Realia et Realia naturalia

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Reconsidering geography and power:
policy ensembles, spatial knowledge,
and the quest for consistent imagination

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CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the relationships between geography and power. The main aim is to examine how geographical knowledge is used by policy makers to improve policy outcomes, and why it often turns out to be unsuccessful. Usually, geographical knowledge is linked to policy shaping by means of a number of governance technologies, such as mapping, spatial statistics, storytelling, and visualisation. In order to support particular policy goals, these technologies are filled with conceptualised, politically and ideologically integrated forms of spatial imagination. The process of imagination is an important part of all policies that seek spatial re-organisation of social structures and power relations. To date, human geographers have demonstrated that the use of geographical knowledge in policy shaping often results in uneven socio-economic relations and spatial injustice. In doing so, they tend to assume that such outcomes are primarily the products of false ideology and thus intentionally evoked by policy makers. However, spatial injustice can indeed be an outcome of spatial policies, but it is normally neither intentional nor a purely ideological outcome. No less important factors behind policy failures are related to systematic and institutional shortcomings of policy making. In particular, the integrity and coherence of policy is just as necessary to effective policy making as choosing the right ideology to drive policies. Therefore, in the case of spatial policies in which geography is applied to improving policy effects, the integration of conceptualised geographical knowledge both within an individual policy field and between interrelated policies is also necessary because it can reduce spatial injustice and give less biased policy outcomes.

In this thesis, the coherence of spatial imaginations is studied in the context of reform policies. Policy reforms (e.g. administrative-territorial reform, education reform) and shaping of new policy prospects (e.g. cross-border region building, border negotiations) provide valuable insights into concerns regarding shortcomings in the use of geography in policy making and formation of spatial imaginations more specifically. Particularly, reforms can cause changes in policy coherence because related policy fields are usually not equally touched. This is often so because some policy areas need more attention and urgent improvement than others. Accordingly, the uneven focus on certain policy priorities is often reflected in policy outcomes by negatively affecting the well-being of a large number of people. Considering this, the thesis consists of four case studies, each of which deals with a particular form of spatial imagination within the context of reform policy. The studies focus on the production of Estonian history and geography textbooks (integrative imagination), efforts to reform the status of provinces in the Estonian administrative-territorial system (reformist imagination), reasoning for Estonian national interests in Estonian-Latvian border negotiations (manipulative imagination), and initiatives to build a cross-border region between the cities of Haparanda (Sweden) and Tornio (Finland) (constitutive imagination).

Drawing on the study results, two main conclusions are made. Firstly, inconsistencies in the use of geographical knowledge in policy shaping often proceed from weak strategic visioning and a lack of coordination and cooperation between responsible institutions. The understanding that geographical knowledge is not just an optional set of spatial facts but that it has a constitutive role to play in the formation of social reality (and thus also policy shaping) rarely finds its way into policy strategies and agendas. Therefore, the responsible institutions and subjects have no direct instructions or advice to take into account ideological coherence and the conceptual integrity of geographical knowledge in the process of policy formation. This often results in controversial and disintegrated spatial imagination that gives rise to inefficient policies and the reproduction of spatial injustice more generally. Secondly, the studies also exposed that even if the need for consistent and coherent geographical knowledge is taken seriously, the contextual aspects of imagination, such as access (who and to what extent they could be included in the process), actuality (what could be the optimal time-span in which knowledge would support particular policy goals effectively) and reception (what kind of interests the people, institutions, or governments that are affected by these policies would have) still remain largely overlooked by policy makers. In sum, in order to take full advantage of the policy-improving potential of geographical knowledge, power structures could enhance their institutional and political capacity to manage and apply it more productively.

INTRODUCTION

The close relationships between geography and power are nothing new. Since the Age of Discovery, the collection and systematisation of spatial data, mapping, boundary-drawing, areal division and classification, as well as signification of places, have been prominent and routine power technologies for securing effective administration and control over people, territories, and resources. Geographical knowledge has played an important part in forming political strategies and practical decision making at any level of governance. All states, regions and cities no matter how peripheral or short-lived, have linked geography to the processes of socialization and identity-building. Geographical knowledge has been one of the key bases for constituting and organising global political affairs. We can hardly imagine its absence when the issues related to the formation of international relations (definition of state borders, coordination of global security, agreeing on the use of jointly shared maritime resources, etc.), planning of the global economy (organisation of the global division of labour, the formation of trade relations, planning of transport, etc.), protection of cultural and environmental diversity across borders, and reduction of regional socio-economic inequality are at stake. However, the story with geography and power has never been a one-sided fairy-tale about the perpetual endeavours of humankind to live in an effectively ordered world. It is no secret that the relationships between geography and power have often been controversial. Even the most innocent geographic explorations carried out under the banner of scientific progress, popular descriptions about journeys through unknown *resting* places, as well as more rigorous cartographic surveys and academic studies have been tempting inspirations for enforcing the colonisation and enslavement of nations, development of uneven social and economic relations in societies, and establishment of repressive political regimes. No less illustrative is the fact that geography has often been placed into service to justify military aggression, territorial interests, and revisionist or expansionist claims in world politics.

In academic human geography, the relationships between geography and power are well documented and discussed (Livingstone 1992); yet academic focus regarding these relationships has considerably changed over time. The development of political geography as an individual academic discipline in the second half of the 19th century was mainly associated with organic state theory, which describes how the physical environment affects the developments of states and how the natural growth of states across borders defines the viability of nations. These ideas were well linked to early geopolitical thought, which became an important argumentative basis for state authorities when the spatial ambitions of the nation-state needed to be justified (Frenkel 1992; Murphy 1999). The pioneering scholars in the field of political geography conceptualised the relationships between geography and power mostly realistically and practically in a sense that geography was viewed as providing

particular strategic information about the outside world, upon which foreign policy competence should be built and practical advice drawn by policy makers (Peet 1985). Since the middle of the 20th century, political geography gradually abandoned the dominant paradigm of environmental determinism. The new approach, often labelled as functionalist political geography, attempted to provide systematic knowledge about causal forces that constitute spatial integrity and the efficiency of governance in politico-territorial units (Cohen & Rosenthal 1971; Gottmann 1975; Hartshorne 1950; Jones 1954). Like early contributions to the field, these works treated geography as a source of political competence but the advice drawn from geographical knowledge was more oriented towards improving territorial governance of states and spatial functions of political systems. Thus, we can conclude that academic political geography was still predominantly concerned with the exploitation of geographic data for strengthening the nation-state's territorial power. As before, it tended to waste all gunpowder on the questions as to how geography affects the formation and application of power (Driver 1991; cf. Allen & Cochrane 2010; Peck & Theodore 2010). The role of power structures in the constitution of geographical space and formation of spatial relations shifted to the centre of political geographers' interests mainly thanks to growing frustration regarding the inability of objectivist spatial science and descriptive geography to provide adequate explanations and instructions for tackling social problems. Drawing extensively from Marxism-based critical theories, political economy studies, and world-systems theory, scholars examined how power structures produce social inequality in the global space and how power structures, in turn, are re-produced through the historically formed global political and economic dominance (Harvey 1973; Taylor 1985). However, since neo-Marxist political geography is based largely on structural analysis of grand categories (e.g. space, scale, class, and race) and critics of the global capitalist system, it routinely ignored the contextual and cultural characters of power structures. Likewise, neo-Marxist studies have rarely highlighted the importance of geographical knowledge in the formation of unequal social structures, spatial relations, and contested places (Cloke & Johnston 2005).

