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What's in a Line?

Making Sovereignty through Border Policy

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Till farmor

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This is a thesis about borders. In many ways, the writing of this thesis has paralleled its theme: just as borders mark the in-between of states, I have found myself occupying the liminal spaces of both disciplinary and institutional homes. The academic field of border studies is in itself multidisciplinary, and I have been working somewhere in-between political science, international relations, and political geography. I have been a graduate student at the Department of Government at Uppsala University but also part of a multidisciplinary research team at Södertörn University. In addition, I have been a Swede studying Norway's relation to its Russian border. Crossing all these kinds of boundaries has at times made this project more challenging than I could have ever imagined, but in the end it has also taught me many things. In completing this daunting task, I have received encouragement, advice, and support from many people. Here I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to all of you who have helped me along the way.

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PART I

1. From Wall to Zone between Norway and Russia

On the outer border of the Schengen Area, where Norway meets Russia in the north, a *Local Border Traffic Permit* was introduced in 2012, giving residents in the area surrounding the border on both sides the possibility of visa-free movement across the border. The border between Norway and Russia is, from a Norwegian perspective, located in a geographically remote and sparsely populated area, in addition to only making up a small percentage of Norway's total borders. Yet, due to the strategic position of harbours in the area and the importance of the natural resources in the Barents Sea, this border has been geopolitically important throughout the last century, both during the Second World War and, later on, during the Cold War, when it constituted, as part of the Iron Curtain, the northern land border between NATO and the USSR. In this sense, the Norwegian-Russian border can be described as an overdetermined border in that it has represented not only the territorial and administrative boundary between two states but also the political and symbolic boundary between two opposing world systems (cf. Rumford 2012, 891). To some extent, this is still true, as the border constitutes an external Schengen boundary at the edge of the European integration project. Given the overdetermined character of this border, its opening through the introduction of a visa-free zone provides a compelling political puzzle. How come visa freedom was introduced at this border?

Borders, understood here as the territorial demarcation between (sovereign) states, have a range of functions for a state. They mark the edge of territories and political-administrative systems as well as draw lines between the citizens of each state. In their role as the territorial demarcations of states, the capacities of borders serve to create, reinforce, and maintain differences between states. Most explanations as to why borders are open have to do with the characteristics of neighbouring states: the more alike two states are, the more likely they will have open borders with one another. Any inequalities of power across two sides of a border, for example in terms of military power or economic standards, can be cause for insecurity and result in demands for more closed borders. In their comparison of border openness across a number of cases, Boehmer and Peña conclude that states are more likely to have open borders between them if they:

> are about equally wealthy to each other, speak at least one common language, are both democratic, have a high number of cities near the border, have militaries of equal size and have not engaged in military hostilities for a long time (2012, 282).

J. Anderson and O'Dowd (1999, 597) make a similar argument, that the degree of cross-border difference determines its openness. That differences and similarities across borders between adjacent states determine how open they are to cross-border movement is a fairly uncontroversial assumption. However, if border openness between Norway and Russia was to be determined by these factors, the likelihood that Norway would pursue a more open border policy with Russia becomes all the more puzzling, given that only a few years before, in 2004, this border ranked 13th in the world in terms of economic inequality between neighbours (Moré Martínez 2011, 18–28). Norway's GDP/capita is more than ten times that of the Russian Federation, while its military capacity is minuscule in comparison, and they have very different levels of democracy and dissimilar languages. Norway's economic and military capacities suggest that increased border permeability would be particularly 'risky' from a Norwegian sovereignty perspective. This thesis will therefore focus on the pursuit of this policy on part of Norway. On a general level, these conditions do not seem very favourable for an open border between the two states; despite this, in 2012, a permit was introduced establishing visa freedom for residents in the borderlands on both sides.

The overall question that this dissertation addresses, in relation to a particular case of border policy change, is why some borders are open while others are not. In this thesis, I argue that questions of open borders can be answered using a theoretical framework that combines an analysis of a state's *sovereignty motives* with a two-level analysis of the functions of the border. This argument is made up of two components: first, sovereignty is here understood as the state's capacity to maintain power/control within its territory, and the argument I make is that states pursue open or closed borders depending on the perceived risks and opportunities that changes in their border policies will have on that capacity. Secondly, since policies towards borders often have significant effects on local border communities, to answer this question we must also understand that the state and its borderlands are not necessarily aligned in terms of what role the border is expected to fulfil. Depending on the objectives in relation to the neighbour, there may be differences in terms of what challenges the opening of a border is perceived to represent. Centre-periphery differences with regard to how open the border should be can, in themselves, be the cause for challenges to sovereignty. Therefore, I argue that both the state (central level/government) and the borderlands (local level/periphery) motives in relation to the borders must be combined in the analysis.

Drawing on existing theory that explains policies towards borders as a result of a state's sovereignty strategy, this thesis adds an analytical component by including a centre-periphery perspective on borders. In the following subsections, the theoretical claims guiding this thesis are outlined, leading to the core arguments of this thesis and the research questions that will guide the empirical analysis of the sovereignty ideas in Norway's introduction of a local border traffic permit.[1]

The Challenge of Open Borders

This section will place the case of the Norwegian-Russian local border traffic permit in a wider European (and global) context of how states react to challenges to their borders, following which is an outline of the argument that borders are sites of sovereignty construction, in that sovereignty is 'made' through the policies states adopt to safeguard their borders. Thereafter, the two main components of my theoretical framework will be introduced, in which sovereignty motives are operationalised along three dimensions, and the role of borderlands and centre-periphery relations will be detailed. The final section of this chapter specifies the research questions that will guide the rest of the thesis and summarises the main contributions that it makes to research on borders and state sovereignty.

Since 2010, events such as the war in Syria and the subsequent refugee crisis in the Mediterranean Sea have brought issues of borders and border control in Europe to the fore of political and academic debate. The response of the European Union, with barbed wire fences and walls being raised at the external borders, and border controls being reintroduced between Schengen countries, has shown with utmost clarity, the violent potential of borders: when walls are raised along borders, they can cost the lives of those trying to cross them. This development has, among other things, raised questions about the viability of open borders within the European Union. The European integration process has always been characterised by a contrast between the openness *within* the European Union and the consequent *closing* of its external borders. This contrast was, to some extent, weakened by the reinstatement of internal border controls in 2015; however, even before these events, almost as if the sum of bordering has to be constant, the border controls of each Schengen state had moved to the shared external border (Laine 2015, 12; Reid-Henry 2013, 198), and the management of external Schengen

[1] The 'local border traffic permit' is the full name of this policy, '*grenseboerbevis*' in Norwegian. For the sake of simplicity, it will sometimes be referred to simply as the 'border permit' or the 'visa-free zone'. All these names are used to refer to the policy that introduces local visa freedom at the Norweigan-Russian border. The specifics of this policy are detailed in Chapter 2.

borders has long been that of risk and securitisation (Huysmans 2000; Moreno-Lax 2018).

Parallel to the securitisation of the external boundary, there is another border logic: that of the unfixed character of European Union membership. The expansion and addition of new member states is a fundamental characteristic of the EU project, and its external border, closed or not, has always been in a state of re-negotiation, as 'no clear-cut closure of the territorial border' (Bartolini 2005, 127) has been defined as to where the EU could potentially end. On the external border to the east, this has given rise to complex, even contradictory, border regimes because they have to answer to both a need for control and a desire for openness (Berg and Ehin 2006; Boman and Berg 2007; Browning and Joenniemi 2008; Dimitrovova 2008). The verdict is still out on how the European Union should handle such conflicting objectives of border functions, but the establishment of local visa-free zones, such as the one between Norway and Russia, could perhaps be seen as a way to do so.

The tension between a desire for security that encourages policies of closed borders and a desire for economic gains and free movement that requires border openness is not new or unique to the European community. The overarching dilemma that much of the literature on borders aims to solve is how we should understand sovereignty in an increasingly globalised world, where states are constantly being put to the test by issues that transcend territorial boundaries. Challenges to state sovereignty come both from above, through supranational organisations, and from below, through regionalisation processes and cross-border cooperation at the local level (Adler-Nissen 2009; Blatter 2004; Keating 1999; MacLeod 2001). Previous studies of the relationship between increasingly permeable borders and sovereignty have approached this problem in different ways, e.g. asking whether globalisation means the end of the nation-state; whether sovereignty should be understood as differentiated; or whether states can share power with supra- and sub-state institutions without a loss of sovereignty. It is often recognised that, despite the idea that globalisation is seen as a challenge to state sovereignty, sovereignty has, in fact, never been 'neatly contained' within states (Agnew 2009).

In recent years, we have seen a surge in walls, fences, and the politics of closed borders as a response to the challenges of globalisation. Thus, rather than creating a 'borderless world', as some proponents claimed in the decade following the Cold War, states continue to play a crucial role in the organisation of territory (Paasi 2009). These developments urge us to take a closer look at how borders continue to be of significance and at the policies states adopt to preserve them (Parker and Adler-Nissen 2012; Rudolph 2005). Recent developments in the study of borders and sovereignty have shifted the discussion from a question of the eventual disappearance of borders to an increased focus on the on-going transformation of borders (Balogh 2014,

42), accompanied by the need for border theories that acknowledge the potential of borders to act as both bridges and barriers (Newman 2006b) as well as an expanding literature that focuses on how bordering practices take place regardless of where a 'line' is (e.g. at airports and in Schengen internal border controls). Defining the concept of 'a border' is quite a challenge since it has different meanings depending on its empirical context and academic field and can be used synonymously (or not) with both frontier and boundary.[2] Here, the use of *border* refers to an 'external state boundary' (J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 594), and, in this sense, denotes both the territorial and legal delimitation of a state.

If we understand sovereignty to be the control over a specific territory that is constituted by the exercise of power and the acknowledgement of its legitimacy, both from within, in terms of citizens accepting the authority of the state, and from outside, in terms of other states recognising the state as sovereign, then sovereignty is always under construction by the actions that states take to uphold it. At the border, and in the policies towards it, ideas about sovereignty do not only become visible but are also put to the test. In particular, challenges to sovereignty will become heightened in the politics towards territorial borders. Therefore, an important task is to study how challenges towards borders are perceived, met, and adapted from within the state itself, i.e. how sovereignty is 'made' through policies towards borders. In order to do so, we can take a closer look at periods and policies that reshape the function or meaning of a border and that result in more or less openness. This dissertation does this through an in-depth analysis of how sovereignty motives were articulated in the Norwegian policy discourse during the four-year period between when local visa-freedom was first proposed in 2008 until it was introduced at the Norwegian-Russian border in 2012.

Borders as sites of sovereignty construction

To understand how policies towards borders contribute to the construction and re-construction of sovereignty, we must first recognise the different functions that a border can fulfil. The primary function of a border is to constitute a line of demarcation. Borders indicate the edge of a sovereign territory by means of fences, gates, or signposts, which mark the beginning of one state and the end of another, and they represent the symbolic limits of sepa-

[2] There are a number of words that are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes hold separate meanings; border, boundary, and frontier are perhaps the most common in English, whereas Norwegian and Swedish only have one word for them all: *grense/gräns*. There is some overlap and some differences between which word is associated with which meaning in political geography, international relations, and anthropology, as well as some differences between American and British English. For a more conceptual discussion on the etymological roots of different words for borders, see Thomas Lundén (2004, Chapter 1) or Malcolm Anderson (1996).

rate political, legal, and administrative systems, in addition to determining belonging to one society or another (M. Anderson 2013; Vaughan-Williams 2009; Wilson and Donnan 1998). Through their demarcating capacity, borders are fundamental for the maintenance and reproduction of state power, and, as such, they are sites where challenges to sovereignty become particularly visible (Wilson and Donnan 1998).

As physical and symbolical manifestations of the sovereign state, any perceived pressures at borders can be potential threats to state sovereignty. When states face the challenges of globalisation, in particular increased migration across borders, one strategy towards borders, which has become increasingly common in the aftermath of 9/11, is to build physical structures intended to stop people from crossing borders (Jones 2012; Vallet and David 2012). It has been argued that the strategy of raised walls and stricter border control is a way for states to *perform* their sovereignty and thus maintain an image of control when sovereignty is, in fact, in decline (Bosworth 2008; Brown 2010; Pusterla and Piccin 2012). Regardless of whether one agrees with the conclusion that the sovereign state is in decline or not, it is still interesting to examine the ways in which border policies function as tools for sovereignty construction. It is easy to see the construction of walls or the enforcement of stricter border controls in reaction to border challenges as ways to strengthen sovereignty (in particular towards less affluent neighbours), but what about when states actively pursue more *open* borders? This thesis makes the claim that the opening of borders can also be understood as a means to manifest and reinforce state sovereignty. To be able to make this claim, sovereignty must be understood as multi-dimensional, in that territorial security is one of several aspects of sovereignty that a state may wish to pursue.

Dimensions of sovereignty

So far in this chapter, I have argued that macro-level similarities between neighbour states are insufficient for understanding the openness created by the introduction of local visa-freedom between Norway and Russia. Instead, I have argued that a theoretical approach that views border openness as a result of sovereignty motives can provide a better explanation. From this perspective, the degree to which borders are open can be understood as a result of the sovereignty motives of the state, that is, in the policies states pursue to make their borders more or less permeable. In order to do this, sovereignty must be *differentiated*, i.e. there must be different types of sovereignty motives available for the state to pursue. In this thesis, different sovereignty motives are therefore conceptualised as belonging to *dimensions* of sovereignty, which will be discussed at length in Chapter 3; here, I will briefly introduce the three dimensions of sovereignty – *geopolitical*, *material*, and *societal* – that will constitute my analytical framework.

If sovereignty is understood as multi-dimensional, the priority given to different dimensions of sovereignty will determine how open a border will be. For example, a focus on territorial integrity and security – what I call the *geopolitical* dimension – may result in more closed borders and the construction of walls and fences, whereas a focus on economic growth and access to new markets – the *material* dimension – may result in more open borders to facilitate trade. Previous research has used different ways to conceptualise what the different dimensions of sovereignty are, but some version of geopolitical security versus economic prosperity is usually included in such a framework (e.g. Litfin 1997; Mattli 2000; Rudolph 2005). The theoretical assumption made by these scholars is that states make 'sovereignty bargains', which means that they accept limitations on some dimension of sovereignty in order to strengthen another. This theory is used to explain why states enter into binding bilateral or international agreements with other states, despite the fact that such agreements may limit a state's autonomy over the control of its own borders. The European Union is a good example of a sovereignty bargain, as becoming a member limits each member state's autonomy in decisions about its borders but gives the state access to the EU's internal market.

In addition to the already mentioned tension between geopolitical security objectives and economic gain, the analysis will also focus on a third, *societal*, dimension of sovereignty. Drawing on Christopher Rudolph (2003, 2005), the inclusion of a societal dimension allows us to take into account the fact that states may worry about not only security risks or economic benefits with regard to their policies towards borders but also about the community that the border is intended to demarcate. The addition of this dimension acknowledges the inclusionary/exclusionary power of borders, which territorially demarcate belonging and thereby constitute the foundation for the construction of shared identities and, to some extent, the legitimacy of the state as a sovereign entity (B. Anderson 1991). The societal dimension of sovereignty captures the idea that more similar neighbouring states have more open borders because the 'risk' of having an open border towards a neighbour one perceives to be different from oneself can be presumed to be higher. Newman (2006a) argues that the exclusionary function of borders has to do with how much distance the border is perceived to define:

> The 'here-there' and 'us-them' cut-off points are not always played out through the construction of physical and visible walls and fences. They may be as invisible as they are tangible and, equally, as perceived as they are real. … The extent to which I am prepared to overcome my feelings of exclusivity will determine the extent to which I am prepared to permit you to cross the border and to interact with me (Newman 2006a, 177).

This argument suggests that seeing the neighbour as the 'Other' would lead to policies aimed at closing the border, but it also suggests that drawing on shared identities and developing regional cross-border identities can be a way to reduce such distance.

Borderlands and centre-periphery relations

The inclusion of a societal dimension of sovereignty in the analysis of policies towards borders complicates the idea of a choice between security versus economy. Social relations and identities within and across borders are often far more complex than what neatly drawn borders on maps can reveal. That more similar states have more open borders is a macro-level explanation that compares different characteristics of neighbouring states to determine their openness. Yet, a core idea in most border studies today is the understanding that states are not internally homogenous. Borders structure asymmetrical relationships and power dynamics not only between states but also *within* states, e.g. between core and periphery or between regions (Hombrado 2011). More precisely, how the border is understood at the centre of a state can be very different from what it represents in its borderlands. It is very likely, for example, that two adjacent sides of a border are much more similar to each other than adjacent states on an overall level. Taking this point seriously means that we can neither assume that changes in how a border is governed will have the same meaning in the centre as in the border region, nor that policy change travels easily from the intention of the central institutions to the impact at the border (cf. Gavrilis 2008). Furthermore, this insight suggests that the success of policies that regulate borders may be dependent on what happens at a local level, in the borderlands. As others have argued before, if we want to study changes in sovereignty motives, it is useful to study borders through comparisons, e.g. between the border and the central state institutions (J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 596). With this in mind, the present thesis focuses on a comparison of the perspectives of both the centre and the periphery regarding the introduction of local border traffic permits. More specifically, it is argued that if the state, at the central level, and the local border community have similar ideas about what function the border should have, the risks of centre-periphery conflict or tension as the result of pursuing a particular border policy are reduced, as agreement between the two levels means that it will not weaken the internal legitimacy of the state.

Research Questions and Contribution

To sum up this introduction, I have argued that this particular open border policy – the introduction of local visa freedom at the Norwegian-Russian

border – cannot be accounted for by regular macro-level explanations of open borders. Instead, I have proposed the use of a theory focusing on the sovereignty motives of the state to explain policies towards borders. That is, if policies towards borders are understood as a conciliation between different dimensions of sovereignty, where states make opportunity-risk assessments of changes in their border(ing) policies, it can be used to understand puzzling cases of border change. Secondly, I have argued that borderlands matter if we are to understand how sovereignty is constructed through policies towards borders. The theoretical framework thus consists of three dimensions of sovereignty: geopolitical, material, and societal dimensions, in addition to a two-level comparison (between the state and the borderlands) of how sovereignty motives are expressed within these three dimensions.

Overall, this thesis aims to further our understanding, conceptually and empirically, of how sovereignty and borders are connected; first, as some notion of a border is implicit in most definitions of sovereignty, the theoretical ambition of this thesis is to investigate and make explicit this connection. It is argued that sovereignty is manifested and produced at the border, through the ideas about what role the border should have. Following this argument, the empirical ambition of this thesis is to analyse how ideas about the border were expressed in the case of the local border traffic permit, and thus show how the pursuit of visa-freedom at the border with Russia makes sense from a Norwegian sovereignty perspective.

In order to achieve these objectives, the analysis seeks to answer three principal research questions:

1. *What sovereignty motives characterised the Norwegian public discourse about the local border traffic permit along the Russian border? That is, how was this border policy change motivated and presented, what objectives was it intended and expected to achieve, and what opportunities and risks were associated with it?*
2. *How were different opportunities and risks within the three dimensions of geopolitical, material, and societal sovereignty combined in the Norwegian discourse regarding the local border traffic permit? Were they seen as mutually reinforcing, competing, or unrelated?*

These two questions seek to determine what kind of sovereignty bargain, if any, was made in the case of the local border traffic permit.[3]

3. *If, and in that case how, were those ideas aligned between the central state and the border community?*

The third question seeks to examine the role of the centre-periphery relationship in this particular case. Are there clues in what the border represents in

[3] The questions asked here should be understood with two underlying assumptions in mind: first, it is assumed that states wish to remain sovereign, and second, that border change (in particular towards more open borders) presents a potential challenge to sovereignty. These starting points for the analysis are discussed further in Chapter 3.

the local context that can answer why this puzzling border opening could take place? If the centre and periphery have the same idea about what the proposed border policy change means, with two different possible observations to be made: 1) that they have similar priorities and risk-assessments and 2) that the distance between here and there (us and them) across the border is perceived as smaller in the periphery, this would help us to comprehend how such an unlikely opening could be made possible. Drawing on the extensive literature from both border studies and international relations theory, which understands sovereignty as political/social construct that can be reproduced, manifested, and reinforced via policies towards borders, this thesis makes four main contributions to current scholarship:

First of all, the methodological contribution of this dissertation is that the connection between sovereignty and borders is made explicit and a research framework – one that combines the role of borders for geopolitical, material, and societal sovereignty with a centre-periphery analysis of what these roles are perceived to be – is developed to examine this connection, which could be useful to the study of any kind of border policy change.

The second contribution is more specifically directed towards theory development in relation to the theory of border politics as 'sovereignty bargains' on the part of the state. As discussed above, there is a potential tension between the different functions that a border performs in the construction of sovereignty, as challenges to the border can take many forms, which call for opposing strategies of open or closed borders. The idea of sovereignty bargains is that states choose to prioritise one dimension of sovereignty over another, which explains why they sometimes pursue open borders despite major cross-border differences. However, as the empirical analysis in this study will show, states themselves do not necessarily perceive a trade-off between different aspects of sovereignty when opening a border. Rather, potential trade-offs when opening borders are mitigated within a border discourse, in which sovereignty objectives are not seen as conflicting but as cumulative and jointly reinforcing. The analysis shows that, rather than compromising one dimension over the gain of another, the introduction of local visa freedom was a strategy to strengthen all three dimensions of sovereignty. This does not negate the hypothesis that states sometimes bargain between these dimensions, but it suggests that there are different possible relations between different dimensions of sovereignty. As well as being mutually competing, different sovereignty motives can be understood as mutually reinforcing, as is the case here.

The second theoretical contribution this study makes is that it takes seriously the relationship between central and local levels within a state as part of understanding open borders. Although multi-level or centre-periphery relations are often part of theoretical frameworks for analysing borders, they are rarely the centre of attention for empirical investigations, which often focus either on the political relations between states sharing a border or on

the local cross-border interactions that make up the everyday border practices.

Finally, this study makes an empirical contribution to the research on processes of governing borders in general and to the research on this particular region in particular. In this particular case, the analysis shows that motives along all three dimensions of sovereignty were represented as mutually reinforcing, and there was an overall agreement between Norway's centre and periphery with regard to what role this border should have.

Outline of the Dissertation

This thesis is divided into two parts. Following this introduction to the research problem and the main arguments, Chapter Two presents the focal case for study and provides a more detailed background of the border between Norway and Russia, as well as a description of how the *grenseboerbevis*, the permit that gives holders permission to cross the Norwegian-Russian border without a visa, works. The second part of Chapter Two presents a (chronological) review of how Norwegian policies towards this border have been analysed in previous academic studies and discusses how my analysis of the *grenseboerbevis* contributes to this research. Chapter Three examines the two overarching theoretical problems that have been introduced in this introductory chapter: first, the question of how and why sovereignty and borders are interlinked and how sovereignty can be unbundled into different dimensions; and second, why both state-level and local-level perspectives on what the border should be are important for the connection between borders and sovereignty. From this, the theoretical framework that will structure the analysis in Part II is derived, and the chapter closes with a summary of my theoretical framework. Chapter Four concludes the first part of the thesis with a discussion of the research design, the choice and collection of materials to be included in the analysis, and an outline of the methodological considerations I have made in the empirical analysis.

Part II of the thesis is divided into four chapters, the first three of which contain the empirical analysis of the focal case. Chapter Five analyses the geopolitical dimension, Chapter Six focuses on the material dimension, and Chapter Seven examines on the societal dimension. Each of these chapters analyses a dimension of sovereignty in relation to the *grenseboerbevis* from the perspectives of both the Norwegian state (the centre) and the borderlands (the periphery). The objective of each of these chapters is to determine the arguments in the public discourse relating to this policy. The motives, risks, opportunities, and challenges of implementing a visa-free zone for the centre and the periphery are identified and compared. Chapter Eight starts with a summary of the findings from Chapters 5–7, and then the answers to the empirical research questions are discussed. Finally, Chapter Eight restates

the research questions and summarises the findings of the study. Conclusions drawn and their implications for further research are then outlined.

2. Case Presentation: Situating the *Grenseboerbevis* in the Norwegian-Russian Border Context

The specific policy that is the subject of this thesis, the Norwegian-Russian local border traffic permit, in Norwegian called *grenseboerbevis*, must be understood in relation to the history of border politics in the area. This chapter has two main purposes, the first of which is to situate the introduction of a local border traffic permit in its political-historical context and describe the details of what the *grenseboerbevis* entails. To this end, the first three sections of the present chapter will 1) situate the case in relation to the Barents region, 2) detail the regulations of the border permit, and 3) discuss this border in relation to its European Union context. The second objective of the chapter is to situate my study of the *grenseboerbevis* within the context of previous and current research about Norwegian-Russian border relations. In doing so, particular attention is given to how previous research has characterised sovereignty strategies in Norwegian policies towards this border since the beginning of the 1990s until now. Further, I will discuss how my research is informed by, and contributes to, this research.

The Norwegian-Russian Border in the Barents Region

The border between Norway and Russia can be said to represent a meeting point of two very different state systems, with different historical experiences, religions, languages, and culture. Even though it has a rather peripheral location, seen from a European perspective, this border region is the target of political strategies, the extent of which attracts much scholarly interest, mostly as part of a perspective that emphasises the development of the *Barents Euro-Arctic Region* within the larger discourse on cross-border regionalisation and the effects it has on local community and identity (Aure 2011; Espíritu and Viken 2010; Joenniemi and Sergunin 2013; Viken, Granås, and Nyseth 2008; Zimmerbauer 2013).[4] The introduction of a local border traffic permit must be understood in the context of this region-building process.

[4] Part of the Barents region strategy is also the funding of a research institute located in Kirkenes; just as there is extensive research on region-building due to political efforts to

In 1993, the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR, or simply the Barents Region) was established as an agreement on cooperation between Norway, Finland, Russia, and Sweden.[5] The Barents region is both an intergovernmental and a sub-state entity, given that it is organised around both the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (an intergovernmental organisation consisting of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia) and the Barents regional council, consisting of 13 county-level governments in these four countries. The Barents Secretariat and the Barents Institute (a research institute connected to the University of Tromsø, specialising in research on border regions, especially in the Barents area) are both located in Kirkenes and, by their existence, exemplify the extent to which this municipality is not only part of the Norwegian state but also, in many ways, part of a larger region-building process.

Although the border permit can be seen as an element of Norway's overall strategy in the North, and possibly as a continuation of the Barents regionalisation process, it is something substantially different from the region-building project as a whole. While it is, in some respects, part of the larger context of cross-border regionalisation, it is both spatially more confined and legally further-reaching than the regionalisation process previously has been. The construction of a visa-free zone enables cross-border movement equally for residents on both sides of the border, within a formal legal framework, and therefore should be studied as a border policy in its own right. In contrast to the Barents region, which is largely a vessel for regional cooperation between states, local governments, and other organisations, the border permit has direct significance for citizens in the visa-free zone as it establishes a new legal category of belonging – the 'border resident' – as opposed to a more symbolical belonging to the Barents region.

On the Norwegian side, the border constitutes the eastern boundary of the municipality Sør-Varanger in Finnmark County. The largest town and municipal centre is Kirkenes, which is located within the thirty-kilometre limit of the visa-free zone. However, some smaller townships are located outside this range, leaving part of the municipality's inhabitants without the possibility of receiving a border permit. The municipality's slogan is 'Sør-Varanger – a boundary-breaking municipality',[6] which indicates the central role the border has in the local identity narrative. It is located 2,500 kilometres from

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construct regions, it can also be argued that research about regions helps create them (Gossas 2008). In fact, my own project is also made possible by region-focused funding from the Baltic Sea foundation. What role regional research plays in region-building processes is a research topic in itself but not the objective of this particular study. The extent of research on this particular border region became evident when my contact at the Barents institute expressed concern that local political representatives and elites are becoming interview-fatigued due to the extent of researchers' interest in their work.

[5] Declaration 'Cooperation in the Euro-Arctic Region', Conference of Foreign Ministers, Kirkenes 11 January 1993 (known as the 'Kirkenes declaration').

[6] 'Sør-Varanger – en grensesprengende kommune' in Norwegian.

the capital city Oslo; the nearest larger city, Murmansk, is 200 km away on the Russian side of the border, whereas the Russian towns Nikel and Zapolyarny are closer and within the 30 km limit. In this regard, Kirkenes and its municipality is really on the 'edge of the state' and much closer to its Russian neighbour cities than any larger Norwegian cities.

That its proximity to the border impacts the day-to-day life of Sør-Varanger's residents is perhaps self-evident, but to what extent it actually does so is a contested issue. A decade ago, Viken et al (2008) argued that the border-narrative at the time was part of an elite identity that mainly involved a small proportion of active 'border-crossers', whereas most people in the region were not particularly affected by their proximity to the border. The introduction of a border permit may change this, as crossing the border will become easier for people without official business in the border region. Furthermore, since the increase in cross-border movement results in a more visible presence of Russians in Kirkenes, even those who do not cross the border themselves are likely to notice the increasingly open border. Inhabitants of this region sometimes live on one side of the border and work on the other, and approximately ten per cent of the population in Sør-Varanger speak Russian as their mother tongue (Rogova 2009). Between Sør-Varanger municipality and Pechenga, the corresponding municipality on the Russian side, there is a joint agreement relating to cultural and educational cooperation (Sør-Varanger kommune 2011), which is renewed regularly and has been developed as the core of inter-municipal relations since 1972. Within the Norwegian state, this municipality holds a rather specific status as, in 1993, it was given the right to some foreign relation functions with regard to Russia.[7] As such, it is an example of the paradiplomatic functions that substate levels have been noted to take on (e.g. Keating 1999; Tatham 2013).

[7] Granted in the The Kirkenes Declaration in 1993, which also initiated the Barents region cooperation.

Figure 1. The Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

(Map source: the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland)

The ambition to construct a border-crossing identity in the Barents region may seem a little paradoxical, considering the importance that constructing a homogenous Norwegian identity has played historically. Norwegian policies in the 19th century saw several efforts to strengthen its national identity, through the language nationalism of 'new Norwegian' and the adoption of cultural traditions from 'distant valleys' by the urban middle class (Eriksen 1998, 128). Such efforts have been seen as means of establishing Norwegians as a unified people, serving to mark Norway as ethnically different from Denmark and Sweden while uniting the urban and rural populations (Eriksen 1998, 129). In addition, with regard to Norway's policies towards its periphery, the minority populations of Finnmark, in particular, were subjected to what is known as 'Norwegianisation policies' (Semb 2010, 101); through more or less forced methods, the Sami and Kven (Finnish) populations of the North were educated in Norwegian, with the intention of strengthening their connection and loyalties to the Norwegian state. Combined with the nationalism ideals of a homogenous population, Norwegianisation policies were used to assimilate minorities living in the northern border areas (Elenius et al. 2015, 212).

From the 1880s onwards, these minority policies also had a clear security ambition, as there was a fear that the Finnish minority would side with Russia-Finland in a conflict, whereas the Sami, who often had border-crossing lives and livelihoods, were seen as 'insecure citizens' (Selle et al. 2015, 44).

Grenseboerbevis: What is the legal agreement about?

The border policy studied in this thesis relates to the introduction of a new visa-regime that established a zone of visa-free travel for residents near the border on both sides. The following section outlines the formal and practical details of the *local border traffic permit* and the bilateral agreement that regulates it.[8] Although not a member of the European Union, Norway is part of the Schengen Agreement. The creation of a visa-free zone is carried out under EC Regulation 1931/2006, which establishes the right of Schengen members to make bilateral agreements about border zones with neighbours at Schengen's external borders. The EC Regulation establishes some minimum and maximum limitations to these bilateral agreements, but the final details are set on a case-by-case basis by the two states involved. In addition to the Norwegian-Russian border zone, there are eight other local border traffic regimes in place within the framework set up by the Schengen agreement.[9] However, the Norwegian-Russian agreement is the only such bilateral agreement where *neither* of the parties are members of the European Union, which is relevant in relation to the overarching question of how we should understand sovereignty in this case: the other border zones are implemented in EU member states that have already given over some of their decision-making power to the EU, but for Norway, being a Schengen member means adhering to rules that are decided in a context where one is not allowed a formal vote.[10]

The Schengen regulation, Article 3.3, defines local border traffic as:

[8] For a detailed summary and commentary on the Schengen local border traffic permit, see Peers (2007).

[9] 'Hungary-Ukraine in January 2008, Slovakia-Ukraine in September 2008, Poland-Ukraine in July 2009, and Romania-Moldova in October 2010. Only the Romania-Moldova agreement fully complies with the LBT Regulation' (European Commission 2011, 2). Other areas that have since entered into agreements are Latvia-Belarus, Poland-Russia (Kaliningrad), Latvia-Russia, and Romania-Ukraine.

[10] According to Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway is part of the Mixed Committee that discusses new Schengen rules, which are then adopted by the European Council (where Norway does not have a vote). Norway can then decide whether or not to implement these rules into Norwegian law, but they also have 'the right and the obligation to apply all the Schengen rules' (regjeringen.no 2013-08-21), which is somewhat ambiguous in terms of how much freedom there is for Norway within the agreement.

> the regular crossing of an external land border by border residents in order to stay in a border area, for example for social, cultural or substantiated economic reasons, or for family reasons.[11]

Article 4 (c) states that a local border traffic permit can be obtained by:

> individuals who are not considered to be a threat to public policy, internal security, public health or the international relations of any of the Member States, and in particular where no alert has been issued in Member States' national databases for the purposes of refusing entry on the same grounds.

The agreement between Norway and Russia follows the above paragraphs closely, but, on some other points, there are stricter rules in their agreement than in the Schengen regulation. Most notably, while the EC regulation limits the duration of stay at each crossing to a maximum of 90 days, it has been limited to only 15 days in the Norwegian-Russian agreement. On the other hand, after 15 days, one can cross the border and then come back as often as one likes, as long as the permit is valid. Another difference is that the Schengen Agreement, Article 3 §2, defines the border area as no more than 30 km from the border, but it allows *for up to 50 km* if there is a local administrative district that extends outside the 30 km limit. In the Norwegian-Russian agreement, the zone is limited to 30 km on the Norwegian side, which means that parts of the Sør-Varanger municipality are located outside the zone, which prevents some of the municipality's inhabitants from applying for a border permit.

Negotiations for the decision to implement a specific local border traffic permit for all Norwegian and Russian citizens living within a certain distance of the Norwegian-Russian border was first initiated in 2008, and the agreement was signed by the foreign ministers of each country in 2010. From the perspective of the Norwegian government, the permit was part of an overall strategy for the Northern areas.[12] At the same time, as the agreement to open up the land border was made, another agreement that determined the Norwegian-Russian maritime border was signed. The maritime border agreement settled a dispute at sea that had been unresolved for 40 years, meaning that, at the same time that the land border was reconstructed as a zone, the border at sea was fixed for the first time.[13]

In 2012, the new visa regime was put into practice, meaning that residents within the boundaries of the visa-free zone are now able to apply for a border permit, which allows them to pass across the border without applying for a visa and without stamps in their passport. Although stamps in one's passport may seem like a small thing, for those who pass on a regular basis, this

[11] Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
[12] Det kongelige justis- og politidepartementet, Prop. 1 S (2009-2010), 103.
[13] Stoltenberg 2nd Government, Press release no 118/10: 2010-09-15.

means that they can now do so without running out of space in their passport and consequently having to renew it often, something that used to be a costly and time-consuming process.

Apart from personal information, such as the name and address of the holder, the border permit also contains biometric information (i.e. a picture and a fingerprint). The permit can be given to residents of the border zone if they comply with restrictions and have a motive to cross the border on a regular basis.[14] The permit does not allow for travel outside of the limit of the border zone, and it is not a work permit.

From Norway's point of view, what has happened with regard to its own citizens is that those who live within 30 km of the Russian border have been given *border resident* status, which, in practice, extends their freedom of movement 30 km into Russian territory. With regard to its own border, it correspondingly shifts the limit 30 km into its own territory, symbolically establishing a border within a border, marked only by a sign at the side of the road. At this limit, there are no border controls, and although it is illegal to travel any further into the country, monitoring that sort of trespass would be a difficult task, to say the least.[15]

The English name *local border traffic permit* is actually rather different when compared to the Norwegian *grenseboerbevis*, which is made up of grense=border, boer=inhabitant, and bevis=evidence; in this sense, the meaning reads something more along the lines of the holder being a border-inhabitant, i.e. someone living at the border (in the borderlands), the emphasis thus being on residency. In comparison, the English name emphasises the function of the permit, which is to allow the holder to travel across the border, with the Russian translation corresponding to the English. The name *grenseboerbevis* has a historical meaning, as it was also used for a type of domestic passport that people were required to carry during German occupation in World War II.[16] Back then, it was designed to stop people from crossing the border; now, it is intended to allow people to do just that.

Besides the historical significance of the name, it is also interesting that the Norwegian word emphasises the residency of the holders, without differ-

[14] These regulations include the stipulation that one should have been a legal resident within the zone for at least three years before applying, but one does not need to be a Norwegian or a Russian citizen. According to Øyvind Nordsletten, Norway's Consul General in Murmansk (telephone interview 130424), the reasons one can give for why one wants to obtain a border permit are very loosely defined, the intention being that anyone should be able to get it without any precise motive. This is different from regular visas, where more specific reasons for the visit are required.

[15] Following up on this would be a very interesting task because of the complicated system of control this entails – the local police are responsible for this, but that would mean internal border controls.

[16] I have also seen mentioned a Norwegian-Finnish *grenseboerbevis* introduced in 1983 (NOU 1997:4, 69), but I have not been able to find any reference to this in research or in connection to the current policy, but at least we know that the name for it has historic precedence.

entiating between Norwegians and Russians. 'Local border traffic permit' and '*grenseboerbevis*' thus embody different meanings, which are relevant when thinking about the latter as giving border residents a specific status: one that can be associated with 'dwelling place' and 'home', thus having a symbolic link to questions of identity and belonging. On the other hand, while the permit establishes those who live there as 'border residents' and allows them a more open border, this does not, to any great extent, change the nature of the physical boundary: according to the border commissioner in Kirkenes, it is as heavily guarded today as it was during the Cold War period, perhaps even more so, given the help of sophisticated surveillance techniques.[17]

[17] Interview 131113 with Ivan Sakserud, Grensekommissarie.

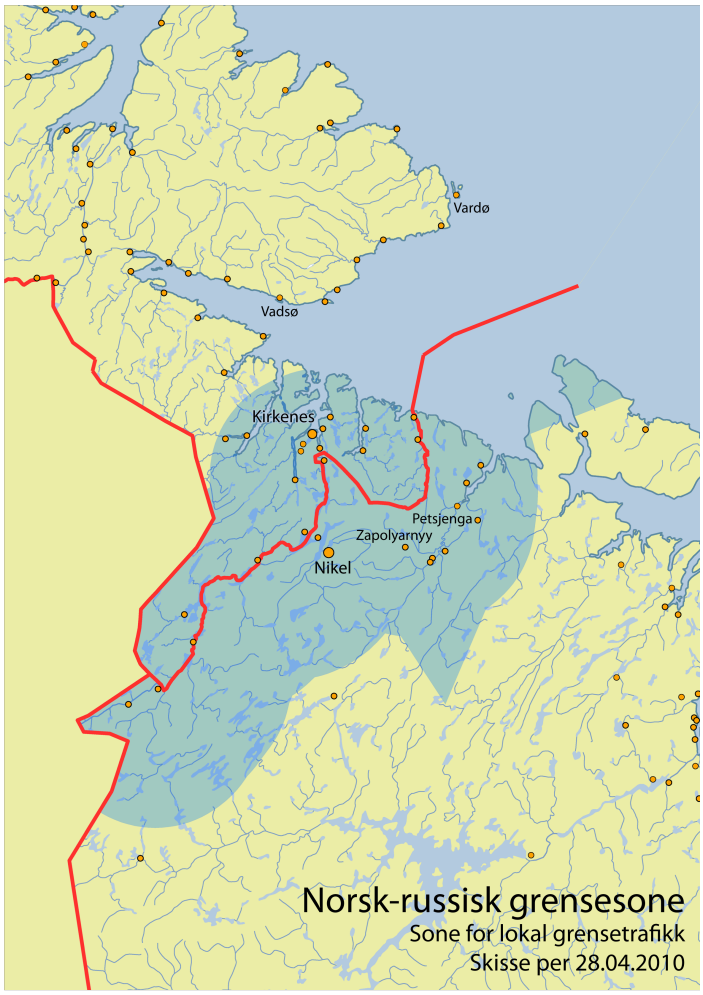

Figure 2. Official map from the Norwegian government detailing the 30 km border zone.

