competences that other hierarchy levels must get involved. This, for example, is the case for the relations between Estonia and Latvia\textsuperscript{40}, but also for those between Finland and Sweden, though the latter are culturally similar and are both members of the European Union. In the case of Narva and Ivangorod, obstacles are so great that co-operation is practically impossible, in spite of a common local language and a common history – or perhaps for those very reasons.

\textsuperscript{40} P. Joenniemi, Border issues in Europe’s North, [in:] T. Diez, M. Albert, S. Stetter (eds), The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Power of Integration..., Cambridge 2008, pp. 129-173.