Since the boom of social theories in human geography that dates back to the 1980s, interest regarding the relationships between power and geography has diversified considerably. The introduction of poststructural, postcolonial, and feminist theories to the political geography debates has brought to the limelight the power practices, ideologies, and the constitutive role of language, meaning, and knowledge in the formation of power structures and spatial policies (Gregory 1994; Nelson & Seager 2005). Scholars have been more interested in how power is transformed through geographical knowledge and discourses and how inequality and domination are normalised at different sites of governance (Agnew et al. 2003). They have emphasised that dependence between power and geography is not only practical and representative, but also constitutive regarding the reproduction of social structures and spatial relations.

Accordingly, the closer look at power practices, ideologies, and spatialising of policies has resulted in critical reassessment both of the nature of power and its mutual relations with geography.

Importantly, academic political geography has adopted a wider understanding of the concept of power. Power is understood more dynamically than simply a property of hegemonic structures or natural authority (Marx 1979 [1859]). Power is not monopolised by governance institutions or global politico-economic structures, but it is more or less characteristic of any subject who participates in the production of social relations (Allen 2004; cf. Weber 1978 [1922]). In addition, contemporary studies in political geography have stressed precisely that power is always imperfect not only in the sense that it begets injustice but also because it is imperfect in doing so. On the one hand, this means that power is not a static category, but it is always contested, mobile, and unequally distributed between places, networks, actors, and relations in space (cf. Giddens 1984). Even the practical application of power – to get things done – is not isolated from other sites where similar efforts are made, as it is not isolated from other things that also need to be done. There is always a potential conflict of power management no matter what resources are drawn for the application of power (e.g. geographical knowledge, statistical analysis, legislation) or what these things are that should be done (e.g. territorial identity-building, trade relations, cross-border cooperation). On the other hand, this means that injustice could be a natural outcome of the application of power but it is normally not intentional outcome; therefore, the uneven distribution of power is not so much based on the availability or quantity of power, but on the quality to manage and apply it (cf. Parsons 1969). Considering this, several scholars have suggested that political geography analyses should pay more attention to the operationalisation of power efficiency than causes and effects of power concentration (Gallaher et al. 2009; Prince 2012).

Today, it is well recognised among human geographers that the general understanding about how geography is used for power application comes from the works of French philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault argued (1980) that state power has become 'untouchable' because of its ability to produce knowledge for the state population. To describe how this process works he used the concept of governmentality. This concept reveals how state power makes society governable. It embraces the construction of governance structures and technologies, and their application for problem solving. Management of the society is exercised through the reproduction of knowledge and representation (statistics, mapping, etc.) as well as the security apparatus (health care system, education, military) that make the application of power possible (Crampton & Elden 2007). Although Foucault's focus was on the evolutional, institutional, and disciplinary constitution of state power, he has also pointed out that the management of a society is always a geographically informed and spatially executed process (Philo 1992).

In addition, in order to secure the efficiency and durability of power there is a need to rationalise, direct, and develop the process of power application. This implies that, among other things, the production and application of knowledge, certain ways and contexts of representation, as well as re-formation of the security apparatus become canalised into a variety of ideologies, plans, strategies, and policies. And, if the management of a society is indeed geographically informed and spatially executed, then these ideologies, plans, strategies, and policies are always more or less effectively spatialised. In brief, this is how geography is rationalised, conceptualised, and contextualised within spatial governance and applied for constituting, changing, and controlling spatial processes, relations and realities. This is how geography is used to contribute to certain policy goals and development of political formations.

Normally, by means of technologies for spatial governance, 'raw' geographical knowledge becomes manufactured in the form of *spatial imaginations* whose policy-improving effects are mostly defined by their context of use and integrity with particular policy goals (cf. Daniels 2011). Spatial imaginations as constitutive elements of a social reality are more or less rationally systematised, conceptualised, contextualised, and (ideally) strategically integrated visions of geographical knowledge. They may be found in written texts (often inserted into narratives or arguments), maps, pictures, caricatures, ads, motion pictures, sounds (mostly defined in which context a particular sound is used), as well as in material environment and physical performances, such as parades and rituals (Neill 2006). The production of spatial imaginations is not the privilege only of state power but takes place at multiple governance scales (e.g. supra-national organisations, regions, administrative units, cooperation areas and partnership networks). Furthermore, spatial imaginations are also an important part of the protest policies of social movements, non-governmental institutions, and different kind of interest groups. It is also worth mentioning that spatial imaginations are not necessarily political in character. They are frequently taken into the strategies and discourses of private institutions and individuals that seek influence and recognition in a particular sphere of social life (e.g. marketing, architecture, culture, or even organised crime).

The formation of spatial imaginations is normally aimed at supporting particular (policy) goals. Especially in a political context, the goals are ideally complex, balanced between other related goals (e.g. education and ethno-cultural integration of a society), and anchored with the expected positive productivity of all targeted outcomes. As such, spatial imaginations too cannot be random, incoherent, and controversial if their efficiency is expected. However, the synergic and integrative character of spatial imaginations is not expected as ideal for any kind of policy making. Depending on the specificity of the policies and hierarchy of goals that the policy makers define to achieve positive results, they may be deliberately presented as temporary or controversial. For example, if the formation of certain policies is in the preparatory phase and goals are still only generally defined, then the constructed

spatial imaginations can be left open for change and correction. This is usually the case in different reform policies in which critical discussions and involvement of multiple partnership bodies and interest groups are welcome (cf. Peck & Theodore 2010).

In human geography literature, spatial imaginations are not conceptually strictly defined phenomena in the sense of meaning and usage. They are often freely equated with concepts of spatial consciousness [of a particular community], socio-spatial or geographical imaginations, or even geographical, socio-spatial, spatial, and geopolitical representations. The most routine term to signify the use of geographical knowledge in policy shaping has definitely been geographical imagination. However, the problem is that it means, roughly speaking, too many things: topics, concepts, visions, technologies, processes, to name just a few (Daniels 2011; see also Gregory 1994; Pile 2008; Thrift 1996). For example, David Harvey (1973, 24), inspired by Charles Wright Mills' notion of 'the sociological imagination' (1959), has defined geographical imagination(s) as kind of spatial consciousness that 'enables the individual to recognize the role of space and place in his own biography, to relate to the spaces he sees around him, and to recognize how transactions between individuals and organizations are affected by the space that separates them'. Doreen Massey (2001, 10), for her part, has provided a more integrative and operational vision, arguing that 'geographical imaginations are not simple mirrors [about how we understand and represent the world spatially]; they are in some sense constitutive figurations; in some sense they 'produce' the world in which we live and within which they are themselves constructed'. In order to stress the constitutive character of geographical imaginations in the context of policy shaping and highlight their role as communicative mediums through which geographical knowledge becomes linked to policy processes, as well as to distinguish them from other areas and forms of use, we could prefer to speak about them as spatial imaginations.