(Map source: Regjeringen.no 2010)

The external borders of the EU

As Norway is a Schengen signatory state, its border with Russia is also part of the external border of the European Union. Therefore, understanding why Norway pursued this policy to open the border is part of the larger puzzle of how the outer borders of the EU are constructed. Although much of the literature on the opening of European borders has dealt with cross-border region-building within the EU (Blatter 2004; Johnson 2009; Perkmann 2003, 2007), Norway has not really been included in this literature. As more attention is directed towards the external borders of the EU, the reconfiguration of the border between Finland and Russia has been covered quite extensively (Laine 2007; Laube and Roos 2010; Paasi 1999; Prokkola 2013). In this context, the Norwegian border with Russia presents an interesting case. Although neither Norway nor Russia are members of the European Union, Norway is a Schengen member, and thus its border with Russia is a *de facto* external EU border when it comes to the movement of people. The borders of the European Union are complex: while internal integration has served to open internal borders between member states, this development has often been juxtaposed with increased control at its external borders, e.g. Frontex and 'Fortress Europe'. At the same time, the external boundary has always been characterised by uncertainty and expansion, in the sense that the number of member states continue to expand and is in a constant state of re-negotiation (Bartolini 2005).

Because of its complexity, the external boundary of the EU presents a significant challenge to scholars who aim to draw conclusions about it. Malcolm Anderson has even argued that 'defining this frontier in cultural, historical or geographical terms is virtually impossible' (2010, 243). Whether the borders of the Schengen Agreement represent a wall, a boundary, or a zone depends a great deal on what kind of passport you hold, if any. Previous research has shown that, far from a single coherent border strategy, the organisation of the external border of the European Union has been highly fragmented and diverse, and the outcome in different sections of the external border is contingent upon a combination of modes of governance, functions, and degrees of openness (Berg and Ehin 2006; Browning and Joenniemi 2008; Kononenko 2005). The result of the EU's external border policies, 'is a border strategy characterized by internal contradictions and a lack of coherence' (Berg and Ehin 2006, 54).

Three policy paradigms that all have different implications for the organisation of the external borders of the EU have been identified: *cohesion* policies that aim for the removal of borders; *security* policies that aim to secure and control the external border; and *expansion* policies that aim for the integration of neighbouring states (2006, 57). At least the first two of these are, to some extent, contradictory. Berg and Ehin (2006, 62) suggest that whether the practices resulting from these paradigms will have de-bordering or re-

bordering functions depends on their context and implementation. On a similar note, it has been argued that the European Neighbourhood Policy is an attempt to reconcile 'border confirming' with 'border transcending' objectives, i.e. these polices aim to balance security with openness (Dimitrovova 2008). This means that any general conclusion about the external borders of the European Union is difficult to draw, beyond noting their complex and multi-faceted construction of being simultaneously open and closed.

The creation of the Schengen local border traffic regulation has been described as having the somewhat ironic purpose of facilitating 'the movement of certain types of commercial and human traffic that the securitisation of external borders has impeded' (Samers 2004, 34). From what previous research has shown, we can expect that the contradiction between security and openness objectives will also be present in this border discourse.

As a country without European Union membership, but part of Schengen, Norway both exemplifies and complicates this picture. Norway represents a liminal state, simultaneously external to the EU while upholding some of the internal EU policies towards other states. As a contribution to existing research, this study of the Norwegian border adds further empirical insight into how a non-EU Schengen member balances the tension between the cohesion, security, and expansion of the European Union with the national interests of openness, security, and autonomy. Assuming that all borders have shared functions of delimiting territoriality and that how these functions play out is highly contingent upon context, case studies of each 'line to zone' agreement are needed, as well as a shared analytical framework that would allow for structured comparison of their similarities and differences. I propose such a framework in this thesis. With the choice of focusing on a border that is part of the EU's 'external frontier' via the Schengen agreement but is external to the EU itself, the study of the Norwegian-Russian border permit will contribute one piece of the complex puzzle that is this border.

The *Grenseboerbevis* in Relation to Previous Research about the Norwegian-Russian Border

Due to its strategic importance and politically significant location, the border between Norway and Russia has received a great deal of academic attention from scholars in different fields over the years.[18] Questions in focus for previous studies of this border region are broad, ranging from the role of the border for geopolitics in the North and the security strategies of the Norwegian government to the development of cross-border relations in the post-Soviet era and the possible development of a shared identity in the border

[18] For an early example, see Lloyd (1954) on the historical evolution of the boundary line on the ground and its economic implications.

region. The purpose of this section is to identify the main findings of previous research into this border and to outline the contribution the present study will make to the literature. The review of previous research is organised chronologically, starting from studies of the early post-Cold War politics of the 1990s, before moving on to discuss the research focusing on regionalism and the role of the EU in the first decade of the 2000s and then reviewing the themes in studies from 2010 and onwards.

The 1990's academic debate: The Barents region as a security strategy or post-security issue?

The motives and strategic importance behind the creation of the Barents region were questions that political geography and international relations researchers sought to answer during the 1990s. In this sense, was the Norwegian initiative to create regional cooperation around the border a geopolitical security strategy aimed at facilitating relations with Russia, or should it rather be seen as a move away from the security politics of the Cold War period and onto a more peaceful situation? The main ambition of this section is to sketch out these two positions and end with a discussion of how they can be seen in relation to the case at hand.

In his study of the political initiative taken by the Norwegian government to establish the Barents region, Eriksson (1995) argues that the project should primarily be seen as a security strategy of the Norwegian government at the time. Rather than seeking to maintain the status quo of the Soviet period, Norway sought to develop border relations with Russia with 'predictable change' as the primary objective. In his analysis, Eriksson defines security as 'freedom from threats' and argues that such an aim is pursued through seeking to balance out or contain that which is perceived as a threat (1995, 260); accordingly, the object to be secured is the political community's collective identity and political autonomy. Eriksson argues that security should not be treated as a single-issue subject but rather as a dimension of politics that can be pursued through policies relating to a variety of policy areas (e.g. the environment, economy, culture, and military). That security can be understood as a dimension of politics is not only a matter of academic analysis but also a political strategy that can be adopted by any government with regard to its borders, which is what Eriksson argues the Barents initiative was for the Norwegian government at the time. Although from a different perspective and with a stronger emphasis on security, Eriksson's reasoning is similar to the approach to sovereignty taken in this thesis, in that politics is understood as multi-dimensional and that policies from different policy areas can affect the outcome of what the border represents. Furthermore, and in contrast to much of the region-building literature in general (studies of both this border and elsewhere), Eriksson sees region-building in itself as a way to

secure the border and maintain sovereignty, which I argue is an important observation that should be added to any consideration of whether increased border openness undermines sovereignty.

Eriksson's research from 1995, at the start of the Barents project, points to some interesting conclusions that will be reflected upon in this thesis, some twenty years later. From the perspective of the Norwegian government, Eriksson contends that the local community was seen as an instrument of national foreign policy (1995, 268), and foreign policy was seen as a question of relations between states and also between *societies* (1995, 270), that is, the relation between peoples. Eriksson identifies the Barents region as a top-down project and observes that the Norwegian government intended for the Barents region to be seen as a 'return to "historical relationships"' (1995, 273). For this purpose, 'Norwegian historians were assigned to write reports on the common history of the Euro-Arctic area' with the explicit objective 'to legitimize the Barents region as a return to pre-Soviet, or even *pre-state,* relations' (1995, 273).[19] Eriksson concludes that the Barents region can be understood as a response to new transnational problems that needed transnational solutions and that, although the state is the core unit of sovereignty, other non-state political communities, such as the provinces and the Sami, may 'have something to do' with security in this regard (1995, 281).

Others do not necessarily agree with the view of the Barents region as a security project. For example, Joenniemi (1997, 124–25) argues that 'as high politics has changed its key, there is less concern about security; consequently, themes related to centrality and distance, participation, and identity, have taken the front seat'. In this context, the creation of the Barents region was intended to replace 'the statist, security-oriented' imagery of East-West relations in the Cold War with new interpretations that focused on local needs and civilian relations (1997, 126). Referring to the use of pre-state historical narratives (i.e. the time before this space was contained within the sharp territorial boundaries of the state) prevalent in the Barents discourse, Joenniemi argues that the 'images employed advocate a variegated, non-statist regional geography. In contrast to the previous period, they provide otherness with a positive reading' (1997, 126). Similar to Eriksson, Joenniemi takes note of the top-down character of the initiative but also argues that, through the involvement of the European Community and local level actors, there is a 'fertile mix of top-down and bottom-up elements' albeit with a potential for centre-periphery tension (1997, 135; cf. Landsem 2013 on the role of local actors in the development of the Barents project). More importantly, in contrast to Eriksson, Joenniemi argues that the focus on issues

[19] Another project was also initiated in Sweden, when a book on the history of the Barents region was undertaken by the Olof Palme International Centre and the Norrbotten County Administration Board in 2001, resulting in *The Barents Region: A Transnational History of Subarctic Northern Europe* (Elenius et al. 2015).

such as economy and identity was not a new way to approach security issues; rather, this focus simply bypassed traditional military-security thinking on the region:

> The debate about regionality in the North has not been about security to any significant degree. It seems that this theme has been avoided; instead, other de-politicized, only indirectly security-related themes have been brought to the forefront. The strategy seems to consist of *de-securitization* rather than attempts at alternative or complementary conceptualizations (Joenniemi 1997, 143).

Eriksson and Joenniemi thus seem to have rather different understandings of security objectives in the Barents region (in terms of Norway's position vis-à-vis Russia) at the beginning of the post-Cold War period, which mainly have to do with what conceptualisation of security each author adheres to: economic development and identity-building as security strategies or as a way to bypass security thinking as ends in themselves. In comparison, Carrillo (1998) argues that the Barents project should be understood as a security-building project using the idea of 'collaborative security' (i.e. security through mutual trust and understanding): 'Though security itself is not mentioned … [the Barents initiative] is a clear security-building project that embraces the new multi-dimensional security concept' (1998, 41). In addition to the security debate above, Carrillo argues that there is another important motive for the Norwegian government, namely the domestic policy strategy to strengthen the economy of the northern regions (1998, 32). This is important as it highlights the centre-periphery perspective of Norwegian policies toward this border; in this sense, such policies are not only about the relationship with Russia but are also about domestic (economic) cohesion.

A further elaboration on the role of identity as part of the Barents region security strategy comes from Hønneland (1998), who considers region-building to be a security strategy of the Norwegian government and, more specifically, focuses on ambitions to construct shared identities across the border as a security strategy. Drawing on Eriksson (1995), he argues that overlapping identities in the border region can be seen as desirable from a security perspective: 'following the region-building approach, an urgent challenge for the decision-makers lies in making the populations of the different states in the region feel that they have something in common with their neighbours across the border' (Hønneland 1998, 280). In studying Norwegian media discourse, Hønneland observes that, a few years after the initiation of the Barents project, there was an increased presence of negative accounts in the Norwegian national media, often stressing the difficulties of cooperation and a cultural gap, which took over from the initial enthusiasm surrounding the project (Hønneland 1998, 289). Thus, in the late 90s, there

were developments both towards and away from the construction of a regional Barents identity.

Although the focal case in this study is not the Barents region as such, the creation of the border permit policy can be understood as a continuation of this strategy, pertaining to the border relations between Norway and Russia. I adapt an understanding of sovereignty that is closer to Eriksson's or Carrillo's than Joenniemi's, as I argue that, while economic and identity themes can very well be seen as security strategies, they are not necessarily so. This is a question still open for empirical investigation and one that this study intends to examine.

Research in the early 2000s: Prospects for regionalisation?

In the early 2000s, academic inquiry into relations at the Norwegian-Russian border moved away from questions about security to focus on issues such as the prospects for the Barents region of becoming something more than a political construct. If identity construction was previously studied as part of a security strategy, more emphasis was placed on the potential for the development of shared identities across the border as a question of region-building beyond a security strategy. This section highlights some of the ways that regionalisation and cross-border relations were studied in the 2000s, in particular focusing on how questions of identity construction were analysed in the academic discourse.

In a discussion of the developments of region-building in the North, Browning (2003, 50) points out that the regional focus of initiatives such as the Barents region, away from traditional security and sovereignty thinking, has the 'potential for liberating politics from Cold War "us-them" suppositions'. In Norway, as in other parts of Europe, there has been a long history of constructing Russia as 'Europe's other', where European identity is defined against what it is not (Jensen 2017; Neumann 1999; Nielsen and Zaikov 2012). Even though there was this shift in political focus after the fall of the Soviet Union, Browning notes that Russia is still often constructed as different from the 'West' within discourses of the Barents region and that Russia is only 'treated as a subject to the extent that it conforms to non-negotiable Western (European) values implicit in the new region-building' (Browning 2003, 52). Because of this continued distance towards Russia, Browning contends that 'Russia finds itself at the lower end' of a hierarchical relation, and, rather than being an equal partner in relation to Norway, Russia is depicted as an 'object to be acted upon' or rescued by Western development (2003, 48). Thereby, the reproduction of an us-them separation continued at the turn of the millennium, and, in contrast to how Russia is seen from a security perspective, where Norway is the weaker part in this discourse, in terms of values and identity, the roles are reversed.

Approaching the identity question from a more optimistic standpoint, Nielsen (2001) takes issue with the claim that the Barents region is merely a political construct, instead arguing that there are good historical grounds for a shared space in the region.[20] Drawing a historic timeline from long before the area was subject to state-boundary divisions, Nielsen (2001, 165), argues that the presence of the Sami and established trade relations in the North to some extent postponed nationalisation, but that, even in the nationalising projects of the 19th century, the 'border treaties to a certain degree made provisions' for cross-border activities, such as moving reindeer across the border and fishing, leaving the border ambiguous in its delimiting capacity. Nielsen (2001, 171) further examines how the early fishing industry was, to some extent, borderless and that the extensive trade in the region resulted in the pidgin language 'Russenorsk', which indicates that there were good grounds for mutual understanding and communication. However, Nielsen goes on to point out that national identities still remained separate, which suggests that relations in the past were more those of good neighbours than of a specific regional identity.

Nevertheless, Nielsen's (2001, 180) argument is that there are historical roots for a regionalisation process and that the history of a shared past is 'a valuable asset' that may help improve relations in the Barents region by focusing on collective memories rather than perceived differences. Regardless of whether one takes issue with the idea that the Barents region is only a political construction, it is clear that the past has been used in the creation of the Barents region as a political and cultural entity. Following this reasoning, the analysis in this thesis takes into account if, and in that case how, references to history have been used in the border permit discourse.

Moving away from research on the political motives for the Barents region, Stenvoll (2002) examined how the opening of the border in the early 1990s resulted in the discursive framing and branding of Russian women as prostitutes in the Norwegian national media during in the first decade of post-Cold War. Stenvoll (2002, 154) argues that the representations of cross-border prostitution in the media contributed to the stigmatisation of all women from Russia (something also found by Aure 2011) and that these representations are then used to legitimise the request for stricter border controls. This kind of 'othering' of the border-crossing neighbour presents open borders as a threat to societal stability. The study of the border permit discourse

[20] Optimistic here in terms of seeing the possible development of a shared regional identity founded on a mutual history. In any case, Nielsen (2001) seems clearly in favour of the development of such an identity and that it goes beyond what is a result of the Barents project. I do not really see what difference it would make; Nielsen's account can definitely be used to further the political identity-building project. There is a normative issue here that has to do with a) if one favours the development of such an identity and b) what motive there is for doing so. My objective is not to take a position on this topic; however, being aware of it is important to understand the different positions that may be visible in the debate.

will contribute to the on-going development of understanding of regionalisation and sovereignty in the North, and this question, about if and how Russians are still being constructed as the 'other', will be a component of the empirical analysis.

The border between Norway and Russia has been given extensive academic attention since the end of the Cold War. In the first decade after the Cold War ended, this region was given particular attention through studies into the creation of the Barents region as a security strategy of the Norwegian government or as a move away from security thinking into the possible construction of a cross-border region. Potential challenges were identified that point to geopolitical and societal security dimensions of sovereignty, but not much attention was given to the local context and consequences of the slightly more open border. Later on in the 2000s, though, the local border community became the focal point of academic research, as we will see in the following section.

Research developments after 2008: A focus on the local level

Taking a step away from analysis of the security and region-building aspects of the Barents region, the Norwegian-Russian border and its increased openness has in the last decade been the focus of studies of the local context, e.g. the potential 'twin-city' development between border towns Kirkenes and Pechenga (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011, 2013).[21] Viken, Granås and Nyseth (2008) investigate the extent to which changes in social, economic, cultural, and political practices in the post-Cold War period have influenced the identity of Kirkenes. They study the changes that have taken place in terms of economic practice, in particular the shift in economic activities/culture from production to consumption and the increased importance of the service sector, as Kirkenes has developed into a tourist destination and a node for politics in the North. They argue that the development of the city and its economic growth is dominated by a narrative that accredits the open border for these changes, in addition to suggesting that Kirkenes may be developing into an 'interdependent borderland' (Viken, Granås, and Nyseth 2008, 32). They also argue that border-crossing practices are primarily the activities of a 'Barents elite' and the idea of Kirkenes as the capital of the Barents region is the 'master-signifier in the rhetoric of the Barents elite' (2008, 35), perhaps with little or no impact on the everyday lives of the majority of people there. However, in a survey of attitudes towards what they label 'Russification' among residents of Kirkenes, Espíritu and Viken (2010) found that residents hold rather positive attitudes toward the 'Barentsification', refer-

[21] For a thorough discussion of the differences between various conceptualisations of cities near borders as border-, binational-, transborder-, twin-, or border-crossing cities, see Buursink (2001).

ring to the attention Kirkenes was receiving due to 'high north' politics. Moreover, they also found that 46 percent of the survey respondents were 'very likely' to travel more to Russia with a permanent visa (Espíritu and Viken 2010, 149), which indicates that cross-border travel might become less connected to the elite if visa arrangements were made more accessible.

Another perspective on the border in the local context is presented by Schimanski (2014), who argues that the growing number of creative representations of this border and the arctic both contribute to, and challenge, the dominant geopolitical-economic discourse of Kirkenes' borderscape (2014, 16).[22] Schimanski identifies the presence of artists and researchers in Kirkenes as potentially alternative spheres to the hegemonic political-economic discourses, while also noting that:

> Social constructivist international relations scholars played a role in forming this new, culturally orientated Northern policy from a local perspective, border art does have a role in international relations, confirmed by the channelling of funding through the Norwegian Barents Secretariat (2014, 6).

It is also important to take note of the role of research itself, because regardless of whether we as researchers intend to affect our research subjects, the accumulation of attention given to a specific region contributes, in itself, to the construction of said region. This is not unique for the Barents region, as other regions have also been aided in coming into existence and legitimised by being defined as regions by the research carried out on them (e.g. Westholm 2008).[23]

Aure (2011) examines the opening of the Norwegian-Russian border through the relations between locals and Russian migrant workers in a border town (near Kirkenes) and asks how the border is being reproduced though social divisions. In particular, she focuses on how intersections of class, gender,

[22] A borderscape, as a concept, is defined by Schimanski (2014, 2) as 'the border, disseminated or diffused across space, defined by what it involves', which is in line with a constructivist understanding of the border not only as the formal/physical boundary but also as the practices it involves. Schimanskis' (2014) argument is that the border is also made up by representations/reactions to it in other places. This definition comes very close to my understanding of how borders work, but I maintain that the concept of a 'border' in itself contains both the physical presence of the border *and* its symbolical and discursive representations, whereas the borderscape concept focuses primarily on the non-spatial aspect of a border.

[23] This thesis is also, to some extent, part of the political-academic ambition to construct regions by creating funds specifically for research into that specific region (The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies). My research is part of a reseach project on borders in the Baltic-Barents region (Berglund, Lundén, and Strandbrink 2015), and I was able to conduct my research in Kirkenes thanks to the Barents Institute, a research institute located in Kirkenes and funded by the Norwegian government, both for which I am, of course, very grateful. As researchers (or artists, as in Schimanski's study), we are interested in the developments of social life and/or its political organisation, and yet, as such, we also become part of the very thing we wish to observe or portray, so that any research about the 'Barents region' inevitably also becomes part of the *creation* of that region.

and ethnicity are produced in these relations. One of her observations is the idea among Norwegian employers and workers that Russians, being 'Northerners', are more like 'us' in that they are as reliable and hard-working as Norwegian Northerners, with Southerners as the contrasting 'Other'. Aure's (2011) findings present a rather sharp contrast to some of the more optimistic ideas about regional integration, as she observes attitudes that stereotype Russian women as suspected prostitutes and Russian men as poor, criminals, or frightening.[24] Her main argument is that the border continues to be important, not only through its location is but also though the relations between Russians and Norwegians in day-to-day interactions.

Olsen (2014) studies how the Russian language has become more part of daily life in Kirkenes. Some previous negative experiences of Russian speakers in Kirkenes have now changed, and people in Olsen's study, which focuses on Norweigans and Russians living in Kirkenes and Alta who have border-crossing experience, have a 'positive attitude towards Russians and Russian language and culture' (2014, 18). Olsen's (rather bold) conclusion is that, because of the extensive practice of Russian in everyday life, 'Kirkenes can be said to have two languages functioning side by side' (2014, 16). Although not to the extent that a 'Russenorsk' language had developed (cf. Nielsen 2001), Olsen still found that Norwegians in the region seem to have become more positive towards the Russian language (e.g. as a merit for employment). In contrast to the situation in the 1990s, Russian women who move to Kirkenes are now more eager to teach their children their mother tongue (2014, 20), a finding that echoes Rogrova (2009), who also argues that the Russian population in Kirkenes now maintains stronger connections with Russia than what was common in the early post-Cold War period.

Another development after 2010: Back to geopolitics

In addition to the academic literature that looks closely at cross-border relations at the local level, there has been a return to the questions of geopolitical security and tension in regard to the relations between Norway and Russia. A number of studies focus on the political discourse of Russian 'High North' politics, pointing to an increased militarisation in policy and discourse (Konyshev and Sergunin 2012); internal Russian debate and criticism towards the maritime delimitation agreement with Norway (Hønneland 2014); the tension between viewing the Arctic as a zone of international cooperation or as national interest (Wilson Rowe and Blakkisrud 2014); and paradiplomacy strategies of the Russian border regions (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2014). The Norwegian official discourse of High North politics has also been analysed and contrasted with the corresponding discourse on the Russian side. In this sense, Jensen and Skedsmo (2010, 447) find that there were

[24] This stigmatisation and, to some extent, changing attitudes towards Russian border-crossers have also been noted by Stenvoll (2002) and Olsen (2014).

shared themes in the discourse around energy, security, economy and the environment, in which Norway takes a strategic position as a 'small state and big player' with the aim 'to leave as much room for manoeuvring as possible' (448).

In another study, Zimmerbauer (2013) looks at how the Barents region has been institutionalised as a region in the public discourse by actors involved in Barents regional cooperation and in representations of the Barents project in the Finnish media. Zimmerbauer's conclusion lies somewhere in-between the two different positions that can be discerned within the academic literature on the Barents project – as either a geopolitical security project or a project of de-securitisation – in arguing that it has 'become institutionalized as a manifestation of both business-oriented regionalist aspirations and international geopolitics' (2013, 90). He also emphasises that the Barents region has a vague territorial shape, with its external boundaries being very soft and porous (as they are internal to each member state), but that its internal boundaries (i.e. the borders between each respective state) still remain firm, which hinders 'everyday actions inside the Barents region' (Zimmerbauer 2013, 98). Further, Zimmerbauer argues that, in public representations of the Barents region, the 'soft, permeable borders [of the Barents region as a whole] are thus represented as more solid, and the hard borders [of the states] as more porous' (2013, 101). If any regional identity has developed, it is in terms of administrative identity and regional branding rather than as cultural identity among its inhabitants (Zimmerbauer 2013, 2016).

This observation has some implications as to what to expect in the analysis of the border permit, as representations of the border in this discourse may show the same tendency to depict the border as more open that it actually is; in this sense, as long as we keep in mind that it is more a question of openness on different axes, what Zimmerbauer (2013) argues is that the legal restrictions, as well as popular affiliations, are not as open as discursive representations.

Conclusion

Research on the border between Norway and Russia has primarily been carried out within the broader framework of studying the Barents region rather than focusing on specific policies concerning the border. Although this border is at the centre of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, an organisation that also includes Sweden and Finland, and has become institutionalised in various ways through the establishment of different cooperative agencies and organisations, the Barents regional cooperation has been more about facilitating cross-border cooperation and cultural and economic exchange than facilitating cross-border movement and visa regime change. Therefore, the local border permit represents something else, something different, and an

analysis of it will provide new empirical information and insight for those interested in the region-building project as a whole.

Previous research on this particular region has covered issues of local identity, othering, economic development, and security policy strategies. Although some acknowledge the importance of both levels, most of these studies focus on either 'high level' politics or cross-border activities in the local context. My contribution to the literature is an analysis of the centre-periphery discourse on the same issue so as to bring together what happens at the local and national levels, not as separate processes but as interlinked, and not to focus on the particular aspects of identity, security, or economy, but to focus on each in relation to the other as different parts of the same (sovereignty) puzzle. Furthermore, the *grenseboerbevis* is a new invention in this region, which takes border opening one step further, and rather than being an 'elite' project, it applies equally to all people on both sides of the border (within the given distance). The *grenseboerbevis* is thus something qualitatively different than previous aspects of border policy, such as the creation of the Barents' region or municipal friendship agreements, and, as such, it merits analysis in itself, which is the aim of this study.

3. The Politics of Borders

In the introductory chapter, it was argued that Norway's pursuit of a more open border with Russia could not be explained by regular macro-level explanations of why borders are open between states, as the cross-border differences are significant. Instead it was proposed that this policy should be understood as a result of sovereignty motives. In addition, it was also argued that borderlands and centre-periphery relations matter for the sovereignty function of the border. This chapter returns to these overarching theoretical problems and explains, in more detail, how the analytical framework used in this thesis was developed. The chapter consists of three parts, each of which is focused on outlining one of the building blocks of the theoretical framework that will then be used in the analysis. First, I examine how sovereignty can be unbundled into different dimensions, in which I review how sovereignty dimensions and the bargaining between them have previously been used to explain politics towards borders. The second part of the chapter discusses how territorial borders and their connection to sovereignty are understood in this thesis, whereas the third theoretical argument is concerned with how centre-periphery relations play into how borders work and why it is important to acknowledge this in a study of borders. The final part of the chapter outlines the theoretical framework that guides the empirical analysis of this thesis.

Border Politics as Sovereignty Strategy

In the Weberian definition of sovereignty, the sovereign state is an organisation that successfully 'claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Weber 1946, 77 [1919]). While this definition is primarily concerned with the inner workings of the state, other definitions are more concerned with the relationship the state has to other states. Krasner (1999) identifies different types of sovereignty: *international legal* sovereignty, referring to the mutual recognition of states with juridical independence over their respective territories; *Westphalian* sovereignty, referring to the exclusion of other actors from the authority structures within the state's territory; and *interdependence* sovereignty, referring to the state's ability to control cross-border movement (Krasner 1999, 3–20). Together, these definitions constitute a conception of sovereignty that, on the one hand,

concerns the legitimate use of power *within* a territory and, on the other hand, is about the freedom to exercise this power without interference from *outside*. In all of these common conceptualisations, sovereignty is intrinsically linked to territory. Consequently, the exercise of sovereignty is dependent on defined territorial boundaries (Agnew 2009, 2). As sovereignty in most definitions requires both the legitimacy to execute power within a given territory and freedom from restrictions from outside, as well as the control over entry and exit, what these definitions also have in common is that they define sovereignty as *relational*. Following this line of reasoning, the sovereignty of a state can be understood as something that exists in relation to something else: in relation to its citizens/people and to other states and actors in the international political arena. Thus, what happens at the border, in the policies towards it as well as through the ideas about the role it plays and the practices around it, works as a marker of territory both from outside and from within.

As more and more issues take on a border-transcending character, the construction of walls along borders is sometimes described as a futile attempt of states to maintain their sovereignty even though it is waning (Brown 2010). However, the challenges to the exclusivity of states as sovereign actors do not necessarily imply that governments themselves perceive open borders and globalisation as threats to their state's sovereignty. It is possible that change towards more open borders is perceived as beneficial enough to compensate for the risks; thus, governments sometimes actively pursue more open borders.[25] In the policymaking process, the pursuit of a more open or closed border is often based on the perceptions of the opportunities and risks of either option. Insofar as states can be considered actors, it is therefore relevant to investigate how they react to, or pursue, more open or closed borders, with the assumption that they are interested in maintaining their sovereignty:

> Frontiers are instruments of state policy. Government policies at frontiers, and government policies regarding frontiers, are in place to promote national interest (Wilson and Donnan 1998, 57).

This assumption can be made regardless of how one believes the conditions for sovereignty are changing, that is, regardless of whether we think sovereignty is waning (because no longer in the hands of states), is differentiating (being shared between different actors and not only states), or remains largely unchallenged in the hands of states. If state formation is understood as an on-going process, border politics are always part of a process to construct the state as sovereign. Regardless of how one defines state sovereignty, there is wide recognition that the understanding of the world as consisting of territo-

[25] Free trade agreements and EU membership are notable examples of how this is done.

rial states with clearly defined boundaries does not accurately capture the reality of the world, as 'making functional systemic boundaries coincide with territorial frontiers has become virtually impossible' (M. Anderson 2010, 236). It is often recognised that conditions for state sovereignty have changed, and a growing body of literature argues that sovereignty has become differentiated and can even be exercised by actors other than states (Brown 2010, 23; Sassen 1996, 30). However, the question regarding the extent to which increased trans-border flows affect state power remains and the 'connections and causal relationship between these developments and their collective impact on the exercise of state sovereignty remain controversial' (M. Anderson 2010, 235). As power diffuses from the state to both supranational institutions and downwards, to sub-national actors, perhaps it is more accurate to describe territorial sovereignty as a 'mythic ideal', one that obscures the fact that the state 'has never been the inviolate territorialized political body that the three sovereignty myths suppose'(Agnew 2009, 49).[26]

It is not the purpose of this thesis to delve into the issue of where sovereignty resides or the theoretical implications of what the consequences of sovereignty disconnected from the territorial state would be. Regardless of where sovereignty resides, and regardless of whether we use a definition of sovereignty that allows for the diffusion of sovereign power, or one that claims that sovereignty per definition is indivisible, we can regard the will to be sovereign as integral to states. Without an idea of sovereignty, states, as we understand them, would not be. Yet, if we understand sovereignty to be relational, it also follows that its construction is an on-going process, in which the politics concerning borders is a constitutive part of the process to maintain the state as sovereign.

Sovereignty as a bargain?

The first theoretical building block of this study draws on previous literature that, in a related but somewhat different approach from Krasner (1999), 'unbundles' sovereignty into two or more constitutive dimensions (Litfin 1997; Mattli 2000; Rudolph 2003, 2005). Karen Litfin (1997, 169) argues that, to understand how transboundary issues – in her study, the globalisation of environmental problems – affect state sovereignty, 'neither the "erosion-of-sovereignty" thesis nor the "sovereignty-as-bulwark" thesis' are very useful; rather, sovereignty should be understood as multi-dimensional, and some aspects of sovereignty may be strengthened while others are weakened when states enter into international agreements as a way to meet the challenges of

[26] The three sovereignty myths Agrew talks about are 1) that sovereignty is invariably territorial, 2) that states have equal sovereignty, and 3) that state territory is an exclusive jurisdiction.

globalisation (Litfin 1997, 169). Drawing on previous conceptualisations of sovereignty, Litfin unbundles sovereignty into three constitutive elements: *autonomy*, understood as the ability to make independent decisions; *control*, understood as 'the ability to produce an effect', including the power and capacity to do so; and *legitimacy*, understood as the 'recognized right to make rules' (1997, 169).

In this literature, the way in which states respond to perceived trade-offs between different dimensions of sovereignty is understood as a 'sovereignty bargain', which is defined as the situation when a state 'voluntarily accept[s] some limitations in exchange for certain benefits' (Litfin 1997, 168; Mattli 2000, 150). In Litfin's account, the state thus makes a sovereignty bargain when entering into an international binding agreement, as it gives up some of its autonomy in order to produce a better outcome. Mattli (2000) similarly disaggregates sovereignty into dimensions of autonomy, control, and legitimacy and studies how states engage in sovereignty bargains where autonomy is ceded in favour of prosperity, for example when states choose to join economic unions such as the EU. At the core of Mattli's analysis is the question of how states assess the costs and benefits when entering into international agreements; however, as each state has different resources (e.g. economic development, size, and political influence), Mattli also emphasises that 'no two sovereignty bargains are structurally identical' (2000, 175).

In a related but somewhat different approach, Rudolph (2005) argues that a theoretical perspective that views sovereignty as 'indivisible' or absolute cannot account for the state's role in the globalisation process. Rather than being powerless against structural forces, he argues, states often take an active role in limiting their own sovereignty by delegating power to supra-state institutions; in a similar fashion, cross-border flows 'are not only *endured*, but also *facilitated*, by states in order to forward their national interest' (Rudolph 2005, 3). The reason why states do this is that different 'dimensions of sovereignty can be "bargained" to promote overall grand strategy and to maximize other dimensions of sovereignty' (Rudolph 2005, 4). From this perspective, the puzzle of why a state would choose to pursue an open border despite macro-level factors speaking against it can be understood as a sovereignty strategy, where the opening of the border is intended to fulfil some objective, and potential risks are weighed against potential gains.

There are some considerations about the idea of sovereignty bargains that need to be reflected on before they can be incorporated into an analysis of border policies, the first of which is whether bargaining with different aspects of sovereignty should be assumed to be a zero-sum game, and, if so, if it is perceived as such by states in the pursuit of border policy changes. When the state is met by a challenge of some kind, it is forced to negotiate or bargain with the different dimensions, the result being that one of the dimensions is compromised in order to maximise another. This reasoning seems quite straightforward to begin with, when the bargain stands between two

alternatives, for example autonomy for prosperity, if one can be traded for the other. However, if a third dimension is included in the analysis, the relationship between the dimensions becomes less straightforward and demands a more nuanced, context-dependent analysis of how they are perceived and negotiated. Rudolph (2000, 15) argues that the interrelationship between these dimensions has been complicated by the 'emergence' of a societal dimension, which makes previous understandings of sovereignty bargains as a trade-off between control and openness insufficient for understanding state behaviour. In Rudolph's (2000) discussion, the extent to which different aspects of sovereignty are in conflict with one another is argued to be context dependent, as there could be situations where it is possible to maximise all dimensions. However, the concept of 'sovereignty bargains' is somewhat misleading, as it implies that there is a mutually competing relationship between different dimensions. This is somewhat contradictory, as the concept is also based on an understanding that sovereignty consists of all these dimensions. If so, then whether these dimensions are mutually competing or whether strengthening one dimension also strengthens the other(s) will differ from case to case.

Second, the use of a concept such as 'bargain' indicates a view of states as rational, unitary actors that strive to maximise their sovereignty. According to Litfin, this assumption is, at best, an oversimplification, and 'the term "sovereignty bargain" should be used with a good dose of caution because it connotes a certain degree of intentionality on the part of a unitary actor that may not actually exist' (1997, 171). However, even if we cannot make the assumption that the state *is* sovereignty maximising in a rational, unitary way, we can make the narrower assumption that if states are to exist, some construction of sovereignty is inevitable regardless of any one actor within the state because, otherwise, we would not recognise these as states. So, even though not necessarily the result of actions from a rational or unitary actor, a sovereignty bargain could be the outcome of a combination of policies, perceptions, and practices in relation to the border.

To further complicate the picture, it is possible to identify tensions *within* each dimension; for example, in terms of the control of economic flows, an effort to increase trade and gain access to new markets through more open borders (i.e. free trade) may be in conflict with objectives to preserve domestic production, which requires more restrictive border policies (e.g. tariffs and trade quotas). Overall, closed borders allow for state control over territory and restrict which individuals or what goods can enter; tariffs protecting domestic industries can be used to strengthen the economy; and restrictive migration policies can be used to keep society homogenous. The potential risks of such policies are, among others, loss of competition, limitations on

trade, and shortages of labour.[27] Open borders, on the other hand, allow for less control over inclusion/exclusion, including the risk of increased competition for domestic businesses and less societal homogeneity.

Finally, as has been noted by previous research, for example on EU policies towards its eastern borders (Berg and Ehin 2006), different border policies and practices can be pursued for very different – and sometimes mutually conflicting or counteractive – motives. Thus, even if all border policies can be understood as part of an overall sovereignty bargain, what Rudolph calls 'grand strategies', different policies may actually give priority to different sovereignty dimensions, which can result in contradictory policies towards the border, making it very hard to determine what kind of 'bargain' is really being struck.

In conclusion, the extent to which border policies should be understood as zero-sum games with regard to their capacity to strengthen sovereignty along different dimensions is unclear from both a theoretical and empirical perspective, which is therefore considered to be an empirical question open to investigation in this thesis. However, the unbundling of sovereignty into dimensions enables us to identify and analyse how different objectives are balanced and prioritised vis-à-vis one another in the development of border policy. Depending on what perceived challenges there are to the state at its borders, and whether these challenges call for more open or more restrictive border policies, there can be different emphases on different aspects of sovereignty.[28]

Unbundling sovereignty

Drawing on Krasner, Litfin, and Mattli, Rudolph (2003, 2005) unbundles sovereignty into three dimensions of security, where security is defined as the state's capacity to maintain its sovereignty. From this perspective, what is needed for the state to maintain its sovereignty is *geopolitical*, *material*, and *societal* security (Rudolph 2003, 2005). The *geopolitical* dimension refers to the state's ability to uphold separation and autonomy from other states, which primarily has to do with military defence and 'hard power'. The *material* dimension refers to the state's ability to control flows of goods,

[27] That is, from a purely state-sovereignty perspective. From a human perspective, restriction of migration can, of course, have other significant risks in terms of violence and loss of lives of those denied entry. This may also have an impact on societal sovereignty if a policy of restrictive migration is deemed illegitimate by the general population; or the opposite, as we have seen in Europe in the last few years, where migration-friendly parties have lost ground to nationalist parties that call for even more restrictive migration policies.

[28] Perceived challenges are here understood as both challenges towards the border (internal or external) that lead to a demand for change in border policies and challenges that a particular suggested or ongoing policy change is expected to result in (i.e. border change can be both a 'dependent' and 'independent' variable in the analysis of border policy if one is interested in using this frame of analysis for causal explanation).

capital, and labour, where the border is the filter that regulates these flows. As a result of an increasingly global world economy, this is perhaps the dimension of sovereignty that is least in the hands of the state today, as many of the economic decisions are dependent on international markets rather than the wishes of each individual state. Nevertheless, a state can still use its border to enhance or limit certain flows. According to Rudolph, the primary logic of material security today is 'the ability to manage the movement of flows [of capital]' (2005, 7).

The *societal* dimension of security has to do with the state's capacity for national unity, which is important, for example, for the legitimacy of the state.[29] In its Westphalian form, sovereignty is strongly linked with the idea that political power should be ordered so that the legal, functional, and societal boundaries of a territorial state coincide. In other words, this understanding of sovereignty is associated with the idea of the *state-as-nation* (Agnew 2010, 782). Although the convergence of territorial power, political organisation, and society into nation-states is rarely clear-cut in reality, the idea itself has very real effects on how states act, how we interpret what happens in the world and, not least, in people's lives, as they are bound by both legal demarcations of states, such as citizenship, and by societal demarcations, such as national identity. Although we can separate the 'nation' and the 'state' conceptually, the idea of the state and the nation as synonymous means that a shared national identity is also part of maintaining the state as sovereign (Rudolph 2005, 7). This is why open borders for people are more complex than open borders for other (material) flows and why states are less willing to tie up their authority on migration policies in international agreements (2005, 9).[30] However, it also matters who crosses borders: when migrants are considered 'socially proximate' to the receiving country, borders tend to be more open (2005, 10).

The conclusion of this argument is that if migration takes place across borders without the consent of receiving populations, it can cause societal sovereignty to be threatened; in this sense, societal sovereignty should primarily be understood as relating to the perception of control – for populations to perceive that the state has lost power over 'who enters' would be a threat to societal sovereignty regardless of how many or how disruptive they are to the state once they have entered; in this regard, it is more about the control and choice of the state to decide who enters.[31] This reasoning is not meant to imply societal sovereignty should be defined in ethno-cultural terms; many states are not nation states per se because they consist of vari-

[29] Without at least some idea of a shared belonging, such things as taxation and following the laws become very difficult for the state to uphold.
[30] Recent events where the European Union has been unable to agree on migration policies and member states refusing to receive their quota are good examples of this.
[31] This perhaps explains why a number of refugees not more than a tiny proportion of the total population can be thought of as a major crisis for many of the receiving countries in Europe.

ous ethno-cultural groups, which do not cause social unrest or societal instability by default. I do not assume that only homogenous states can be sovereign; rather, it is an open question if and how a shared identity is constructed in relation to the border and if that, in turn, gives rise to internal cohesion or conflict.

Above, I have discussed the different ways in which sovereignty has previously been conceptualised as multi-dimensional, all of which have the same core as Krasner's four types of sovereignty, only with different focuses and smaller or larger variations. Although Litfin's unbundling is somewhat more abstract and Rudolph's dimensions are more directly linked to the subject matter of different policy options, depending on how one chooses to operationalise their dimensions, they are rather similar in what they aim to capture: that states need the capacity to act as well as the recognition of their right to do so by both external and internal actors. Here, the main points from this discussion will be summarised, as they provide the foundations for my theoretical framework.

First of all, important in all of the conceptions discussed above is that there are many ways in which sovereignty can be challenged and that strategies to maintain state sovereignty need to balance the risks and opportunities between open and closed borders. Second, and more importantly for the purpose of this thesis, is the role of borders for these conceptualisations of sovereignty, as *territory* is understood as a 'tangible dimension' of sovereignty upon which the other dimensions operate (Litfin 1997, 169). Finally, what they have in common is that they understand state policies towards borders as a question of sovereignty. That is, policies towards borders can be analysed as policies of maintaining sovereignty, and openness of the border is then the result of a 'sovereignty bargain', where the outcome can be explained as an evaluation of opportunities and threats associated with these dimensions of sovereignty.

The analytical framework used for the empirical analysis of the Norwegian border traffic permit draws on these conceptualisations, primarily Rudolph's unbundling of sovereignty into geopolitical, material, and societal dimensions. Below, more detail of how these dimensions can be understood in relation to the role of borders is provided, and, in Chapter 4, how the dimensions are operationalised so as to allow for empirical investigation is discussed. Before doing so, however, the theoretical underpinnings of the second part of the research objectives are presented: how borders are sites of both sovereignty manifestation and contestation and why, therefore, centre-periphery relations should be considered important when examining why borders become more open.

The Purpose of Borders

In the following section, the main functions of borders for the territorial state are discussed. Some of the main strands within the literature on borders are outlined and, from this, two main points relating to the purpose of this thesis are drawn out: first, that all borders have exclusionary, inclusionary, and filtering functions, and second, that these functions work to uphold the political, economic, and social boundaries of the state. In their capacity as dividing lines between states, borders are often described and understood through different metaphors: they can be seen as *containers* that enclose or hold all that is supposed to be within a state, they can function as *walls,* both powerful symbols of division and actual physical barriers (e.g. Brown 2010; Jones 2012), or they can be *filters* that let some things through while stopping others (J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 596). In line with the function of the border as a filter, borders are understood as more or less permeable, as *membranes* that either maintain uneven distribution by stopping some things from passing or strive for balance by redistribution through themselves. In this capacity, the border-crossing features of migration, economic flows, and regulation are sometimes compared to those of osmosis (Barth 1998, 21 [1969]; Kearney 2004, 142; Piattoni 2009, 173). In some accounts, borders are described as *bridges* or *doors,* with the ability to connect as well as divide societies (Houtum and Strüver 2002).

Regardless of what metaphors we use, most border studies are based on an understanding that borders have classifying and value-filtering capabilities, through which they structure the identities and resources available for those who are affected by them (cf. Kearney 2004). In addition to their capacity to '*limit* movements of things, money, and people, [borders] also *limit* the exercise of intellect, imagination, and political will' (Agnew 2008, 176). What Agnew means by this is that we are 'trapped' into thinking about borders as necessary features of political organisation and thus become limited both in our analysis of events and in what we can conceive as possible within the realms of organising political communities. While this study does not escape the trap of thinking about borders as an inevitable feature of the state as a political organisation, I would argue that as long as borders continue to be of significance for the ordering of states, we should endeavour to describe and analyse this connection rather than escape it. An important aspect of acknowledging the connection between borders and political organisation (such as the territorial state) is to shed light on the varieties of ways in which this can be done, and, although borders are a shared feature of states, they are by no means the same everywhere, in that there are a multitude of ways in which borders can perform their functions as barriers, filters, and bridges.

If seen from a historical perspective, the significance of borders for modern political organisation is rather new, as there were other ways to define political order long before the emergence of the nation-state: the medieval

feudal system is often used as a contrast, where, rather than living within a particular border, allegiances and jurisdictions 'crisscrossed' over territory, and social classes determined belonging and order (Sassen 2006, 32). From another perspective, borders are old, in the sense that a lot of border theory in the first decade of the 21st century focused on the ways in which they have become obsolete. As the permeability of borders increase and their delimiting capacities are weakened, other ways of conceptualising political order may seem more suitable; the overlap of judicial and political authority within the European Union has been described as, among other things, 'neo-medieval', 'postmodern', and 'poly-centric' (J. Anderson 1996; Browning and Joenniemi 2008; Hooghe and Marks 2003).

The tendency towards increasingly barrier-like manifestations of borders in terms of walls and fences all across the world suggests that borders are far from obsolete. As states are faced with increased overlap between jurisdictions of other institutions, and decision-making power extends to more actors, the functions of borders have instead become more differentiated. While they retain some of their delimiting functions, others disappear or become selectively functional. For example, borders can become more open with regard to one type of cross-border activity while more closed for another; people move with less ease across borders than goods, and capital seems to have no boundaries at all, yet the ability to move across borders is very unequally bestowed on different people (cf. Laine 2017, 10). This is important to keep in mind when we investigate why borders become more or less open. In this sense, border permeability is not a matter of either open or closed; rather, it is a question of open for what and for whom (J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 602). In this thesis, when I talk about open borders, the main focus is on the movement of *people* across borders. The ordering functions of borders, as summarised in Figure 3, constitute the essence of borders and are not exclusive to political-territorial borders. Regardless of whether borders are more or less open, travelled across, or discernible by physical structures, they separate something within from something external and they determine what can pass across them.

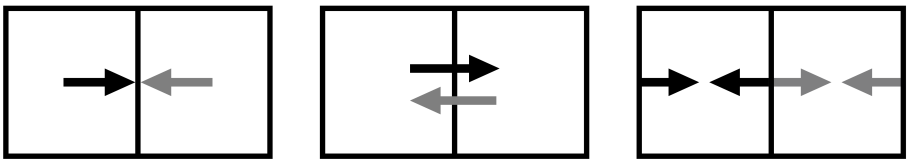

Figure 3. Core border functions.

Exclusion (delineate where one entity starts and the next begins); *filter* (regulate who and what can pass across); and *inclusion* (encircle the whole and what belongs).

As political institutions of the state, the exclusionary, inclusionary, and filtering functions of borders are made through the combination of *policies* that regulate them, the *practices* by which the borders are managed and interacted with by those who cross or live near them (including the way they are guarded and demarcated by physical structures such as border controls and fences), and the *perceptions* or ideas about what the border is or should be and what it is thought to be a separation of and from (Kolossov 2005, 625).

Although the line on the map or on the ground may have been drawn in the same place for a very long time, the symbolic division it represents, as well as the rules that regulate it, the intensity by which it is guarded, and the number of passages that take place across it, all change over time, which gives the border different values at different times.[32] Ideas about the border, for example about what risks and opportunities it presents or relations to the neighbour across the border, are shaped by, and in return shape, border practices, such as patterns of cross-border movement, patterns of movement across or away from the border, and the day-to-day interactions connected to the border. In turn, both perceptions and practices inform and are informed by the rules and legislation that regulate border functions. Thus, processes of change are intrinsic to borders, and borders are thus 'always in a state of becoming' (Dodds 2013, 569). It is therefore important to study critical periods, for example when any of these factors change, so as not to assume that what we knew about it before is still valid.

Border *change* is here understood not only as happening when territorial demarcations are re-drawn but also when the judicial, material, or symbolical function of an existing border is changed, a definition that plainly captures what the border permit is about: a change in judicial function (visa regulations) that is part of, and contributes to, shaping the idea and symbolical meaning of this particular border (cf. J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 595). If we consider open borders as a potential challenge to state sovereignty, it is important to keep in mind that this only seems to be an issue where there is some sort of change going on: borders that are stable, in terms of cross-border interactions, do not usually raise much concern. For example, consider a comparison between Norway's border with Sweden, which, in many regards is very open (no passport or visa is needed; practically no border controls; low language barrier). The point is that it is not an *open* border as much as the *opening of* a border that raises these questions.[33]

[32] It should also be noted that even fixed positions of borderlines are not really fixed either, as they are sometimes re-drawn to adjust for changes in the landscape. In the case at hand, for example, the border was re-drawn in 2010 to adjust for the changed flow of the Jakobselv River.

[33] In light of events in Europe since 2014 an onwards, where many states once again have introduced border controls as a result of the number of refugees arriving, even the border between Sweden and Norway has been subject to ID and passport controls, taking a step away from the normal level of openness between these two countries.

Another important feature of borders is that they have a fundamentally *violent* potential to lock people in or out. Even in democratic states, at borders that are open, undisputed, and unproblematic, state borders are representations of the sovereign state's monopoly over the legitimate use of violence (Agnew 2005, 438; J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 596; Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012, 730). This is even truer when seen from the outside – state borders are often marked by structures that force people to stop, through passport and visa regulations as well as walls, barbed wire fences, or military guards.[34] In states where the regime's legitimacy is in question or the people are opposed to the government, borders have been used to prevent exit, such as in East Berlin in the last century or North Korea today. In fact, except for prisons, there are not many other institutions, other than borders, that have the same capacity to restrict people's movement.[35] The violent potential of the border is particularly interesting in the case studied here because, although the border itself is not disputed, its history is violent, both in terms of full-out war (WW2) and in terms of being almost impossible to cross (the Cold War) up until today, where much of the border is still saturated with the potential for violence, such as military guard posts, signs, and surveillance. In this regard, both states keep up highly visible reminders of their capacity to enforce their borders.[36]

No matter how much we regard borders as social constructs or 'borders of the mind', the fact remains that their physical manifestations are far from obsolete and often even have violent consequences for those who try to cross them. Vice versa, without the strong symbolic and organisational power of borders, there would be little need for, or sense to, their physical manifestation. Thus, if we wish to understand why some borders are opened while others are closed, a good place to start is to find ways to study how ideas about what practical or symbolic functions the border should fulfil are reflected in the politics towards them. Because of the different roles that borders can be ascribed, they often lend themselves well to analysis of the use of dichotomies: opportunity/threat, inclusion/exclusion, and competition/cooperation. Far from being clear-cut, such dichotomies often exist sim-

[34] See Brown (2010, 38) on the violent potential of borders when they are marked by actual walls that cut through lands and physically stop people from crossing the border. Further, consider the historical violence of borders, where wars were fought along lines marking the borders gained and lost and the trenches drawn along fought-over boundaries that killed millions in World War I.

[35] The dislocation of border control to places other than the lines of the map is another discussion; for example, border controls being outsourced to external airports has been emphasised by some authors as a way in which states deal with the new conditions for sovereignty (Dudziak and Volpp 2005, 594; Sidaway 2011, 973; Walters 2002, 575).

[36] Based on my observations at the Norwegian side of the border, there are, among other things, visible military watchtowers on both sides, border posts marking the entire stretch of the borderline, signs warning you that it is illegal to cross, and video-surveillance cameras, all of which remind you that the border is being monitored.

ultaneously, which causes borders to 'appear inherently contradictory, problematic and multifaceted' (J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 596). Borders are not static; their function and value can shift over time as well as across contexts. The study of borders, therefore, should be carried out with an acknowledgement of their complexity and an ambition to capture the role and value that a particular border is given at a specific time and in a specific context.

In sum, borders serve as a fundament for political organisation and, as such, they are essential to the construction of the sovereign state. Borders always have exclusionary, inclusionary, and filtering functions of some kind. If we focus more specifically on the role of territorial borders in state sovereignty, these functions are combined in the task of marking the political, economic, and social dominion of the state (Agnew 2005, 437): first, they do this as manifestations of the political boundary, as they define the territory within which the state is assumed sovereign and thus have the right and obligation to protect those within; second, borders are used to control and regulate economic flows – they 'enhance or maintain unequal cross-border exchanges' (Agnew 2008, 185) and thus structure opportunities and inequalities between states; third, borders help structure the societal relations of a state by drawing a line between those within and those outside – they serve as a basis for establishing who belongs and thus help in the construction of shared identities and communities. Each of these functions is directly linked to the establishment and maintenance of the state as sovereign, in particular if we define the maintenance of sovereignty as dependent on geopolitical, material, and societal dimensions, as was done in the section above. Thus, for the purpose of this thesis, state sovereignty is understood as demarcated and given meaning through the politics towards borders, where borders fulfil purposes of exclusion (important for Westphalian and international legal sovereignty), inclusion (important for domestic and Westphalian sovereignty), and the regulation of flows (important for interdependence sovereignty). This connection can be summarised as follows:

Border functions for the construction of sovereignty

Political function →	Territorial demarcation: define position vis-á-vis other states (exclusion); external recognition
Economic function →	Regulate flows of people, goods, and capital
Social function →	Demarcation of belonging; defining national community (inclusion/exclusion); internal legitimacy

Here, I have made explicit the connection between sovereignty and the border that is often either assumed or overlooked. This connection is at the centre of my argument that borders are a good place to start if we wish to understand state sovereignty or that studies of why states open or close their borders are implicitly studies of how sovereignty is constructed. In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss the final piece of my theoretical argument: the border as a site that challenges the state and why the relationship between the state centre and its borderlands should be included in this analysis. This chapter then concludes with a summary of the theoretical arguments outlined in this chapter, before moving on to a discussion of the research design, methodological choices, and operationalisation of the analytical framework in Chapter 4.

Borders as Sites Where the State is Challenged

As discussed above, the implicit assumption of the nation-state is that national community and territorial boundaries of a state are aligned so that borders define not only external difference but also internal coherence. In this section, the dilemmas of this assumed alignment are discussed, as they inform my argument that borderlands and centre-periphery relations need to be taken into account in the analysis of policies towards borders.

Because of the assumptions that the borders of a state are also the borders of a nation, borders 'are intimately bound up with the identity-making activities of the nation-state' (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012, 729–30) and are thus essential to the construction of national identities and imagined communities (B. Anderson 1991 [1983]). Because the societal homogeneity implicit in the concept of the nation-state is rarely (if ever) found in reality, the delimitation of the state by its external boundaries should rather be understood as the ground on which the construction of national identity takes place (Agnew 2009, 60). Territorial borders often represent both the authority of the state and the national limit, even if they do not *de facto* define the national identity of the people within them (and even less so as migration patterns change). This is also why 'the claim to territorial sovereignty (irrespective of the ability to realise it) is an inherent element in nationalist ideologies' (Agnew 2010, 781). The territorial claims of nationalist movements are one thing, but we do not really have to take it that far to argue for a strong connection between sovereignty and national or collective identity; the mere presence of a territorial demarcation implies some form of separation, and identities can be constructed based on this separation. From this perspective, a shared sense of belonging (within a territorial boundary) is, in itself, an element in the construction of the state as sovereign.

Because of the separation that territorial borders imply, if a border is vaguely defined or contested, the state may make specific efforts to define a

shared identity with those living in the border region. Anne Norton, for example, argues that 'efforts to rhetorically establish the nationality of the frontiersmen . . . prompt those nearest the centre to portray the frontiersmen as the *national par excellence*' (1988, 61 emphasis added). An example close to the case at hand is how early Norwegian nationalism included travelling to remote areas to find 'genuine' Norwegian culture and incorporate it into the national consciousness. This worked as a way to both mark the difference towards Sweden and also bring urban and rural areas closer together in a Norwegian identity (Eriksen 1998, 128–32). Furthermore, important as it is to mark inclusion of the periphery into the national narrative, it may be as important for the state to mark its difference towards the neighbour. Hence, instruments of state control are frequently present at or near external boundaries, and national symbolism abounds: flags, churches, monuments, and signs are often placed directly adjacent to a border, telling us that this is where this state begins (J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 596).[37]

As the outmost edge of the state, everything the border delimits becomes visible as the border, where it can be compared and contrasted with the 'other side'. This is also a site where the division it is supposed to uphold can be questioned and opposed. The relationship between the state and its citizens is therefore particularly interesting in border areas, for it is here that the possibility of something else emerges:

> 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. . . . 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 (Lundén 2009, 140).

Depending on the centre-periphery dynamics of a state, it may be that 'locals do not necessarily see borders in the same way as governments' (Rumford 2012, 889), an argument that underscores the argument for studying borders through research designs that allow us to capture both central and local narratives. These should not necessarily be expected to overlap or be shared. If we understand borders as sites with the potential to challenge the state, it is important to recognise that challenges should not only (or even primarily) have to do with *external* threats or risks. Many of the challenges present at borders have to do with *internal* issues, such as demands for regional autonomy or conflicts between the state centre and peripheral regions. Thus, in

[37] In the particular case of the Norwegian-Russian border, for example, there is a church built very close to the border on Norway's side, far from the closest village, clearly in an impractical spot if attendance was its primary purpose; in this sense, it was built as an outpost of the Norwegian church (and thus state). On the Russian side, the border, when first drawn up, was made to make a peculiar loop, with the sole purpose of including a Russian Orthodox chapel, Boris Gleb, on the Russian rather than Norwegian side of the territorial boundary (Lundén 2011, 12).

transformative periods, when borders become more open, there is always the potential for identity change, identity conflict, and tension.

If the notion that nation and state coincide with territorial boundaries can be simultaneously manifested *and* challenged at the border, then different modes of cooperation across borders further complicate the idea of a simple connection between nation-state territories. For example, open border policies that encourage and enable border-crossing practices for individuals have the potential to disconnect the nation-state pairing, as the state as an administrative authority unit can be home to multiple national identities. In a state-centric research approach, states are usually analysed as units and compared to each other, but, from the perspective of borders as sites where state sovereignty is both manifested and challenged, we cannot assume that the way in which the state relates to cross-border neighbours is uniform, as the relationship between border communities may be very different from the relations governments have with each other.

European integration and the challenge from below

One example of how open borders can present a challenge to the state is the integration processes within the European Union, which have often been described in the academic literature as presenting a challenge 'both from above and from below'.[38] Part of this relates to the development of sub-state cross-border regions, which present several more or less tangible challenges to state sovereignty. First of all, the state's position as the sole foreign policy actor within a given territory is challenged by the development of paradiplomacy:

> Paradiplomacy, while for the most part unspectacular, does represent an important and new dimension both to regionalism and to international relations, further evidence of the breakdown of the distinction between domestic and international affairs and between national and regional matters (Keating 1999, 14).

Paradiplomacy can be considered as a resource for both state and sub-state actors, as a way to promote regional security and mitigate ethnic conflict (Cornago 1999), or for sub-state actors as a way to bypass difficult relations between their respective central governments at the bilateral level (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2014). Blatter (2004, 545) argues that sub-state cross-border institutions 'are undermining the exclusive gate-keeper role which national executives had'. By 'embodying the behaviour of a sovereign state', a sub-state region can be recognised as an international actor, and thus paradiplomacy is particularly important for 'regions with statehood aspirations' (Sharafutdinova 2003, 313–16). Through cross-border regionalisation,

[38] See, for example, the vast literature on multi-level governance and the hollowing out of the state (Bache and Flinders 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2003; Rhodes 1994).

open borders challenge the geopolitical dimension of sovereignty, as states are no longer exclusive international actors (assuming they ever were). When local and regional authorities engage in international relations and enter into agreements with their counterparts across borders, they bypass the monopoly on diplomatic relations that is traditionally held by central governments (Cornago 1999; Keating 1999; Lecours 2002). This development tests the way we understand foreign and domestic policy, as there is no longer a clear analytical/empirical division between the two, which also redefines theoretical boundaries between the fields of international relations and comparative politics (Hocking 1999).

A second question relating to cross-border regionalisation is whether these developments create boundary-crossing affiliations and identification and, if so, whether the development of regional identities challenges national identity and thus assumed loyalty with the state (Bucken-Knapp 2002). People can have non-conflicting local, regional, and national identities, but the possibility that different identities can be used to mobilise along competing lines of affiliation should not be disregarded, as has been the case in many sub-state regionalisation efforts (e.g. Prytherch 2009).

The paradiplomacy literature highlights the potential for centre-periphery conflict as a result of cross-border region-building. However, much of the empirical focus in previous literature has been on the comparison of local level relations in different cross-border regions. Another strand of this literature emphasises the role of governments as drivers of regionalisation, where these region-building projects are seen as any other geopolitical issue (Popescu 2008, 434). Popescu argues that cross-border cooperation is structured by conceptions of territory, and that the territorial boundaries of the involved states continue to matter, causing the 'relationship between region formation and state borders [to] remain in a state of unresolved tension' (2008, 421). The role of the state in cross-border region-building, and what these regions actually mean for sovereignty, remains unclear. These processes also bring centre-periphery differences into focus, as these processes involve questions of the division of power, influence, and authority (Carter and Pasquier 2010, 296; Paasi 2011, 10). If open borders are the result of, and/or result in, the development of regional identities, they have the potential to magnify existing centre-periphery cleavages by enabling minorities dispersed across the border to mobilise, or allowing local governments to put pressure on their national governments by developing ties across the border (i.e. threatening exit). If a state has historically used the border to mark the frontiersman as national par excellence, or if difference from 'the Other' has been used to mobilise national sentiment, cross-border regionalisation definitely holds the potential for challenging sovereignty by forming new identities and allegiances.

As previous research on cross-border integration indicates, although regionalisation does not replace the state as the main form of political organi-

sation, it has resulted in a process of territorial re-structuring that challenges pre-conceived notions of state, sovereignty, and territoriality. This means that, in any policy directed at borders and border regions, there can be something at stake for the state; cross-border activities and regionalisation potentially dissolve the domestic-foreign policy divide by challenging the state monopoly on diplomatic relations, and the development of regional identities may put national belonging into question and challenge the legitimacy of state power, while economic competition may challenge the state with regard to the cost of not opening borders.

In sum, what the border 'is' is both contingent upon the rules that regulate it *and* the contexts in which these rules take effect. For the purpose of this thesis (but also, from this standpoint, applicable to *any* state border), the relationship between local and central is assumed to be dual: top-down in the sense that the local community reacts to policy or practice change introduced by the central government, and bottom-up in the sense that policy change can be assumed to be initiated to meet some understanding of what the current situation at the border is and a desire to change it. For example, more restrictive visa policies can be a response to (real or perceived) external demands on immigration, while less restrictive policies can be a reaction to a perceived low interaction across the border in case. Either way, what happens at the border can influence the centre and vice versa.[39] The further away from the core or centre a border is located – either in terms of geographic or social distance – the more it can be expected to challenge the centre in some way.[40]

Theoretical Framework

The following pages summarise the theoretical framework of this thesis. First, the three dimensions of sovereignty as discussed above are joined with the discussion of how borders matter for the construction of sovereignty. This constitutes the first part of my theoretical framework and is summed up in table 1 below. Then, the arguments for including a two-level analysis of both centre and local level into the analysis are discussed, constituting the second part of the framework. The relation between these two parts is illustrated in figure 4, and what an analysis using this framework may show is described.

[39] Although, of course, it must be noted that I do not assume this to be an 'equal' relationship. Although what happens at the periphery is not unimportant, policymaking power lies at the centre.

[40] E.g. by internal political conflict between centre and periphery or by way of the state's efforts to emphasise the border region as particularly representing the state/nation.

Where Rudolph studies grand strategies and migration policies, Mattli the choice to enter into transboundary economic unions, and Litfin international environmental agreements, I argue that this approach, using a combination of sovereignty dimensions to understanding policies towards borders, is just as useful – with some adjustments – for the study of any policies aimed at borders. The logic of articulating motives, objectives, and priorities in relation to how borders are managed is not limited to critical decisions such as joining supranational organisations or entering into supranational trade bargains, where the economic growth versus autonomy issue is often discussed,[41] nor only on the aggregate level of one state's total number of policies regarding its borders, but in every single decision about border policy change.

As policies towards borders may well be heterogeneous or even contradictory, the theoretical argument here is that making an overall macro-level bargain would not only be difficult from a state's point of view, but an analysis attempting to determine what the overall strategy is in a given context would also have to become rather reductionist and may obscure the nuances and contradictions between different aspects of border policy. Nonetheless, the division of sovereignty motives into different dimensions is useful for the analysis of border policy at a micro level. When applied on a single-case basis, it allows us to identify the particular (combination of) sovereignty ideas that motivate border change, thereby illuminating how states mitigate between the complex and often multifaceted roles that the border is intended to fulfil.

For the purpose of this thesis, to understand the opening of Norway's border towards Russia, even though macro-level factors suggest the border would remain closed, I have developed an analytical framework that builds on the division of sovereignty into geopolitical, material, and societal dimensions and incorporates the various functions the border has for each of these dimensions. Table 1 summarises this framework and outlines how the functions of the border correspond to different dimensions of sovereignty.

[41] Think only of the debate surrounding the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement's (CETA) infringement on state autonomy (see e.g. Bjorklund et al. 2016).

Sovereignty Dimension	**Geopolitical**	**Material**	**Societal**
Objective (maintaining state sovereignty)	Control over territory; autonomy from outside powers; security from external military threats.	Economic stability and growth.	Internal legitimacy of the political regime; social stability (and/or homogeneity).
Primary function of the border to this dimension	External ordering. Demonstrate control over territory; delineate where the state's authority begins; physical manifestation of political power.	Cross-border regulation. Managing flows of goods, services, and people; regulating access to markets.	Internal ordering. The symbolic boundary of belonging; delineate the imagined community.
Possible challenges	Invasion; border transgressions (by both state and non-state actors); bilateral or supra-state influence over state autonomy.	Global competition; labour supply/demand, trade restrictions; infrastructural capacity.	Centre-periphery conflicts; demands for regional autonomy; perceived distance to 'outsiders'; antagonism towards migrants.
Means to achieve this sovereignty objective	Military capacity; (bilateral) diplomatic relations; role of supra-state organisations.	Trade opportunities; labour migration/employment issues; costs of border infrastructure.	Identification of *us* or *them*: marking differences between groups; shared identities within the state.

Table 1. *Dimensions of sovereignty and the role of borders*

Centre-periphery relations at the border

The third research question asked at the beginning of this thesis related to the role the centre-periphery relation had for the introduction of the border permit. Here, centre-periphery is defined in both political and spatial terms. The centre denotes both the centre of political power within the state and the seat of the national political administration, whereas the periphery is defined as the municipal political level that, importantly, has a geographic position, located far from the centre and next to an external territorial boundary.[42]

If we agree that border studies are, or should be, studies of the state, it is also the case that studies of the state sometimes tend to treat states as unitary entities, placed next to each other on an international arena, and, from this perspective, borders can easily be overlooked as lines on a map with no function in themselves. However, even if we are not interested in cross-border relations or the role of borders in delimiting the state from other states, another important function remains: borders also help structure internal relationships between the core and periphery. Yet, a factor that does not always come through in studies of borders is how these two relationships interact (i.e. how centre-periphery relations help shape the border and vice versa). Although it is sometimes recognised that centre-periphery dynamics have a 'crucial bearing' on cross-border relations (J. Anderson and O'Dowd 1999, 597), studies of borders should also aim to investigate this more explicitly and in empirical detail.

Given the role of territorial boundaries for the state, both as a marker of it's domain and for delimiting the imagined community from which economic redistribution draws legitimacy, the relation between the central level and the local communities at the edges of the state is essential to the construction of territorial borders. An analysis of border policy change should therefore take into account the border's function in structuring internal cohesion and legitimacy of the state. To understand what kind of sovereignty construction happens through border policy, we need to look at *both* the motives and reasons for the central government to pursue a particular policy *and* at how this is received and perceived in the border community that will be affected by it. Perceived challenges and objectives at the border, and thus proposed border policy changes (or expectations of what a border policy change could lead to), may be understood very differently in the centre of the state when compared to the border region where this policy will take effect (cf. Gavrilis 2008).

Possible tensions between centre and periphery may come to light if the centre and periphery do not share the same ideas about the reasons for, or expected outcomes of, a particular border change. There are several ways in

[42] Other common definitions include criteria about economic backwardness, cultural difference, population scarcity and so on to identify the periphery as different from the centre (and from other less peripheral non-central areas).

which perceived challenges at the border may differ between centre and periphery. For example, while geopolitical motives may be most important for the state, the local community might prioritise economic motives. Furthermore, even when the same function is prioritised, they may differ in terms of risk assessment, for example both could have primarily economic motives, but where the state sees opportunities of trade and thus wants to open the border, the local community may see the risks of competition and want to restrict cross-border trade. Change towards a more open border can also lead to changes in perceptions of the 'Other' through a bottom-up process of more cross-border interaction (Newman 2003, 20). The effects of policies towards borders may be difficult to predict if ideas about what role the border ought to have differ greatly between policymakers and border communities. For example, if the government sees the opening of a border as vital for economic growth, but the local border community sees this as a threat to local businesses due to increased competition, a border policy change to increase border openness could increase or cause centre-periphery conflict and tension.

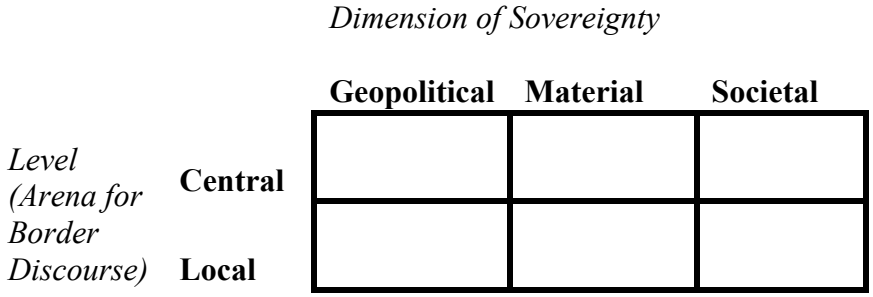

Figure 4. The analytical framework

How this framework is operationalised for the study of this particular case is detailed in Chapter 4 when questions of research design and analytical method are discussed. However, the framework is designed to be applicable in any case where we wish to gain a better understanding of how sovereignty ideas are being (re)produced and constructed in policies towards borders, and it can be used to identify, classify, and compare, in detail, ideas about sovereignty that are present in a border policy debate in different contexts within the border in question. This framework can also be used to identify changes in perceptions of borders over time and changes in sovereignty priorities, or to understand the centre-periphery conflict with regard to how a border should be managed, given that there are different ideas about what border function/sovereignty dimensions should be given priority. When the possible alternative outcomes (in terms of what dimensions of sovereignty

are emphasised in relation to a particular border policy) are understood as an open empirical question, there are three main alternative outcomes for how conflicting sovereignty objectives could be negotiated at each particular level:

1) As zero-sum: the argument would be that we need to compromise x in order to gain more y.

2) As differentiated: the argument would be that we can handle objective x by policy *a* and objective y by policy *b*; they will not be mutually exclusive or even have an impact on each other (or policy *b* will have this effect on objective x and that effect on objective z, but these are not mutually competing).

3) As cumulative: there is no 'trade-off' because objectives x, y, and z are not seen as competing but rather as re-enforcing each other.

Alternatives 2 and 3 both allow for different approaches to different potential challenges at the border and thus are also more closely connected to an understanding of borders as multi-functional in the sense that borders can be open across some functions and yet constitute barriers in other respects. How this is done in any particular case is context-dependent and therefore must be answered by empirical investigation. This is the first ambition of my analysis.

In addition, ideas about a border can differ between the central and local levels, and thus how these dimensions are combined may not be the same. Thus, the second objective of the analysis is to find out if the centre and periphery share the same ideas about the border, or if the sovereignty motives between the two levels are in conflict with one another. A central ambition of this thesis is therefore to locate the missing piece of the puzzle by explicitly focusing on a comparison of central and local level perspectives in the case of a border opening. Because the border not only separates the state from what is outside but also marks the legitimacy of the state from within, the more analogous ideas and motives for change in border permeability are at the two levels, the less likely it is that a more open border will result in tensions between the centre and periphery, i.e. coherence between the two levels could be a way to counterbalance the challenge of open borders.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that, rather than being something constant or inviolable, sovereignty should be understood as constructed in an on-going process and that this construction becomes visible through practices and policies towards borders. Regardless of the answer we give to the question of the extent to which state sovereignty is undermined as a result of globalisation, there is still a need to better understand how sovereignty is constructed from within states themselves and how the challenges towards borders are

perceived and met through border policies. One way to understand this, drawing on previous conceptualisations, is to 'unbundle' sovereignty into three different dimensions: geopolitical, material, and societal, and thus investigate if and how states prioritise these different aspects of sovereignty based on what they perceive to be their primary objective or most pressing challenges. Depending on what specific challenge is emphasised in a particular border setting, motives of different dimensions are given different priorities. Assuming that the objective of the state is to maintain its sovereignty, perceived challenges must be met in a way that minimises the perceived risk. The question that we then wish to answer is: how are the three dimensions of sovereignty balanced when border policies change? In this thesis, it is argued that the three dimensions of sovereignty model, and the corresponding function of borders, is a useful way to approach an investigation into how sovereignty is constructed from within. Instead of an analytical focus on the macro-level, grand strategy, of a state's overall border policy, this framework is useful in analysing single cases of border policy. It was argued that, as borders work as containers, i.e. manifestations of the sovereign state, any policy that changes border regulation is part of how sovereignty is manifested.

The second argument chiselled out from the discussion above is the borderland's role for challenges to sovereignty. While borders manifest state sovereignty, they are also sites where challenges to a state's internal cohesion become visible. The distance between the central government and peripheral regions can become accentuated at the border, particularly when local cross-border relations differ from those between their governments. What can be drawn from this reasoning is that if the central government and the border community have different opinions and objectives with regard to border policy, this may not only highlight centre-periphery cleavages but also test the state's control of the border. To understand how sovereignty is constructed in policies towards borders, we thus need to look at *both* the motives and reasons for the central government to pursue them and at how they are perceived and understood in the affected border community.

In the next chapter, my analytical framework is further operationalised, and the choices made in relation to the research design and analytical methods are discussed.

4. How to Study Sovereignty through Border Policy: Research Design and Methodological Considerations

In order to answer the research questions relating to sovereignty ideas in the Norwegian public discourse on the visa-free border zone, it was important to design an empirical study that could capture discussions regarding the local border traffic permit both at the central level, where the policy is made and decided upon, and the local level, where it is implemented and will affect the lives of citizens. The following chapter details how the present study was designed, how material was selected and collected, and the methods used to analyse this material. The chapter is organised as follows: first, I describe the motives behind the choice of focusing on this specific case of border opening through policy change and why it deserves academic attention; second, the choices involved in the design of the study are discussed, with a specific focus on the motives for a specific emphasis on public discourse and the two arenas where this policy change is discussed: the state and the border community. The third part of the chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the selection and collection of the empirical material, together with a description of what the material used for the analysis consists of and can be said to represent. The final part of the chapter details how the empirical analysis was carried out, in particular the strategy by which the analytical framework was operationalised and the material was coded and interpreted in the analysis.

The case of the Norwegian-Russian visa-free border zone

On an overarching level, the introduction of a local border traffic permit at the Norwegian-Russian border represents a case of border policy change where the border becomes more open through changes in visa regulations. If we ask why, if open borders challenge sovereignty, states choose to pursue open borders (in particular with regards to the movement of people), then the case of the Norwegian-Russian border can, to some extent, be considered a 'least likely case' of becoming open, as the border is one that has been char-

acterised as both 'high and hard' (Zimmerbauer 2013). Norway's border with Russia has, in recent history, been the epitome of a closed border, where very few interactions took place across it during the Cold War, and the two countries' different political systems, languages, religions, cultures, and economies all suggest that opening up the border would present some challenges. Again, the Norwegian-Russian border can be contrasted with that with Sweden, wherein openness does not present much of a challenge given that language, history, and standard of living are shared to such an extent as to not be perceived as challenges for either state.[43]

My initial interest in this case arose from the puzzling piece of border policy that the *grenseboerbevis* represents. Its construction gave rise to many questions: What is the *grenseboerbevis*? How can it be understood? What is a 'border zone' and what does it mean for those who live there? Why did Norway choose to introduce this policy? What were the motives behind it? How has such a policy proposal been received in a context that was previously divided by the Iron Curtain, where earlier reforms to open the border in the 1990s led to major concerns about crime rates and negative perceptions of their neighbours? From a more theoretical perspective, connected to this policy, what kind of sovereignty construction does it represent and what ideas exist about what the border represents? This thesis does not endeavour to answer all these questions, but the analysis of sovereignty ideas within the discourse of this particular open border policy provides insights that make the introduction of local visa freedom less puzzling.

An important aspect of the problem is that, if changes in border practice can be perceived as challenging to state sovereignty, then the faster or more unprecedented such a change is, the more these challenges should become visible. Although the opening of the Norwegian-Russian border is an ongoing process that can be said to have started with the end of the Cold War, the four years between initiating and implementing the border permit saw regular border-crossings multiply. Between 2008, when the policy process started, and 2012, when it came into practice, border crossings increased by 241 per cent. So, even before the introduction of a visa-free zone, this was a time of rapidly increasing border crossings after ten years of slowly declining numbers. This means that the border permit was part of an ongoing transformation of border-crossing practices in the region. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the increase in passages has been from Russia into Norway, which means that the effects of this increase should be very substantial in the Norwegian border community. The total number of border crossings in 2010 was 121,000, which represents approximately twelve times the total population of Sør-Varanger. If Norwegian sovereignty is perceived

[43] What has been characterised as a pluralistic 'security-community', where there is assurance of mutual non-violence, but where both members maintain legal independence in separate governments (Lindgren 1959).

to be challenged by these rapid changes in border crossing patterns, or if these massive increases in border passages give rise to tensions or conflicting demands between the centre and periphery or between Norwegians and Russians, this would likely become visible in the discussions on visa freedom in the border region.

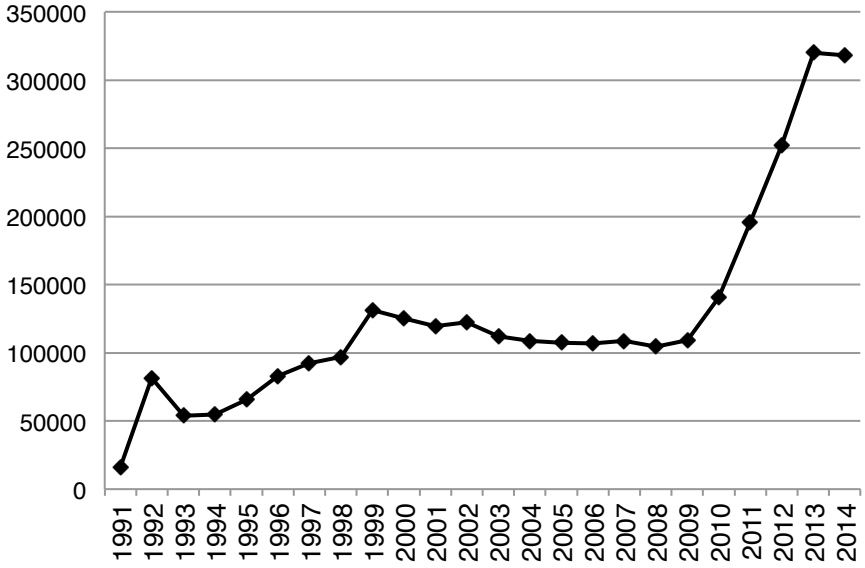

Figure 5. Border passages at Storskog border station 1991-2014.

(Statistics source: Øst-Finnmark Politidistrikt 2015)

What is this a 'case of'? This question is important if one choses to study a particular political 'event', which is sometimes answered with mutually exclusive alternatives: either a case is a single observation in a larger population of cases and, by saying something about the one, you can infer something about the many (Gerring 2007, 17), or a study of one single case is carried out because the event is unique in some way and thus must be understood in its uniqueness. However, with complex socio-political events, both of these positions can be correct because the fundamental difference between these approaches depend on the level of abstraction one specifies the event to be a 'case of' and thus at what level of abstraction one can say anything about the larger population. In this thesis, I develop a theoretical framework that aims to have general applicability, i.e. I argue that, for *any* event of border policy change, there will be a combination of geopolitical, economic, and societal sovereignty motives involved in the discussions leading up to the event of policy change, and the centre and periphery (i.e. the government and the local border community) will either be in agreement about what the-

se motives are and what function the border should play, or they will not. This can be expressed as different hypotheses that can be examined empirically. However, we cannot assume that the results of a study on the Norwegian border traffic permit case can be generalised to other borders in terms of the configuration of these different motives; in this sense, given that the specific themes and arguments will be context-dependent, the empirical results should not be assumed to match other cases.