Considering this, we can argue that a number of critical geography studies have reported about the importance of spatial imagination in policy making and power application. For example, it is well demonstrated how the usage of geography for political purposes produces inequality and oppression in social space and how it helps to consolidate the power regimes. Moreover, there are also a myriad of studies that record how geography is used by marginal groups and oppressed people in order to highlight particular problems in society and challenge the dominant power structures and ideologies. Still, we should keep in mind that the use of geography for political purposes [in the form of spatial imaginations] is far from being an unproblematic success story (Gregory 1994). If we assume that spatial inequality and repression are not intended policy outcomes, then the policies that cause them are inefficient. The failure to excel in policy shaping can lead to the uneven reproduction of social space and to increase the potential number of subjects who are negatively affected by it. Therefore, we should not only look at how policies fail but also *why* they fail. In

particular, more attention is needed to turn on the inconsistencies in policy integration partly caused by anarchic use of geographical knowledge both in knowledge production and application phases (Ciuta & Klinke 2010; Jones & Clark 2013).

The current thesis aims to contribute to this debate as well. Usually, the policies are dependent on other policies, too, as they are dependent on more or less strategically developed counter-policies of those who are affected by the given policies. The policy dependence can be horizontal (cross-sectoral), vertical (hierarchic between political units) or inter-scalar (non-hierarchic between political units) (Allen & Cochrane 2010; Matusitz 2010; Meijers & Stead 2009). Ideally, the power structures aim at dynamic and holistic formation of policies, which takes systematically into account the integrity between policy tasks and their mutual effects on policy outcomes. Underdal (1980) has pointed out that integration between policies is based mainly on three aspects: comprehensiveness (a broader scope of policy consequences in terms of time, space, actors, and issues), aggregation (the minimal extent to which policy alternatives are evaluated from 'overall' perspective), and consistency (the minimal extent to which a policy penetrates all policy levels and all government agencies) (Meijers & Stead 2004, 2). In order to meet these requirements, the closer cooperation between policy makers and introduction of more flexible forms of governance are encouraged (Jessop 2004; Kooiman & Jentoft 2009; Lagendijk et al. 2009; Meuleman 2008). Due to the complex and dynamic character of policies, as well as differences regarding how much policy areas affect each other, the coherence between policies has increasingly been targeted by means of global-scale agreements, policy agendas, action programs, and common financial instruments (Begg 2010; Peck & Theodore 2010). These efforts often highlight the importance of spatial effects of policy making and deal with the integration of spatially informed and executed policies as well. For example, in the EU a number of policy areas such as spatial planning, regional policy, transport policy, land-use policy, and environmental policy are framed by spatially grounded principles of sustainable development and territorial cohesion (Hamdouch & Depret 2010; Rayner & Howlett 2009). Such internationalisation of policy formation is an important ideological mechanism for urging policy makers at multiple governance levels to take spatial dimensions in policy shaping seriously. However, the policy agendas and strategic frameworks that are elaborated at supra-national, national, or regional levels often focus on policy outcomes and tend to be less concerned with the policy formation process (Begg 2010). Therefore, the ways in which generalised spatial visions about commonly targeted policy outcomes such as shared social services across national borders or transnational transport corridors become translated into particular contexts of governance and how particular policy tasks could be spatially conceptualised and integrated with other spatialised policy tasks depend significantly on the institutional capability to apply geographical

knowledge within the policy formation process. And this capability tends to vary greatly in time and space.

Inspired by the deficit of our knowledge regarding the consistency and integrity of spatial imagination in policy formation, the main interest of this thesis is to examine how geographical knowledge is used by policy makers for improving policy outcomes, and why it often turns out to be unsuccessful. Special focus is granted to the quality of *integrative efficiency* of spatial imaginations in the formation of spatial policies. By integrative efficiency I mean the conceptual, functional and ideological correspondence of spatial imaginations both within individual policies and policy ensembles (Ball 1993). Thus, such strategic efficiency [which should ideally lead to better reproduction of social realities and reduction of spatial injustice] consists also of conceptualisation of geographical knowledge in a way that takes into account the interdependence of policies. The integrative efficiency of spatial imaginations, it can be noted, is especially important to follow if governance systems are under transformation and there is a need to establish itself within competitive political or economic systems.

Four different cases are studied in this thesis, all of which deal with the integrative efficiency of spatial imagination within transition policies. Three of these case studies are related to Estonian state-level reform policies in the post-Soviet transition period and one is concerned with sub-national region-building in the border area between Sweden and Finland.

- The first study sheds light on the construction of Estonian spatio-temporal knowledge within post-Soviet education reform in 1989–2002. The production of Estonian history and geography schoolbooks is chosen as study example (study **I**).
- The second study deals with the reproduction of Estonian provinces within Estonian administrative reform initiatives in the period of 1989–2003. Special focus is given to the reproduction of Tartumaa, Viljandi-maa, and Jõgevamaa provinces (study **II**).
- The third study addresses the argumentative use of the 'Baltic unity' concept in the Estonian-Latvian border definition process in 1992–2004. Three different cases are analysed: 1) the Estonian-Latvian maritime border dispute in 1994–1997; 2) the dispute over small urban territory in the Estonian-Latvian border towns Valga/Valka in 1992–2004; and 3) the free-trade conflict between Estonia and Latvia in 1998–2004 (study **III**).
- The fourth study concentrates on the formation of an international identity for cross-border cooperation between the border cities of Haparanda (Sweden) and Tornio (Finland) in 1996–2008 (study **IV**).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis is about relationships between geography and power. My main interest is in studying how geographical knowledge is used by policy makers in the formation of spatial policies and improving particular spheres of governance. In the policy-shaping process, geographical knowledge is usually not represented as randomly chosen geographical facts or chaotic spatial models and descriptions but is more or less rationally and ideologically reasoned into spatial visions or imaginations. Because of this, I am focusing on: a) how such imaginations are formed within different reform policy contexts; b) how they correspond to the policy objectives they are intended to support and mediate; and c) what could be the main challenges policy makers face regarding the formation of spatial imaginations. For that reason, the four case studies presented in this thesis draw evidence from the particular reform policy contexts as well as different scales of policy performance. For each of the four articles the specific study questions are as follows:

Education reform policies (study **I**)

- How were the spatial imaginations about post-Soviet Estonia's time-space legalised and institutionally reproduced through the education reform policies, and how did this process contribute to integration of the ethno-culturally divided Estonian society?

Administration reform policies (study **II**)

- How were Estonian provinces imagined and reproduced as effective locations for regional economies and institutional social realities in the governmental practices of the administrative reform initiatives?

Territorial policies (study **III**)

- How have Estonian political authorities and public media reproduced the spatial imaginations about 'Baltic collectivism' as part of the national territoriality policies and practical constitution of an EU-eligible nation-state?

Cross-border cooperation policies (study **IV**)

- How have local partnership institutions been promoting the spatial imaginations through cross-border cooperation at the international level, and how has such formation of international identity contributed to the key objectives of cross-border cooperation?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

All academic studies that deal with geographical knowledge explicitly or implicitly reflect the ontological nature of geography. They reflect in what sense geography is. In this respect, the current thesis is also not an exception. Therefore, we should also shed light on the ontological perspective that this thesis has regarding the nature of geography, or, more accurately, clarify what it means at all to speak about geography as something that someone can use for certain strategic and political purposes.