The choice to study this case was made because it is a distinct piece of legislation, developed and decided upon during a limited and distinguishable period of time, and in its construction, it can be considered as a representation of an opening process. At the same time, it represents a break with previous border and visa policies in this context because, in its construction, it establishes a new category of belonging – the border resident – that differentiates between citizens of the same country depending on whether or not they live within the visa-free boundary. This last point is particularly interesting, since it makes this policy one where the internal organising function of the border is challenged – the policy has unequal effects on Norwegian citizens depending on where they live, as border residents get access to an extended space across the border. It should be noted that, although this could be considered a 'case of' both Norwegian border policy towards Russia and border policies in general, the ambition of this study is not to generalise the results of the study to other contexts or other cases of border policy. It is exploratory in the sense that the objective is to understand what seems to be a very curious new type of border-crossing regulation. Thus, the generalising ambition of this study is on the theoretical level (cf. Yin 2009, 15); in this regard, I argue that an analytical framework that takes both centre and periphery into account and aims to identify how different dimensions of sovereignty are balanced or 'bargained' with could be applied to the analysis of any kind of border study. For example, the same analytical framework could be useful for analysing border discourse regarding the building of walls or introduction of stricter border controls.

Crucial to the choice of research questions and design of this project were field trips to Kirkenes for data collection, which took place both at the initial phase and at later stages of the research. Spending periods of time in Kirkenes allowed for first-hand observation of the impact the border proximity has on everyday life there: bilingual street signs in the town centre, Russian vendors in the market square, and hearing Russian spoken in shops around town are only a few examples of how the proximity to Russia makes an impression on the daily life of this town. Informal conversations with people living there as well as some pilot interviews with actors with a thorough knowledge of Kirkenes were taken into consideration when planning the research design. Although the analysis at hand is not ethnographic and was completely built from written source materials, the time spent in Kirkenes provided me with an invaluable understanding of the context in

which the border traffic permit was to be implemented. For example, visits to Storskog border station, the shopping centres, and the border museum allowed for a first-hand impression of many of the subjects discussed in these sources, which can be seen as an important resource for me as a researcher when it came to coding and interpreting the material, as it reduced the risk of misunderstanding or missing important aspects.

Two arenas of observation: Public discourse at state and local levels

This study is designed as a comparison of discourse in two arenas: the arena of policy making at the centre and the public discourse in the border community arena (see figure 6 below). By means of such a design, it is possible to answer questions about if, and how, different ideas relating to the border permit are expressed at these two levels. The local and central arenas are empirical points of observation; in this sense, the construction of the border zone is studied as it takes place both in the central state discourse *and* at the local level where the border is located. These arenas are represented in the analysis through different types of material: governmental reports, documents, and parliamentary discussions at the central state level, and newspaper articles at the local level.

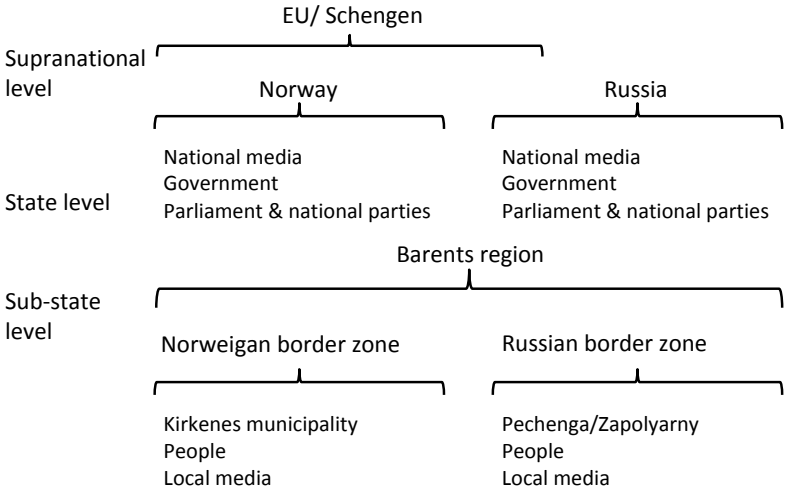

Figure 6. Potential arenas for border discourse on the Norway-Russia border

These two levels of observation must be understood as separate from the analytical question of how to describe the relationship between centre and periphery. The question of how the relations between centre and periphery are articulated within a discourse is not contingent upon the choice to study materials from both central and local levels. It would, for example, be possible to study the articulation or existence of centre-periphery conflict even when only examining empirical material from one of these levels.[44] The analysis will reflect the questions of whether the motives for the border permit differ between centre and periphery *and* whether an explicit tension between centre and periphery is articulated in relation to this border policy. Following the argument made in Chapter 3 about the potential challenge to the state, which requires us to examine the border from both the centre and periphery, any study that is interested in policies that have spatial dimensions could benefit from a comparison of central and local perspectives on the matter in question. For example, any policy that affects housing, health, redistribution, or infrastructure development, where the effects of the policy will have a spatial effect (in that it will not 'hit equally' across the land),

[44] For example, studying centre-periphery dynamics by comparing two different border regions and their relations to the same centre or studying attitudes towards the periphery in government policies over time.

could make use of such a two-level analysis. The question of centre-periphery relations is particularly relevant in the case of Norway. Ever since Seymor M Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) published their seminal work on cleaveages and party structures, the role of centre-periphery relations in the shaping of national policies has been a frequently studied issue in research on Norwegian politics. Although Norway's peripheral regions historically have been politically influential, and proportionally over-represented in parliamentary seats (e.g. Aardal and Bergh 2018), the extent of the power of the periphery is contested: to some extent the periphery's remains strong (Baldersheim and Rose 2010), but there are also indications that reforms have centralised power while weakening local governments (Baldersheim and Fimreite 2005; Tranvik and Selle 2005). Political cleavages between Norway's centre and its northern periphery have for example been expressed in the referendum on EU-membership, where the northern provinces were strongly negative towards a Norwegian EU-membership compared to the Oslo region (Østerud 2005, 710).

Given the scepticism towards EU membership, a new border regime within the Schengen framework might be seen in a similar light, e.g. as an infringement on Norway's independence. That Finnmark has more seats in parliament proportionally to its inhabitants means that there is room for the periphery's voice in parliamentary debates, so if there is a centre-periphery conflict over this policy, it should show up in parliamentary debates. There might also be centre-periphery differences that do not show up at the central level, which could indicate that parliamentary representation is not a guarantee for overcoming centre-periphery cleavages. During this time, the national government was a social-democratic led coalition, and the *Arbeiderpartiet* has historically been very strong in the north. However, at the local level, there was a shift from a social-democratic to a centre-right majority in the municipal council in 2011. Thus, if this policy would give rise to centre-periphery conflict that could be bridged by left–right alignment, such conflict could show up in the local debate after 2011 when the municipality is no longer led by the same majority as the central government.

A comparison of material from the local community and the state contributes towards answering two specific areas of investigation relevant to the purpose of this dissertation: first, it allows us to identify the motives and expectations relating to the border zone as they are expressed in these two contexts and, second, it allows us to compare and contrast the extent to which these ideas correspond to each other. In this sense, to what extent were the government's objectives for opening the border reflected by those it would affect? Were the perceived risks and opportunities in the local community understood at the central level?

Identification, selection, and collection of material

The purpose of this section is to describe the research material that was used in the analysis of the border permit. In order to explore how sovereignty is constructed in the border traffic permit discourse, material was selected representing both the state and local arenas. The material included in this study was chosen to represent the Norwegian public discourse relating to the construction of a border permit at the Norwegian-Russian border. By *public* in 'public discourse' in the general sense, I mean statements[45] communicated in a public forum, such as, for example, in a newspaper interview or a speech in parliament, thus intended to be heard and/or read by the public (as opposed to, for example, negotiations behind closed doors or private conversations between friends). Public statements are, by definition, political as they make up the fabric of ideas that shape our understanding of any phenomena at a societal level. By *discourse* in 'public discourse', I refer to the collection of such public statements that give meaning to a phenomenon; in short, how it is talked about. Although a 'given discourse cannot be entirely detached from all other discourses' (Neumann 2008, 66), to study something necessarily requires a delimitation of what that thing is, and a whole range of choices will have to be made to define and select that which is to be studied. In this study, the material selection has been narrowed down to public statements that explicitly mention the local border traffic permit, which was necessary in order to identify and select what material to include in the analysis.

This condition of how to identify a particular segment of public discourse can be described from two perspectives: one general and one case-specific. From a general theoretical perspective, this is a study of ideas of sovereignty through the lens of territorial borders and their function, in which, out of the entirety of public discourse that exists about sovereignty and border policy change in all the states that have borders, and out of all border policies in these states, the focus has been narrowed down to a particular state and a particular border and border policy. From a case-specific perspective, this debate is part of the wider Norwegian public discourse on border relations with Russia, and, as such, the border permit discourse is a segment of the wider discourse that also includes historical relations with Norway's neighbours and the development of cross-border relations.

In this study, I use the concept of discourse as described in the section on public discourse above. However, this is not a *discourse analysis* in the methodological sense, as I am using a toolkit more akin to qualitative content analysis for the representations of ideas about the border, explicitly in order to identify expressions that connect to different dimensions of sovereignty. Despite this, there are some aspects of discourse analysis that under-

[45] These should be understood as both written and oral statements, but all materials in this study are analysed as written text. E.g. parliamentary debates are analysed from the transcripts of them.

lie this study, such as the idea that the researcher should be interested in finding and exploring expressions of conflict in the material (Neumann 2008, 66). Such a perspective translates into questions about if, and how, conflicting ideas about what the border traffic permit means (in terms of what objectives it is expected to achieve and what risks or threats it is associated with) are expressed. Furthermore, this also relates to the issue of conflict between different sovereignty dimensions, e.g. how the potential conflict between openness and security objectives is expressed.

From this understanding of political discourse, ideas are not treated as passive or descriptive but as constitutive. That is, how something is talked and thought about provides the context within which decisions about it can be made, and thus can have consequences for the decisions that are made about it (e.g. Bacchi 1999).[46] As discussed in previous chapters, since borders constitute both material *and* symbolical representations of sovereignty, the meaning a border is given – or how it is represented – is part of what it *is*. The material analysed in this thesis has been selected from two public arenas in which the border traffic permit is discussed: official political documents and parliamentary debates in the governmental arena and the local discourse as it is represented in two daily newspapers. Figure 7 summarises the written sources used to represent the two arenas of public discourse in this study. It should be noted that these arenas, and the material thus collected to represent them, are not symmetrical, in the sense that the texts used are of a very different textual character. Bill proposals, parliamentary debates, and newspaper articles are not the 'same kinds' of texts, as the arena for public discourse on the level of the government is very different from the arena for public discourse in a small municipality. The purpose of the selection of data for the empirical analysis was to find material that best represented each of these contexts. The following section provides a more detailed discussion of the material used and why it was seen as providing the best account of public discourse on the local border traffic permit in Norway.[47]

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[46] In the case of borders, Paasi (1999, 670) argues that 'boundary discourses may also become materialized, . . . in legislation, . . . for example' which makes clear the connection between how boundaries are represented in discourse and the effects 'in the concrete boundary landscapes'.

[47] A comparison of materials of equal character, such as, for example, two different parliamentary debates, may have been useful if the aim was to compare how different parliaments have argued about the introduction of local border traffic permits in the other countries that have them. That is not the purpose of this thesis. These two arenas, the state and government and the local border community, are *not* equal or comparable in terms of policy power or institutional design. Nonetheless, they are two contexts wherein the introduction of a local border permit is an issue being discussed. As such, the different levels of power these different texts represent can even be considered an advantage for the purpose at hand; in this sense, given the differences, what are the *ideas* expressed in these different contexts and what do they tell us about the construction of sovereignty in Norway's border policy towards Russia?

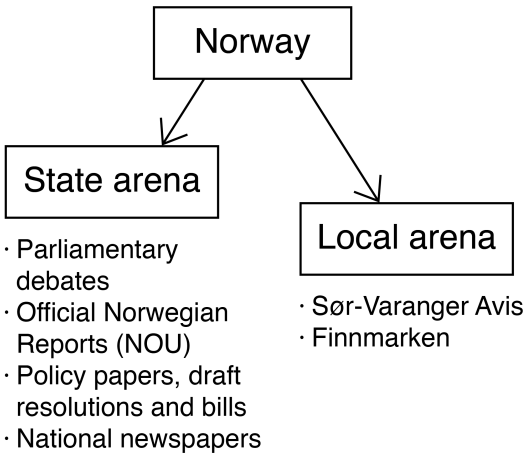

Figure 7. Summary of written sources

Materials representing the state level

The analytical focus of this study is on ideas in public discourse as they are expressed throughout the policy process. At the centre, there are two main arenas for public discourse: the national media and official government publications. Here, the main focus of analysis is placed on the government, as the initiator of the policy proposal and the executive power, and the parliament *Storting*, as the legislator. With regard to national media coverage, the four largest newspapers are included in the analysis.[48] The newspaper coverage of the local border permit is given less room than government documents in the analysis of the central/state arena because, with a total of less than 30 articles in the four-year period, the newspapers hardly provide extensive coverage of the issue.[49] Statements made in parliament are given the most attention in the analysis, as it is here that the reasons for the policy are most elaborately expressed. That is, debates in parliament are where the motives for a certain policy will have to be explained and argued, as well as where arguments against and objections to a policy can also be given room, which is why it is here that the fullest range of political ideas connected to the local border permit are expected to be found. The meaning and content of a policy is created in parliamentary debate, in terms of policy-makers'

[48] These are: *Aftenposten*, *Verdens Gang*, *Dagens Næringsliv* and *Dagbladet.*

[49] In the four largest daily newspapers, the word *grenseboerbevis* is mentioned 35 times in total. Out of these, five are not about this particular border permit but the one used during occupation in WW2 for Norwegian citizens living near the borders to be able to travel in their own region. Out of the other 30 times, 6 are duplicates, for example published both online and on paper, or from the same news source. Two-thirds of the remaining articles are from 2010, around the time the agreement was signed. Compare this with the local news, where, from the time the agreement was signed up until implementation, we see an increase and continued reporting on the subject.

intentions and oppositions' positions. Parliamentary debates can give voice to different positions regarding a particular policy in a number of ways, not only in the context where opposition parties are against the policy, but also where policies are used as examples of a bigger picture or in relation to and to emphasise other issues. In this regard, parliament is where political positions that are intended to be made public are made public, which is what I am interested in.

In order to cover the state level discourse on the local border permit traffic as thoroughly as possible, all public documents produced at the national level (by government and parliament) that mentioned and discussed the border permit, from the time when the *grenseboerbevis* is first mentioned in May 2008 until the time of its coming into effect in May 2012, are included in the analysis. These documents primarily take three different forms: a) transcripts of parliamentary sessions; b) reports or bills to the *Storting*;[50] and c) Norwegian official reports.[51] All these documents were collected online through the official websites of the Norwegian parliament and government. During the entire period covered in this study, the second Stoltenberg government was in power, which was a coalition between the Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet), the Socialist Left Party (Socialistisk Venstre), and the Centre Party (Senterpartiet). This coalition formed the government between October 2007 and October 2013, and the Labour Party held a majority of the cabinet positions, including Prime Minster (Jens Stoltenberg) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jonas Gahr Støre). The majority of speakers that mentioned the border permit in parliamentary debates were representatives of the governing coalition.

Materials representing the local level

At the local level, how to identify what material to be collected had to be done in a different manner from that of the centre. In contrast to the central level, there is little by way of official records regarding the border permit to be analysed at the local level. Because this is a policy decided upon at the level of national government, the municipal council does not discuss it on record, nor does it have any official influence over the policy process.[52] On

[50] *Stortingsmelding,* or *Melding till Stortinget* (STM/MST) are reports/white papers from the government to the parliament containing such things as reports on the current state of specific policy areas and/or suggestions for future policy development. They are often the groundwork for policy proposals.

[51] *Norsk Offentlig Utredning*, NOU

[52] As Sør-Varanger municipal council keeps a website of all its public sessions records, a search was carried out for all the public documents in Sør-Varanger municipality mentioning the word 'border' in their title during this time period. None of these documents mention the border permit. Subjects discussed in relation to the border include issues that are within the authority of the municipality, such as cross-border agreements with the Inari municipality (Finland), plan and building permits for construction sites near the border (e.g. the building of a new military border guard station at Svanvik), and infrastructure issues (such as the building

the other hand, where the national media has been rather quiet on the subject, local media coverage of the policy process and its related issues has been extensive. It was therefore decided that the local and regional printed press would be the most suitable material for studying public discourse at the local level. In the four-year period before the visa freedom of the local border traffic permit came into effect, the *grenseboerbevis* is mentioned, on average, 4.7 times per month in local newspaper articles up until the agreement was signed in November 2010; after that, on average, 18.9 articles per month address the subject of the border permit. In this sense, the border reform is continuously given attention and is an active part of local public discourse, as can be seen in Figure 8.

of a new border passage station at Storskog). Some of these concern the openness of the border indirectly, but none of them mention the *grenseboerbevis*, which is why the public discourse as it takes place in the printed press was analysed instead.

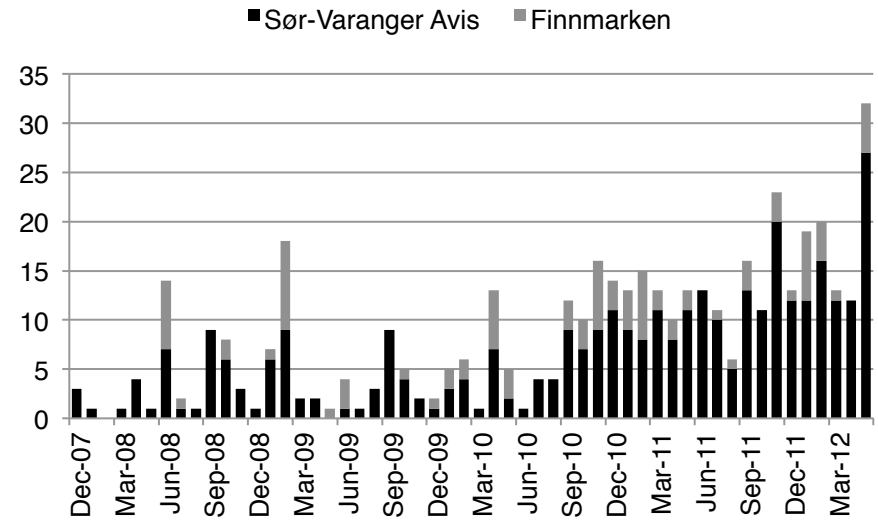

Figure 8. Number of articles that mention 'grenseboerbevis' between 2007-2012.

The newspaper articles that constitute the empirical material for the analysis of the *grenseboer*-discourse at the local level were collected during field trips to Kirkenes in 2011, 2012, and 2013, where I could gain access to the digital archives of the *Sør-Varanger Avis* and *Finnmarken*. *Sør-Varanger Avis* is the local newspaper for the municipality, whereas *Finnmarken* is the regional newspaper for the *Finnmark fylke*; the former is politically unaffiliated but was previously connected to the Conservative Party (Høyre), while the latter is affiliated to the Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet). The inclusion of both these newspapers means that different political perspectives can be taken into account and be reflected upon in the analysis.

In the analysis of both the local and central arenas of public discourse, I have included all instances where the border permit is mentioned in the selected material, even if it is not the central focus of that particular article or document. The decision for which material to use was based on two criteria: a) the *grenseboerbevis* should be mentioned, and b) it should be within the timeframe between initiation and implementation of the policy. Once these documents were found, the coding process for what parts of the material should be included in the analysis was carried out in a similar way as that for the government documents, i.e. by locating parts of the text containing statements about the border permit within each document (some of these documents are up to 200 pages, and perhaps only one or two of the pages relate to the border permit). Once the sections of the document that contained statements about the border permit were located, some complex choices had to be made. For example, how much of the text in which the

border permit is mentioned should be taken into account in the analysis? When the border permit is the main focus of argument in a parliamentary debate or the main topic in a news article, it is obvious that the particular article is relevant to the study at hand. However, even when the border permit is not the main focus, it is equally relevant to the analysis to note how it is being used in relation to other issues, as this can tell us something about the ideas of sovereignty that are part of the border policy change. Here, it was decided to make qualitative judgements based on two criteria: a) focus on the parts of the texts that directly refer to the *grenseboerbevis*, and b) include enough of the statement/context in which the border permit is mentioned to capture the relevance of why it is mentioned (e.g. when it is discussed as *part of* a larger strategy, this context is also included as part of the material). The next section discusses what different voices mean for the analysis in this thesis.

Voices/actors represented in the public discourse on the border permit

In the theoretical chapter, it was argued that the state should not be assumed to be internally homogenous when it comes to how it views the border. Nevertheless, some kind of delimitation as to which perspectives that should be included is needed, and, as discussed above, there are two main arenas of particular interest here. The state, in terms of the political leadership that represents the citizens within the territorial boundary, is here represented by material from the parliament and government, while the borderland is represented by material from the local news media. Consequently, the voices that can be heard within the source material represent a wide range of both individual and group actors, from the 'person on the street' who is asked if s/he will use the border permit in the local paper and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, who speaks for the government in parliamentary assemblies to local business owners, union representatives, opposition parliamentarians, and newspaper editors. Taken together, the voices of these actors cover different positions of power and opposing positions on the political spectrum. They also represent actors with vested, active interests in the developments of the border policy, as well as actors who have not given it much thought at all. As the analysis will later show, there is a wide range of ideas and issues connected to the creation of a visa-free border zone, but these are not necessarily divided along established party lines. Altogether, the material analysed in this study covers a range of different motives in connection to the border permit as they are expressed in public discourse.

The material has not been selected to provide equal representation to different points of view on this subject but rather, as mentioned before, to represent the public discourse on the border permit in each respective arena.

Taken together, all these voices constitute the public discourse of the border permit and, although it is not the explicit objective of this study to compare and contrast different actors' roles or arguments within the discourse but rather the central ideas about the border permit that represent both the state and the border community, the analysis will also comment on and take note of the most significant differences among actors within each arena. By so doing, I aim to capture the objectives of the 'state' with regard to the policy while avoiding the assumption that the state is a unified actor, as cautioned by Liftin (1997, 171).

It should be noted that, in the local media discourse on the border permit, there are often interviews with, or quotes from, Støre's speeches. These are often direct reflections of what is being said at the central level, but they will be analysed as part of the local discourse, which they become part of when written about in the local newspapers. This means that some of the motives and ideas expressed in the central discourse are directly reflected in the local context. Therefore, in the analysis, how policymaker's views are reproduced and presented in the local discourse will also be discussed.

The roads not taken

In any research process, choices made mean that some things will be left out and some questions will remain unanswered. In this process, other research designs could have included analysis at either the supra-state level (what was the Schengen discourse behind the local border permit?) or as a state-state comparison (how does the Norwegian discourse compare to the Russian discourse?). The chosen research design intends to analyse the two-level interaction between central political discourse and local-level media discourse on the Norwegian side of the border, while leaving out both a comparison at the macro level (i.e. Schengen) and the corresponding discourses on the Russian side. The analytical object is to interrogate the ideas of sovereignty connected to the border permit in public discourse and how these ideas have been expressed in the Norwegian centre and periphery. In this regard, how this process was perceived from the Russian context is not part of the design; rather, Russia's role in the policy process becomes part of the analysis only as part of the Norwegian public discourse.

The choice to limit the analysis to the Norwegian context is theoretically motivated on the grounds that my main interest is how sovereignty is constructed from within and how borders may have different meanings depending on where we look at them from within the state. If, on the other hand, the ambition of this study had been to explain how the border permit came to be agreed upon, the focus could have been on the bilateral negotiations leading

up to the decision.[53] A research question more similar to previous studies on this region, such as how the visa-free zone can contribute to the construction of a regional identity, would, on the other hand, have benefited from a research design that focused on the local level on both sides of the border. Either of these approaches could result in empirically interesting and theoretically rewarding studies, which would require very different methodological approaches and the use of empirical data other than what has been used here, but they are also outside the scope and theoretical focus of this study.[54] Another alternative design, if we were particularly interested in the character of the local border traffic permit, could have been to compare this border permit to those introduced at the Poland-Kaliningrad border (or any of the other eight Schengen cases), or how the border permits at the Schengen border compare to border traffic permits at the US-Mexico border, where somewhat similar border policies are in place in some places along the border. Since the Schengen local border traffic zones have only recently been introduced, not much research has been published that particularly focuses on them. Two exceptions are the research of Domaniewski and Studzińska (2016) and Anisiewicz and Palmowski (2014), who examine the effects of the introduction of border traffic permits on the local border communities where local border traffic permits have been introduced. Like other studies on cross-border cooperation, their focus is on describing and evaluating the effects that border policy reform has on the border region. As my research question was decided upon and the project had begun before the border permit had been used for the first time, studying the effects of it was excluded by both choice and necessity.[55]

In any policy process, there will, of course, be some development over time, as the proposal travels from initial idea to a decision ready for implementation. The changes and developments over time in this case will be part of the analysis. However, to clarify, the intention of this study is not to analyse the policy process; instead, the developments over time within the process are all part of the ideas expressed in the public discourse, which this study aims to explicate. In this sense, if ideas are part of the re-construction

[53] See Miggelbrink (2014) for a macro-Schengen perspective on the construction of the local border traffic regulation.

[54] A fully balanced two-state comparison would also suffer from imbalance in terms of access to government documents and information. As knowledge of Russian politics, society, and language would be a requirement to perform such an analysis, it was also not possible for me as a researcher. The case of Norway is different, since, as a Swede, I have an outside perspective but have lived in Norway for a short period of time and, due to the similarities in our languages, I can read Norwegian fairly comfortably.

[55] Future research that both looks at the practical effects that the border permit has had and how ideas about the border function has changed since 2012 would certainly be of interest, not least since the Norwegian shift in government and the refugee crisis since 2014 have also had implications for this border.

of a border, any changes in the discourse that reflect changes in the policy process are part of the border construction.

It should be underlined that I regard change as inherent in borders, meaning that they are never fixed. Although the place where 'the line' is drawn may be the same for a very long time, the symbolic division it represents, the rules that regulate it, the intensity at which it is guarded, and the number of passages that takes place across it all change over time and give the border different meanings.[56] Studying critical periods, for example, when any of these factors change significantly is therefore important so that we do not assume that what we knew about it ten years ago is still valid.

In the end, the design of this study comes down to research interest: I want to know what functions borders have in the world and how something that seems so necessary for a state to even exist can also be part of the ongoing construction of state sovereignty; I want to know how seemingly conflicting objectives, such as openness and security, can be reconciled; and I want to know how borders are shaped by the public perceptions of them, both as targets of policy and in their local contexts, in particular if, and in that case how, the centre and periphery can share these ideas.

Operationalisation and coding

The analysis of the local border traffic permit was structured around the two research questions relating to how sovereignty is construed in the discourse and how this is done at the centre and periphery. As outlined in Chapter 3, this was done by first analysing each level separately, focusing on unbundling the dimensions of sovereignty and the extent to which each dimension is expressed in the border permit discourse. The second step was to compare and contrast differences between the local level and central level and thereafter discuss the sovereignty 'bargain' being made in the case of the local border traffic permit. After having decided on the design of the study and what material to include in the analysis, the representations of different ideas needed to be mapped and interpreted in an analytically coherent way. In the following section, the method for coding, sorting, and mapping the content in the empirical material is described in more detail.

Working with the qualitative analysis of text requires a number of choices and considerations. Some methods of textual analysis require a strict analytical scheme, whereby specific words or phrases are counted and measured. Such strictly deductive models of analysis require pre-determined, clearly defined categories in which to place findings from the texts, thus providing great transparency to the analysis but also leaving little room for discovering

[56] The 'line' is also redrawn once in a while to adjust to changes in the landscape, water levels, etc., so the physical manifestation of the border is not really permanent either.

nuances and unexpected issues in the source material. Other methods, for example most versions of grounded theory, build from the bottom-up and generate theory based on categories that show up in the source material (e.g. Glaser and Strauss 2006 [1967]). However, a fully inductive approach to the source material, however interesting this might be, would not serve to answer the specific questions presented in this thesis. By posing an analytical question, i.e. 'how is sovereignty constructed here?', and using the three dimensions of sovereignty as a framework, I am already making some assumptions about what is to be studied in this material (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2008, 63). With the geopolitical, material, and societal dimensions in mind, a method of coding through the close reading of the source material was adopted, in which the theoretical framework informed the approach to the material and the content of the material itself also informed the analysis. The coding was thus done by moving back and forth between the empirical material and the theoretical framework. The benefits of working with this method is that it allowed for a structured approach to the material while maintaining flexibility and sensitivity in regard to the particulars of the case at hand.

Dimensions can be used to sort statements into categories as well as to determine where statements are in relation to a specific research question (Bergström and Boréus 2005, 165). Using dimensions as an analytical tool is useful for the ordering and systematic comparison of large quantities of texts, and the approach adopted here, where (sub-)categories were decided upon continuously throughout the analytical process, allowed for an openness to nuances and layers of meaning throughout the analysis, compared to, for example, completely pre-determined categories. The risk of this approach is that there is a chance of overlap, as these categories are not (compared to, for example, ideal-types) mutually exclusive. As one ambition of the analysis is to find out how the different dimensions of sovereignty are bargained with, the question of overlap between the dimensions used in coding, i.e. when statements about the border permit relate to more than one dimension of sovereignty, is, of course, a very important one. However, the relevant question then is *how* this is done and how these dimensions are interrelated in the discourse, which will not be captured by the coding and sorting process, but will instead require attention in the subsequent discussion of each dimension.

The dimensions of sovereignty and the corresponding functions of the border outlined in the previous chapter should be understood as the theoretical link between our interest in how sovereignty is constructed from within the state and the empirical contexts we wish to study. That is, although the context and history of each border is unique, this framework could be applied to the analysis of any border policy case. By unbundling sovereignty into dimensions, we can study each of them separately and thus determine both what sovereignty dimensions are attributable to a border in a particular

empirical case and how they are interconnected and/or bargained with in relation to border policy change. If only one of the dimensions were to be important in a specific border policy case, then only the issues relating to that particular dimension would be part of its public discourse. For example, a geopolitical policy would be where geopolitical concerns, e.g. military security, diplomacy, and territorial control, were the only relevant and visible ideas connected to a change in border policy; an economic sovereignty policy would be where only economic motives, such as creating markets, redistribution, or increasing cross-border trade, were considered; and a societal sovereignty policy would be a border policy with the intent to regulate relations and movement of people, for example the control of migration, connecting border communities with central infrastructure, or the 'nationalisation' of border populations. In such cases, it would be difficult to draw any conclusions as to whether there is any kind of 'bargaining' between different objectives. Although each of these scenarios are possible in theory, since all three dimensions are constitutive of sovereignty, it is more likely that all of them will be addressed at some point during a process of border policy change. The more relevant question, therefore, is not only which of these dimensions are more important, but if and how they are interrelated and balanced against one another in the making of border policy.

Based on the framework of the three dimensions of sovereignty outlined in Chapter 3, and taking the issue of centre-periphery relations into account, the analysis aims to answer the following questions:

1) What are the sovereignty motives for the border zone? That is, where should the problems, benefits, and risks articulated in the discourse be placed in relation to the three dimensions of sovereignty?
    a) What are the central themes in the discourse? (What are the central issues connected to it?)
    b) What are the objectives of the border permit? That is, what problem is it expected to solve or what benefit is it expected to have?
        i) Are the objectives/benefits geopolitical?
        ii) Are the objectives/benefits material?
        iii) Are the objectives/benefits societal?
    c) What risks or problems are it expected to create or are it associated with?
        i) Are the problems/risks geopolitical?
        ii) Are the problems/risks material?
        iii) Are the problems/risks societal?
    d) Who is the permit created for? Who is expected to use it and gain from it?
    e) Is there another dimension/theme in the discourse that does not fit into the three-dimensions approach?

2) How are motives based on different sovereignty dimensions related to each other in the discourse?
   a) As conflicting/zero-sum? Is the policy expected to have positive outcomes on one dimension but create problems in another?
   b) As differentiated? Is the policy expected to have different and parallel/non-conflicting outcomes?
   c) As cumulative? Is the policy expected to have different but mutually reinforcing or additive outcomes?
3) How and to what extent are the central and local-level discourses aligned?
   a) Are the themes and issues the same/overlapping?
   b) Are the priorities and objectives the same?
   c) Are the expected benefits and risks the same?
   d) Are there conflicting objectives at the local and central levels?

There are a number of possible outcomes from a comparison of centre-periphery discourse on three dimensions based on the questions above:

1. Same or overlapping objectives *or* different or even opposing objectives;
2. Same or overlapping risk assessment *or* different identification of risks and risk assessment;
3. Same or overlapping perceived outcomes *or* different expectations on the outcomes; or
4. Same or overlapping connection between sovereignty dimensions *or* different ideas about how these are connected (3a–c)

There is no given assumption about how the border permit should be construed in terms of sovereignty motives. As previous research on this border region has shown, geopolitical (Second World War and Cold War), material (Barents regional cooperation), and societal (Norwegianisation, Barents regionalisation) motives have all characterised Norwegian policies towards this border. Any and each of these sovereignty dimensions could be actualised in the discourse on the local border traffic permit. The questions for this study are therefore: Which sovereignty dimensions are associated with the introduction of local visa freedom? How are they weighed against each other? Are there similar or conflicting ideas about the meaning of the border permit between the centre and the periphery?

Coding procedure

The operationalisation of these dimensions was drawn up so that it could be used to identify and connect the border permit discourse to ideas about sovereignty and, more specifically, how these dimensions were interrelated in the discourse. These four categories were drawn up as a preliminary sorting

tool for the material: 1=geopolitics, 2=economy, 3=society/identity, and 4=other (centre-periphery or other/specify). After selection, the texts were read through and the primary (as well as the secondary/third) theme of the text was noted as well as the main subject in each text, e.g. 'border control', 'sports exchange', or 'local business'. Texts that contained more than one theme or connected different themes were given more than one code, e.g. if the local economy was the main subject of an article but friendly neighbours were mentioned, then the text was coded as Economy 1st theme and Society 2nd.

The texts were sorted based on their subject matter, with similar ones being given the same code, e.g. meetings between Norwegian and Russian diplomats were coded as 'bilateral relations'. The connection between statements about the border permit and sovereignty dimensions was made not only when statements were made for or against the border permit but also with regards to statements about how it was expected to work or its implications for other issues, as well as when the border permit was brought up in relation to other border policy issues. For example:

a) 'The border permit *will lead to* increased sales in Kirkenes shopping centres' was coded as the economic dimension theme 'local business'
b) 'We are talking with Russia about *the possibility for* a local border traffic permit' was coded as the geopolitical dimension theme 'bilateral relations: Russia',

This is despite the fact that the first statement is an argument about expected effects of the border permit and the second statement mentions the border permit in relation to Norway's diplomatic relations with Russia.

The texts were re-read so that the coding procedure would be consistent throughout. Some topics were coded as relating to more than one main category because of how they were used in the discourse, and, if that were the case, they would be given specific attention when discussed in the following chapters. After this coding was carried out, the texts were re-read and grouped thematically, first into the three dimensions of sovereignty, i.e. geopolitical, economic, and societal, as well as the fourth category of issues that related to centre-periphery relations; then, within each of these dimensions, the texts were sorted based on the sub-topics of the discourse.

The coding was primarily used as a tool to identify and sort different themes, and the following chapters have been structured in line with the three dimensions of sovereignty and the sub-themes by which they are represented in the discourse. The fourth main theme that was used in the coding, centre-periphery relations, will also be discussed in the analysis, but not as a fourth dimension of sovereignty, as it rather cuts across these dimensions. The following sub-sections provide a summary of the main characteristics of

each dimension, as they are operationalised in this study,[57] the specific questions that will be asked in this study, and a discussion (with examples) of how such expressions have been analysed in the case at hand.

The geopolitical dimension

The geopolitical role of borders is understood here as all issues relating to the state's control over territory and its international relations, which includes hard power, such as military presence, border fences and surveillance, and other demonstrations of power, as well as soft power, such as the bilateral, diplomatic relations and mutual recognition between states and international organisations. Themes that are taken into account in the analysis of geopolitical sovereignty ideas in the discourse are, for example, the role of and relation to the neighbour state, the role of supra-state or international level actors, and the use of military and security arguments. Here, I also consider all questions concerning legislation and legal independence, as the domestic legislation on visa policy becomes a geopolitical issue when set against the regulations of a neighbouring state and, in particular, when it comes to issues of overlapping jurisdiction and supra-state legislation, legal matters are a notable geopolitical concern.

Codes for the geopolitical dimension:

1) Bilateral relations
   a) with Russia
   b) with Finland
2) International relations
   a) Schengen
   b) NATO
   c) EU
3) Border control issues
   a) Military
   b) Security
   c) Crime

The material dimension

The material dimension of sovereignty is understood here as the role of the economy for a state's possibility to remain sovereign. The regulation and control of cross-border flows are central to this dimension. As such, it can be expected that economical concerns, in the form of *both* opportunities and threats, are a central theme in any border policy discourse. This dimension is operationalised here as including all the themes relating to the economy in

[57] This should not be taken as a final/generally applicable list of features, as the particular articulation of each sovereignty dimension might be different in different contexts.

the discourse, such as trade, movement of capital and goods, labour migration, and costs of managing the border.

Codes for the economic dimension:

1) Labour market
   a) Work/labour migration
   b) Wage dumping risk
2) Trade across the border
   a) Local business growth
   b) Tourism as business
3) Infrastructure issues
   a) Border passage capacity
   b) Other infrastructure issues
4) National economic interests
   a) Natural resources
   b) Welfare/income gap across the border

The societal dimension

The societal dimension of sovereignty relates as much to the capacity of the border to keep something together as to the capacity to keep something apart. That is, the function to separate is the one we think about when we see borders as a means to delimit between different states, but, as has been argued above, a border is also the starting point for the construction of an imagined community. The societal dimension is understood here as the perception of societal relations across, as well as within, the border, relating to such issues as social representation, dialogue, and difference. This dimension is operationalised here as including all references to culture, identity, and history, either through identifying or constructing common ground or by marking distance or difference that distinguishes 'us' from 'them'.[58]

Codes for the societal dimension:

1) Identity
   a) Local/regional identity
   b) National identity
   c) History
2) Cultural exchange
   a) Tourism
   b) Sport
   c) Minority population
3) Othering
   a) Criminality

[58] Note that I do not assume a particular 'us' or 'them'; who a potential 'other' is perceived to be is an open question for the analysis.

b) Language/communication
c) Marking of differences
4) The folk-to-folk expression

The fourth theme used in the analysis is not a fourth dimension but an open category used to capture themes in the discourse that could not be shoe-horned into the other three dimensions, in particular how centre-periphery themes possibly cut across the other three dimensions; it was used in the coding of the material as it is an important part of the research objective of this thesis to also include centre-periphery relations in the analysis.

Codes for the fourth category:
1) Infrastructure investments (as criticism of the centre)
2) Border policy framed as local/ regional issue
3) Border policy framed as national issue
4) Border permit influence on other political issues
5) Miscellaneous

Interpreting text and reflexivity

Regarding the interpretation and analysis of the material, some important questions exist relating to how to value observations, one of which is the prevalence and centrality of different themes in the border permit discourse, while the other is how well the analysed texts give a meaningful representation of said discourse. The selection and delimitation of texts has already been accounted for above, so this section will discuss what choices were made when considering the issues of interpretation and the prevalence of specific themes.

It should be noted that, since the purpose of this study is to understand what sovereignty ideas the border permit represents, any and all observations containing the *grenseboerbevis* in the material were taken into account in the analysis. The analysis does not strive to provide a quantitative 'measure' of how much or how often each idea or theme was mentioned in the debate. Still, there are benefits to a discussion of centrality that should not be overlooked. It would be difficult to claim relevance from an analysis that aimed to provide equal weight to every single issue found in the material connected with the border permit. It would then also be impossible to say anything about how the discourse differs between the central and local contexts and how the prevalence of different themes varies over time. The problem of evaluating the relative importance of each theme in the discourse was handled though a number of strategies.

First of all, the analytical focus rests on topics that were recurrent in the discourse. Issues that came up only once in the material are noted as such in their interpretation and the arguments for why they are deemed relevant are

made clear. For example, the fear that the border permit will be used to dump wages for Norwegian workers by employing Russian workers is mentioned only once or twice in the material, but it is a counter-argument to the main narrative that the border permit is necessary to find workers at all, and, as such, it is an indication of how ideas about the economy can be framed from different perspectives as either a threat or an opportunity, as well as providing a rare example of a critique of the border permit. The overall assessment takes into account what seems to be the dominant idea within each dimension, i.e. if there is more risk or more opportunity associated with this policy, and then it will summarise and evaluate how ideas within each dimension are related to each other in the discourse. Furthermore, the connection between each theme and the corresponding dimension of sovereignty that it is categorised into will be made clear in the discussion, in addition to why some topics are interpreted as expressions of more than one dimension.