Geography, in whatever form it reveals itself, is always an integral part of a (social) reality (Agnew & Duncan 2011; Gregory et al 1994; Knox & Marston 2009; Livingstone 1992). The reality itself, no matter whether ontologically pluralist or fundamentalist, is translatable and potentially formable by human subjects. The translations [or epistemologies] of a reality are dominantly defined by 'disciplinary matrices' (Johnston 1986) or philosophies of science, which become adopted, experienced and reproduced in the social practices of everyday life. The nature of geography, however, depends not only on the ways in which a reality is translated as a spatiality but also on how geographical knowledge is understood and interpreted *in relation* to translated reality (Benko & Strohmayer 1997). We can indicate that regarding the constitution of a reality the knowledge about geography plays ideally either a *constitutive* or *reflective* role (Merriman et al. 2012). If knowledge is seen as reflective, then the formation, accumulation, and application of that knowledge are usually distinguished (often even unintentionally) as functions that have no direct relation to reality or have qualitatively unequal importance in the constitution of a reality. If knowledge is seen as constitutive, then these functions are linked to each other and they all have qualitatively equal importance in the constitution of a reality (Arbib & Hesse 1986; Luhmann 1990). These two ideal relations provide the ontological basis for 'potentially eligible' realities through which one can define the nature of the geography he or she is studying and/or in which he or she is living.

Putting geography into objectivist, dialectic, and idealist realities

Since the mid-19th century, academic studies in human geography have defined the nature of geography through numerous realities. According to the epistemological principles attributed to them (i.e. what kind of relations these realities have with knowledge), they can be reduced to three dominant variations: objectivist, dialectic, and idealist realities. Firstly, in the case of objectivist reality, geography is seen as something that exists outside the human mind – as associated spatial phenomena of a reality that are governed by certain invisible rules and processual logic (Peet 1998). Human subjects can make

spatially perceived objects, relations, and processes 'available' through physical discovery, experiments, and predictions, as well as signification, systematisation, conceptualisation, modelling, mapping, and manipulation, i.e. scientifically grounded techniques of knowledge formation (Lewin & Somekh 2004; Livingstone 1992). Thus, knowledge of '"the way things are" is conventionally summarised in the form of time- and context-free generalisations, some of which take the form of cause-effect laws' (Guba & Lincoln 1998, 204). However, through knowledge about geography human subjects cannot change the nature of geography or causal relationships that geography has regarding human subjects. Humans can only change the spatio-temporal conditions in which geographical phenomena and processes take place. Thus, if geography is defined through objectivist reality, then the produced knowledge about geography is primarily a communicative tool for changing the spatio-temporal settings of human activities. Perhaps the most illustrative examples of this ontological position can be found in writings of environmental determinism, but also in early regional geography, quantitative geography, and traditional geopolitics.

Secondly, if geography is defined through dialectic reality, then geography becomes subjectivised. This implies that geography is seen as something that makes a difference or something that is oriented by human beings to make a difference within (social) reality. In this case, geography is also ontologically separated from the human mind but it reveals itself and becomes 'manageable' through dialectical relationships with practices and representations launched by human subjects (Massey 2005). Unlike in the case of objectivist reality, the causality of geography is here partially dependent on the human mind and social practices. Nevertheless, humans are not able to change the nature of geography because 'of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of phenomena' (Guba & Lincoln 1998, 205). They can, however, change both the nature of the relations that geography has regarding human activities and the contexts of performance. Therefore, in this ontological perspective, knowledge about geography is a tool that not only helps to communicate with geography (as in the case of objectivist reality), but also reforms the causal relationships between human beings and geographical phenomena and processes. The way in which it can do rests on the degree of freedom individuals have in this process. It can be performed, for example, through subjective interpretations and experiences of individuals (as suggested by humanistic geographers) or through the formation and maintenance of a universal spatial justice and ideal arrangement of spatial relations within (social) reality (as defended by neo-Marxist, realist, as well as feminist geographers) (Knox & Marston 2009). We can say that for the past four decades dialectic reality has definitely been the most popular choice among human geographers for defining the ontological nature of geography.

Thirdly, definition of geography through idealist reality means that the nature of geography is directly dependent on the human subjects. Humanist

geographer David Ley (1996) has elegantly introduced the idealist horizon of geography by urging us to think seriously over jolly question: 'Can there be a geography of the moon?' Why on earth should we suddenly stop in believing the paraphrase from Gertrude Stein's "Geography and Plays" (1993 [1922]) that a moon is a moon is a moon? In its radical form, the idealist ontological perspective is grounded in the belief that there are no such things as 'outside' or 'inside' reality because reality is constituted by collective mental processes. This implies that if something exists, then it exists only because there is someone who is able to think about what exists and share his/her thoughts with others who have similar abilities. Thus, the idealist approach manifests that reality is not 'given' but construed (Arbib & Hesse 2004; Gregory 2004; Law 2004). 'Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions' (Guba & Lincoln 1998, 206). In addition, idealist ontology advocates the belief that human subjects can change and reproduce a reality through interactions, language, and cultural and institutional practices (Berger & Luckmann 1966). Because of that, geography as an integral part of a reality is always in a state of becoming caught into consistent perception, signification, and re-production of knowledge. In brief, the nature of geography is about doing geography. Spatio-temporally perceived and mentally organised objects, phenomena, relations, and processes become geographical if they are collectively intended and more or less effectively agreed. Therefore, in the case of idealist reality, knowledge about geography is not just geography itself, as one may guess, but it is rather a tool for keeping geographical reality alive (cf. Latour 1986). There cannot be geography without knowledge.

In human geography literature radical idealist perspectives [which advocate the idea that no reality exists *without* mind] are mostly discussed in theoretical writings, and they are rarely favoured in empirical studies (Cloke & Johnston 2005; see also Guelke 1974; Harrison & Livingstone 1979). Human geographers usually prefer more moderate versions of objective idealism in which the materialist existence of geography [and a realist perspective of reality in general] are endorsed but seen as established and imposed, and/or in which the idealistic nature of geography is regarded as more or less characteristic only for certain domains of social life (e.g. culture, politics, history). Nevertheless, it has often been lamented that the proponents of objective idealism tend to underestimate the importance of that materiality in the constitution of geography (Anderson & Wylie 2009). Examples of objective idealist approaches can be found in contemporary political, social, and cultural geography studies that deal with a wide range of issues related to, among other things, the production of space, power geometries, geographical representation, and identity-building.

Towards the ontological spaces of solidarity

Although the idealist frame of reality has often been subject to criticism within the academic community, it still has a prominent place in contemporary human geography literature. One reason behind such vitality seems to be the tendency that for the sake of methodological soundness and disciplinary progress (Bassett 1999), scholars often tend to give up cheering for essential conflict between some moderate forms of idealist and dialectic reality. For example, the rise of the critical realist approach in human geography has also served as a boost for broader acceptance of constructivist studies in academic human geography and vice versa. Overlapped study interests and related conceptual schemes have helped to provide the productive discussion arena for mutual correction of methodological and epistemological positions (Cloke & Johnston 2005; Yeung 1997). This kind of collaboration is often the case with empirical studies, in which the importance of both knowledge and agency in the constitution of geography is agreed and the definition of geography is intentionally limited with *social* reality. Such dynamic approach to the study area assumes that ontological perspectives from which conceptual schemes should be derived do not have an exclusive character but remain open for further critical adjustment and development. However, in addition to the synergy provided by overlapping study interests and conceptual flexibility, the viability of idealist ontology in academic geography has also been bolstered by attempts to find new ontological spaces of consensus and discussion between different 'paradigmatic camps' on the basis of hybrid realities (Hannah & Strohmayer 2001; Sui & DeLyser 2012). These trends have been most evidently anchored by efforts to search for a common identity in the geography discipline and encourage interdisciplinary research (Egner & von Elverfeldt 2009; Massey 1999), to elaborate now well-known theoretical frameworks of geography analysis on the basis of relational thinking (e.g. non-representational theory or geography of heterogeneous associations), as well as to establish manifest-loaded approaches to issues related to geographical reality, performativity, and the subject's positionality (Gregson & Rose 2000; Nagar 2002; Ramírez 2000).

Searching for solidarity by defining ontologically mixed realities has been championed not only in the discipline of human geography but also characterises recent trends in other social sciences. To name just a few, productive debates in the fields of sociology of knowledge, analytical philosophy, and communication studies have been among the most inspiring sources from which different forms of pluralist ontology are drawn. For example, the interactive constructivism launched by Neubert & Reich (2006) proposes, roughly speaking, that reality could be divided into two parts. One of them is dependent on the human mind and the other is not. This is so because human subjects are able partially to transform and re-construct a knowable reality that is 'conquered from not yet symbolically registered or imaginatively expected that lurks behind any construction of reality' (Neubert & Reich 2006,

170; see also Searle 1996). Human subjects interact with reality by 'incorporating and assimilating it into their (symbolic and imaginative) constructions of reality' (ibid., 171). Though this view still puts the human mind in the dominant position regarding organisation of a knowable reality, it also draws extensively from the realist tradition which claims that 'a reality has several levels and that a knowable level does not easily reveal significant structures or causal mechanisms at deeper levels [of reality]' (Neuman 2006, 95). Thus, following this ontological perspective, geography is not only a mental construction or knowledge about the spatial organisation of the world because human subjects cannot create it [geography] out of nowhere. There is always an unknown, mentally unorganised and ontologically *postponed* geography or 'resource of spatial difference' through which spatial relations and settings became corrected and re-produced in socially constructed reality. Therefore, that postponed geography helps to make the existence of socially constructed spatial relations and interactions possible. However, according to interactive constructivism, only human subjects can communicate with postponed geography, because 'it does not speak to us at all' (ibid., 171). In this sense, knowledge about geography plays the role of mediator, and as such allows us to induce changes in socially constructed spatial phenomena.

Similar but more action-centred understandings about the nature of geography can also draw from other approaches that aim at the creation of ontological spaces of solidarity. One of the interesting but hitherto sporadically adopted ways of flexible thinking about reality has been provided by the philosophical tradition of pragmatism. Though being far from a uniform school of thought, pragmatism and its further developments share common anti-fundamentalist principles about relationships between knowledge and reality, and advocate fallibilism of scientific inquiry (Diggins 1995). Pragmatism rejects traditional philosophical dualisms and 'encourages openness and scepticism to ideas, and debate about the varieties of experience among diverse communities of interest' (Wood & Smith 2008). For pragmatists, reality is not mental or material. It is not 'something', but a process, a dynamic becoming, change, interaction, and activity. According to Dewian pragmatism, a reality is an inter-subjective construction made available 'through interaction, cooperation, coordination, and communication' (Biesta 2010, 112). Therefore, what counts in reality are not things but the relations between things and shared activity performed by human subjects. As such, reality has no stability, and because of that nothing has a conclusive identity, including the truth. The latter is understood as a pluralist, contextual, infinite, and practically proven category. This is why pragmatists claim that truth and knowledge are relative, depending on particular contexts and places. Decock & Douven (2012) have also noted that pragmatists see no 'uniquely correct way to conceptualise the world [or reality]. The way the world is depends to at least some extent on the conceptual scheme that we use to speak and think about the world'. Moreover, they believe that there cannot be any objective 'foundations' upon which truth is drawn and

verified. Truth appears in solidarity which is formed through community, and truth lasts as long as the community's belief about it lasts.

To date, the pragmatist tradition has gained relatively modest success among human geographers. One of the reasons behind this is its lack of theoretical coherency and seemingly weak integration with dominant strands in the discipline. Nevertheless, some key ideas of this approach have been theoreticised and linked to empirical studies also in human geography (Proctor 1998; Sunley 1996). What makes the pragmatist approach valuable for geographers is not so much its theories of truth but rather the way in which pragmatists see a relationship between reality and knowledge. On the one hand, unlike orthodox constructivists, they do recognise that reality is more than just imposed knowledge or an imagination of the world. On the other hand, they view knowledge as a particular mode of *experience* that facilitates interactions and makes it possible to plan and direct interactions intelligently. The existence in the world is seen as an integral part of a knowledge. Knowledge never comes from nowhere, just as it never goes to nowhere. Knowledge is embodied. This dependence is perhaps most brutally substantiated in Hilary Putnam's (1987) version of pragmatism, which declares that reality is causally independent of the human mind, but the structure of reality (individuals, kinds, and categories) is a function of individual's adequate or inadequate conceptual schemes. Since pragmatists also tend to claim that the human mind is always task-oriented and dedicated to fighting for difference, the knowledge about geography, including systematically organised geographical concepts, are 'tools, instruments for achieving particular purposes. They are dependent upon their context of use and they are always provisional, never certain, and potentially subject to contingent change' (Barnes 2008, 1551).

On an ontological level, the knowledge of which pragmatists speak is not anarchic nor chaotic. Since knowledge has experiential traces in pre-existing but unstable reality, it is also always stimulated by difference-making and filled with power, ideology, and subjectivity. For this reason, knowledge is potentially functional and rational but always imperfect. This also means that knowledge can produce more or less [ideologically and/or practically] adequate spatial relations and phenomena but is, in turn, also re-shaped by those relations and phenomena because of their contextual and temporal character. This imperfection of knowledge also guarantees continuous interactions between the representations, practices, and structures of reality. Geography in this sense is not just a quantity of unorganised spatial information transformed into purposeful concepts and applied to structures of reality; it is also the dynamic but uneven spatial arrangement of social relations and structures (incl. societies), and the inaccurate and ambiguous process of sharing and belonging that makes this kind of transformation of [geographical] knowledge possible (Cloke & Johnston 2005). This is how geography clings to the interplay between the human mind and emerging reality. This is how the nature of

geography does not just result in objects, subjects, or imaginations, but rather is 'nested' in the competitive process of the constitution of a social reality.

Therefore, if we speak in this thesis (study **I–IV**) about geography as something that someone can use for certain strategic and political purposes, then in an ontological sense we could speak about experiencing geography that seeks the constitution and re-production of a social reality. In a practical sense, however, use of geography is about a particular conceptualisation of [geographical] knowledge. Human subjects are always placed within geography and use its pre-ordered resources (both physical and mental) for more or less effective and rational living in the world, but they also use [geographical] resources for establishing difference and dominance in the world (Blunt & McEwan 2002; Harvey 1996; Rose 1993). This is where knowledge becomes connected to power structures and transformed into contrasting interests and competitive ideologies. Considering this, we can argue, concurrent with the idealist and pragmatist claims, that conceptualisation of a [geographical] knowledge means using geography in order to establish certain social realities out of many (study **I–IV**).