An analysis of text is always based on *interpretation* in the sense that the researcher's task is to identify and classify statements in the text. Here, statements about a certain border policy are being interpreted as representations of sovereignty ideas. This does not necessarily mean that the intentions behind statements were directly related to any particular sovereignty strategy on the part of individual actors, because the dimensions of sovereignty and sovereignty bargains are understood at a theoretical level of abstraction. In this sense, I interpret statements in the material as representations of sovereignty dimensions, and I try to be as explicit as possible and provide extensive examples/illustrations of all my claims with quotes from the material, thus making the analytical process as transparent as possible. It is conceivable that some of the themes would not have fitted into given dimensions if interpreted by someone else or that, in someone else's estimation, certain ideas have been placed in the 'wrong' dimension. This is always a risk when conducting qualitative analysis, but the risk is mitigated through the use of examples and active discussion and explanation throughout the analysis relating to why ideas have been interpreted the way they have. To do this material justice, my strategy has been to be as careful and transparent as possible in the reading and interpretation of the material. In the following chapters, I have given examples of quotes that represent each analytical point I make, and I have explained my interpretation of these quotes in as detailed a way as possible. The quotes have all been translated to English for readability, but the original Norwegian quotes can be found in footnotes for readers who wish to make their own reading of them.

Conclusion

Previous chapters have outlined the way in which the theoretical points of departure for this study are organised into an analytical framework and how this framework is operationalised to enable analysis of the empirical materi-

al. This concludes the first part of this thesis. In the following chapters, this framework will be put into practice to analyse the local border traffic permit in the Norwegian context. Chapters 5–7 each focus on one of the three dimensions of sovereignty: geopolitics, economy, and society. Each chapter details how themes in the discourse on the border permit connect to a particular dimension of sovereignty. Each chapter first presents an analysis of the central discourse/government material and then examines the periphery discourse/local material before concluding with a comparison and conclusion of how each dimension of sovereignty matters in the discourse. Chapter 8 concludes the analysis with a discussion of how all three dimensions of sovereignty come into play in the border permit discourse, as well as if and how the different sovereignty motives are 'bargained with' in relation to each other. The chapter also summarises how this border policy change is dealt with at the two different levels and discusses how tensions between different objectives and asymmetries between the two levels are formed in this public discourse. Finally, I discuss how these findings contribute to our understanding of borders, sovereignty, and centre-periphery relations in border politics. I suggest some ways forward from the study of the Norwegian border traffic permit by proposing possible hypotheses and questions for further research that could be developed based on this analysis.

PART II

5. 'Our Neighbours and Colleagues': The Border Zone as a Tool for Bilateral Friendship

In this first of three empirical chapters, the border permit will be examined from a geopolitical perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to determine the extent to which geopolitical concerns were in focus when the visa-free border zone was created. As argued in previous chapters, geopolitical interests are a core element of border reconfigurations, as states attempt to meet the geopolitical challenges to sovereignty. Military invasion or occupation are the most drastic forms of geopolitical challenges, but tense or hostile bilateral relations, border transgressions, or a heightened military presence in the border area constitute such threats that may be seen as important reasons for border policy change. The absence of military hostility and equal military capacities are generally crucial aspects of border openness (e.g. Boehmer and Peña 2012). As mentioned before, several issues can be perceived as potential geopolitical risks for the Norwegian state: national self-determination vis-à-vis Schengen, control and influence in the Barents Sea, and stability in bilateral relations with Russia. During a large part of the 20th century, the border was closed off, with very little interaction across the border, and the area has been, and to some extent remains, heavily militarised.

In this chapter, the bilateral relations between Norway and Russia, the role of the international community, and the security issues relating to the introduction of a local border traffic permit will be analysed. The analysis shows how arguments about the role of the border for Norway's external relations have been taken into consideration in the public discourse and if and how the introduction of a border permit has been expected to affect these relations. This chapter is organised as follows: the first half focuses on the border permit discourse at the state level, while the second half focuses on the discourse at the local level. The analysis aims to identify what geopolitical motives and/or challenges were raised in relation to the introduction of a border permit. Although the ideas expressed at both levels often overlap, there are some differences that will be taken note of. At the central level, in the parliamentary debates, the maintenance of good bilateral relations with Russia were of primary concern, but we will also see that Norway has tried to balance the strong powers of both Russia and the EU. In the local context, we will see how the region has become a location for 'high politics'. The

conclusion will summarise the main findings and compare the central and local level arguments.

Geopolitics in the central-level discourse

At the central level of the state, the geopolitical aspects of creating a visa-free border zone are of primary concern in the debate. The following section outlines and analyses three main strands where the border permit is dealt with in relation to its role in external relations: the history of bilateral relations with Russia and the role of interpersonal diplomacy, the introduction of a visa-free border zone as a security strategy, and Norway's relationship with supra-state organisations, mainly the EU and Schengen.

History and interpersonal relations

Given the geopolitical role this border has had, it is not surprising that its history, and the history of Norway's relationship with Russia, is an active part of the on-going political debate. This is highly visible when it comes to the question of a visa-free border zone. In discussions about the border permit at the state level, references are made to both Cold War and post-Cold War history. For example, the previously closed and heavily militarised border between Norway and Russia is described as an area 'where NATO met the Soviet Union; [it] is now an area where development and cooperation across the border is taking off' (Støre [A] s101116, 572-3).[59] Such references are used primarily in connection with arguments about the progress and developments that have been achieved since the fall of the Soviet Union or, later on, the more recent restricted security zone along the Russian border in order to show how different the situation has become in recent years and that progress in terms of a more open border has occurred:

> The shift in the North, from a front line between East and West to an area for cooperation on resource utilisation, environmental concerns, knowledge, work, and wealth creation, started with the fall of the Berlin Wall (Hansen [A] s120417, 2999).[60]

[59] Documents from the parliament will be referenced as follows: (Støre [A] s101116, 572-3), where Støre=name of speaker, [A]=party affiliation, s101116=stortinget year-month-day, and 572=page. The following abbreviations for party names are used: A=Arbeiderpartiet/Labour Party, FrP=Fremskrittspartiet/Progress party, H=Høyre/Conservative party, Sp=Senterpartiet/Centre party, SV=Sosialistisk Venstreparti/Socialist left party.

[60] Skiftet i nord, fra frontlinje mellom øst og vest til et område for samarbeid om ressursutnyttelse, miljøhensyn, kunnskap, arbeid og verdiskaping, startet med Berlinmurens fall (Hansen [A] s120417, 2999).

The historical references primarily take two different forms with two different purposes: either they are used to emphasise a peaceful past – 'the border between Norway and Russia has always been a peaceful one' (Vedum [Sp] s110208, 2336) – in connection to arguments about Norway and Russia being good neighbours with friendly relations and shared interests, or they are used to emphasise the different character of border relations between 'now' and 'the Cold War' and how much more open the border is now.

In addition to historical references to the relationship between the two states, a main theme when describing the bilateral relationship between Norway and Russia is the *interpersonal relations* of high-level politicians. In particular, Norway's foreign minister at the time, Jonas Gahr Støre, in speaking about his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, emphasises their personal connection, which thus constitutes part of their diplomatic relations:

> When I meet my Russian colleague Sergei Lavrov at the border in three weeks' time – one day in Kirkenes and Murmansk in another – strengthened cross-regional cooperation will be in focus (Støre [A] s080520, 3253).[61]

> Earlier this month, here in Oslo, Foreign Minister Lavrov and I signed an agreement between Norway and Russia: the agreement on simplified border passage for border-dwellers (Støre [A] s101116, 572).[62]

Støre's personal relationship with Lavrov is also noted in reports in the national press:

> At a press conference, it was clear that the two had discussed practical collaborative issues in a tone that becomes warmer with each meeting (Aftenposten 080610).[63]

In this manner, high-level meetings between foreign ministers are not only the practical means by which two states communicate with each other, but their personal relationship – described as good and friendly – also becomes a symbol for the relationship between the two states.

A peaceful history and interpersonal relations should be understood in connection to a third theme in the discourse: the image of Norway as a small diplomatic state, in relation to Russia, the much stronger actor.

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[61] Når jeg om tre uker møter min russiske kollega Sergei Lavrov ved grensen – én dag i Kirkenes og én dag i Murmansk – vil styrket grenseregionalt samarbeid stå sentralt (Støre [A] s080520, 3253).

[62] Tidligere denne måneden her i Oslo undertegnet utenriksminister Lavrov og jeg en avtale mellom Norge og Russland, avtalen om forenklet grensepassering for grenseboere (Støre [A] s101116, 572).

[63] På en pressekonferanse var det tydelig at de to hadde drøftet praktiske samarbeidsspørsmål i en tone som blir varmere for hvert møte (Aftenposten 080610).

> Norway was the first Schengen country to sign such an agreement with Russia. It is a good example of how our good neighbourly relations are a source of innovation (Støre [A] s120326, 2750).[64]

The 'friendly neighbour' argument is used on a few occasions throughout the time period studied here, but it is too infrequent to make any assumptions about how this view develops over time, in particular between the pre- and post-agreement years. It is clear from the arguments above that a peaceful history is seen as a foundation of continued peaceful relations and that diplomatic interpersonal relations are both a means and motive in Norway's relationship with Russia. This will be developed upon further below, where the public image of these relations in the local discourse is discussed. First, however, let us look at what seems to be the main geopolitical objectives of the border zone from the perspective of the Norwegian government.

The border zone as a security strategy

As shown in the previous section, the bilateral relations in connection to the border permit are characterised by an emphasis on a shared, peaceful history, of having 'come a long way' since the Cold War, and of personal relations representing the good neighbourly relations between the two countries. However, this is not the full story of Norway's relationship with Russia. In some instances where the border permit is brought up, the Cold War is still present and certain cautiousness towards Russia is visible. In these cases, the border relations and policies aimed at regulating the border can clearly be seen as motivated by security concerns, and agreements with Russia to redefine the border are a means of reducing tensions and possible conflicts between the two states. In the passage below, Foreign Minister Støre gives an account of Norway's relations with Russia. Here, it is made clear that there is an awareness and some caution about the power imbalance between the two states:

> Relations with Russia constitute, as previously, a main priority in Norway's High North policy. But the perspective has changed since the Cold War, and it is still changing. At the same time, two things remain constant: first, Norway is adjacent to a large country with interests and ambitions in our region, and second, this relationship underpins our need for an unwavering Euro-Atlantic security foundation. . . . A self-confident country with vast energy revenues is now showing itself and seeking respect as a regional and international player. In some cases, this occurs through a pattern of behaviour we recognise, such as resuming military exercises in our region.

[64] Norge var det første Schengen-landet som undertegnet en slik avtale med Russland. Det er et godt eksempel på at vårt gode naboskap er en kilde til nytenkning (Støre [A] s120326, 2750).

> This is a general trend and should not be construed as a threat against Norway. But there is a tangible presence that we follow closely (Støre [A] s080520, 3252).[65]

In this passage, the relationship with Russia is described as a balancing act. On the one hand, the importance of Russia as an international political actor is highlighted, as well as the differences between the two in terms of size and power. Norway's security concerns in relation to Russia, especially with increased military activity in the North and the subsequent need for stable Euro-Atlantic security cooperation, is emphasised. On the other hand, it is also stated that the increased military activity close to Norway should not to be seen as a threat, and the fact that the relationship is considered friendly is underlined. Støre continues:

> We have agreed with Governor Jevdokimov from Murmansk to look into the possibility of developing a city-twinning project between the border municipalities of Sør-Varanger and Pechenga (Støre [A] s080520, 3253).[66]

The naming of Lavrov and Jevdokimov, and the emphasis on friendly agreements between colleagues to strengthen cooperation in the border region, balances the caution about an increased military presence in the area. From a geopolitical perspective, the development of cooperation across the border can, in this case, be understood as a security strategy – given the differences in power, good, friendly relations with the stronger party is a means to level out the relationship. In this context, the aim is to 'investigate if it is possible to get Russian authorities to agree on developing so-called local border traffic permits' (Støre [A] s080520, 3253), and thus facilitating border passage for citizens on both sides of the border is part of a strategy to reduce the risks to sovereignty by developing friendly diplomatic relations. In a report to the parliament in 2010, it is argued that the facilitation of border passages is 'a central element in strengthening cooperation with Russia' (MST9, 66). In this context, the Norwegian government's efforts to advance

[65] Forholdet til Russland utgjør som tidligere en hovedakse i norsk nordområdepolitikk. Men perspektivet endret seg etter den kalde krigen, og gjør det fortsatt. Samtidig er det slik at to forhold forblir konstante: for det første at Norge er nabo til en stor stat med interesser og ambisjoner i våre nærområder, og for det andre at dette forholdet underbygger vårt behov for urokkelig euroatlantisk sikkerhetsforankring. . . . Et selvbevisst land med store energiinntekter viser seg nå fram og søker respekt som regional og internasjonal aktør. I noen sammenhenger skjer dette gjennom et handlings-mønster vi kjenner igjen, som ved å gjenoppta et militært øvelsesmønster i våre nærområder. Dette skjer på bred front og kan ikke tolkes som en trussel mot Norge. Men det er et følbart nærvær vi følger nøye (Støre [A] s080520, 3252).

[66] Når jeg om tre uker møter min russiske kollega Sergei Lavrov ved grensen – én dag i Kirkenes og én dag i Murmansk – vil styrket grenseregionalt samarbeid stå sentralt. Vi er enige med guvernør Jevdokimov fra Murmansk om å se på muligheten for å utvikle et såkalt tvillingbysamarbeid mellom grensekommunene Sør-Varanger og Petsjenga (Støre [A] s080520, 3253).

connections across the border can be understood as a means of increasing Russia's interest in maintaining stable relations.

That the development of cross-border cooperation is a security strategy is even clearer in a statement two years later, after the agreement had been signed, where a connection is drawn from the border permit, via the increase in border passages, to the security outcome of closing the gap between Russia and Europe:

> So, there is every reason to praise the Foreign Minister that we now have in place a maritime delimitation agreement and that a local border traffic permit is in place, which I think means much more than just 30,000 to 40,000 people who now do not need to apply for a visa to pass the Norwegian border. It helps to curb the world's largest welfare cleft, and it helps to tie Russia closer to Norway and closer to Europe.
>
> I think it helps to tie Russia closer to the NATO alliance as such. From a long-term perspective, this is actually very, very important. It is also going to mean a great deal in the security policy dialogue that Europe, NATO, and Norway are bound to have with Russia (Kristiansen [H] s101118, 689).[67]

Visible in the above statement is the idea that Norway needs to balance Russia's power by developing strong linkages, and, in this context, the border permit is seen as a way to reduce the geopolitical threats to sovereignty by reducing the risks involved when there are unequal welfare levels across the border. This idea reflects previous research on the conditions for open borders, e.g. Boehmer and Peña (2012), who found that open borders are more likely when equal economic situations are in place. In this case, however, the causality of the argument goes the other way: by opening the border, connecting trade, and developing interpersonal relations first, the expected result is a reduction of the welfare gap and thus a reduced security risk. Furthermore, there is an interesting claim about the function of a visa-free zone here; in this sense, the argument is that interactions across the border at the local level have effects on the bilateral relations between Norway and Russia while also bringing Russia and Europe closer together, possibly even Russia and NATO. This highlights the security dimension of the border policy, but it also provides support for my initial argument that borders are constructed both through the day-to-day interactions in their proximity and through the effects these interactions are intended to have, both as functions and as symbols, at a macro level. In contrast to those who would argue that stronger

[67] Så er det all grunn til å rose utenriksministeren for at vi har fått på plass en delelinjeavtale, og for at vi har fått på plass et grenseboerbevis, som jeg tror betyr mye, mye mer enn bare det at 30 000–40 000 mennesker nå ikke trenger å få utløst et visum for å passere norskegrensen. Det bidrar til å dempe verdens største velferdskløft, det bidrar til å knytte Russland nærmere Norge, nærmere Europa. Jeg tror det bidrar til å knytte Russland nærmere NATO- alliansen som sådan. I det langsiktige bildet er dette faktisk veldig, veldig viktig. Det kommer til å bety veldig mye også sikkerhetspolitisk i den dialogen Europa, NATO og Norge er nødt til å ha med Russland (Kristiansen [H] s101118, 689).

cross-border linkages at the local level would pose a challenge to state sovereignty, the Norwegian government here seems to turn this expectation on its head, instead focusing on how local-level connections across the border are expected to reduce security risks at the national level. The inclusion of NATO in the argument above leads us into another important aspect of the understanding of sovereignty in this case, namely the role of supra-state institutions in the construction of the Norwegian-Russian border zone.

Supra-state organisations and the room for state power

One of the main themes in the academic discourse on globalisation and its effects on the sovereignty of states is the increased importance and power of supra-state institutions. A question often raised in this regard is if, and in such a case how, states have lost sovereignty to the supra-state level, or in some cases, to global non-state actors. This is often included in the analysis of the European Union and its member states, where, in a sovereignty bargain, the latter can be said to 'give up' some of their decision-making powers in exchange for other gains. Since Norway is not a member of the EU, it cannot be said to have given up sovereignty to the EU, but, as a member of NATO and as part of the Schengen Agreement, there is still room for the state-supra-state relationship to create tensions in bilateral relations with Russia. In this section, the role of international actors as portrayed in the discourse on the border permit is discussed. Particular attention is paid to the complexity of the relationship between Norway and international actors, the limits and benefits of this relationship, and the sometimes-conflicting image of how independently Norway can formulate its own border policy with regards to Russia. In this particular context, the supra-state institutions (in particular the Schengen Agreement) are a cause for some concern regarding decision-making power, but they are also actively used in the strategic bargaining of the state.

The border permit is first mentioned in parliament on 20 May 2008, in a speech by the foreign minister on the foreign policy state of affairs. Here, it enters the discussion in the context of the relationship with Russia and the strategic importance of the North. The expansion of Norwegian foreign policy interest in the North is described as having led to both the development of Barents cooperation as well as cooperation between local government authorities across the border. Furthermore, the Norwegian interest in developing these relations is expressed as follows:

> The last 15-20 years have given Norway more foreign policy manoeuvrability in the North. It has laid the basis for Barents cooperation, closer contact between authorities across the border, and broader 'people-to-people' cooperation. It has taught Norway vital lessons that we intend to build on and share with European and Atlantic partners and with our friends in the EU.

> Our vision must be that the Norwegian-Russian border could become a European border, without unnecessary restrictions on the movement of people, goods, and services. The goal is a visa waiver, as formulated in the new visa agreement, although there is some way to go there (Støre [A] s080520, 3252).[68]

The EU is described here as 'our friends', and the explicit goal of the Norwegian-Russian border politics is to reach visa freedom, to make this border 'a regular European border, without unnecessary restrictions'. The formal agreement is bilateral between Norway and Russia, but, as Norway is part of Schengen, it is done within the framework of rules regarding all Schengen members. Notable here is also the emphasis on Norway as leading cooperation with Russia and being able to share that experience with the EU and NATO (the Atlantic partner), with the Norwegian-Russian cross-border cooperation as a model for relations with Russia.

Though not a member of the EU, Norway is part of the EES and Schengen agreements, and the relationship with the European community is often mentioned and emphasised, with statements such as 'our friends in the EU' (as above) and 'the EU countries are our closest allies and political partners' (Støre [A] s100504, 3098). The border between Russia and Norway is referred to as a *European* border*,* as can be seen in the following passage regarding the new border agreement in the Barents Sea, which states that 'a European border has been defined' and that the Border permit is made possible by the Schengen Agreement:

> The EU countries are also our closest allies and political partners, and we are woven together through cultural and historical ties, common values, and a legal community. We want to pull together with the rest of Europe in dealing with the financial crisis and its aftermath. We want to show solidarity and responsibility. . . . Norway, Russia, and the rest of Europe will benefit from closer cooperation and good common solutions. The agreement between Norway and Russia on facilitating local border traffic in Sør-Varanger is another example. This is a scheme Schengen acquis provides for, and now only minor clarifications remain before the agreement can be signed (Støre [A] s100504, 3098).[69]

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[68] De siste 15–20 årene har gitt Norge utvidet utenrikspolitisk handlingsrom i nordområdene. Det la grunnlaget for Barentssamarbeidet, for styrket kontakt mellom myndigheter over grensen og for et bredt folk-til-folk-samarbeid. Her gjør Norge viktige erfaringer som vi prioriterer å videreutvikle og dele med europeiske og atlantiske partnere, også med våre venner i EU. Vår visjon må være at den norsk-russiske grensen kan bli en vanlig europeisk grense, uten unødige hindre for bevegelse av personer, varer og tjenester. Målet er visumfrihet, slik det er formulert i den nye visumavtalen, selv om det er et stykke igjen dit (Støre [A] s080520, 3252).

[69] EU-landene er også våre nærmeste allierte og politiske partnere, og vi er vevet sammen gjennom kulturelle og historiske bånd i et verdi- og rettsfellesskap. Vi ønsker å trekke sammen med resten av Europa i møtet med finanskrisen og dens ettervirkninger. Vi ønsker å utvise solidaritet og ta ansvar. . . . Norge, Russland og resten av Europa er tjent med stadig tettere samarbeid og gode felles-løsninger. Avtalen mellom Norge og Russland om forenklet

The relationship between Norway, Schengen, and the EU illustrated by the above statement is complex. Although mostly portrayed as positive and enabling, the role of the EU in relations with Russia is double-edged. On the one hand, it is argued that the border permit is made possible *due to* the Schengen Agreement. On the other hand, there are concerns expressed that the 'detour via Brussels' may make Norway's relation with Russia more difficult than it needs to be:

> It may have been an advantage in our negotiations with Russia that we have not had to take a detour to Brussels. . . . I also hope that we should establish a functioning border traffic permit and that our Schengen membership will not be seen as an obstacle from the Russian side (Nordås [Sp] s100506, 3184).[70]

This passage once again emphasises Norway's position in balancing between two stronger powers, and there is a perceived risk of giving up decision-making power to Brussels. The Schengen Agreement as an enabler for the border permit is repeated in November of that year, shortly after a bilateral agreement on the local border traffic permit had been signed. Here, the construction of the border as something more than a therritorial demarcation between the two states, as representing the boundary between East and West, is again emphasised:

> What used to be the border between NATO and the Soviet Union is now an area where development and cooperation across the border is gaining momentum (Støre [A] s101116, 572-3).[71]

The ambivalent role of the influence of Schengen on Norwegian sovereignty is also mentioned later in the debate, just before the border permit came into effect. New regulations for identification in the Schengen area, and thus a change in Norwegian legislation, were to be decided upon and, in this context, the border permit is brought up as an example of when these new identity cards could be used to increase security and combat illegal immigration (Olsen [A] s120319, 2586). The new rules concerned the use of biometric information such as fingerprints, which were to be introduced as part of the new rules. Here, it is argued that, regardless of whether they are good rules or not, Norway is bound to adopt them due to the EES agreements (Christoffersen [A] s120319, 2584, not directly mentioning the *grenseboerbevis*) and,

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lokal grensetrafikk i Sør-Varanger er et annet eksempel. Dette er en ordning Schengen-regelverket legger til rette for, og det gjenstår nå bare mindre avklaringer før avtalen kan undertegnes (Støre [A] s100504, 3098).

[70] Det kan ha vært en fordel i våre forhandlinger med Russland at vi ikke har måttet gå omveien om Brussel. . . . Jeg håper også at vi kan få på plass et fungerende grenseboerbevis, og at vårt Schengen-medlemskap ikke vil bli sett på som et hinder fra russisk side (Nordås [Sp] s100506, 3184).

[71] Det som tidligere var grensen der NATO møtte Sovjetunionen, er nå et område der utvikling og samarbeid over grensen skyter fart (Støre [A] s101116, 572-3).

later on, that this could be used for the border permit, which is good in itself (i.e. the *grenseboerbevis* is used as an argument for the introduction of biometric information in identity cards). Another instance where the Schengen influence is discussed is in a report on Norwegian immigration and migration policy, where the border permit is discussed as a policy within the Schengen framework. Here, something important in relation to supra-state authority is mentioned, namely that the European commission must approve all agreements pertaining to border permits (MST9, 66; NOU2012:2, 702). This description can also be found in a report on labour migration from 2008 (STM18, 211-213), where it is stated that Norway cannot introduce visa freedom for Russian citizens due to the Schengen Agreement (STM18, 213), but that steps can be taken to facilitate border passage, e.g. an investigation into whether it would be possible to make such an agreement (local border traffic) with Russia.

In all of the above examples of the border permit discourse, it is clear that, in terms of geopolitical sovereignty, being a member of supra-state institutions is a double-edged sword for Norway. On the one hand, adherence to Schengen regulations is described as a means for Norway to increase border security and immigration control; on the other hand, it restricts Norway's authority over the decisions it can make with regard to its own border, while possibly also creating tensions in the bilateral relations with Russia. Compared to Jensen and Skedsmo (2010), who note that Norway's ambition in the High North is to be a 'small state and big player', these findings suggest that such an aim may be easier said than done.

Geopolitics in the local discourse

If the border permit in the central discourse is seen as a result of, and a contribution towards, good interpersonal relations with Russia, as well as, with regard to the Schengen framework, both enabling and restricting the possibilities for more open borders with Russia, how are these issues reflected in the local discourse? In the analysis below, it will become apparent that many of the themes, even exact phrases, from the central level are also present in the local discourse. For example, when speeches by the Foreign Minister in parliament refer to meetings that have taken place in Kirkenes, these are, of course, events reported on in local newspapers. Still, the emphasis on objectives and possible risks are articulated somewhat differently at this level, as will be seen below.

History and interpersonal relations

With regard to the geopolitical aspect of the local discourse on the border permit, there are many similarities, such as the historic references and the

accounts of interpersonal relationships between the foreign ministers discussed above. In an interview in the local newspaper *Finnmarken*, Jon Fredriksen, the newly appointed Norwegian consul general in Murmansk, argues for the benefits of visa freedom in the border zone. He uses a historic reference to remind us of the time before the Russian Revolution when relations between the two countries were more open and border passages were allowed:

> It will be a huge step forward. And a historical retrospective. Before 1916 people in the area had this right to cross the border. If the countries agree, and get something like that through Schengen, it would be a milestone for cooperation in the North (fin080612, 9).[72]

In connection to an agreement concerning multi-entry visas, the mayor of Sør-Varanger is quoted as saying that the border permit is the long-term goal and contrasts the development with the historical past and the divide during the Cold War:

> But this is an important first step. One cannot expect two countries that are, after all, as different as Norway and Russia to be able to create a new 'world order' in a snap (sva081030, 5).[73]

The interpersonal relationship between high-level political actors described in the central discourse is also frequently present in the local discourse. The bilateral meetings that Støre refers to in his address to parliament sometimes take place in Kirkenes, and these events often make front-page news in the local newspapers. One example of this is on 10 June 2008, when headlines and pictures in both newspapers show foreign ministers Støre (Norway) and Lavrov (Russia) shaking hands at a bilateral top meeting in Kirkenes. The ambition that 'a border permit might come swiftly' is declared, and Lavrov is quoted as underlining the peaceful history between the two states, who have never been at war with each other, as well as the importance of solving border issues with the best interests of the local community in mind:

> 'Maybe the documents currently in force are the best, and maybe a local border traffic permit is more appropriate. The most important thing is that the people who live here feel comfortable,' said Lavrov, who declared that he

[72] Det vil være et gedigent framskritt. Og et historisk tilbakeblikk. Før 1916 hadde folk i området denne retten til å dra over grensen. Blir landene enige, og får noe slik gjennom i Schengen, ville det være en milepel for samarbeidet i nord. (fin080612)

[73] Men dette er et viktig første skritt. En kan ikke vente at to land, som tross alt er såpass ulike som Norge og Russland, med et knips skal kunne lage en ny «verdensordning» (sva081030, 5).

> was happy to be in the country that the Russians had their first contractual border with already in 1251 (sva080610, 4).[74]

The two foreign ministers symbolically walked back and forth across the border:

> Visa requirements were abolished when the two foreign ministers walked across the Norwegian-Russian border Tuesday morning. 'That's how easy it will be when the border traffic permit is introduced,' said Jonas Gahr Støre, strolling through Russian passport control without a passport (fin080611, 10).[75]

Furthermore, the meetings between the foreign ministers are depicted as friendly and close:

> Sergei Lavrov and Jonas Gahr Støre have clearly found a good tone between them. They are on first name basis with each other and often meet. Outwards they both emphasise common interests and consensus over conflict and controversy (fin080612, 10).[76]

These personal relations are often illustrated with *names* and *pictures* of leaders shaking hands. As such, these individuals embody the relationship between their states, and pictures of them shaking hands emphasise the idea of the two states being friendly and equal neighbours. The equality that the handshake represents should be understood in light of the idea that sovereignty assumes equality between states, even though they rarely have comparable powers (Agnew 2005, 440). In this particular case, the portrayal of handshakes and friendly relations between ministers serves as an illustration of the balance of power between Norway and Russia. Here, it is clear that the emphasis on good relations that was present at the central level is also reflected and reproduced in the local discourse.

> Norway and Russia have agreed to introduce a border traffic permit. Monday, Crown Prince Haakon and Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre received the Russian President Dmitri Medvedev. Today, the historic boundary agreement is on the agenda, where Storskog will be open for visa-free passage for peo-

[74] 'Kanskje er det de dokumentene som i dag gjelder, som er det beste, kanskje er et slikt grenseboerbevis mer hensiktsmessig. Det viktigste er at de som bor her føler seg komfortable,' sa Lavrov som sa han var glad for å være i landet som russerne hadde den første avtalefestede grense med helt fra 1251 (sva080610).

[75] Visumplikten var opphevet da de to utenriksministrene spaserte over den norsk-russiske grenssen tirsdag formiddag. 'Så enkelt blir det når grenseboerbeviset er innført,' sa Jonas Gahr Støre og tuslet gjennom den russiske passkontrollen, uten pass (fin080611, 10).

[76] Sergej Lavrov og Jonas Gahr Støre har tydelig funnet en god tone seg imellom. De er på fornavn og møtes ofte. Utad betoner begge felles intresser og enighet framfor konflikt og stridsspørsmål (fin080612, 10).

> ple living up to 30 kilometres from the border. The Agreement itself will enter into force no sooner than next year (sva100427, 1).[77]

The personal relationship between the two foreign ministers is further emphasised by Gahr Støre himself, when, in the following quote, he represents the border permit agreement as if it had begun during a casual stroll across the border and expresses surprise at how easily it came about. That Norway and Russia are 'rediscovering each other' is another example of the bilateral relations between the states being portrayed as a relationship between individuals:

> 'Two years ago, Foreign Minister Lavrov and I walked across the border at Storskog and this subject came up. . . . I had little faith that we were going to get where we are in two years' . . . Jonas Gahr Støre emphasised that, in many ways, Norway and Russia are about to rediscover each other. 'It takes two, and we see a brand new will and a new look. But there are still bureaucratic obstacles and Byzantine structures,' he added and mentioned customs and security (sva100430, 10).[78]

When the agreement about the border zone was agreed upon in 2010, Linda Beate Randal, the Mayor of Sør-Varanger, is quoted in the local paper, and her statement illustrates a position that emphasises, through the use of historical references, what a success story the agreement is perceived as being at the local level, even going so far, in an effort to stress how unlikely achieving the border permit was, to compare the agreement to landing on the moon:

> This is amazing. The agreement is historic, and I think none of us had thought this possible ten or even five years ago. It gives perspective to think about thirty years in the past and what we then thought or knew about the world. . . . It sounded unreal, and it is really a moon-landing project that the declaration is now signed (sva100427, 6).[79]

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[77] Norge og Russland er enige om å innføre grenseboerbevis. Mandag tok kronprins Haakon og utenriksminister Jonas Gahr Støre i mot Russlands president Dmitri Medvedev. I dag står den historiske grenseavtalen på dagsordenen der Storskog åpnes for visumfrie passeringer for folk som bor inntil 30 kilometer fra grensen. Selve avtalen trer tidligst i kraft neste år (sva100427, front page).

[78] 'For to år siden gikk utenriksminister Lavrov og jeg over grensen på Storskog og dette temaet kom opp. . . . Jeg hadde liten tro på at vi skulle komme dit vi er på to år.' . . . Jonas Gahr Støre fremholdt at Norge og Russland på mange måter er i ferd med å gjenoppdage hverandre. 'Det må to til, og vi ser en helt ny vilje og et helt nytt blikk. Men fortsatt er det slik at det er byråkratiske hindringer og bysantiske strukturer', sa Støre og nevnte toll og sikkerhet (sva100430,10).

[79] Dette er helt fantastisk. Avtalen er historisk, og jeg tror ingen av oss hadde trodd dette verken for ti år siden eller for fem år siden. Det gir perspektiver å tenke seg 30 år tilbake i tid, og tenke over hva vi da trodde - eller visste om verden. . . . Det hørtes uvirkelig ut, og det er virkelig et månelandings-prosjekt at erklæringen nå undertegnes (sva100427, 6).

However, there can be some differences detected between the central and local debates, as the local media discourse sometimes reflects opinions that are somewhat more sceptical of the ability Norway really has to influence Russia and that what will determine the outcome is if Russia perceives an interest for itself. For example, in an editorial piece in *Sør-Varanger Avisen*, it is argued that successful negotiations of visa freedom are dependent upon Russia's interest in the matter:

> That [visa facilitation] is in Norway's interest is not interesting at all. Nor does it help that it is in the two countries' mutual interest. They do not think like that in Russia (sva071215, 4).[80]

There are some representations of the perception that the mutual interest in visa freedom also consists of a power play between the two states. In the following quote, the Russian consul general in Kirkenes, Igor B. Bulaji, emphasises visa freedom as being a two-way street and that Norway also has strict regulations towards Russia:

> From my country's point of view, it would be desirable to be able to travel without visas and without boundaries. But such openness cannot be delivered by one country. It is also important to remember that a visa is not a Russian invention (sva080430, 19).[81]

The role of Russia in making the agreement possible is emphasised on numerous occasions, for example in the form of a statement about the relations between the two being good but the final outcome as being up to Russia to decide, as in the following newspaper article quoting the foreign minister on a recent visit to Kirkenes:

> I do not think Norway will be the big challenge. We will prioritise this and will work to gain approval on the Russian side (sva091015, 22).[82]

It is interesting to note here that not only is the language of good interpersonal relations that we saw in the central discourse reflected at the local level, it is also reinforced and problematised. The interviews and pictures of handshakes symbolically reproduce these interpersonal relations as representations of the relationship between the two states, while, at the same time,

[80] At det er i norsk interesse, er ikke interessant i det hele tatt. Det holder heller ikke at det er i de to lands felles interesse. Sånn tenker man ikke i Russland (sva071215, 4).
[81] Fra mitt land sitt side ville det være ønskelig å kunne reise uten visum og uten grenser. Men en slik åpenhet kan ikke leveres av et land. Det er også viktig å huske på at visum ikke er en russisk oppfinnelse (sva080430, 19).
[82] 'Og jeg tror ikke Norge blir den store utfordringen. Vi skal prioritere dette og arbeidet med å få førankring på russisk side' (sva091015, 22).

there seems to be an awareness of Norway's limited influence over what Russia decides to do.

The border zone as a security strategy

If the security concerns at the central level mainly have to do with maintaining good relations with Russia and balancing power between Russia and the EU, in the local discourse the security argument is, to some extent, outweighed by an impatience with the rigorous border restrictions. The Cold War and a lingering fear of 'the Soviet danger' ('Den sovjetiske fare' in sva120512, 6) are used as arguments to criticise the central government for not being quick enough to allow visa-free travel across the border. As previous research has indicated, there are established formal local relations across the border, and paradiplomacy has been given some credit for why Norwegian-Russian relations, with regard to this border region, are seen as such a success.[83]

Maintaining control of the territorial border is a core element of geopolitical sovereignty. That the state is able to monitor and control passages across its border can be regarded as a minimum requirement for any state claiming sovereignty over a territory. Hence, if diplomatic relations and security strategies represent the high politics of borders, border control represents the day-to-day practical work of keeping the border intact that makes claims to sovereignty possible. To some extent, the local discourse on border control focuses on its practical function, but there are also representations of mutual relations between the military that closely correspond with the idea of Russia as 'good neighbours and colleagues' discussed above. In the central discourse, border control *per se* is not a very prominent theme, but in the local discourse, it is given more room.[84]

> Berntsen [commander of the garrison in Sør-Varanger] regards a solid defence in the future as a necessity for Russian authorities to accept a visa-free zone. 'A local border traffic permit is dependent on us having a strong and credible Norwegian border defence. Ninety-five per cent of boundary violations up here come from the Norwegian to the Russian side. The Russians are

[83] From the informal interviews I conducted and my impressions from visiting Kirkenes and meeting people there, there is an opinion in the local community that their relations with Russia are better than at the central level and that 'Oslo' is sometimes too hesitant and stuck in a Cold War image of Russia. In contrast to the rest of Norway, Sør-Varanger was liberated from German occupation in 1944, and a monument in the city centre honours the Soviet army for this. The liberation also meant bombing the entire city to the ground, but there still seems to be a positive attitude towards Russia, although perhaps not always towards Russians, which I will discuss further in the chapter on societal sovereignty.

[84] Note here that I make a distinction between the theme of border control, which refers to guarding the border in its entirety and any transgressions along the border, and that of border infrastructure, which will be discussed at length in the chapter on material sovereignty, since it has more to do with the economic costs and benefits of border passages.

> not satisfied with that, although cases have dropped substantially in the last ten years,' says Berntsen (sva100211, 4).[85]

Border control and military cooperation to maintain the border intact and keep any transgressions from taking place are seen as prerequisites for the border opening to take place. This resonates with some of the literature on state sovereignty and the protection of borders (e.g. Brown 2010), in that the maintenance of sovereignty is symbolically reinforced through stricter border controls even though the porosity of borders is an undeniable fact. Here, it seems that, even though the 'wall' has been torn down since the Cold War, in terms of the introduction of visa freedom, the priority given to territorial control remains as strong as ever, if not even stricter. This seemingly paradoxical relationship between policy and practice may be exactly what makes opening the border possible, in that the policy of openness can be pursued without causing the fear of sovereignty loss due to a lack of territorial control. Furthermore, from the above statement, it should be noted that it is not primarily border transgressions into Norway that seem to be the main concern. Instead, the main concern is that if Norway cannot control who passes from its side of the border, this will cause mistrust on the Russian side, thus leading to less willingness to cooperate with regard to opening the visa-free zone. The risk of illegal border crossings from the Russian side is not portrayed as critical enough to hinder the border opening.

In relation to the geopolitical sovereignty issue of control, it seems, at least in this context, as though the control-feature of the border has been strengthened in terms of military capacity and monitoring from both sides. Norway and Russia seem to have a mutual interest in maintaining strict control over border crossings, and, at the local level, the military cooperation taking place across the border is portrayed in a manner similar to how interpersonal relations were presented in the central-level discourse. A number of articles in the local newspapers refer to local military cooperation and the border patrols meeting regularly to learn from each other and exchange experiences:

> 'We have full control of the border and an excellent working relationship with our colleagues in Norway. We can talk, meet, and solve problems just like good neighbours do. We are prepared for anything and can therefore naturally worry about many things, but I do not think that the border traffic per-

[85] Berntsen ser på et solid forsvar iframtiden som en nødvendighet for at russiske myndigheter skal godta en visumfri sone. 'Et grenseboerbevis er avhengig av at vi har et sterkt og troverdig norsk grenseforsvar. 95 prosent av grensekrenkelsene her oppe kommer fra norsk til russisk side. Det er ikke russerne fornøyd med, selv om tilfellene har gått mye ned de ti siste årene,' sier Berntsen (sva100211, 4).

> mit will pose a threat to safety,' said Bobrov (Russian border commissioner, sva101002, 2).[86]
>
> Kudrjasjov [Lieutenant General, Chief of the FSB department Murmansk oblast] agreed with his Norwegian colleagues. 'Relations between our border troops are very good. The border is friendly and calm. We are very pleased with the openness and the information we have received from our hosts. It has been interesting to get full information about daily life on the Norwegian side of the border. Life here does not differ much from the life of our border forces at home,' said the Russian FSB chief (sva100204, 11).[87]

This relationship echoes similar findings of border guard cooperation at the Finnish-Russian border, where 'both sides cooperate . . . because it makes practical sense' (Laine 2015, 16). The interaction between Norwegian and Russian border patrols is carried out on the authority of the central state, but it is done in a rather autonomous way, and the interpersonal relations of the border commissariat on both sides and the construction of these agencies to match each other – where the border agents have their own authority – corresponds to what Gavrilis has called a 'boundary regime', where states paradoxically 'attain superior levels of cross-border cooperation and security against mutual threats in their outlying territories when they devolve authority to local border administrators' (Gavrilis 2008, 15; cf. Lundén 2009 on hierarchical symmetry). From a state sovereignty perspective, the expected increase in traffic across the border will result in the need for stricter controls and more resources in order to maintain full control over the territorial boundary.