Experiencing the geographies of power: the shared archives of knowledge

Conceptualisation of a geographical knowledge has been a prominent and well-theoreticised topic especially in the literature of critical geopolitics, postcolonial theory, and new regional geography. Each of these three approaches has provided basic theoretical inspiration for studies that are presented in the current thesis (study **I–IV**). They highlight the importance of rivalry in the constitution of [geographical] reality, share common interest in the political implication of geographical knowledge, and take the practical dimension of spatial imagination seriously. We can identify at least three reasons why these theoretical perspectives are valuable sources if one has an interest in studying the integrative efficiency of the spatial imaginations. Firstly, critical geopolitics provides a holistic understanding of how geographical realities (or social spaces) are re-produced and challenged through discursive processes and power relations (study **I–IV**); secondly, postcolonial theory emphasises the importance of identity policies in the constitution of spatially informed governance structures (study **I & IV**); and thirdly, new regional geography illustrates how particular context-dependent spaces become institutionalised and connected to competitive and relational spatial systems on multiple governance scales (study **II & IV**).

Critical geopolitics:
tracking the origins of geographical 'truth regimes'

Constructivist geography, which draws mainly on poststructuralist thought and ideas of critical theory (Gregory et al. 1994), is interested in how people think about reality as it is and how power relations affect the formation, mediation, and control of social realities. Since constructivist geography relies heavily on idealist ontology, it addresses the reality that is mediated through language. It assumes that the frames of realities are produced through discursive practices and power relations that encompass the formation and consumption of concepts, narratives, and imaginations (Cloke & Johnston 2005).

In human geography literature, the constructivist turn has been most often identified with critical geopolitics and new cultural geography. Since the end of the 1980s, critical geopolitics has been deeply interested in re-thinking geopolitics, the political constitution of geographical realities, and symbolic representation of political power (Müller 2008). Inspired by ideas of critical theory and poststructuralist, postcolonialist and feminist thinkers such as Gramsci, Habermas, Derrida, Foucault, Said, Spivak, and Butler, scholars have spilled much ink in attempting to confront classical geopolitics, arguing that the latter is primarily an ideology that has legitimised political repressions and military aggressions both in domestic and international arenas. Geopolitics is viewed as a particular mode of geographical representation used by academics, politicians, and intellectuals of statecraft and power institutions for organising, administering, and controlling the state territory and population, and constituting world affairs (Ó Tuathail 1996). However, it is also a competitive process for monopolising popular understanding of the spatial imaginations and identities, because geographical representation is not a privilege of dominant power structures such as nation-states but can take place on a variety of power scales (e.g. from global organisations to local social movements, private institutions, or even individual subjects) (Dalby 2008; Häkli 1998).

We can notice that according to the critical geopolitics approach, spatial imaginations, when placed into a political context, could be seen as a part of geopolitics. If this is so, then why can we not follow some traditional line of (critical) geopolitical analysis in this thesis? The first reason is that for critical geopolitics each policy that is somehow spatially informed or spatially communicated is not geopolitics. Originally launched as a critique of traditional geopolitics and its areas of competence, critical geopolitics still tends to link spatial imagination only to a narrow set of policy areas and practices (e.g. international relations, security, environment, energy, and gender policies, or various resistance policies initiated by marginalised social groups) (Dalby 2010; Dodds et al. 2013). The second reason is that critical geopolitics sees spatial imagination primarily as a politically exclusive tool for power concentration and implementation (Kearns 2008). Spatial imagination is regarded as *a priori* destructive in the sense that it always serves someone's (ideological) power

interests at the expense of others. Thirdly, critical geopolitics is primarily a politically informed approach focusing on critique of ideology, and as such it pays little attention to systematic and bureaucratic issues of spatial reasoning in policy formation (Haverluk et al. 2014; but see Kuus 2011). Hence, this approach offers a limited theoretical contribution to how the integrative efficiency of spatial imaginations (that are produced for enhancing the synergy of interdependent policies) becomes established and reproduced.

Yet there is no reason to overlook the fact that critical geopolitics provides a valuable theoretical basis and way of thinking to the current thesis (study **I–IV**), especially because it illustrates well how social realities became constituted and spatial relations normalised in various political contexts through spatially communicated practices and discourses. This approach teaches us 'mechanisms by which political and economic control and ways of seeing the world are projected and accepted as "common sense" and "natural"' (McFarlane & Hay 2003, 213). It encourages us to contextualise and disclose the geographical 'truth regimes' that are formed for political purposes and uncover their source of repression and injustice (Ó Tuathail 1994). Critical geopolitics literature also provides a variety of conceptual tools by which the relationship between power strategies and production of geographical knowledge could be analysed.

Postcolonial theory: *evidencing the contingency of imaginative dominance*

Postcolonial theory has much in common with critical geopolitics. Similarly to critical geopolitics, postcolonial theory is based largely on poststructuralist thinking and pays special attention to how particular 'knowledge systems have come to dominate' (Sharp 2009, 5). Postcolonialist studies in human geography are praised for providing broader understanding about how knowledge and representation regarding non-familiar cultures, nations, and societies are historically formed and the world political map 'naturalised' through imperialist policies, as well as how the legacy of 'colonial experience' is rooted and reproduced within contemporary Western cultural, political, and economic practices. Gilmartin & Berg (2007, 120) have noted that postcolonial studies offer us 'a radical and productive critique of how we think about and do geography'. Importantly, postcolonialism teaches us that geography is always something we are experiencing and this experience is culturally and ideologically exclusive in the sense that it draws dominantly from our collectively shared colonial experience. There are always other realities we construct by loaning a pre-knowledge from our 'colonial present''as there are always others who construct our reality by loaning a pre-knowledge from their 'colonial present' (Gregory 2004; Jazeel 2014; Kothari & Wilkinson 2010; Noxolo & Preziuso 2013). The continuous re-production of colonial legacy is not only characteristic of former colonial empires like Great Britain, Germany,

or Russia, but also for formerly colonised nations. Joanne Sharp (2009, 5) has claimed that this is so because the 'knowledge and values created by imperial powers were insinuated through institutions of education, governance, and media, and they also became (to a greater or lesser extent) the ways in which the colonised came to know themselves'. According to Sharp, 'the inter-nationalization of a set of values and ways of knowing the world is much more difficult to overturn than the physical rule of colonial regimes' (Sharp 2009, 5). Colonised nations, it should be mentioned, have often used colonial imaginations as negative manifestations to oppose in order to form their own imaginations and identities of dominance (cf. Kothari & Wilkinson 2010). Therefore, postcolonial theory stresses the importance of relationships between imagination and spatial identity policies. Scholars have noted that colonial imaginations are inseparable from power practices and strategies of territorial control (Gregory 1994). Because of this, such imaginations often become a part of particular identity-building processes (e.g. formation of national or regional identities), which help to create and govern socio-spatial structures and achieve a variety of policy goals (study **I** & **III**).

A no less important contribution of postcolonial theory to the current thesis is its advocacy of adaptive colonialism. Postcolonial theory declares, in the spirit of ontological solidarity, that although geography is largely made up of imposed collective (colonial) experience, it is not immune from the historical evolution of institutional and political contestation (Livingstone 1992). The contested legacy of imperial geographies is not only reflected in political protests, social resistance, or wars, but also in public discourse, including academic agendas, paradigms, theories, and research models that define how particular geographical realities and truths become negotiated and reproduced (Blunt & McEwan 2002). Considering this, it is emphasised that a greater awareness of our own sensitive positionality as researchers helps us not only to understand the historically contested and practical nature of geography, but also to strengthen the academic credibility of (geographical) imaginations we reproduce through our work (Aalbers 2013; England 1994; Greenhough 2012).

New regional geography:
staging the integral spaces of governance

New regional geography is an umbrella term coined in the 1980s to characterise a variety of approaches that focus on the study of regional processes and phenomena. New regional geography is often regarded as a theoretically advanced replacement or alternative to the traditional chorological school of thinking and quantitative regional science. It is mostly inspired by Hägerstrand's time-geography, Giddens' structuration theory, Bhashkar's critical realism, and radical geography as well as contructivist thought. Andrew Sayer (1989, 254) has argued that the emergence of new regional geography

was a result of 'a growing awareness of the problem of abstracting from time and space in social science, particularly in concrete research, and hence an increasing recognition of the ways in which "geography matters"'. Therefore, encouraged by the general spatial turn in social sciences, regional geographers became increasingly interested in the constitutive role of geography by 'actualising' the dynamic, integrative, and reproductive nature of places, networks, and scales. This challenge is well generalised by Polish geographer Iwona Sagan, who claimed that 'the ontological understanding of space was changed in favor of the understanding of society. [Geographers] started to search for the spatial organization of society, instead of the social organization of the space' (2004, 141). Importantly, the concept of region was linked to social theories and methods that allowed understanding and analysis of regions 'as semi-coherent territories within which place-specific causal properties' shape – and in turn are shaped by – 'the wider dynamics of capital accumulation, state intervention (or withdrawal) and uneven development' (Jonas 2012, 265; on the debate over the territorial vs. relational constitution of a region see, e.g. Varró & Lagendijk 2013). New regional geography has been instrumental in underlining that a region is 'less a material object, a static geographical category or a taken-for-granted scale and much more a subject with identity, a strategic domain, an object of struggle and/or a site-and-scale-in-the-process-of-becoming' (Jonas 2006, 402). Canadian geographer Anne Gilbert (1988) has identified the three most dominant ways in which a region is understood in new regional geography literature. Firstly, the cultural perspective sees the region as a source of identification and meaning; secondly, the economic perspective emphasises that region is primarily a local response to global capitalist processes: and thirdly, for political perspective, the region is an arena enabling and constraining social interaction. Regarding the current thesis, cultural and political perspectives in particular offer important insight on how spatial imaginations become constitutive to the production of socio-economically structured spaces of governance (study **II** & **IV**). Generally speaking, cultural perspective provides a theoretical understanding of how spatial imaginations are related to (spatial) identity-building at the regional scale and how this identity-building is embedded within the swarm of politically motivated spatial processes at the regional scale. More holistically, political perspective uncovers the role of (regional) identity-building as a constitutive part of global processes including regionalisation, networking, competition, and capital reproduction (Allen & Cochrane 2007; Johnston et al. 1990).

The cultural view illustrates the formation of spatial identities by stressing the importance of the link between a governable territory and its population. In regional terms, this implies that the effectiveness of applying power on the particular region depends to a large extent on how compatible the regional identity (the regional consciousness of individuals) is with the identity of a region (regional narratives, symbols, imaginations, etc.). The formation and

popularising of a shared spatial identity, which may be both territorially bounded and relational, helps to control and mobilise local people and secure the effective implementation of power policies over a particular region (study **IV**). However, the spatial imaginations as part of the production of a region's identity should be oriented to forming not only regional but also international 'imaginative communities' (Sykes & Shaw 2008). The latter have a great role to play if the resources outside of the region, such as EU financial aid or a skilled workforce, are needed and sharing of policy competence through networking processes favoured. Scholars have also noted that such spatial identity policies are fluid and dynamic because the regional authorities who are behind them are forced to react adequately to the growing global pressures of competition and rescaling of nationhood (Terlouw 2009).

The political view continues in a similar vein, arguing for the integrative nature of regions. Accordingly, the regions created and re-produced also by means of spatial imaginations are 'mediums and outcomes of social practices and relations of power that are operative at multiple spatial and temporal scales' (Henderson 2009, 631). Thus, the promotion of a positive interdependence between socio-spatial formations, no matter which scale of governance they occupy (e.g. cities, urban regions, cross-border regions, supra-national organisations), is one of the key factors for enhancing the efficiency of spatial policies and development (study **IV**). Furthermore, political perspective also teaches us that the regions (or any other socio-spatial formations) have a geohistorical, context-dependent, and politically mobilised character. The emergence and continuity of regions are deeply rooted in their history of construction, which is communicated through practices and discourses of spatial governance (study **II**). The latter includes also regional institutionalisation, identity formation, and building of competitiveness through regional alliance-making (Harrison 2013, MacLeod & Jones 2001; Paasi 2003).

The basic operational concepts

We can resume that the studies of critical geopolitics, postcolonialism, and new regional geography have enriched our knowledge about the spatial logic of social processes and demonstrated the constitutive role of politically motivated practices and discourses in spatial governance. They have also helped us to understand how spatial identities are formed on multiple governance scales and how particular spatial identities become linked to the forms of spatial governance. Yet, so far these seminal works have not been provided with a systematically developed theoretical framework for studying the spatial imaginations as a part of policy making in general and the formation of policy efficiency in particular. Accordingly, there is also a lack of theoretical literature regarding the formation of spatial imaginations within transition societies. One reason is that the formation of spatial imaginations is dependent on the spatio-

temporal contexts within which they are produced, the specific 'colonial present' they are embedded within, as well as the particular policies they aim to improve. But perhaps an even bigger problem, especially if we conduct conceptual studies, is that all of these theoretical perspectives have a very fragmented and often empirically inadequate conceptual apparatus (Holmén 1995; Müller & Reuber 2008; see also Lagendijk 2003; 2006). Even if we seek to study the most common kinds of spatial imaginations that are produced by state authorities for spatial socialisation or national identity-building, we can encounter the problem of conceptual translation (study **I**). Among other things, the problem of conceptual translation is also associated with particular study design (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). If our study were to follow the mix of certain theoretical perspectives, we would reduce and modify them into a number of *operational* and *instrumental* concepts. Operational concepts are passive concepts in the sense that they are not directly dependent on the aim of study but serve as tools through which study analysis becomes communicated and placed into the broader context. Instrumental or analytical concepts are dependent on the aim of the particular study. They are active concepts in this respect in that they are applied directly to analytical units. Accordingly, their meaning is normally unmasked in study reports, as is the case also in the current thesis (study **I–IV**). Hence, in order to minimise the problem of conceptual translation and communicate the empirical studies about spatial imagination more coherently, we should also establish the shared meanings of basic operational concepts in this introductory chapter.