> The new border traffic permit creates challenges at the Norwegian-Russian border. According to border commissioner Ivar Morten Sakserud, there is an urgent need to make Storskog able to cater for more traffic. . . . 'But this goes hand in hand – the more people that pass across the Norwegian-Russian border, the greater the chance that border agreements are broken and the greater the possibility that border violations increase,' says the Norwegian border commissioner (sva100925, 27).[88]

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[86] 'Vi har full kontroll over grensa og et utmerket samarbeid med våre kolleger i Norge. Vi kan snakke sammen, møtes og lose problemer akkurat som gode naboer gjør. Vi er i stand til å forutse alt og kan derfor selvsagt bekymre oss om mye, men jeg tror ikke grenseboerbeviset vil utgjøre noen trussel mot sikkerheten,' sier Bobrov (sva101002, 2).

[87] Kudrjasjov [Generalløytnant, sjef for FSB-avdelingen i Murmansk fylke] var enig med sine norske kolleger. 'Forholdene mellom grensestyrkene våre er svært gode. Grensen er vennlig og rolig. Vi er veldig fornøydemed den åpenheten og informasjonen som vi har fått fra vårt vertskap. Det har vært interessant å få full informasjon om det daglige livet på norsk side av grensen. Livet her skiller seg ikke mye fra det livet våre grensestyrker har hjemme', sa den russiske FSB-sjefen (sva100204, 11).

[88] Det nye grenseboerbeviset skaper utfordringer ved den norskrussiske grensen. Ifølge grensekommissær Ivar Morten Sakserud haster det med å gjøre Storskog i stand til å ta i mot større trafikk. . . . 'Men dette går hånd i hånd og jo flere som passerer den norskrussiske grensen, jo større er sjansen for at grenseavtalen brytes og mulighetene for grensekrenkelser øker,' sier

An interesting observation to be made here is that, in this discourse, the introduction of a visa-free zone is clearly seen to pose a challenge in terms of border control. The more people cross the border, the more likely it is that transgressions will happen. This illustrates the complex relationship between objectives of security and openness at the border – in this case, rather than openness replacing security as a principal objective, the increase in openness also requires an increased focus on border control.[89] This reflects, and gives further depth to, previous research that has pointed out how policies towards the external borders of the EU must reconcile objectives to simultaneously confirm and transcend its borders (e.g. Berg and Ehin 2006; Browning and Joenniemi 2008; Dimitrovova 2008).

There is also another meaning of security in the local context: the security concerns with regard to what the border zone will mean for crime rates in the region. There are fears voiced from the police as well as from local store owners that crime rates will increase:

> While foreign ministers Jonas Gahr Støre and Sergey Lavrov are in discussion about facilitating border passages at Storskog, police commissioner Hakon Skulstad warns that the introduction of the border permit will result in more burglaries, more fighting, prostitution, and drug trafficking (fin 090202, 1).[90]

As these concerns are primarily framed as economic and societal issues, such as the need for investment, and as a question of how Russians are perceived, these themes will be further discussed in the following two chapters.

Supra-state sovereignty and the room for state power

The role of supra-state institutions comes into play in the local discourse too, in particular the role of the EU and the Schengen Agreement. Early on in negotiations with Russia about a visa-free zone, the influence of Schengen is discussed:

> Norway has received a proposal from the Russian authorities on how the two countries can achieve a common arrangement on a border traffic permit – a

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grensekommissæren (sva100925, 27). This argument is also repeated in an article in sva101216, 5.

[89] On this note, at the same time as the visa-free zone was being agreed upon between Norway and Russia, there was another agreement that finalised how their maritime borders should be drawn. From a press conference about this agreement, Støre is quoted in Finnmarken saying: 'We must have a border, and then there will be no boundaries for what we can accomplish together' (fin100204, 5), an argument that weighs heavily on the idea that 'good fences make good neighbours' (Williams 2003).

[90] Mens utenriksministrene Jonas Gahr Store og Sergey Lavrov er i dialog om enklere grensepassering ved Storskog, advarer politimester Håkon Skulstad om at innføring av grenseboerbevis vil gi flere innbrudd, mer bråk, prostitusjon og narkotikahandel (fin090202, 1).

> special ID card that replaces both visas and passports for people within a limited radius from the border. . . . The Foreign Ministry consul is convinced that the proposal by the Russian authorities shows a significant determination to realise the local border traffic permit. . . . *The matter is ultimately for the Russian authorities to decide*. Another challenge also lurks behind the scenes: the Schengen Agreement. When Norway and Russia have agreed, *Schengen still has the last word* (auth. emphasis, sva081007, 2).[91]

The passage illustrates the complexity of the matter – the border permit is primarily seen as a bilateral agreement and is described as part of Norwegian-Russian diplomatic relations. It is made clear that Russia is the stronger player, in that Norway is depending on Russia being willing to come to an agreement, and yet the Schengen Agreement comes into play and can affect the outcome of the agreement. The last sentences in the passage literally claim that Russia *and* Schengen both have the final say. That the border permit is pictured in this way in the local media resonates with some of the statements in the parliamentary debates, which position Norway between the powers of the EU and Russia.

In line with the Schengen Agreement, Norway is not able, on its own, to allow Russian citizens visa freedom, and the agreement also restricts the extent of a visa-free border zone to 30 kilometres, which divides the municipality closest to the border – some villages end up outside the reach of the border permit. This causes some tension in the local community and criticism towards the centre:

> Schengen states that a boundary zone shall be a maximum of 30 kilometres from the border. So, not all of Sør-Varanger will have the opportunity to obtain local border traffic permits (sva090131, 5).[92]

The problems of the local business association, who wish to employ Russian workers, also give rise to some criticism of the fact that it gives priority to EU citizens over workers from Russia (fin090121, 5).

There is a fair amount of media coverage on the border passage at Storskog not having the capacity to meet the increased traffic expected when the border permit is implemented. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, as it mainly refers to questions of infrastructure and economy, but, in terms of supra-state influence, Schengen requirements are used

[91] Norge har mottatt et forslag fra russiske myndigheter til hvordan de to land kan få til en felles ordning med grenseboerbevis. Et eget ID-kort som erstatter både visum og pass for folk innenfor en begrenset radius fra grensen. . . . UD-rådgiveren er klar på at forslaget fra russiske myndigheter viser en tydelig positiv vilje til å få realisert grenseboerbeviset. . . . Det er det uansett russiske myndigheter som til syvende og sist avgjør. En annen utfordring lurer også i kulissene. Det er Schengen-avtalen. Når Norge og Russland er blitt enige, er det fremdeles Schengen som har det siste ordet (sva081007, 2).

[92] Schengen fastslår at en grensesone maksimalt skal være på 30 kilometer fra en landegrense. Dermed får ikke alle i Sør-Varanger mulighet til å få grenseboerbevis (sva090131,5).

as an argument in the local discourse for claims as to why the central government should invest more in the capacity of the border station at Storskog:

> Schengen stipulates that the introduction of local border traffic permits must be met with simplified control and smooth passage . . . it will be embarrassing for Norway if the local border traffic permits are introduced if at the same time it would be almost impossible to use because travellers have to queue for hours (sva101016, 3).[93]

In October 2011, it was reported that a border zone similar to the Norwegian-Russian one was being set up between Poland and Kaliningrad, where the zone was planned to stretch much further than 30 kilometres, indicating that Schengen rules may not apply equally for all:

> Schengen rules only allow local border traffic zones of 30 kilometres and, in special cases, 50 kilometres. It is these rules that the Norwegian-Russian agreement builds on for Sør-Varanger and Pechenga. But, in the case of Poland-Russia, the ambition is to include Gdansk, located 100 kilometres from the border, and also the northern parts of Kaliningrad Oblast, located more than 150 kilometres from the border (sva111001, 2).[94]

That the Schengen Agreement restricts the possibility to extend the agreement to a larger territory is brought up (as a problem) more than once, both in the parliamentary debate and here in the local context:

> During this year's border seminar, it was stated that getting the local border traffic permit in place is a complex political process, since Norway, as a member of Schengen, cannot act independently of the Schengen Agreement (sva120228, 8).[95]

So, although the Schengen Agreement has the provisions for making a local border traffic permit possible, it comes with restrictions that are portrayed as restricting Norway's self-determination over its territory. This critique is combined with the feeling that the development of visa freedom is not happening quickly enough and that the Schengen regulations do not seem to apply equally everywhere, as, for example, in the Poland-Kaliningrad case,

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[93] Schengen stiller krav om at det ved innføring av grenseboerbevis skal være en forenklet kontroll og smidig passering … det blir pinlig for Norge dersom grenseboerbevisene innføres og det samtidig blir nesten umulig å slippe inn fordi reisende må stå i kø i timesvis (sva101016, 3).

[94] Schengen-reglene tillater bare lokal grensetrafikk i soner på 30 kilometer, og i spesielle tilfeller 50 kilometer. Det er disse reglene den norsk-russiske avtalen bygger på for Sør-Varanger og Petsjenga sin del. Men i tilfellet Polen-Russland er ambisjonen å inkludere Gdansk, som ligger 100 kilometer fra grensen – og også nordre deler av Kaliningrad oblast som ligger mer enn 150 kilometer fra grensen (sva111001,2).

[95] Under årets grenseseminar kom det frem at det å få grenseboerbeviset på plass, er en sammensatt politisk prosess, da Norge som ermedlem av Schengen ikke kan handle uavhengig av Schengen avtalen (sva120228,8).

where the 'zone' included goes much further than the 30-50 kilometres stipulated in the Schengen Agreement:

> For us, it is incomprehensible that, in 2012, Norway cannot, on its own, come to an agreement about visa-free travel with Russia before the European Union and Schengen have got such a deal. In Poland, which is also a Schengen country, you have at least reached an agreement about visa exemption for a much larger geographic area on both sides of the border than Norway and Russia have agreed on (editorial, sva120211, 6).[96]

Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen the geopolitical motives that come into play in the construction of a visa-free border zone. It was shown that, from the perspective of the government, the maintenance of stable bilateral relations with Russia is a core motive in the border policy discourse. It was also noticeable that, at the central level, Norway is perceived as balancing itself between the powers of the EU and Russia. A challenge to Norway's ability to independently form policy at the border towards Russia was perceived in both the local and central debate, as the dependence on Schengen rules may limit Norway's ability to negotiate with Russia. Furthermore, it was shown that, while a policy of a more open border in terms of visa regulations is the explicit goal at the central level and, in return, is welcomed at the local level, it did not follow that there is a perceived challenge of a more porous border in terms of surveillance and defence.

Comparing the central and local levels, when it comes to geopolitical motives for introducing a border permit, the arguments are highly symmetrical. Both perceive relations with Russia to be a challenge to Norwegian security, and good bilateral relations, in the form of interpersonal relations between political leaders and in the border community, are strategies to meet this challenge. Thus, more openness at the border is not perceived as a challenge to security; rather, from the perspective of the state, increased cross-border interaction is, in fact, a security measure, in that it is expected to 'tie Russia closer' to Norway and thereby encourage the maintenance of stability and friendly relations. Giving up decision-making power to the supra-state level is perceived both as a challenge to Norway's sovereignty, as it restricts the ability to negotiate with Russia independently, and also as a tool to even out power-imbalances between the two. If there is an asymmetry in the discourse at the two different levels with regards to security, it is that geopolitical con-

[96] For oss er det uforståelig at det i 2012 er slik at Norge ikke på egenhånd kan få til en avtale om visumfrihet med Russland før EU og Schengen har fått til en slik avtale. I Polen, som også er Schengenland, har man i det minste fått til en avtale om visumfrihet for et langt større geografisk område på begge sider av grensen enn det Norge og Russland er blitt enige om (sva120211, 6).

cerns are much more prominent at the central level. At the local level, the main focus of the border permit discourse is its economic implications, to which we will shift our attention in the next chapter.

6. ‘Klondike Kirkenes’: The Border Zone as a Virtual Goldmine

In this chapter, the material issues associated with the border permit in the discourse will be analysed. The purpose of this chapter is to determine how economic concerns play into the introduction of a local border traffic permit. As detailed in previous chapters, part of maintaining state sovereignty lies in the capacity to control economic flows and create the economic resources necessary to maintain state capacity to produce an effect. The border functions necessary for the economic sovereignty of the state are primarily those that have to do with the management of flows, i.e. movements across the border in and out of the state, which includes issues such as trade and labour mobility across the border, in addition to also encompassing such things as the resources and costs associated with managing flows across the border. As previous research has shown, economic motives are often a driving argument behind more open borders, as a means to gain access to new markets and improve the economic capacity of the state. In the case at hand, what were the economic motives for introducing visa freedom and were there any risks or challenges associated with the expectations of a more open border, in particular with regard to the management of flows across the border?

In this chapter, the analysis of economic issues in the border permit discourse will compare and contrast the similarities and differences in relation to how these are portrayed at the two levels. Overall, it is clear that the border permit is often associated with economic motives (e.g. the explicit ambition to increase economic exchanges across the border), both in parliamentary debates, where economic opportunities of a more open border are often expressed, and in local debates, where the question of border openness is often associated with the economic impact it is expected to have on the local community. This chapter is structured along three main themes that connect the introduction of a visa-free zone to material objectives and risks: first, the objective to facilitate labour migration and/or cross-border commuting; second, the expectations of local economic growth; and finally, concerns about the capacity of the infrastructure to manage increased mobility across the border. These three themes are all present at both the central and local levels, but there are still some differences, in particular relating to how the objectives are articulated at the different levels. After a separate discussion and

analysis of the central and local discourses, the conclusion will summarise and highlights these differences, in addition to reflecting on how material and geopolitical motives are connected to each other in the motives for pursuing a more open border.

Economic motives in the central discourse

In the border permit discourse at the central level, strengthening the economy is a clearly expressed motive for opening up the border. The following section outlines and analyses three main strands of ideas where the border permit is highlighted with regard to its role in the economy: the possibility of cross-border commuting and labour migration, infrastructure at the border crossing, and finally the economy as a means of strengthening geopolitical security.

Labour migration and cross-border commuting

From the outset of the policy process, when the idea of a visa-free zone was first being introduced, there was an explicit ambition to facilitate border crossings in order to improve the possibility for Norwegian companies in the region to employ Russian workers. The passage quoted below has been taken from an account of the state of affairs in Norway's foreign policy relations with Russia. Here, trade and economic relations are the topics within which the border permit is discussed for the first time. In this sense, the border permit is presented as a way of facilitating border passages, which, in turn, will stimulate economic cooperation:

> We need to develop rules and practices for issuing visas, border passage, and the recruitment of labour in such a way as to promote rather than hamper economic relations. We will examine whether it is possible to get Russian authorities on board with regard to designing so-called border traffic permits for the population in the border areas near Norway and Russia (Støre [A] s080520, 3252-3; STM 18, 2007, pages 24, 216).[97]

In this account, the border permit and other visa regulations are primarily tools 'to promote rather than hamper economic relations'. In this regard, increasing economic exchange between the two countries is an explicit goal

[97] Vi må utvikle regelverk og praksis for visumutstedelse, grensepassering og rekruttering av arbeidskraft på en slik måte at det fremmer og ikke hemmer økonomisk samkvem. Vi vil undersøke om det er mulig å få russiske myndigheter med på å utforme såkalte grenseboerbevis for befolkningen i de grensenære områdene i Norge og Russland (Støre [A] a080520, 3252-3).

of the new visa regime(s).[98] There is a visible concern in these debates that the Norwegian economy – as part of a global trade system – is dependent on labour migration from other countries, and that difficulties recruiting workers is a restrictive factor on the Norwegian economy. For example, from a parliamentary debate in 2008:

> Norwegian industry is already dependent on significant labour migration. . . . When the industry committee was recently travelling in Finnmark, Nikel, and Murmansk, we heard about a labour market characterised by low mobility and high demand for skilled labour. I am pleased that the government is now taking the initiative on several new schemes that effectively open the border in Storskog. This is an important part of the Norwegian High North policy and should be a source of increased economic activity in an area of the country that has long been characterised by depopulation and unemployment (Gullvåg [A] s080617, 3765).[99]

Here, any way to facilitate and increase border traffic, and cross-border commuting in particular, is seen as a means to solve the problem of a lack of skilled workers in the area. In this context, a connection is made between the facilitation of border passage for individuals and access to skilled labour for employers in the northern region. The intention of opening the border is to bolster local economic growth, which, in turn, is in line with national economic interests. In the quote above, it is stated that increased economic growth has turned the region from decline to prosperity. This development is seen as the result of various factors, among which are the re-opening of the mining industry and increased economic activity in the Barents Sea, which illustrates the change from high rates of unemployment to a shortage of workers and positions the North as a region where the economy is growing. This, in turn, strengthens the national economy overall, but, perhaps more importantly, also highlights the state's concerns over a periphery that is economically weak when compared to the rest of the country. Such economic centre-periphery cleavages potentially increase the border's challenge to the state, both in terms of internal cohesion and the state's ability to manifest control at the border.

The speaker continues to state that economic development also benefits the population in the Russian border region, although economic differences are still noticeable:

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[98] The statement refers to the BP as one of a few visa regimen changes that were being evaluated.

[99] Norsk næringsliv er allerede avhengig av en betydelig arbeidsinnvandring. . . . Da næringskomiteen nylig var på reise i Finnmark, Nikel og Murmansk, fikk vi høre om et arbeidsmarked preget av liten mobilitet og stor etterspørsel etter kvalifisert arbeidskraft. Jeg er glad for at Regjeringen nå tar initiativ til flere nye ordninger som i realiteten åpner grensen i Storskog. Dette er en viktig del av norsk nordområdepolitikk, og bør være en kilde til økt økonomisk aktivitet i et område av landet som lenge har vært preget av fraflytting og arbeidsledighet (Gullvåg [A] s080617, 3765).

> Pessimism has turned to optimism, even in the Kola Peninsula, although the population there have a long way to go before they reach the prosperity we have had on the Norwegian side of the border. But, gradually, many Russians have sought a better life in Norway. Easier border crossings make it possible to live in Russia and work in Norway, which can also contribute to prosperity on the Russian side of the border (Gullvåg [A] s080617, 3765).[100]

This ambition is also reflected in the news coverage of the proposed border permit, as in these quotes from the Minister of Labour at the time and the Border Commissioner:

> 'We propose a drastic redeployment of today's system. I want a smooth border where the labour can flow across the border, whether the needs are in Norway or Russia,' says Bjarne Håkon Hanssen (Verdens Gang 080418).[101]

> 'We imagine that Norwegians can commute daily to work in the Russian cities near the border and that Russians can work in Norway,' says Sakserud (Aftenposten 090820).[102]

This reasoning in itself is interesting because it refers to what was also noticed in the geopolitical analysis – that the improvement of welfare in the neighbour region is part of the reason to open the border. As previous studies have shown, economic inequality correlates with closed borders (e.g. Boehmer and Peña 2012; Moré Martínez 2011). Here, the opening of the border and facilitation of cross-border commuting is presented as a measure to place the two sides on a more equal footing and reduce inequalities, not only between the Norwegian centre and periphery but also between Finnmark fylke and Murmansk oblast. Seen in the historical experience of extremely different levels of affluence across the border, the idea that an open border can improve the economy also on the Russian side should be understood as a strategy to reduce friction across the border.

In the later phase of the policy process, after the agreement for the border permit had been signed, it is made clear that the permit, in itself, will not allow work across the border – specific work permits are still needed. Instead, the discussion shifts towards other policies that are suggested to facili-

[100] Pessimisme er snudd til optimisme, også på Kolahalvøya, selv om befolkningen der ennå kan se langt etter den velstand-utviklingen vi har hatt på norsk side av grensen. Men det er etter hvert også mange russere som har søkt et bedre liv i Norge. Enklere grensepasseringer gjør det mulig å bo i Russland og arbeide i Norge, hvilket også kan bidra til velstandsutviklingen på russisk side av grensen (Gullvåg [A] s080617, 3765). This same speech was also published in the local paper.

[101] 'Vi foreslår en voldsom omlegging av dagens system. Jeg ønsker en smidig grense der arbeidskraften kan flyte over grensen enten behovene er i Norge eller Russland,' sier Bjarne Håkon Hanssen (Verdens Gang 080418).

[102] 'Vi ser for oss at nordmenn kan dagpendle på jobb til de russiske byene nær grensen, og at russere kan jobbe i Norge,' sier Sakserud (Aftenposten 090820).

tate labour mobility, but the border permit's role as 'a step in that direction' is still emphasised:

> The border traffic permit will not entitle the holder to work in the other state's border area, but I see this as a first step towards further improvement in the border region's travel and work opportunities (Støre [A] s101116, 572).[103]

This illustrates the complexity of how policies towards borders are designed, in that it is clearly not as straightforward as it might be perceived at first glance; yes, the introduction of visa freedom opens up cross-border movement, but there are layers of policies that regulate different aspects of this openness, and one policy choice to facilitate movement across the border directly affects other policies.

Infrastructure

The introduction of a border permit was, from the outset, expected to increase trade in the region and facilitate economic exchanges across the border. But in order to do so, there was need for infrastructure in terms of roads and border stations that could accommodate increasing numbers of border crossings. The white paper that introduces the local border traffic permit (STM 18, 24) presents it as one out of five policy actions that, if/when implemented, will simplify cross-border commuting from Russia to Norway. The main focus in this proposal is to increase the 'efficiency' of border passage. Efficiency is understood here in both formal and practical terms: less bureaucracy, more available application offices, and a streamlined procedure of crossing the border itself. The objective is to improve the capacity of the border control at Storskog, which is deemed insufficient for the number of passages that the expected introduction of a border permit will give rise to:

> Measures must be taken in order to establish new infrastructure for border crossing that can meet the growing traffic we are experiencing at the Norwegian-Russian border. This infrastructure must be able to meet the traffic we expect in the years to come. With the new local border traffic permit, there will be a significant increase (Høglund [FrP] s120326, 2752).[104]

[103] Grenseboerbeviset vil ikke gi rett til å ta arbeid i den andre stats grenseområde, men jeg ser dette som et første skritt i retning av ytterligere forbedring i grenseboernes reise- og arbeidsmuligheter (Støre [A] s101116, 572).

[104] Så må det tas grep for å få på plass en ny infrastruktur for grensepassering, som kan møte den økende trafikken vi opplever ved den norsk-russiske grensen. Denne infrastrukturen må kunne møte den trafikken vi forventer i mange år fremover. Med det nye grenseboerbeviset blir det en sterk økning (Høglund [FrP] s120326, 2752).

The rapid increase in border passages at the border station and the infrastructure that connects the two countries are also used to highlight the peaceful relations between Norway and Russia:

> Cooperation across the border with Russia is accelerating, requiring a quick solution to the infrastructure at Storskog. The local border traffic permit and even simpler solutions with regard to visas in the future will further strengthen cooperation across this border, which, 20 years ago, was charged with a very different kind of tension (Hansen [A] s120417, 3000).[105]

Economic growth as means to a (geopolitical) end

If labour migration and cross-border commuting are direct expected outcomes (in terms of allowing people to cross on a daily basis) of introducing a visa-free zone, other economic outcomes, on a more general/indirect level, have to do with expectations relating to economic growth in the region. In the discussion about the northern region in the central debate, achieving increased economic growth is an explicit policy objective:

> It is probably not the last time that a representative of the government parties from this pulpit tells his audience that the overall objective of the government's High North strategy is to create sustainable growth and development in the North (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).[106]

In relation to the overall question about how sovereignty can be constructed through policies to open borders, it is interesting to note that there are elements of this discourse where the economic motives for a more open border are, in turn, understood as a means to a geopolitical end. Management of the natural resources in the North (i.e. gas, oil, minerals, and fish) is an explicit priority of the Norwegian government, as stated in the *Nordområdestrategien* and in some of the parliamentary debates where the border permit is brought up.[107] Securing resources for the future, and doing so by maintaining good relations with other parties interested in these resources (Russia primarily, but also all the other states in the Arctic council), connects the geopolitical sovereignty issue with the material. In this sense, access to, and the division of, resources in the North is a question of power. In the following quote, economic development in the region is described as a means to

[105] Samarbeidet over grensen mot Russland er akselererende, og krever en rask løsning på infrastrukturen på Storskog. Grenseboerbeviset og en framtidig enda lettere situasjon med hensyn til visum vil ytterligere forsterke samarbeidet over denne grensen, som for 20 år siden var fylt av en helt annen type spenning (Hansen [A] s120417, 3000).

[106] Det er nok ikke siste gang en representant fra regjeringspartiene fra denne talerstolen forteller sine omgivelser at den overordnede målsettingen for regjeringens nordområdestrategi er å skape bærekraftig vekst og utvikling i nord (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).

[107] Støre [A] in s080520, 3252: 'Forutsigbarhet i vårt reaksjonsmønster er viktig for å sikre stabilitet og bærekraftig utnyttelse av ressursene i disse områdene også i framtiden'.

achieve security and reduce the risk of conflict. Thus, the 'opening' of the border via the border permit is, in this context, a way of making societal connections and economic exchanges possible, not only as an objective in itself but also as a means to a geopolitical end.

> In the course of 20 years, the North has been transformed from a surface friction between the East and West into a region for sustainable resource management in the Barents Sea, research and climate monitoring in the Arctic, and business development on both sides of the Norwegian-Russian border. The agreement on the delimitation line in the Barents Sea and the agreement and cooperation in this area have removed our only unresolved issue with Russia. The agreement on the local border traffic permit has strengthened the opportunities for both industrial cooperation and 'people-to-people' cooperation across the border. This development is a tangible example of how positive developments have been in our part of the world, as well as how increased economic cooperation and integration reduces the basis for conflict (Hansen [A] s101203, 1230).[108]

The passage above succinctly sums up how the importance of maintaining good relations with Russia and integrating their economies is expressed in the central-level discourse. The economic motive is at the core of the reasoning, and the argument is that economic integration is a security measure: through economic exchange and integration, livelihoods on both sides are tied up with each other. With increased interdependence, the risk of conflict is expected to decrease, echoing a rather familiar idea about economic interaction as an alternative to war, often used in explaining the birth of the European Union.

To sum up the central-level discourse on the creation of a visa-free zone, it has been shown that economic growth in the North is seen as a priority for the government. As a means to this end, cross-border traffic and access to Russian workers is deemed as a way to strengthen the local economy. Furthermore, cross-border trade is also seen as positive because it can contribute to the local economy on the Russian side and thereby reduce the welfare gap across the border. That the viability of the local economy is a national priority is in line with what we could expect from a theoretical point of view, as it both contributes to the state's economy overall and works as a way to lessen

[108] I løpet av 20 år har nordområdene blitt forvandlet fra en friksjonsflate mellom øst og vest til et samarbeidsområde for en bærekraftig ressursforvaltning i Barentshavet, forskning og klimaovervåking i Arktis, og næringsutvikling på begge sider av den norsk-russiske grensen. Enigheten om grenselinjen i Barentshavet og avtalen om samarbeid i dette området, har fjernet vårt eneste utestående spørsmål med Russland. Avtalen om grenseboerbeviset har styrket mulighetene både for næringssamarbeidet og folk-til-folksamarbeidet over grensen. Denne utviklingen er et håndfast eksempel på hvor positiv utviklingen har vært i vår del av verden, på hvordan økt økonomisk samarbeid og integrasjon reduserer grunnlaget for konflikter (Hansen [A] s101203, 1230).

economic inequality between the centre and periphery, an argument that will be further illustrated in Chapter 7.

Economic motives in the local discourse

If the central level saw the expected economic outcomes of the visa-free zone as means to improve geopolitical security as well as a means to strengthen the local economy, local economic growth is the primary focus in the local discourse on the border permit. As we will see in the following subsections, labour migration and cross-border economic interaction are the main themes here, but the challenge of sufficient border infrastructure is emphasised much more than at the central level.

Labour migration and cross-border commuting

In the local context, during the first two years of the policy process, before the border permit negotiations were concluded and the agreement signed, *the demand for employees* in Finnmark can be seen as the main theme of the border permit discourse. The largest industries in Kirkenes and nearby are the fishing industry, the mining industry, and Kimek (offshore and ship-building industry), all of which employ Russian workers. Representatives of these industries are quoted in the local media expressing concern or even irritation because they perceive work permit regulations to be too complicated, a 'bureaucratic jungle' (sva080301, 6), and that it is a problem for them as employers that Russian citizens are secondary to citizens within the EES-agreement:

> The Labour and Welfare administration still demand that we advertise all positions in all of EU/EES before we can get Russian labour (fin090121, 5).[109]

This reflects the discussion in the previous chapter about the role of the EU in relation to Norway, and it is perceived as a problem that Norway has ceded some of its autonomy over border policy making through the Schengen Agreement. In the initial years of the policy process, the main focus is that a border permit may be a possible solution to the complicated rules for employing Russian citizens, something that is expected to facilitate cross-border commuting in the area.

> Felix Tschudi and Sydvaranger Mine AS will first look for local workers in Sør-Varanger for the new mine, but they have indicated that they are very in-

[109] NAV krever likevel at vi skal lyse ut alle stillinger I hele EU/EØS-området før vi kan få inn russisk arbeidskraft (fin090121, 5).

> terested in using Russian expertise from the cross-border areas. Then, a local border traffic permit could be practical (sva071215, 22).[110]
>
> Such a permit will make it possible for people who live near the border to take on part-time employment in Norway (fin091015, 5).[111]
>
> Finnmark lacks manpower, and many companies would like to invest long term in Russian labour, but the rules for labour migration are a major obstacle to this (sva080301, 6).[112]

The objectives of the border permit are, in the local context, expressed in a similar manner as in the parliament, i.e. as an enabler of cross-border commuting:

> Smooth local border traffic permits, which can open up easy daily commuting from Kirkenes to Nikel, for example, are one element of many that MAY be in the white paper (sva080412, 4).[113]
>
> With new mining activities, Russians in the border areas may get jobs in Sør-Varanger and choose to commute daily (sva090131, 5).[114]
>
> Sør-Varanger has low unemployment, while the Russian side has a long tradition and expertise in industrial activity (sva100429, 11).[115]

Low rates of unemployment are also brought up to give weight to the argument. A combination of demand for more workers in local industries, low unemployment rates (indicating that it is difficult to find skilled labour on the Norwegian side of the border), and the argument that there is skilled labour in Russia due to the industrial character of the region, all add up to an argument in favour of increased work migration from Russia being an objective of the introduction of a local border traffic permit.[116] An interesting aspect of this line of reasoning is the expressed request that Russian citizens

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[110] Felix Tschudi og Sydvaranger Gruve AS vil først se etter lokal arbeidskraft i Sør-varanger til den nye gruvedriften, men har signalisert at de er svært interessert i å bruke russisk kompetanse fra de grensenære områdene. Da vil et grenseboerbevis kunne være praktisk (sva071215, 22).

[111] Et slikt bevis vil gjøre det mulig for dem som bor ved grensa å ta deltidsjobber i Norge (fin091015, 5).

[112] Finnmark mangler arbeidskraft og mange bedrifter vil gjerne satse langsiktig på russisk arbeidskraft, men regelverket for arbeidsinnvandring er et stort hinder for dette (sva080301, 6).

[113] Smidige grenseboerbevis, som kan åpne for enkel dagpendling fra Nikel til Kirkenes, for eksempel, er ett element av mange som KAN ligge i meldingen (sva080412, 4 op).

[114] Med ny gruvedrift kan det være at russere i grenseområdene får seg jobb i Sør-Varanger og velger å dagpendle (sva090131, 5).

[115] Sør-Varanger har lav arbeidsledighet, mens det på russisk side e lange tradisjoner og kompetanse fra industriell aktivitet (sva100429, 11).

[116] Around one to two per cent in Kirkenes and very low all over Finnmark (sva110402,7).

should be treated as 'any other EU/EØS-citizen', which echoes the statements discussed in the chapter on geopolitics that an ambition of this policy is that the border should become a 'regular European border'. That the border with Russia should become an internal European border is also underlined through a marked difference between Russian citizens working in Norway and 'African and Asian migrant workers' (sva080301, 6), thus identifying Russian citizens as 'European' citizens and Russia as part of Europe.[117] Expressions such as 'visa-free labour migration' (sva080417, 5), a 'boundary-free labour market' (sva080419, 5), and a 'desire to use Russian competence' (sva100429, 11) are prevalent in connection to the border permit in the local media, in particular during the first two years of the process and in interviews with representatives from local industries. This, of course, represents an elite perspective of what a more open border would mean, to some extent reflecting earlier findings that the opening of the border as part of the Barents regional integration is an elite project (Viken, Granås and Nyseth 2008).

Overall, in relation to the demand for Russian labour migration, the border permit is seen as a possible facilitator of cross-border commuting and, as such, is framed as being very positive for the local community. Scepticism towards it mostly has to do with the visa facilitation process not moving fast enough. However, there are a couple of articles that stand out, in that concerns are raised from the trade unions that labour migration risks are causing wage dumping and that the rights of migrant workers need to be protected. The critique here is not targeting the border permit *per se* but rather the need for fair employment for employees from Russia.

> LO fears that social dumping may be the consequence of the huge upturn expected for businesses in Sør-Varanger (sva080301, 6).[118]

Notable in this part of the discourse, which connects the local border traffic permit to ideas about an open labour market, is that it only refers to Russian workers in Norwegian industries and not vice versa; that is, the idea that Norwegians could work across the border in Russia is not a visible part of the theme, which is interesting in relation to the economic dimension of sovereignty – the regulation of borders as a way to strengthen the state's economy has more to do with the growth of domestic industries than with what/

[117] This is an observation that will be further elaborated on in the following chapter, i.e. the role of identity in the reconstruction of the border. This points to variations of 'othering' taking place, and Russia/Russians are not thought of as any other immigrants/migrant workers. It may be developed into an argument about labour migration demand as conditioned upon societal proximity – the marking of difference here places Russians closer by defining what they are not, i.e. Africans or Asians, perhaps as a way to overcome any Norwegian-Russian differences.

[118] LO er redd sosial dumping kan bli konsekvensen av det store oppsvinget som er ventet i næringslivet i Sør-Varanger (sva080301, 6).

where its citizens work. In this context, the visa facilitation has little to do with enabling individual mobility and more to do with making sure that the needs of domestic industries are accommodated.

The theme of 'labour demand' is prevalent in articles that mention the border permit in 2008 and continues to be an important theme in 2009–10, but, after the agreement was signed and up until its implementation, this theme almost disappears from the local discourse. This is probably a result of the actual content of the border zone agreement, where, in its final form, the border permit is *not* a work permit and does not give the right to work in Norway, and thus it is no longer part of the discourse on what the expectations on the border permit are. After the agreement was signed, it is noted that:

> There will not be a common Norwegian-Russian labour market in the border region at this time. The Local Border Traffic Permit will not give the right to take up employment or residence (fin101103, 8).[119]

Thus, after the agreement was signed in November 2010, the focus of the local media reports shifts towards other expected outcomes, and the wishes connected to it in its initial phase perhaps become less important. That is, after the agreement was signed, there are very few articles that connect the border permit to labour migration, and more and more articles focus on how the visa-free zone will affect the local shopkeepers and citizens who will be able to use it. Comparing the theme of labour migration in relation to the border permit between the central and local context, the arguments for it and the expected outcomes are largely overlapping and similar. In this sense, the differences are more in degrees of emphasis than in kind.

Economic growth as an end in itself

One aspect of a less restrictive visa policy that is visible in the local discourse is the possibility to increase tourism and thereby strengthen local tourist businesses. Here, as the zone stretches out on both sides of the border, the permit opens up for more tourism from Norway into Russia and vice versa. The possible outcome of 'travel for pleasure' that is expected as a result of the implementation of a visa-free zone can be divided into two main categories: tourism and cross-border shopping. With regard to tourism, here I refer to activities such as tours, sightseeing, and hotel weekends, and by cross-border shopping, I refer to activities for the purpose of private consumption goods.

[119] De blir ikke et felles norsk-russisk arbeidsmarked i grenseregionen i denne omgang. Grenseboerbeviset vil ikke gi rett til å ta arbeid eller opphold (fin101103, 8).

The latter is a very prominent theme in the border zone discourse from 2010, from when the agreement was signed up until its implementation. The former is largely (perhaps remarkably?) absent from the discourse; the possibility for increased tourism in the region is mentioned a couple of times, without it being the main theme (sva100710; sva101104). Although a survey is mentioned, finding that 87 per cent of people in Nikel would consider visiting Norway if it did not require a visa (sva100130), there are not very high expectations that the permit will lead to more overnight visitors (sva110628). Given the fact that the visa-free zone allows Norwegians to travel into Russia, it is perhaps rather surprising that there are only two articles, one in connection to the signing of the agreement (sva100812) and one in connection to the first day of its implementation (sva120531), focusing on tourism in that direction.[120]

Cross-border shopping can take place in two ways, either Norwegians travelling across the border to spend money on consumer goods in Russia or vice versa. In the period studied, the former is not a very prominent theme in the local media. If mentioned, it is in the form of general statements, such as 'expected increase of trade in both directions' (sva100807), or when price differences and the resulting cross-border shopping is highlighted: 'One can only imagine that fuel tourism will skyrocket with the introduction of local border traffic permits' (sva120103, 3); 'Record-high fuel prices drive people in Kirkenes across the border to refuel' (fin120307, 3).

Similar to what has been found in the case of Finnish-Russian cross border shopping (Izotov and Laine 2013, 103), people on both sides of the border travel across to spend money, but on different products. As Norwegians go across the border for cheap petrol, Russians come to Kirkenes for nappies as well as quality consumer goods, which, to a certain extent, becomes a symbol of the role that cross-border shopping will start to play in the local economic life of Kirkenes (sva120103, sva120324). There are expectations of even larger increases in cross-border shopping as a result of the introduction of a border permit. Local business owners are reported as preparing to invest with the opening of the border:

> Headline: Mega-mall will attract Russians
>
> Tromsø firm Barlindhaug Property will build a 4.9-acre shopping mall at Hesseng, the aim of which is to exploit the Russians' consumer demand. . . . Assessment of the possible potential for trade as a result of the border permit agreement is central (fin101030, 9).[121]

[120] On the other hand, the *Sør-Varanger Avisen* ran a regular 'local profile' from 2011–2012 that included the question, 'What will you use the border permit for?' and leisure travel was sometimes given as an answer. The most common answer was that it would be used for consumption travel, in particular to buy cheap fuel in Nikel.

[121] Headline: Storsenter skal lokke russere / Tromsø-firmaet Barlindhaug Eiendom vil bygge et 20000 kvadratmeter stort handelssenter på Hesseng. Formålet er å utnytte russernes han-

Headline: From Russia with purchasing power

> Trade booths in Kirkenes are . . . 'very excited. We may get a massive increase of customers' (fin101104, 4).[122]

The expected increase in cross-border trade is mentioned sparsely in 2008 (sva080610), but from 2010 onwards, it is a recurring theme in the local news. Reports that 'trade booths in Kirkenes are facing brighter times ahead' (sva100710, 6) due to less toll restrictions on the goods that Russians can take back into Russia, that Kirkenes is a 'commercial town in rapid development' (sva100807, 6), and that 'border trade has exploded in one year' (sva101216, 9) all tell of lesser restrictions on cross-border shopping in place as well as the rapid expansion of local businesses as a result of these changes. In this context, the border permit is almost always referred to as something that will push the expansion of Russian customers even further: 'the Business Garden[123] in Kirkenes believes that the local border traffic permit will mean a lot for commercial and industrial life in Sør-Varanger' (fin110401, 6).

When the border permit is part of a narrative of increased traffic across the border and the resulting expansion of local shops and stores, there are a few themes that recur: a) that Kirkenes, a town with a population of 10,000, has the turnover of consumer goods equivalent of a town with a population of 30,000 (sva111112, 6; sva120324); b) the new purchasing power of Russia's middle class and the type of quality goods they buy in Kirkenes; and c) the way that local stores adapt to this new powerful customer base: language courses for employees, rationing of certain goods, and investments in new shopping centres.

As discussed above, during the first years of the process, the primary economic issue in the local discourse is the demand for labour. After the border permit agreement was signed, this topic becomes less common (probably as a result of the permit not having any provisions for work-permit status and thus less of a given connection once the terms had been agreed upon), and another theme emerges as the main economic argument for a local border traffic permit: cross-border shopping. The increase in cross-border traffic is primarily expected to come from an increase in trips across the border for individual consumer goods, and the growth of local businesses as a result, which favours an understanding of the border permit as an important economic border policy. It is the projected economic returns of the policy (ra-

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delslyst. . . . Vurdering av mulig potensial for handel som følge av genseboerbevis-avtalen er en sentral del (fin101030, 9).

[122] Headline: Fra Russland med kjøpelyst / Handelsstanden i Kirkenes . . . 'er veldig spent. Vi kan få en massiv kundeøkning' (fin101104, 4).

[123] The 'Business Garden' is a government-sponsored programme to facilitate regional growth by forming clusters of cooperation between local businesses. Kirkenes Business Garden is an organisation that represents around 100 businesses operating in Kirkenes.

ther than, say, the recreational benefits for the local population) that dominate the discourse. The estimated economic gain of increased traffic across the border is the primary motive for enthusiasm about the border permit in the local discourse.

Issues of infrastructure

Having discussed the expected economic consequences and motives for the border permit, i.e. the demand for labour migrants or day-commuters, the increased cross-border consumption patterns, and the expansion of local businesses as a result of these developments, we will now take a closer look at another theme that is often discussed in the local discourse: the infrastructure of border crossings. Infrastructure concerns is a theme prevalent in the local media throughout the years studied, primarily in *Sør-Varanger Avisen.*[124] These concerns are often articulated as a criticism towards the state, a theme that will be discussed and reflected upon more at length in Chapter 7. Here, I will not elaborate further on the centre-periphery dynamics involved here but rather develop on infrastructure as an economic issue that runs parallel to all the other economic aspects and that constitutes perhaps the most critical issue in relation to the border permit. By infrastructure, I refer to questions relating to the physical environment that constitutes the passage across the Norwegian-Russian border, i.e. the E105, the only road that crosses the border, passing through Kirkenes and leading up to Storskog, the border control station on the Norwegian side of the border passage. Storskog itself, the border station, is a central feature of the infrastructure theme.[125]

The core of the infrastructure concern is that the existing infrastructure is unable to handle the expected increase in cross-border traffic, which therefore requires investments such as improvements of the E105 (sva081009), the airport (sva090314), and, above all, an increased capacity at the border control station (an argument that can be found in sva090131; 090203; 090205; 100430; 100803; and 101016, to name but a few).

The capacity at Storskog, i.e. the number of border controls it can perform in a certain amount of time, is a much-discussed issue. There are arguments for investment in terms of opening hours, number of employees, and, more specifically in relation to the border permit, the question of special lanes for permit holders and technologies in compliance with Schengen regulations and/or that would allow for quicker passage through the border control:

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[124] In *Finnmarken* the question relating to investment at the border passage is framed more as a security issue, connected primarily to the police's capacity to maintain control with increased traffic at the border station (discussed in Chapter 5), than as an efficiency issue.

[125] Other infrastructure issues are Kirkenes Airport and the idea of a railway across the border, the latter only being mentioned once in relation to the border permit, in 2008, when the idea was 'given up' by the Kirkenes Business Garden.

> The visa-free zone that Norway and Russia have, in principle, agreed that they will implement and that prime minister and president signed on Tuesday triggers substantial investment needs on both sides of the border (sva100430, 6).[126]

> Unless something happens at Storskog, Norwegian authorities have to forget the introduction of local border traffic permits and visa-free travel both ways. . . . With the local border traffic permit, there will probably be queues every day, at least if the two countries' desire for increased traffic, increased trade, and increased cooperation has the opportunity of becoming reality (sva101005, 6).[127]

> 'Go ahead. Invest in infrastructure,' says Felix Tschudi (Large investor and owner of Sydvaranger) (sva100429, 10).[128]

In addition, police officers at the border station, the border commissar (sva101002), and the mayor (sva110414) all express similar concerns that the visa freedom will not have the desired effect of facilitating border crossings as long as Storskog's capacity is insufficient for the task. The visa freedom is expected to increase pressure on the border station, the number of passages is estimated to go up from 140,000 in 2011 to 400,000 in 2014 (sva110319), and an argument voiced by a variety of actors in the local media is that if the expectations are to be lived up to, investment is needed. This is an important aspect – a new border regime in the form of changes in visa policy is also directly linked to economic consequences, both in terms of costs and benefits. For the state, this means costs in the form of investments to match the demands from local political and business actors. As it relates to the state's capacity to control cross-border flows, the risk perceived in the local discourse is that the proposed policy change to open the border will not be met with the practical capacity to do this.

Another interesting point to note is that the implementation of a border permit is expected to 'trigger significant investment needs' (sva100430, 6), while, at the same time, border investment is seen as a prerequisite for the permit (sva101005, 6). That is, the *idea* of the visa-free zone has political and economic consequences years before the policy has been implemented, as a result of the expectations connected to it. This can also be understood in relation to the situation at the border – problems of long queues and waiting

[126] Den visumfri sonen som Norge og Russland i prinsippet er blitt enige om å innføre og som statsminister og president tirsdag skrevet under på at de vil gjennomføre, utløser betydelig investeringsbehov på begge sider av grensen (sva100430, 6).
[127] Uten at det skjer noe på Storskog, er det bare for norske myndigheter å glemme innføringen av grenseboerbevis og visumfrie reisende begge veier. . . . Med grenseboerbevis blir det sannsynligvis kø hver eneste dag. I vert fall hvis de to lands ønsker om økt trafikk, økt handel og økt samarbeid skal ha mulighet for å bli virkelighet (sva101005, 6).
[128] 'Sett i gang. Invester i infrastruktur,' mener Felix Tschudi (Storinvestoren og Sydvarangereieren) (sva100429, 10).

times at the border station are prevalent themes in the local media during the time period studied, with yearly border passages increasing by unprecedented amounts (see Fig. 5, p.74 above). The point here is that the permit is used as an argument in a debate about the present situation, as well as itself being a motive for investment in infrastructure at the border station.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the economic objectives and ideas about the border permit have been analysed. It has been shown that there are strong economic motives for implementing a more open visa regime, both from the state's perspective, where economic integration is seen as a way to strengthen the local economy, and as part of a geopolitical strategy where economic integration across the border is seen as a way to stabilise bilateral relations. In the local discourse, the border permit is seen as a way to facilitate the employment of Russian workers and, later on, to strengthen the growth of local businesses. As has been demonstrated, although the permit in itself does not allow for working across the border, in both the central and local discourse, the border permit is perceived as an opportunity to facilitate labour migration. Finally, it is clear that this new visa regime is expected to have far-reaching effects on the infrastructure of border passage. Infrastructure issues are both seen as a potential problem that could reduce the openness of the border and as an opportunity, in that investment in infrastructure would benefit the local economy.

The expectations of economic returns are important in both central and local contexts, but there are some interesting differences in terms of what the expected economic gains represent. In the local context, the economic benefit of increased cross-border flows is primarily a goal in itself, and the policies aimed at the border can be seen as a means to an economic end. In the central context, on the other hand, the expected economic returns of a more open border are explicitly connected to other goals, and local economic integration across the border is seen as a means to achieve stability in the region and thereby improve bilateral relations with Russia. In terms of sovereignty dimensions, this provides support for the third possible relationship between different dimensions: that they are seen as mutually reinforcing, where policies to strengthen the economic returns of the border are also expected to reduce geopolitical risks.

7. 'Much Can Be Solved by the Meetings of Ordinary People': Overcoming *Us* and *Them* in the Border Zone

In this last of the empirical chapters, the border permit discourse will be examined from a societal perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate how societal and identity issues come into play in the Norwegian border permit discourse. As argued in previous chapters, borders play a crucial role in the construction and maintenance of shared identities, and therefore changes in border policies and practices can challenge such constructions by changing the norms for inclusion/exclusion. In this particular case, there are a number of socio-cultural differences that could be articulated as cleavages between Norway and Russia and thus could be the cause for perceived challenges to the Norwegian 'imagined community'. In this sense, religion, language, and political culture are all markers of identity that set these two countries apart from each other and thus have the potential to be verbalised as a separation between 'us and them', which, in turn, can be used as arguments for or against a certain policy. That there is such a potential does not mean that such differences necessarily *will be* articulated, or that differences are at all visible or deemed meaningful in the context of the border permit. This is what we must investigate in this chapter. One important idea that may come into play in terms of what sort of identity marker the border is perceived to be is that of the development of a shared regional identity in the Barents region.

This chapter is structured along three main questions: How does the history of neighbourly relations between Norwegians and Russians on either side of the border come into play in arguments for introducing visa freedom? Who is the border-crosser described to be in the discourse and how does this relate to expectations for the border permit? And finally, what kind of 'us' is this policy understood as being for?

The societal dimension in the central discourse

The role of identity or the articulation of any ideas that would signify an 'us vs. them' logic is very scarce in the central debate. Where it can be noted is in a parallel to how Russia, as a political counterpart, is described, with the emphasis of Russia as a good neighbour, something that comes back in two themes related to societal relations marked by the border: the history of being neighbours and the concept of 'people-to-people'.

Peaceful co-existence with 'our neighbours'

There are three different historical periods that are referred to in relation to the question of a local border traffic permit, all of which have very different symbolic functions: first, there are references to pre-Soviet history, which is portrayed as times when relations between the two states were amicable:

> Norway and Russia have a thousand-year history of peaceful coexistence. The connections have been characterised by understanding and respect, mutual assistance, and pragmatic solutions (MST7, 69).[129]

The second historical theme is the Cold War, which is used as a point of reference and comparison as a time when the border was almost completely impassable and relations across the border, on the local level, were difficult to maintain. This history is often juxtaposed with a third theme, that of post-Cold War developments, to show the progress that has taken place in border relations since the early 1990s:

> 'People-to-people' cooperation should never be underestimated. It has dismantled barriers and, in our case, drilled many small holes in the previously barred border gate between Norway and Russia during the Cold War. Now, people in the border areas will get their own border traffic permit that facilitates the passage and that will strengthen Sør-Varanger municipality's businesses. Who would have thought that to be possible a short time ago? (Olsen [A] s120417, 3006)[130]

The point of the historical references and these three time periods in relation to the border permit is important. As already discussed in Chapter 5, historical references play a part in the diplomatic relations between the two states. However, the historical narrative is also important for the construction of an

[129] Norge og Russland har en tusenårig historie med fredelig sameksistens. Forbindelsene har vært preget av forståelse og respekt, gjensidig bistand og pragmatiske løsninger (MST7, 69).
[130] Folk-til-folk-samarbeid skal man aldri undervurdere. Det har bygd ned stengsler, og i vårt tilfelle boret det mange små hull i den tidligere stengte grenseporten mellom Norge og Russland under den kalde krigen. Nå skal menneskene i de grensenære områdene få et eget grenseboerbevis som forenkler passering, og som vil styrke Sør-Varanger kommunes næringsliv. Hvem hadde trodd at det var mulig for kort tid siden? (Olsen [A] s120417, 3006)

idea about this region. For example, in an article about Kirkenes' Russian population and cross-border relations, the before and after is symbolised by a repurposed bomb shelter:

> The old bomb shelter in the city centre has been rebuilt into a sports hall. Where people previously were to survive when the enemy arrived from the East, sports are now taking place with Norwegian and Russian calls from the stands (Aftenposten 101109).[131]

In this discourse, the history of the region is told as having a *before*, *during*, and *after* the Soviet period, which emphasises the idea that a closed border between these two states was a *historical anomaly*. It is supposed to be open, as there were extensive exchanges and movements across the border before, and opening up the border passage for traffic is simply going back to what should be regarded as normal. This is also reflected in the explicit ambition that 'Norway's border towards Russia should become an ordinary border, that is, like the border with Sweden' (Aftenposten 081006). This is consistent with Norwegian policies from the early 1990s and a continuation of the motive of the Barents project to go back to 'historical relationships' (Eriksson 1995, 273).

The meetings of 'ordinary people' and the role of culture

A prominent subject in the parliamentary discourse is the role a border permit could have for encouraging cross-border relations. This theme is emphasised by the recurrent use of the expression 'people-to-people', which refers to the 'meeting of ordinary people' as a means to improve bilateral relations, a strategy that was initiated with the sports and culture exchanges that took place between the two countries during the Soviet era:

> We must not forget that it was culture that opened the door during the coldest of the Cold War in the 1950s. . . . When one encounters culture in such harsh environments, one understands how important it is to invest in culture as a bridge between the peoples of the North (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).[132]

If we consider the theoretical argument that cross-border interaction creates the possibility to develop a shared identity, the 'people-to-people' concept is very interesting. This expression is clearly used as a positive affirmation for

[131] Det gamle bomberommet i sentrum er ombygd til idrettshall. Der man tidligere skulle overleve når fienden kom fra øst, foregår det nå idrett med norske og russiske tilrop fra tribunene (Aftenposten 101109).

[132] Vi må ikke glemme at det nettopp var kulturen som var døråpneren under den kaldeste kalde krigen på 1950-tallet. . . . Når en møter kulturen i slike barske omgivelser, forstår en hvor viktig det er å satse på kulturen som brubygger mellom folkene i nord (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).

cross-border contact, but there are two meanings to the concept, since folk here can be used to refer to both individuals and to 'the people'. In the second meaning, the two peoples meet, but identification and separation are maintained. The expression is thus a way to talk about this region that does not require or refer to any shared identity that transcends the border. As such, it serves to reduce or bypass any differences without challenging the identity of either people. The expression 'people-to-people' is brought up rather frequently as an established way to talk about this region that does not demand a shared regional identity. This saying is complemented and nuanced by a similar image, one that is more connected to the local and that gives more attention to day-to-day life in the border area: the idea of *ordinary people* having *natural* interactions across the border, e.g. in phrases such as the following:

> Much can be solved by the meetings of ordinary people across borders. In my home county, meeting places have been created through generations of interaction between people (Simensen [A] s091012, 97).[133]

> The natural relations between peoples of the North (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).[134]

Finally, the role given to culture and cultural exchange is sometimes emphasised in relation to the border permit, for example as a way to cooperate between the two countries:

> [In addition to the delimitation agreement], we have established a border permit within a 30 km zone between Norway and Russia. Both of these will most likely create more activity and cooperation between people living in the North. From such a perspective, the cultural field and cultural cooperation across borders becomes very important (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).[135]

Or that an open border will enrich the access to culture for people in Kirkenes:

> 'Seventy-three per cent say they will travel more often to Russia. They really want a larger area to become visa-free, preferably even Murmansk,' says researcher Arvid Viken. The respondents state that they want to go on holiday

[133] Mye kan løses ved at vanlige mennesker møtes på tvers av landegrensene. I mitt hjemfylke har det gjennom generasjoner vært skapt møteplasser mellom folk (Simensen [A] s091012, 97).
[134] Det naturlige sammkvemet mellom menneskerne i nord (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).
[135] Siden da har vi fått på plass et grenseboerbevis innenfor en sone på 30 km mellom Norge og Russland. Begge disse vil med stor sannsynlighet skape mer aktivitet og samarbeid mellom folk som bor i nord. I et slikt perspektiv blir kulturfeltet og kultursamarbeid over grensene svært viktig (Simensen [A] s101214, 1812).

> to Russia, for shopping and to experience Russian culture and restaurants (Aftenposten 090820).[136]

Cultural exchange and local cross-border relations are given a practical role in the central discourse; as in the 'people-to-people' quote above, culture is seen as a facilitator for other objectives. This is particularly clear in the way that cultural activities, such as the annual 'Barents Spectacle', are seen as both being good for the local community and cross-border integration and also as a means to facilitate political relations and economic integration:

> Culture and industry go hand in hand through the Barents Spectacle programme, which also holds exciting arenas for debate about how, together, Norway and Russia can explore and exploit valuable natural resources in the region for the benefit of the population (Aspaker [H] s110201, 2239).[137]

> There is enormous potential in the contact between Norway and Russia at all levels, both culturally and commercially, after we have got the [maritime line of demarcation] in place, and also after we have local border traffic permits, which can lead to much greater activity over the border (Halvorsen [SV] s110201, 2240).[138]

> As a neighbour to Russia, it is important that we have close contact and can cooperate on issues of common interest. It requires mutual understanding and respect for our different starting points, both in terms of history and experience. Increased contact between people on both sides of the border, measures such as the border traffic permits, and joint projects in healthcare, to name but a few, are important contributions to such contact and understanding (Hansen [A] s110509, 3947).[139]

Here, even though there is some caution about the differences between the two countries, in talk about the interaction between ordinary people across the border, this is clearly seen as mitigating – rather than creating – potential

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[136] '73 prosent sier de vil reise oftere til Russland. De ønsker egentlig at et større område kan bli visumfritt, helst til og med Murmansk,' sier forsker Arvid Viken. De spurte opplyser at de ønsker å dra på ferie til Russland, på shopping og for å oppleve russisk kultur og restauranter (Aftenposten 090820).

[137] Kultur og næring går hånd i hånd gjennom programmet for Barents Spektakel, som også rommer spennende arena- er for debatt om hvordan Norge og Russland i samarbeid kan utforske og utnytte viktige naturressurser i regionen, til beste for befolkningen (Aspaker [H] s110201, 2239).

[138] Det ligger enorme utviklingsmuligheter i kontakten mellom Norge og Russland på alle nivåer, både kulturelt og næringsmes- sig, etter at vi har fått delelinjen på plass, og etter at vi også har fått grenseboerbevis, som kan føre til mye stør- re aktivitet over linjen (Halvorsen [SV] s110201, 2240).

[139] Som naboland til Russland er det viktig at vi har nær kontakt og kan samarbeide om spørsmål av felles interesse. Det krever at vi forstår hverandre og har respekt for våre ulike utgangspunkt, både når det gjelder historie og erfaring. Økt kontakt mellom mennesker på begge sider av grensen, tiltak som grenseboerbevis og fellesprosjekter på helsesektoren, for å nevne noe, er viktige bidrag til en slik kontakt og forståelse (Hansen [A] s110509, 3947).

conflict between people. Given the complex historical background, and the expectations from previous literature, this was somewhat surprising. In the central parliamentary discourse, social interaction across the border is perceived as a way to strengthen and stabilise the border rather than as a challenge to it. This is also exemplified by the role that language, and learning each other's language, plays in the discourse:

> Everyone who has followed the development in Kirkenes can see that the city is changing and is increasingly characterised by its proximity to Russia. The proportion of Russians has become so significant that the city, without hesitation, put up bilingual street signs in both Norwegian and Russian (Aspaker [H] s110201, 2239).[140]

> Language is very important. It is one of the most important tools to improve our cooperation across the border (Ljunggren [A] s110201, 2243).[141]

> Language is perhaps the most important inroad to a better understanding of Russia in general and Russian culture in particular (Aspaker [H] s110201, 2229).[142]

Who is the border permit for?

Centre-periphery relations are not very visible in the central discourse; however, as we will see in the second half of this chapter, it is a much more prominent theme in the local context. Given the argument that enclosure is one of the most important functions of borders, and seeing societal sovereignty as a question of the state's capacity to keep society together, the little we find about this in relation to the border permit is still very interesting. As discussed in Chapter 5, one main motive for the border opening from the perspective of the Norwegian government is to strengthen the local economy, with the intention of reducing domestic inequalities:

> Many of the challenges and opportunities we have in the North must be resolved at a high political level. Mostly about finding good solutions for people who live and work here every day (Simensen [A] s091012, 97).[143]

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[140] Alle som har fulgt utviklingen i Kirkenes, ser at byen er i endring og stadig mer preges av sitt naboskap til Russland. Innslaget av russere er blitt så betydelig at byen med største selvfølge skiltes tospråklig: på norsk og på russisk (Aspaker [H] s110201, 2239).

[141] Språket er veldig viktig. Det er et av de viktigste verktøyene for at samarbeidet vårt over landegrensen til Russland kan fungere bedre (Ljunggren [A] s110201, 2243).

[142] Språk er kanskje den viktigste inngangen til bedre forståelse av Russland generelt og kulturforståelse spesielt (Aspaker [H] s110201, 2229).

[143] Mange av utfordringene og mulighetene vi har i nord, må løses på et høyt politisk nivå. Det meste handler om å finne gode løsninger for menneskene som lever og arbeider her i hverdagen (Simensen [A] s091012, 97).

> The border permit is an example of a political action that creates local involvement through new trade possibilities for the local population. The border permit gives the people in the region the opportunity to define their role in this cooperation themselves (Pedersen [A] s110215, 2472).[144]

This can be understood in two ways in relation to the societal sovereignty dimension. If we think about the role of the border to *exclude*, we can understand it as giving priority to economic gains above societal stability, in this case by not perceiving or articulating any risk connected to opening up Norway's border to Russia. On the other hand, if we think about the role of the border to *include,* we can regard the economic focus as a means to maintain societal stability within the border by reducing inequalities between centre and periphery as well as by reducing differences across the border. This risk-free idea is in contrast to a few articles in the national media, where there is concern that an open border will result in increased crime because Russian border crossers with the permit will be those who cannot afford the existing visa:

> First and foremost, there are fears of increased crime when the poorest – those who cannot afford a visa today – get the chance to cross the border (Dagens Næringsliv 100616).[145]

> The chief of police reminds us that the difference in living standards is high between Kirkenes and the Russian countryside along the border. He points out that liquor and tobacco are cheap on the Russian side and that an open border may lead to more prostitution and more burglaries in Finnmark[146] (Aftenposten 090213).

The societal dimension at the local level

The introduction of the visa-free border zone would only have a direct effect in the daily lives of those who live within a distance of 30 kilometres from the border, as they are the ones who can get the permit themselves and who will meet those who use it to cross the border to the Norwegian side. Thus, it could be expected that perceived societal effects of a more open border would be more explicit in the local discourse. What are the objectives and

[144] Grenseboerbeviset er et eksempel på et politisk tiltak som skaper lokal forankring, gjennom nye handelsmuligheter for lokalbefolkningen. Grenseboerbeviset gir befolkningen i regionen mulighet til selv å definere sin egen rolle i dette samarbeidet (Pedersen [A] s110215, 2472).

[145] Først og fremst fryktes det økt kriminalitet når de aller fattigste - de som ikke har råd til visum i dag - får mulighet til å ta seg over grensen (Dagens Næringsliv 100616).

[146] Politimesteren minner om at forskjellen i levestandard er stor mellom Kirkenes og de russiskebygdene langs grensen. Han påpeker at sprit og tobakk er billig på russisk side, og at en åpnere grense kan føre til mer prostitusjon og flere innbrudd i Finnmark (Aftenposten 090213).

possible challenges that this change is expected to have for the border community? Here, this question is examined by following two main themes in the discourse: the role attributed to Russians as border-crossers and the relationship between the border community and Oslo.

Border permit expectations: the border-crosser as worker and consumer

Similar to the central discourse, the most common way to refer to the relationship with Russian society is as *neighbours*, often with an emphasis on the friendly character of these relations, i.e. 'good neighbours in the North' (sva090801, 4). The 'people-to-people' concept is also used in the local context; for example, the region is described as having 'extensive people-to-people cooperation that has lived and lives its own life rather independently from the political focus' (sva090908, 4), which refers to the fact that, even if the concept originated in a policy initiative, the concept and the practice of interaction across the border happen outside of state initiatives. Collaboration between peoples is described as a way to bridge the barriers that the border creates, both symbolically and in practice:

> Without ['people-to-people' cooperation in the North], it would not have been certain that Norway would have been the first country that Russia decided to open up to. Stone by stone, both sides have built trust and openness [towards each other] (sva100427, 6).[147]

> 'Our experience is that the "Russian market" in Kirkenes is an important arena for "people-to-people" cooperation. We see that this is very popular among our inhabitants, while it is also a great attitude-building initiative. When people get to know each other, prejudices are worn down and new contacts are linked across the border,' writes Randal [mayor of Sør-Varanger at the time] (fin100111, 4).[148]

As we have seen in previous chapters, with the opening up of the border and the expected subsequent increase in cross-border traffic due to the border permit, the idea of 'good fences, good neighbours' is, to some extent, challenged because the barrier between them is broken down. In the proximity of the border, the locals and their neighbours will become *grenseboere*, border-residents, and the border permit will, to some extent, turn the border into a

[147] Uten dette, hadde det neppe vært en selvfølge at Norge blir det første landet Russland har valgte å åpne opp for. Sten på sten har man bygget tillit og åpenhet, begge veier (sva100427, 6).
[148] 'Vår erfaring er at "russetorget" i Kirkenes, er en viktig arena i "folk-til-folk"-samarbeidet. Vi ser at innbyggerne synes dette er et svært poulært tilbud, samtidigt som det er et flott holdningsskapende tiltak. Når folk blir kjent med hverandre, bygger fordommer ned og nye kontakter knyttes over grensen', skriver Randal (fin100111, 4).

zone instead of a barrier. The 'people-to-people' idea could be understood as contested by the creation of a border zone, for, with it, a new category of belonging is introduced – the *border resident*. The term *grenseboer* is used to refer to all people living in the border area, but, with the introduction of the visa-free zone, it also becomes a legal category that differentiates citizens on both sides by giving them further legal access across the border than their fellow citizens, as eligibility for the border permit 'applies only to border residents' (sva120228, 8). When the *grenseboerbevis* is introduced in the discourse, it refers to border residency as a category that unites 'border residents on both sides' (sva120531, 6). If the expression 'people-to-people' serves to symbolically bring nationalities together, the expression 'border resident' cuts across national boundaries and thus potentially challenges the line of inclusion drawn by the territorial border.[149] This may be of particular weight for those in Kirkenes, who, as one Russian-Norwegian high-school student puts it, 'live on both sides of the border' (fin080610, 8). If we recall Newman's argument, that the more different the 'Other' is perceived, the more likely it is that tensions or conflict will arise in relation to border-crossing activities (Newman 2006a), then who the border-crosser is perceived to be in the local context is therefore important if we wish to understand the potential challenges and opportunities for the border society when the border opens up. Below, I will identify and discuss the main themes and roles of the Russian border-crosser in the border permit discourse.

The first prominent theme with regard to border-crossings, in particular during the first two years of the border permit discourse, as discussed in Chapter 6, is the role of the border zone as a facilitator for labour migration. The demand for skilled labour is often emphasised in the local context, and the idea expressed here is that, with a border zone, it will be easier to employ Russian workers. A manager for the mining industry is quoted as saying that they are 'very interested in using Russian competence' (sva071215, 22). In this context, Russians are perceived as skilled workers and the neighbouring region as having long traditions of industrial work, which makes these workers particularly suited for work in Kirkenes, where the main industrial activities include mining, shipping, and the wharf industry: 'Russians in the North are highly educated and highly competent' (sva100916, 4).

In addition to being described in the role of skilled workers, the other clearly defined role that Russian border-crossers are identified with is that of *consumers*. Cross-border shopping is described as increasing at a high rate and is expected to 'explode' as a result of the introduction of visa freedom. This is an important resource for the local community, as Russians who cross the border spend not 'hundreds, but thousands of crowns' (sva100710,

[149] One task of future research could be to investigate if/how this impacts on individuals belonging to this group, e.g. if being a 'border resident' also affects how one identifies with national and local communities.

7). The cross-border consumer is described as belonging to the new middle class, sometimes contrasted with the historical differences in income and welfare between the two countries, and how this gap has been reduced since the end of the Cold War. As consumers, they are most welcome, as quotes from local shopkeepers on numerous occasions show:

> I notice that they fill their shopping carts well when they shop here (fin101104, 4).[150]

> The area of Kirkenes and Øst-Finnmark is too small; now, we look eastwards. We have many Russian customers here today, and this will be even greater when the border traffic permit arrives (sva101116,10).[151]

> I would say that about half of our customers are Russians coming across the border to shop (sva101216, 9).[152]

> It may seem as if they have got a better economy and also a middle class. What they are saying is that they like the products we sell; moreover, they get the VAT back […]. Russians are an important customer base, and it means a lot for us to take good care of them (sva111110, 12).[153]

The roles of 'worker' and 'consumer' highlight that border-crossing Russians are perceived as resources in the local public discourse. Particular focus is given to their skills and purchasing power, characteristics that are markers of neither social or cultural proximity nor distance; instead, they are defined by their contribution to the local economy.

There are two other roles in which the identity markers that differentiate 'Russian' from 'Norwegian' are more visible, the first of which is that they are sometimes described as more culturally sophisticated: 'The Russians are a cultured people' (sva090613, 23). Although this is a difference, it is seen as an appreciation of the 'other' and a desire for more cultural exchange, which will be facilitated by the opening of the border:

> There is a broader cultural range in Russia. The Russians can be more enthusiastic and more open. What has always been an impediment [to cultural exchange] is the border (sva101021, 11).[154]

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[150] Jag legger merke til at de fyller handlevognerne godt når de handler (fin101104, 4).

[151] Området med Kirkenes og Øst-Finnmark er for lite, nå servi østover. Vi har mange russiske kunder her i dag og dette vil bli enda større, blant annet når ordningen med grenseboerbevis kommer (sva101116,10).

[152] Jeg vil si at omlag halvparten av kundene våre er russere som kommer over grensa for å handle (sva101216, 9).

[153] Det kan virke som om de har fått en bedre økonomi og også en middelklasse. Det de sier er at de liker utvalget, dessuten får de jo momsen tilbake. […] Russerne er et viktig kundegrunnlag og det betyr mye for oss å ta godt vare på dem (sva111110, 12).

[154] Det er et bredere kulturelt spenn i Russland. Russerne kan være mer entusiastiske og mer åpne. Det som alltid har vært en demper er grensen (sva101021, 11).

In previous studies of this region and the reaction to the increasingly open border, it has been shown that there are identifiers ascribed to the Russian border-crossers that are negative and carry social stigma, such as Russian men being associated with criminality and women with prostitution (Aure 2011; Stenvoll 2002). This image is one that, at times, also comes up in relation to the border permit. For example, both local papers report that the police have raised concerns about crime rates and a need for police resources to prepare for the introduction of a border permit:

> Freer movement of people across the Norwegian-Russian border can also increase crime and prostitution, and the police believe that a substantial increase in resources is a necessary investment (sva090131, 4).[155]

> The police fear that the introduction of the so-called border permits may increase prostitution, drug trafficking, drunken brawls, and theft (fin090202, 2).[156]

Although not a dominant theme in relation to the introduction of a visa-free zone, it is apparent that this stereotype is both reproduced and challenged in the context of introducing a border permit. The articles cited above are followed up by two critical responses to the statements made by the police commissioner, both of which argue that changes in border traffic at the beginning of the 1990s also gave rise to many concerns, but that these are old problems that should be left in the past:

> Norwegian authorities in general, including central and local police authorities, were very concerned about the 'hordes' of mafia, drug smugglers, criminals, and prostitutes who would come flooding across the border at Storskog. . . . In retrospect, this great fear was grossly exaggerated. . . . As the old fear scenarios are dusted off, because a local border traffic permit will allow us neighbours to move more freely between the countries, it is unfortunately like hearing an echo of the past (sva090203, 4).[157]

> 'In the midst of a festival that celebrates the transnational and great cooperation and integration that is happening here, we get this. I think it's very, very sad. It confirms prejudices individuals may have, and it creates a perception

[155] Friere flyt av folk over den norsk-russiske grensa kan også gi mer kriminalitet og prostitusjon, og politiet mener en betydelig økning av ressursene er en både nødvendig og en god investering (sva090131, 4).

[156] Politiet frykter at innføring av det såkalte grenseboerbeviset kan gi økt prostitusjon, narkotikahandel, fyllebråk og tyverier (fin090202, 2).

[157] Norske myndigheter generelt, inkludert sentral- og lokal politimyndighet, var svært urolig for den «horden» av mafia, narkosmuglere, vinningsforbrytere og prostituerte som ville komme kommende over grensen på Storskog. . . . Sett i ettertid var den enorme frykten betydelig overdrevet. . . . Når det nå er pusset støv av de gamle fryktscenarier, fordi et eget grenseboerbevis skal la oss naboer få bevege oss friere mellom landene, er det dessverre som å høre et ekko fra fortiden (sva090203, 4).

> that Russians generally are criminals or prostitutes,' says Rune Rafaelsen, head of the Norwegian Barents Secretariat (sva090203, 4-5).[158]

> I don't see why people's morals should change overnight just because they are given border permits [says the mayor] (fin090202, 3).[159]

It is also reported that cross-border crime has decreased as a result of a three-part collaboration between Norwegian, Russian, and Finnish authorities (sva080614, 15), and, later on, there is emphasis on disassociating criminality with Russians, for example in statements such as the following:

> Who is primarily responsible for the crimes taking place in Sør-Varanger? It is NOT Russians anyway. . . . Criminals could easily come here from many places, and shoplifting is no more a Russian phenomenon than a Norwegian one (sva120512, 6).[160]

> 'Increased traffic has not led to increased crime. There is little crime related to Russian visitors in Sør-Varanger,' said the police chief (fin 101103, 8).[161]

The negative implications of associating Russians with crime and prostitution is contested in the local media discourse, as this theme is never brought up without also being rebutted and described as a remnant from a past that no longer has any truth to it. The other themes, where the border-crosser is given the role of consumer or worker and is seen as a resource for the local community, are much more stressed and unchallenged. In the context of border-crossers as resources, any differences are rarely emphasised – if they are, it is to point out the need for local adjustment, e.g. the need for employees to learn the language to be able to communicate with the new clientele (sva110203, 8). Furthermore, there are statements such as the following, which portray the local community as a role model for open borders and integration, while also invoking a shared history of cross-border openness:

> Because maybe something good is done here that the rest of Norway can learn from . . . not least because this area has always been a melting pot of nationalities and a multi-cultural area in the broadest sense (sva100911, 6).[162]

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[158] 'Midt under en festival som feirer det grenseoverskridende og flotte samarbeidet og integrasjonen som skjer her oppe, får vi dette. Jeg syns det er veldig, veldig trist. Det bekrefter fordommer enkeltemåtte ha og at det lager en oppfatning av at russere generelt er kriminelle eller prostituert,' sier Rune Rafaelsen, leder for Barentssekretariatet (sva090203, 4-5).

[159] Jeg skjønner icke at folks moral skal forandre seg over natten, bare fordi de får grenseboerbevis (fin090202, 3).

[160] Hvem er det som i hovedsak står for den kriminaliteten som skjer i Sør-Varanger? Det er IKKE russere i hvert fall. . . . Kriminelle kan fort komme hit fra mange kanter og butikknasking er ikke et russisk fenomen, mer enn et norsk (sva120512, 6).

[161] Økt trafikk har ikke ført til økt kriminalitet. De er lite kriminalitet knyttet til russernes besøk i Sør-Varanger, fastslår politimesteren (fin 101103, 8).

The border permit that is discussed here has practical use primarily for those who regularly cross the border, but it does not directly affect more permanent migration. Still, it is at times mentioned in connection to the part of the local population that are of Russian origin, as 'a tenth of the Sør-Varanger population are Russians' (sva100427, 6) or who have family and friends in the border area (sva081030, 5). These are examples where the border-crossing Russian is not depicted as the 'other', or even as a resource, but is included in the idea of an 'us' in the local community.

On some occasions, the Norwegian government is criticised for being too strict in regard to the application procedures for Russian labour migrants, in that Russians 'are treated as employees from Africa or Asia' (sva080301, 6). By pointing out a different 'other', one perceived as more distant, i.e. African and Asian labour migrants, this argument suggests that such distance towards Russian citizens is unjust. What is happening here is therefore inclusion by reference to another exclusion.[163] The restricted work permit regime is sometimes blamed on the Schengen Agreement, with criticism of its exclusion of Russians: 'In today's paper, we read about the unfair differentiation between EU/EEA citizens in Norway and workers from outside this area, for example Russia' (sva100911, 6). Notable here is the differentiation between EU *citizens* on the one hand and *workers* on the other, which once again emphasises the Russian border-crossers in their function for the Norwegian economy.

Centre-periphery relations

In the above discussion, it was shown that reference to the cultural or social distance (or proximity) of Russian border-crossers are rare and that the role they are given in the discourse is primarily one of a resource. If 'they' are not clearly distinguished in the discourse, who is perceived to be 'us' in this context? As will be shown here, the tension that seems to be most articulated is *not* between the two sides of the border, as could have been expected; instead, the most explicit differences seem to be in how the central state is perceived to view Russia. The central government is often represented as blocking or complicating cross-border relations. On a number of occasions, local criticism towards the centre follows a specific pattern: there are difficulties for Russians who wish to obtain visas; the bureaucracy for processing applications is unnecessarily complicated; there is a lack of investment to improve the border passage infrastructure; and the centre is perceived to have a lingering 'fear of the Reds' that is unfounded. For example, concern-

[162] For kanskje er det gjort noe bra her som resten av Norge kan lære av. . . . Ikke minst fordi dette området alltid har vært en smeltedigel av nasjonaliteter og et flerkulturelle område i vid forstand (sva100911, 6).

[163] In her study of Norwegian-Russian relations in the town Båtsfjord, Margit Aure (2011, 175) points to a similar hierarchical ordering of workers.

ing the perceived risk of increased criminality as a result of a more open border, the head of the Barents secretariat is quoted as saying that, because of daily contact across the border, such fears are no longer present in the local community, but they become stronger the further away you get from the border:

> These views are stronger the further from the Russian border you get. In Oslo, these old prejudices are alive and well, while in Kirkenes they are virtually gone, and it is obviously because through daily contact we see that they are not true' (sva090203, 4).[164]

Another example of this is when visa procedures for Russian citizens are criticised for being too restrictive, it is questioned whether the Norwegian authorities are afraid of Russians in the North:

> What the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Immigration Office are so afraid of is difficult to understand. . . . What's so extra scary about Russians from the north? (sva090804, 4)[165]

In connection to the introduction of the *grenseboerbevis*, the local discourse often focuses on the government's eagerness to promote the *idea* of visa freedom on the one hand as opposed to the slow progress of its *implementation* on the other: 'there is a gap between vision and reality' (sva090212, 5), and a perceived lack of investment in infrastructure at the border control station causes the central government's ambition for visa freedom in the North to be described as 'much ado about nothing' (sva090402, 4).

Two years before the final implementation of the border permit, new rules for Russians applying to enter Norway were introduced, whose requirements were met with reactions such as 'you would think this form is taken from the archives of the KGB, translated into Norwegian, and introduced as a standard' and 'counteracting the work that has been done for a more open border' (sva100622, 4). However, even when the local border traffic permit was finally agreed upon, in the local discourse there remains a sense of distance between the vision of visa freedom and the realities at the border:

> It gives an indication of how high, or low, one in Oslo really prioritises the new border traffic regime. To our ears, it sounds distorted that the proposed agreement text contains a clause that obliges applicants for local border traffic permits to have legitimate reasons to cross the border. What do legitimate

[164] Disse synspunktene er sterkere jo lengre fra grensen til Russland en kommer. I Oslo lever disse gamle fordommene i beste velgående, mens i Kirkenes er de så og si borte og det er selvsagt fordi vi gjennom daglig kontakt ser at dette ikke stemmer (sva090203, 4).
[165] Hva norsk UD og UDI er så redde for, er vanskelig å forstå. . . . Hva er det som er så ekstra skummelt med russerne fra nord? (sva090804, 4)

reasons to travel across borders have to do with visa freedom? (sva120412, 6)[166]

Taken together, although mixed with optimism about the progression of visa freedom in the North, the central government is perceived in the local public discourse as a) not living up to its promises about opening the border, or at least making the process unnecessarily slow, and b) being sceptical or prejudiced against northern Russians. Through this, a distance is constructed between the local community (we are open to the open border) and the central state (they are afraid and reluctant), a distancing from the Norwegian centre that contributes to the construction of proximity with neighbours across the border and a cross-border community.

Another interesting aspect in core-periphery relations is the fact that the expected increase of people present in the area as a result of the border zone is used as a *resource* for local political actors in negotiations with the state. In 2010, after the border permit had been agreed upon, local political actors can be seen using it as an argument in negotiations about where a new regional hospital should be built. With the choice between Kirkenes and Tromsø, the expected increase in the number of border passages is used to argue that the hospital must be placed in Kirkenes. The negotiations are reportedly successful, and after the decision to build a new hospital in Kirkenes had been made, 'Russia saves Kirkenes hospital' is front-page news.[167]

Bonus material: daily interviews

An additional note on the status of the border permit in the local context is that, in addition to the number of news articles and editorials that cover the border permit and its expected outcomes, throughout 2011, the *Sør-Varanger Avis* asked a question about the border permit in its daily interviews with locals: 'What will you do with the *grenseboerbevis*?' There were generally three different answers that respondents gave to this question: 1) they will use it to go to Russia to buy cheap petrol; 2) they will use it to visit family or friends on the other side; and 3) the respondent has not had a visa before and they are not sure whether to get the permit or not but is positive towards it being introduced. Besides adding to the image that the positive attitude towards the border permit is not solely held by the elite voices that are usually given room in a newspaper, these small interviews reinforce the picture that 'the person on the street' also appreciates the border permit. Even more so,

[166] Og det sier sitt om hvor høyt, eller lavt, man i Oslo egentlig prioriterer den nye grenseboerordningen. I våre ører skurrer det også alvorlig at det i forslaget til avtaletekst er lagt inn en klausul om at søkere av grenseboerbevis skal ha legitime grunner for å krysse grensen. Hva har legitime grunner til å reise over landegrensene med visumfrihet å gjøre? (sva120412, 6)

[167] 'Russia' here does not refer to the state of Russia but the amount of possible Russian patients expected (sva101123, 1).

these interviews also say something about the expected accessibility of the border permit in comparison to regular visas, in that its introduction seems to encourage people who have never thought about crossing the border before to do so.

Summary and conclusions

In the case of this particular border, there are plenty of identity factors that could have been seen as obstacles to an open border – the long history of the border as a barrier between 'West' and 'East' and differences in languages, religions, economic development, and political systems are all elements that could easily be translated into questions of belonging and thus into barriers to more open movement across the border. In Chapters 2 and 3, it was argued that, when we investigate why borders become more or less open, the important question to ask is for whom they become so, and that a perceived distance from, or even hostility towards, the border-crosser would be difficult to reconcile with more open borders. What is evident from the discussion above is that, when the border permit is brought up at the government level and when some form of identity or cultural argument is raised in parliamentary debates, it is not expressed as a perceived risk. There are few concerns that would align with the otherwise common discourse in relation to opening borders, i.e. seeing increased diversity as a risk factor for societal coherence. In terms of language differences and the possibility of communicating with their neighbours, it is interesting to note that, in this discourse, the absence of a shared language is never turned against Russians as their problem. When language difficulties are brought up in relation to the border permit, it is always with the argument that Norwegians should learn Russian.

From a societal sovereignty perspective, region-building projects have the potential to challenge the national imagined community by being identity projects in themselves. A regional identity does not necessarily challenge the national identity, but neither should we ignore the possibility that it could be perceived as doing so. Even without border-crossing regional projects, the societal function of a border is not only to define where one state ends and another begins but also to encircle what is *within* a state. Given this function, centre-periphery relations are an important aspect of societal sovereignty, following the theoretical argument that peripheries are more challenging the more distant they are perceived from the centre.

A conclusion that can be drawn from the above discussion is that, in both the central and local discussion, there is a clear focus on functional rather than cultural identities, i.e. Russians are primarily associated with their functions for Norway (as consumers or employees) than with something related to their Russian-ness (e.g. language differences or being more cultured than Norwegians). The majority of references to Russians as border-crossers re-

late to their capacity as a resource for the local community, practically excluding the aspect of cultural identity from the equation. This is rather remarkable, considering that so much of the literature focuses on the importance of identity, either to explain openness or border conflict or as an argument for region building across borders. One way to understand this could be that, by focusing on functional rather than cultural identities, the issue of 'us versus them' is not articulated and is therefore effectively taken out of the 'challenge of open borders' dilemma.

Furthermore, the way in which the introduction of visa freedom in the local community is associated with historical relationships between the two countries reflects some of the conclusions from previous research about the Norwegian government's use of the local community as an instrument of national foreign policy (Eriksson 1995). From this perspective, the facilitation of cross-border relations at the local level is a social action aimed at reinforcing geopolitical security. Similar to the geopolitical strategy that strengthening the economy in the region would also stabilise bilateral relations with Russia, the facilitation of 'people-to-people' contact and local cross-border relations are strategies to decrease geopolitical tensions between Norway and Russia on a bilateral level.

8. Results and Discussion

At the beginning of this thesis, it was argued that, although globalisation and international non-state actors are complicating the idea of the state as the sole sovereign actor, territorial boundaries remain important sites for manifestations of state power. Although it has been argued that the expansion of border walls along more borders than ever before hides a *de facto* loss of state sovereignty, much remains to be understood about how states themselves perceive and meet these challenges to sovereignty. It is easy to understand that perceived challenges against sovereignty may result in policies to reinforce borders, in particular through an intensified focus on the border as a symbolic manifestation of state power. Building walls can easily be interpreted as a way for states to maintain their control over borders, and, by doing so, emphasis is given to security objectives over openness.

In this study, it was asked how the pursuit of open borders should be understood in relation to the question of sovereignty. How come a state would seek to open a border towards another state where macro-level differences between them suggest that a more open border would potentially challenge its sovereignty? More specifically, it was asked what the sovereignty motives were that played into Norway's commitment to the construction of a visa-free zone with Russia. Below, I will recapitulate the main findings from Chapters 5–7. First, I summarise the main arguments, expectations, and challenges as expressed in the Norwegian border discourse and compare how these ideas differed between the central and local arenas. Then, I will discuss how these arguments can be understood within the sovereignty bargain-framework: if and how different sovereignty dimensions were 'bargained with' in this border discourse. The final section of this chapter discusses how these findings contribute to previous research on this particular border, in addition to how the conclusions drawn here contribute to theory development within the overarching question of the relation between borders and sovereignty.

Summary of findings

The first empirical question that this thesis set out to answer was what sovereignty ideas characterised the Norwegian public discourse about the local border traffic permit? In Chapters 5 to 7, I analysed the arguments for why a

local border traffic permit should be introduced, as they were expressed in the policy proposals and parliamentary debates at the level of the state and in the local printed media at the border region in question. What were the perceived risks? What benefits and gains were expected? How were these arguments aligned between the centre and periphery?

Geopolitical challenges to sovereignty

The first dimension of sovereignty motives to be analysed was what I have called the geopolitical dimension – that is, those ideas that have to do with Norway's relations to Russia and Europe as well as the military and security risks relating to the border. If borders are more likely to be open where neighbouring states have similar military capacities and there is no history of geopolitical tension, how were these challenges overcome here? To understand this, I analysed how geopolitical motives (opportunities and risks) were articulated and evaluated in the discourse. As the analysis showed, an important motive for proposing the introduction of a local border traffic permit on the part of the Norwegian government was to create and maintain stable bilateral relations with Russia. It was made clear that Norway is positioned as a 'small state between powerful neighbours', and thus, building peaceful diplomatic and neighbourly relations with Russia should be understood as a strategy to overcome the challenge that unequal military capacities present by defusing any security threat that Russia may pose.

The strategy to build friendly bilateral relations with Russia is complicated by Norway being situated between the EU and the Russian Federation. Both at the central and local levels, acting within Schengen rules was perceived as a challenge to sovereignty, as it may have limited Norway's ability to negotiate efficiently with Russia. While the agreement on a local border traffic permit was formally a bilateral agreement between Norway and Russia, it was carried out within the Schengen framework. A possible interpretation of these findings is that the Schengen Agreement restricted Norway's ability to enter into a more extensive bilateral agreement on visa freedom than the prescribed 30-kilometre zone, effectively undermining Norway's ability to regulate its own borders.

Furthermore, while the border would become more open in terms of visa regulations, it was found that both the central and local discourses emphasised that this would not entail a more porous border in terms of surveillance and border control, thus indicating that the introduction of local visa freedom was understood as a potential security risk that must be met with increased border control capacity.

Although the geopolitical dimension, in terms of a focus on bilateral relations, diplomacy, and border security, was much more prominent in the discourse at the central level, the main themes and events in bilateral relations, such as official meetings between Norway and Russia, were also reflected in

the local discourse. In sum, there was remarkable alignment between centre and periphery in terms of what the objectives, as well as the perceived risks, were in terms of geopolitical sovereignty.

Economic opportunities?

The second dimension of sovereignty to be analysed was the material motives for pursuing a more open border. A conventional understanding of what explains open borders suggests that economic inequalities are unconducive to open borders, in particular that rich states tend to close borders towards their less affluent neighbours. As this has been one of the world's most divisive borders in terms of economic inequality (Moré Martínez 2011), the question of how economic opportunities and risks were connected to the introduction of local visa freedom particularly relevant. The conclusion drawn from Chapter 6 was that, from a central perspective, there were strong economic motives for implementing a more open border regime, both to strengthen the local economy, and as part of a security strategy, as economic integration across the border was used as a means to promote friendly bilateral relations. There was also some indication that economic exchange and local labour movement across the border were understood as a means of reducing income inequalities in the region, which indicates that this border policy can be seen as a means of creating conditions more conducive to open borders.

In the local discourse, the focus on labour movement was more pronounced, as the border permit was initially understood as way to facilitate the employment of Russian workers. Although the permit, in itself, does not allow for working across the border, it was very much motivated by its ability to facilitate labour migration. Furthermore, the new regime was expected to have far-reaching effects on the infrastructure of the border passage. Later on, when the bilateral agreement was signed, this focus changed into a more general expectation for the border permit to lead to the growth of local businesses and a strengthening of the local economy.

The analysis of the material dimension showed that growth opportunities were clearly important motives for the introduction of a local border traffic permit in both central and local contexts. Nevertheless, there was an interesting difference in terms of what this economic motive represented: whereas the economic benefit of increased cross-border flows in the local context was primarily seen a *goal in itself*, in the central context, this objective was connected to a *security motive*, as economic cross-border activity was expected to work as a means of achieving geopolitical stability in the region.

Who are 'we'? Who are 'they'?

One claim that we often see in the literature about border openings, not least in this particular case, is an emphasis on the role of identities in driving development towards more open borders or for creating conflict, e.g. that cultural proximity is seen as a prerequisite for open borders, or that differences of language, religion, and ethnicity across borders make for social conflict if borders become more open. How did these claims fare in the case of the Norwegian-Russian border permit?

In contrast to the focus on crime and prostitution in the public discourse of the early 1990s (Stenvoll 2002), in the context of the local border permit, Russian border-crossers were not portrayed as 'dangerous others'. Rather, they were seen as neighbours and as a resource for the local community in the roles of workers and consumers. Although some of the previous scepticism remained, it was by no means the dominant narrative in this discourse. Whenever some form of cultural-difference argument was raised, it was not framed as a risk or a threat. The majority of references to Russians as border-crossers related to their capacity as resources for the local community, shifting the focus from the 'other' as a potential threat to Norwegian society to the 'other' as an economic resource. The perceived usefulness of the Russians as border crossers thus became a way to strengthen the argument for an open border, perhaps even working as a way to counter previous negative stereotyping. One conclusion that can be drawn from the 'we are such good neighbours' themes in this discourse is that, by being repeated in both the central and local discourse, this idea served to preclude and minimise any societal tensions that could have been galvanised by the further opening of the border, as had been the case in the first major border reform in the 1990s (Stenvoll 2002).

If sovereignty is understood as having a societal dimension, where shared identities are the basis for the legitimacy of the state, then region-building projects have the potential to challenge sovereignty by being identity projects in themselves. Previous research has shown that, in the creation of the Barents' region, Norway had perceived cross-border identity building as a way to strengthen its sovereignty by aligning Russian and Norwegian interests in the North; however, it is also unclear how much of a shared identity this has resulted in. As the analysis in Chapter 7 has shown, the *grenseboerbevis* differs from the Barents' project in that the prospect of, or appeal to, shared identities was rarely expressed. Building a regional identity was not an explicit part of the objectives for introducing the border permit. 'People-to-people' and good relations were assumed to exist in the region and were expected to improve as a result of the establishment of a visa-free zone; further, the border permit was not portrayed as a means of creating a regional identity.

What does this tell us about how to understand the identity and societal coherence aspects of borders? In any given border policy change, there are internal as well as external opportunities for 'othering' and using the border's exclusionary capacity as an argument for why border-crossing should be restricted, but such issues do not necessarily have to be articulated. At the very least, I would argue that the role of identity (in societal sovereignty) could be mitigated by a focus on other themes: it is a possible line of conflict, but it does not necessarily have to be articulated as a threat to the national community of a state. Borders, even when they separate two, on first sight, very different states, may not necessarily give rise to identity conflicts when they open up, at least not when the economic gain is worth more than the identity risk.

An important finding is that the economic motive relating to an increase in trade activities across the border was a strategy for the government to strengthen the local economy on the Norwegian side of the border, which can be understood as a means of holding the Norwegian centre and periphery together, not via national-identity claims but by keeping domestic economic inequality in check.

The first observation that can be made from this summary is that an analytical framework primarily focusing on one of the sovereignty aspects would not have been able to fully capture the meaning given to this border permit. It was clearly neither solely a geopolitical strategy nor a material or societal one. That is to say, this single border policy encompassed a range of motives and was expected to have an impact that ranged from the everyday lives of people living near the border on either side to the bilateral relations between Norway and Russia. Thus, one question remains: is there a logic to how the three dimensions fare in relation to each other, was a sovereignty bargain made?

What sovereignty bargain was made, if any?

In Chapter 3, I argued that there were three possible ways in which geopolitical, material, and societal sovereignty could be interrelated. Where others have seen different dimensions of sovereignty in terms of sovereignty bargains, I argued that it is an empirical question as to whether entering into an international or bilateral agreement about borders should be understood as a 'sovereignty bargain' on the part of the state entering into such an agreement. I proposed three different hypotheses as to how motives along the three dimensions could be related to each other within the discourse: as (1) zero-sum, i.e. mutually competing so that emphasis on one dimension requires weakening one of the others; as (2) parallel, i.e. different policies or effects of a policy for different sovereignty motives, which are understood as

non-competing in relation to each other; or as (3) mutually reinforcing, where different motives can be pursued that reinforce or complement rather than cancel each other out.

As has been concluded, there were themes from the three different dimensions present in the Norwegian discourse on introducing local visa freedom along the border with Russia. Prominent motives for entering into this bilateral agreement were, among others, that it was intended to strengthen and stabilise bilateral relations with Russia, increase economic activities in the region, and promote a relationship of friendly neighbours in the border region. Was there a bargain made, where one dimension of sovereignty was compromised in order to strengthen another?

The first possibility is that opportunities within one dimension of sovereignty are pursued to the risk of another dimension. As the analysis has shown, in the central-level discourse, there were expectations that this policy would lead to economic growth in the local community, as well as strengthen Norwegian-Russian relations in the region and thereby also improving bilateral relations. The economic opportunities were thus not seen as being in conflict with geopolitical objectives. The 'risks' voiced at the central level in relation to the introduction of local visa freedom were not related to the border becoming more open, but rather that the border becoming more open was seen as a way of reducing political risks in the relationship with Russia. To some extent, these can also be interpreted as means to achieve societal stability because a stronger local economy was partially argued for as a means to reduce centre-periphery frictions that were the result of economic inequality between different regions within the state.

At the local level, there was a somewhat more explicit indication of this being seen as the risk on one dimension in favour of another. The expected economic opportunities were connected to a concern that a more open border would increase crime rates. However, this risk was generally framed as the risk of not implementing the policy properly, in terms of adapting the infrastructure at the border passage to manage increasing cross-border flows, rather than as a challenge to societal or geopolitical security.

The second hypothesis was that the policy would have parallel, non-related outcomes for different dimensions of sovereignty, but I did not find much evidence to indicate that this was the case here. Instead, the main conclusion to be drawn based on the analysis is that there seemed to be a cumulative relationship between the expected outcomes of this policy along different dimensions, supporting the third alternative. At the central level, we saw this in how 'people-to-people' relations were seen as a vehicle for effective economic interactions and that opening the border would improve the interactions between people at the local level. This interaction was expected to increase cross-border trade and commuting, and these two effects were seen as mutually reinforcing. More importantly and explicitly, expected outcomes of social and economic relations at the local level were clearly seen as

a way to achieve geopolitical objectives, in that friendly bilateral relations at a micro-level were expected to have a positive effect on macro-level bilateral relations between Norway and Russia, which served the geopolitical security objective of this policy on the part of the Norwegian government. Hence, what could be interpreted as a sovereignty bargain that gives priority to the material dimension – Norway relaxing border restrictions to gain access to a new labour market and consumer pool – is in fact a geopolitical strategy.

We also saw that the societal dimension was primarily articulated as a means to economic and geopolitical ends and was not so much treated as a goal in itself. This finding is particularly interesting in relation to the region-building process that has previously been studied primarily as an ambition to construct shared identities across the border. Possible explanations for this is that either the regional development had come so far in 2008 that there was already a shared identity, the 'people-to-people' relationship was so well developed that it was no longer an issue, or the opportunity and/or risk of societal integration with regards to this particular border policy was negligible and therefore not important in itself.

In answering the question of what sovereignty bargain was made, if any, the conclusion drawn here is that the three dimensions of sovereignty were not perceived as mutually competing in the Norwegian public discourse. Not because there was not an acknowledgement of the tension between openness and security, but because the different dimensions of the expected policy outcomes can be understood as mutually reinforcing and part of a strategy to increase security (and thus strengthen the state's capacity to maintain sovereignty). From the Norwegian perspective, social and economic integration across the border contributes to the improvement of geopolitical sovereignty and thus does not constitute a 'bargain' between different sovereignty motives. Based on the way in which the geopolitical is only expressed in terms of objectives in itself, whereas both societal and economic objectives are also seen as means to the geopolitical end, it is reasonable to assume that, had the Norwegian government perceived the opening of this border and the economic benefits of doing so as opposed to its geopolitical concerns, e.g. border control or loss of power vis-à-vis Russia, they would not have pursued this course of action. Sovereignty bargain theory explains open borders as the result of state strategies to meet perceived challenges to its borders. In this case, to overcome the macro-level factors against an opening, there would have to be motives that would compensate for the potential risk of opening the border. The summary above shows that this was clearly a strategy to meet both the geopolitical and economic challenges at the border with Russia; however, interestingly enough, the strategy was argued for in such a

way that any potential trade-offs between openness and security were reduced to a minimum.[168]

Reflections and consideration for future research

Centre-periphery relations and the border

One claim that was made at the outset of this thesis was that research into the roles that borders have as markers of sovereignty needs to include an understanding that states are not unitary actors. The border can have very different meanings at the national level, where policy is made, and at the local level, where the day-to-day border relations take place. How the border is understood at these two levels should thus be of concern to scholars interested in the question of border permeability, as whether pursuing closed or open borders creates different challenges depending on the extent to which the centre and the periphery have shared ideas about how the border should be managed. In this particular case, something I did not expect was how very symmetrical the ideas were at both levels, in terms of how positive they were towards local visa freedom as well as the reasons why the prospect of a more open border was seen as such a good idea. The comparison also revealed a striking similarity in how this issue was portrayed and what the expectations and concerns about the possible outcomes were. To some extent, the government's objectives and intentions were, of course, reported on in local newspapers, and thus became part of the local discourse, but these motives were also corroborated, elaborated, and reinforced by all kinds of voices in the local discourse.

It would be premature to assume that this centre-periphery alignment, where the priority-order of the three dimensions were the same at both levels and the expected outcomes largely overlapped, could explain the 'success' of the policy in terms of how it was received and implemented (as I do not cover its effects in this analysis); however, a tentative conclusion that could be drawn is that a *symmetry of ideas* between the centre and periphery could be a way to mitigate the sovereignty challenges presented by open borders. An agreement between centre and periphery regarding the purpose and desirability of a pursued border policy legitimises the actions of the state from the inside, thereby strengthening the societal sovereignty of the state, even in a case where the border becomes more open.

[168] If public discourse at both the centre and periphery had made the assessment that an open border was a good thing but the border had remained closed, then we would have to look at other possible explanations, i.e. gridlock in political decision making, more direct influence of supra-state actors, and the role of the neighbor (it takes two to make bilateral agreements).

For future studies of border policy change, this can be formulated as a hypothesis: it would be very interesting to test whether or not centre-periphery motive alignment can explain the success and failure of different border policies, e.g. when the introduction of a new policy results in domestic tension or conflict or when reactions to, or outcomes of, the opening or closing of a border seems puzzling in some way. An example to contrast the Norwegian discourse on the *grenseboerbevis* is the re-introduction of border controls at the Swedish-Danish border in 2015. As a result of how the EU handled the refugee crisis, Sweden saw an unprecedented number of refugees arriving across the Øresund Bridge from Denmark in 2015. The central government perceived this as a challenge to geopolitical and societal security, arguing that the situation posed 'urgent challenges to *vital functions* in society' (Regeringen.se 2015) and thus the border was closed. At the border, the Øresund Bridge is used by thousands of people every day to commute to or from Denmark for work. As such, the primary objective in the local discourse was the economic consequences of closing the border, e.g. 'how can the government even propose that this *lifeline* be closed?' (Avellan 2015). Some aspect of *life* is threatened in both accounts, but for exactly opposite reasons. In this case, the central level saw geopolitical and societal dimensions to be conflicting with the economic dimension and gave priority to the former, which caused tension between the centre and periphery as the economic consequences of closing the border were a concern in the border region.

Developing the sovereignty bargain theory: Dimensional hierarchy?

One of the fundamental claims about borders that have been made here is that what happens at borders poses inherent challenges to the state. The extension of this argument in the globalisation literature is that globalisation leads to, or demands, open borders, which, in turn, presents a challenge to state sovereignty. Any process that results in more open borders, in terms of economic flows, movement of people, or political control, may present a range of sovereignty challenges: societal, material, and (geo)political. A central issue that still remains to be solved in this literature is if open borders inevitably undermine sovereignty. In this thesis, the objective was not to answer this question with a yes or no, but rather to determine what kind of sovereignty purpose the border permit had, and, in so doing, to answer the question about how states can pursue open borders while maintaining (the idea of) sovereignty. The analytical framework used to pick apart the Norwegian border permit discourse built on the sovereignty bargain theory of Litfin, Rudolph and others. The main argument in this theory is that border regime change – a state's willingness to open or close its borders (or enter

into international agreements that restrict its autonomy over decisions that have effect within its territory) – is the result of a bargain, where one good is traded for another, or one sovereignty dimension is given priority over another.

What is bargained with is conceptualised differently by different authors, but my conceptualisation is closest to that of Rudolph (2005), where the geopolitical, material, and societal dimensions of maintaining state sovereignty are used as the principle for unbundling. In Rudolph's reasoning, which of these dimensions is given priority by a state depends on a combination of contextual factors, such as external pressures or the domestic needs of the state. In this framework, the three dimensions of sovereignty are treated as horizontally equivalent: three security values, which can be bargained with depending on what the perceived threat or risk is. It was useful to adapt this model from grand strategy/sovereignty bargaining to an investigation of the sovereignty aspects of a single border policy, as it (together with the addition of an understanding of core-periphery dimensions) allowed for a thorough investigation of the motives for pursuing this policy.

One element that came up in this analysis, which could not be captured completely when looking at these three dimensions as mutually interchangeable/bargainable, is their *internal hierarchy*. The observation here is that, rather than seeing the three dimensions as interchangeable, losing one to gain more of another, they are framed as cumulative in relation to each other. Although most attention was given to economic motives, pursuing these was not expected to be at the expense of one of the others. The geopolitical aspect – the border policy as a strategy to secure good relations with Russia – was the only one of the three that worked as a goal in itself. Maintaining political balance and stability in relations with Russia was never used as a means to achieve something else. In this case, the economic objectives to increase cross-border travel to boost local economic growth, and the facilitation of labour migration across the border, were both goals in themselves at the same time as *also* being methods to achieve another, geopolitical, goal. The argument was never framed the other way around, i.e. that better bilateral relations with Russia would be good for the economy.

These findings suggest a more hierarchical relationship between the different dimensions of sovereignty: first of all, if we only look at the geopolitical-material relationship, this is often thought of in terms of autonomy vs. growth and is similar to how the choice between open or closed borders is often understood. The most common example of this is that of joining the EU and thus giving up some autonomy for the benefit of access to an internal market. Based on my findings, I would suggest a more hierarchical relationship between the three dimensions: that the maintenance of geopolitical security is at the core of any sovereignty strategy, and that the material and societal dimensions are of a secondary nature to this. In this sense, economic and societal factors are secondary to the maintenance of geopolitical securi-

ty, and they are only given priority (i.e. in bargaining away with geopolitical security) in the absence of geopolitical challenges. For example, the choice to give priority to the economic benefits of an open border would only be possible insofar as the state perceived no other security risk in doing so. In such a case, the implication would be that, from the perspective of the state, there is no trade-off between the different dimensions because if geopolitical security was to be challenged, that would immediately be priority number one. This is also a useful way of thinking about sovereignty in other contexts. Geopolitical security/stability is kind of a baseline, without which economic strength and/or societal stability have little meaning.[169]

Making sovereignty through border policy? Suggestions for future research

Looking at borders from a sovereignty perspective, we could say that the nation-state, with a clearly defined territorial border serving as a container for jurisdiction, control, and community, is the basis for an international system of sovereign states. The opposite of this is the idea of a globalised world system in which borders are obsolete, supra-state and non-state actors compete with the state for power (or even replace state power), and borders are perceived as obstacles or remnants of an outdated system. The middle ground between these two ideal-type understandings of the world, where a lot of theory-building today is taking place and which this thesis took as its starting point, is an understanding of the international system as consisting of states in a global political arena, where the challenges from globalisation have by no means have rendered borders obsolete but have rather reinforced and reconfigured the function and meaning of borders as sites where sovereignty is made. Globalisation (in terms of non-state actors and increased cross-border flows) has not fundamentally changed the function of borders, nor the central motives for states to have borders, but has rather challenged the possibility of enforcing border policies and has thus demanded new kinds of border regimes. The introduction of a 'border resident' category, such as the border permit studied in this thesis, is an example of such border regime innovation that we may see more of in the future.

A conclusion that can be drawn from the results of this study is that pursuing a more open border does not necessarily imply that there is less geopolitics, which has sometimes been argued. That geopolitics matters is per-

[169] The increased number of border walls and fences in recent years can be seen as a consequence of changes in the sovereignty bargains of wall-building states; in this sense, popular opinion has shifted towards a demand for closed borders, open borders are perceived as threats to societal and/or geopolitical sovereignty, and the bargain that prioritised the material gains of open borders seems to have been restructured towards prioritising the other dimensions. This is particularly visible in UK and US politics in 2016/17, and the three-dimensional sovereignty bargain approach seems useful for describing these border policy changes.

haps not surprising in a context where the border is as overdetermined as this one, but this conclusion also suggests that open borders are not an indication of less sovereign states. Building walls is not the only strategy a state can adopt to counter the perceived 'loss' of sovereignty. What this means is that we should approach explanations of an open border with an open mind as to what openness means and with analytical tools that allow us to identify the roles that the border is expected to have. It also should encourage more comparative approaches that identify and explain different approaches to, and outcomes of, policies towards borders.

Another conclusion from this study – that the centre-periphery agreement about border function is strikingly visible – can be formulated as a hypothesis about borders: that border policy change is most likely to be successful (i.e. risk-minimising/least threatening) when the centre and periphery are in agreement about what the purpose of the border is. Thus, in cases where border change leads to destabilisation or centre-periphery conflict, future studies could show that this may be explained by competing or conflicting understandings of what purpose the border should have or what the role of the border should be.

A final hypothesis that can be drawn from these results and further tested is whether the potential challenges or risks of pursuing more open borders can be mitigated through a border discourse that constructs sovereignty objectives as cumulative rather than conflicting: Are border openings that are framed as strengthening the state along geopolitical, material, and/or societal dimensions more likely to be successful than those that are framed as a choice between different dimensions?

In summing up the conclusions from this thesis, I have a particular hope for future research in this field: that more political scientists will engage with the idea that borders and the policies that govern them matter. In her dissertation on Syria's politics towards its 'lost' territories, Emma Lundgren Jörum writes:

> Probably because a precisely defined territory is so essential to modern statehood – no territory, no state – it has long been taken for granted within political science […]. Both International Relations theory and Comparative Politics theory depart from a definition of the state that takes territory and borders for granted: the former tends to assume that the state is a fixed territorial entity and focus is put on relations between these territorial entities. Within the latter, state territory is seen as the container of state-society relations. Since one discipline dedicates itself to what goes on inside the borders, and the other with what goes on between borders, the borders themselves – and thereby the territory – are left out of both (2011, 21).

In the first couple of years of my work on this project, I was sometimes met with scepticism towards the border as an object of study. Yes, as political

scientists, we are mostly interested in states, and not the lines that separate them, but we cannot ignore the fact that how states manage their borders continues to have a significant impact on people's lives as well as on world politics. As sites of policy implementation, sovereignty demonstration, and bilateral contact, as well as sites of physical exclusion and symbolic inclusion, borders are certainly more than just lines on a map. It would most definitely be useful if political science scholars were to take more of an interest in the theory building and empirical study of borders as political institutions, e.g. to study border management as you would any public management institution, using different institutionalist and organisational theoretical perspectives. Borders need more, not less, attention from political science because the research front is now opening up to more theoretical ambitions to make general explanations, as well as a focus on more comparative research that endeavours to systematise what we already know about borders, and these questions need answers that have to do with states and sovereignty.

Epilogue

> What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
>
> Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
>
> Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
>
> What's in a name? That which we call a rose
>
> By any other name would smell as sweet;
>
> William Shakespeare*, Romeo & Juliet, Act I, Scene II*

In playing on Juliet's question as to why the name of Montague should hold such meaning as to separate her from her beloved Romeo, the title of this thesis asks, 'What's in a line?' As it turns out, names hold meaning, and the lovers from divided families meet an unhappy end as a result. I have made this argument for the subject of this thesis: borders have meaning, as the lines between countries represents the hopes, wishes, and fears of that which they enfold. I have argued that what is in a line depends on its context, and it may change over time depending on what role it is given and what meaning it is charged with. In addition, the meaning of the line is inseparable from the idea of sovereignty, as it serves the crucial functions of demarcation from the outside, filtering interactions, and unifying what is within.

In 2010, when I began the project to study the border between Norway and Russia, the *grenseboerbevis* had not been put into practice – it was still a decision taken waiting to be implemented. Back then, border passages across Storskog were increasing at an exceptional rate, and, if you asked people who favoured an opening of the border, there seemed to be no end to how open this border could become. Later on, in 2012 (it seems so long ago already), I talked to the Norwegian border commissary at the time, Ivar Magne Sakserud, who told me that the number of illegal border crossings per year were about a handful, and they mostly consisted of tourists venturing too far across border markers or boats on the river Jakobselv going too far across the stream, transgressions that could easily be handled. They were not for that reason taken lightly, but the border patrol on both sides seemed to be working well together, and any tension I could notice was primarily a con-

cern that Russia may be offended that it was mostly Norwegians who had committed these transgressions. At the time, it was very rare that a refugee or immigrant managed to reach Norway through Russia, and the cold, inaccessible landscape and the river had, on one occasion, even resulted in a fatal outcome.

That was only a few years ago, but – as we should have learned in previous chapters of this thesis – borders are never static; they change as the political landscape around them change, and they are actively used to construct sovereignty and control. Since then, two things have happened that I had not expected when I started writing about the Norwegian-Russian border: first, that a comparison with the border between Norway and Sweden – that I nonchalantly assumed would stay as open as any border could be, as it had done for such a long time – now had to include the caveat that stricter border controls had been introduced in 2015. Furthermore, the social democratic coalition government at the time of the border permit construction was replaced by a new right-wing coalition, where the Fremskrittspartiet and Høyre parties won seats in parliament on a platform of more restrictive immigration policies. The European refugee crisis reached all the way to this northeastern edge of Schengen, where refugees who had managed to come through Russia ended up cycling across the border passage at Storskog in unprecedentedly high numbers and approximately 5,500 people applied for asylum in Norway with the authorities in Kirkenes (Abelsen and Flyum 2017). Suddenly, there was a new 'other' to take into account, something that became clear in political discourse in Norway (as it did all over Europe), not least in relation to the border passage at Storskog. This led – among other things – to the construction of a new 200-metre-long border fence at the Storskog border passage, very close to Russia, causing some tensions in relations with Russia as well as between Finnmark and Oslo (Trellevik 2016).

This reflects a wider development in Europe and the world, where much of what we thought about open borders within the European Union has been put into question, with border controls once again being introduced within the Schengen system, the UK voting to leave the EU, and, not least, the renewed focus on Russia as a threat to European interests. What the consequences of this development will be in the long run is only speculation, but it is safe to say that the challenge of how to manage borders remains. Increasingly mobile populations all over the world, refugees from conflicts, and ever more refugees from climate change will continue to put state policies towards borders to the test. The choice between more walls and fences or openness and free movement will continuously have to be made by all states that claim sovereignty over a certain territory. This is not an easy choice on several grounds, since the challenges to borders are complex and priorities over conflicting objectives will often have to be made. The results from this study suggest that constructing different sovereignty motives as mutually reinforcing, rather than contradictory, could mitigate the possible tensions

between different objectives, and that openness may not necessarily be perceived as prioritising one dimension of sovereignty over another.

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Appendix I. Government documents

Reference in text	Title of parliamentary transcript or government document
s080520	Sak nr 1. *Utenrikspolitisk redegörelse av utenriksministeren*
s080617	Sak nr. 10 *Innstilling fra kommunal- og forvaltningskomiten om arbeidsinnvandring*
s091012	Sak nr 1. *Debatt om Hans Majestet Kongens tale til det 154. storting ved dets åpning og melding om Noregs rikes tilstand og styring*
s100504	Sak nr 1. *Redegörelse av utenriksministeren om viktige EU- og EØS-saker*
s100506	Sak nr 1. *Debatt om utenriksministerens redegörelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker*
s101116	Sak nr 1. *Redegörelse av utenriksministeren om viktige EU- og EØS-saker i löpet av kommende höst*
s101118	Sak nr 1. *Redegörelse av utenriksministeren om viktige EU- og EØS-saker i löpet av kommende höst*
s101203	Sak nr 1. *Innstilling fra utenriks- og forsvarskomiteen om bevilgninger på statsbudjettet for 2011 vedkommende.* Sak nr 2. *Innstilling fra u-f om svalbardsbudjettet for 2011*
s101214	Sak nr 1. *Bevilgninger på statsbudsjettet for 2011, kap. under Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdept., Kulturdept. og Kunnskapsdept*. 2. *Endringar i statsbudsjettet 2010 under Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdept.* 3. *Endringer på statsbudsjettet for 2010 under Kunnskapsdept.* 4. *Endringer i statsbudsjettet for 2010 under Kulturdept*. 5. *Samtykke til beslutning i EØS-komiteen om MEDIA Mundus*
s110201	Sak nr 2. *Interpellasjon fra repr. Aspaker om å legge til rette for et russisk språkprogram med hovedfokus på den nordlige landsdelen mv*.
s110208	Sak nr 4. *Innstilling fra U/F om samtykke til ratifikasjon av overenskomst av 15. september 2010 mellom Norge og Russland om maritim avgrensning og samarbeid i Barentshavet og Polhavet*

s110215	Sak nr 1. *Debatt om utenriksministerens utenrikspolitiske redegjørelse*
s110509	Sak nr 2. *Interpellasjon fra repr. Eriksen Søreide om den innenrikspolitiske situasjonen i Russland, særlig knyttet til sivilsamfunn, rettssikkerhet og presse- og ytringsfrihet, og hvordan Norge arbeider for å påvirke en utvikling i positiv retning*
s120319	Sak nr 4. *Innstilling fra kommunal- og forvaltningskomiteen om endringer i utlendingsloven*
s120326	Sak nr 2. *Interpellasjon fra representanten Ivar Kristiansen til utenriksministeren*
s120417	Sak nr 1. *Innstilling fra utenriks- og forsvarskomiteen om nordområdene*
STM 18	Stortingsmelding nr 18 (2007-2008) *Arbeidsinnvandring*
MST 7	Melding til Stortinget nr 7 (2011-2012) *Nordområdene: Visjon og virkemidel*
MST 9	Stortingsmelding nr 9 (2009-2010) *Norsk flyktning- og migrasjonspolitikk i et europeisk perspektiv*
NOU2012:2	Norges Offentlige Utredninger (2012:2) *Utenfor og innenfor: Norges avtaler med EU*

Appendix II. Newspaper sources

National newspaper articles quoted

Citation reference	**Article heading**
Aftenposten 080610	Lavrov og Støre vil åpne grensen
Aftenposten 090820	Grensen blir visumfri
Aftenposten 090213	Frykter mer grensekrim
Aftenposten 101109	Russere gir Kirkenes ny giv
Dagens Næringsliv 100616	Frykter økt kriminalitet
Verdens Gang 080418	Åpner Nord-Norge for russere

Sør-Varangen Avis articles quoted or mentioned

Citation reference (sva-yymmdd, page)	**Article heading**
sva071215, 4	Må gå foran
sva071215, 22	Arbeider med grenseboerbevis
sva080301, 6	Frykter useriøse aktører
sva080301 ,6	'Regelverket må mykes opp'
sva080412, 4	Grunn til forventning
sva080417, 5	Visumfri arbeidsinnvandring
sva080419, 5	Nesten grensefritt arbeidsmarked
sva080430, 19	Ønsker norske lettelser velkommen
sva080610, 4	Grenseboerbevis kan komme raskt
sva080614, 15	'Vi har kontroll'
sva081007, 2	Grenseboerbevis rykker nærmere
sva081009, 8	Håp for ny vei
sva081030, 5	'Et skritt i riktig retning'
sva090131, 4	Frykter mer kriminalitet og prostitusjon
sva090131, 5	Grensetrafikken kan ta av
sva090131, 5	Kan splitte kommunen
sva090203, 4	Fly forbanna på politimestern
sva090205, 8	Tenker nybygg på Storskog

sva090212, 5	‘Glipp mellom visjon og virkelighet’
sva090314, 7	‘En stor dag for Sør-Varanger’
sva090402, 4	Mye skrik og lite ull
sva090613, 23	På nett med Russland
sva090801, 4	(title missing)
sva090804, 4	Hvorfor så redde?
sva090908, 4	Folk i fokus
sva091015, 22	Snart avtale om grenseboerbevis
sva100130, 5	Venter på visumfrihet
sva100204, 11	Til et roligere hjørne av verden
sva100211, 4	Nye grensestasjoner: løser problemer
sva100427, 1	Fri flyt over Storskog
sva100427, 6	Gult lys for visumfrihet
sva100427, 6	Fri flyt over Storskog: visumfritt 30 km
sva100429,10	‘Invester i infrastruktur’
sva100429, 10	Historisk grensetrekning
sva100430, 6	Utløser store investeringer
sva100622, 4	Sterk kritikk [mot invitasjonsskjema]
sva100710, 6	Grenselettelser med hensikt
sva100710, 7	Setter opp kilokvoten over grensen: Får ta med 50 kilo, om så hver eneste dag
sva100803, 6	Grensetrafikkeken har eksplodert
sva100807, 6	Handelsby i rask utvikling
sva100812,10	‘Hva skal vi der å gjøre?’
sva100911, 6	Integrering i nord
sva100916, 4	Ønsker russerne velkommen
sva100925, 27	Forbereder seg på grenseboerbevis
sva101002, 1	Klare for åpen grense
sva101002, 2	‘Sammen klarer vi alt’
sva101005, 6	Penger til E 105
sva101016, 3	‘Er trafik korker i Oslo også’
sva101021, 11	Bygger talerstoler for usynlige barn
sva101104, 3	Visumfri grensepassering: Kan tre i kraft om ett år
sva101216, 5	Lover nye grensestasjoner
sva101216, 9	Grensehandelen har eksplodert på ett år
sva110203, 8	Russisk språkoffensiv i nord
sva110319, 6	Grensetrafikk krever strakstiltak
sva110414,23	Vil ha Kirkenes-pakke
sva110628, 17	Hvem skrur på nordlyset?
sva111001, 2	Polsk-russisk grenseboerbevis
sva111110, 12	Med på vekstbedrift-kåring: Plusset raskt på millioner
sva111112, 6	Søndagsåpent
sva120103,3	Til Kirkenes for bleier- til Nikel for diesel

sva120211, 6	Veien til visumfrihet
sva120228, 8	Opplev Russland – hvis du vil
sva120324,6	Symbolske bleier
sva120412, 6	På like vilkår
sva120512, 6	'Den russiske fare'
sva120531, 6	Her maler en gaupe mellom fabrikkpipene

Finnmarken articles quoted in text

Citation reference (fin-yymmdd, page)	**Article heading**
fin080611, 10	Tvillingavtal i boks, Spaserte over grensa uten pass
fin080612, 9	Generalkonsul tror på åpnere grense
fin080612, 10	Arbeider videre med visumlette
fin090121, 5	Russiske arbeidere får ikke komme
fin090202, 1	Varsler mer kriminalitet
fin091015, 5	Kom med pengeløfter
fin101030, 9	Storsenter ska locka russere
fin101103, 8	Vardø neste med grenseboerbevis
fin101104, 4	Fra Russland med kjøpelyst
fin110401, 6	Framtiden med grenseboerbevis
fin120307, 3	Til Russland for å fylle bensin

Appendix III. Different ways of conceptualizing sovereignty

Krasner's four types of sovereignty	**Litfin (and Mattli) Sovereignty dimensions**	**Rudolph's dimensions of security ('maintaining sovereignty')**
Westphalian: Exclude external actors, maintenance of borders and territory	Autonomy: Independence from outside actors	Geopolitical security: Military defence, being stronger than neighbouring states
International legal: mutual recognition of states in a nation-state system		
Interdependence: Control of transborder flows	Control: The capacity to produce an effect	Material security: Maximize material resources, economic strength Natural and human resources Ability to manage flows Domestic economic growth
Domestic: Organization of government and relation between government and people	Legitimacy: Internal and external recognition	Societal: National unity, exporting culture, Social proximity, Imagined community