Power: positive interdependence and practical efficiency

The concept of power is a very important operational instrument for any critical geography study; however, it is also one of the most fragmented concepts in terms of meaning that we use (Richardson 1996). Traditionally, power is understood as a centralised, invisible, and repressive tool by which particular goals are accomplished (Allen 2004; Dahl 1957; cf. Foucault 1980; Giddens 1984; Laclau & Mouffe 1985; Latour 1986; Lukes 1974). Therefore, to define the nature of power we need first to answer the question of where it is. Regarding the current thesis, there are two valuable views in the market – the centralised and networked concepts of power. Centralised power reveals itself as a territorially concentrated and institutionalised resource that can be delegated, maximised, or minimised. Power is something that is distributed both horizontally and vertically between socio-spatial structures. The distribution of power is normally unequal because it is hierarchic in nature. For example, it is understood that bigger states have more power than smaller states, or that state institutions have more power than regional institutions. Yet, the hierarchic distribution of power does not mean that power is the monopoly of politically constituted social structures: it can be the property of any form of social organisation, including even individual subjects (De Certeau 1984; Giddens

1984). Networked power, quite differently, lies not in places but relations that are created through social interactions both within and between socio-spatial structures. In this case, power is a collectively shared resource that can be mobilised for common purposes (Latour 1986). Typically, networked power is seen as less instrumental than centralised power, because it is primarily designed to provide equal benefits for all those who are involved in particular network relations. In addition, there are two useful views regarding the condition of power: the first suggests that the existence of power in social structures is natural, constitutive, and constant, whereas the other view states that power comes into existence only if it is used (Allen 2004). There is no essential power in social structures but the capability for power practices (Agnew et al. 2003). In this thesis, however, the understanding of power draws both from centralised and networked viewpoints (study **I–IV**). Power is actualised by social structures and individual subjects both territorially and relationally in a way that allows them to build up and mediate more or less rationalised discourses [policy formation] and actions [policy execution] in order to make differences in social reality (Giddens 1984). Thus, the nature of power depends on its ability to shape a reality. This ability is never equal because some power holders or mobilisers have more to contribute [material resources, human and financial capital, ideas, time and space] than others. Power tends to be accumulated (e.g. territorially, structurally, bodily) because it is transferable and representative. Accumulation of power also helps to call its intermediary nature into existence. There cannot be power in relational networks or mediums without mutual interests [between subjects] in sharing it, and these interests always have different exchange values. Yet, it is expected in this thesis that relational characteristics of power are becoming increasingly favoured by social structures because the main quality of power is to allow its holders or mobilisers to do things as effectively as possible.

Scale: power hierarchies and/ or effective relations of performance

The second important operational concept in this thesis is scale. The concept of scale is a valuable tool for understanding how space makes a difference between social phenomena and how spatial interdependence between social phenomena becomes established and re-produced. Though extensively theoreticised and challenged in recent years by human geographers, the concept of scale is still often viewed as a spatial domain of social life (Brenner 1998; Marston 2000; Marston et al. 2005). Several scholars have pointed out that the efforts to develop and apply more analytically sound versions of the concept of scale have often been problematic. Leading scale theorist Andrew Jonas (2006, 400), for example, has indicated that 'the geographers have struggled with ways of incorporating concepts of scalar process, structure and difference into their

analyses of social and economic change'. This inconvenience is partly related to the 'paradigmatic legacy' of analytical representation, which advocates normative but analytically inadequate attributes of the concept of scale. Scale is normatively static and vertical because this is the way in which the subjects usually tend to think about spatial order and practice in relation to it. In addition to this, confusion regarding the concept of scale comes also from the difficulties in holding its ontological and analytical meanings separate (Moore 2008). This is often so because the scale, obviously more than any other concept geographers use in their analyses, is becoming (too) fundamental for the constitution of a social reality. On an ontological level, this means, literally speaking, that the mechanisms of scale do not work only for social reality, but they also work more and more similarly to the way in which a social reality works. From the analytical point of view, this tendency causes operational shortcomings. In order to study and explain a reality there is normally a need to abstract and reduce the reality into analytical schemes, models, and concepts. However, geographers sometimes tend to *copy* that reality [in an ontological sense] into their analytical frameworks so that the concept of scale becomes (but to a lesser extent space too) nothing more than a simplified reflection on reality [in an ontological sense] itself. This results in a paradoxical trend in which scale gradually occupies the place that a reality traditionally holds in geographical studies (see also Moore 2008). Considering recent theoretical advances in the field and the calls 'to eliminate scale as a concept in human geography' (Marston et al. 2005, 416), we cannot even rule out the need to *replace* the concept of scale [as tautological] with another analytically more appropriate one in order to explain the processes and phenomena of reality that are [now] based on scalar ontologies (see also recent debates over 'flat ontology', e.g., Escobar 2007; Jonas 2006; Leitner & Miller 2007; Marston et al. 2005).

Due to the particular aims of the current thesis and the desire to avoid the 'tautological trap' referred to above, two useful approaches are extracted for understanding and operationalising the concept of scale. The first perspective is an essentialist one, and it postulates that scale is a hierarchic, fixed, ontologically pre-given and ideologically neutral platform in which and through which spatial processes and relations take place. Scale is characterised by its range (e.g. household, city, and province), levels of spatial performance (e.g. local, regional, national, and global) and relations between levels of spatial performance. It is expected that the relations between different scales rest on rational logic and they are defined by the quantity and concentration of power and capital on a particular scale. For example, it is believed that social processes which occur on a higher scale define to a great extent the nature of social processes that take place on lower scales (MacKinnon 2011). The second valuable perspective is dialectic, and it seeks to point out that scale is not an inherently pre-given and hierarchic arena of spatial processes and relations. Instead, the dialectic view suggests that scale is constructed or produced by social processes and relations (Brenner 1999; Cox 1998; Jonas 2006; Sheppard

& McMaster 2004; Smith 1992). Sallie Marston (2000, 221) has specified that scale is primarily 'constituted and reconstituted around relations of capitalist production, social reproduction and consumption'. The dialectic view also underlines that social processes and scale are mutually constitutive in the sense that processes and relations are affected by the scale that they produce. Furthermore, the scale has relational characteristics too, because practices and discourses on one scale are implicated in, and overlap with, those on other scales. Unlike the essential view it also sees the engagement of power with scale as political and strategic. The production of scale is politically motivated and mobilised, and as such it always consists and reflects power relations (Delaney & Leitner 1997). In the context of the current thesis, the concept of scale combines both essential and dialectic positions (study **I–IV**). Importantly, we acknowledge that scale is a dynamic category. It is indeed socially produced and this production often has a politically motivated character. We do not ignore the hierarchic nature of scale, but we admit that scalar hierarchies are not absolute. To a great extent, scalar hierarchies are dependent on the uneven distribution of power between social structures and/or their different contribution to power networks; however, it is considered that the increasing importance of implementing power effectively, often through networked relations, reduces hierarchic or top-down nature of a scale.

Policy: assembling spatial imaginations, power, and scale

The third operational concept that frames study analyses in this thesis is that of policy. The concept of policy is extensively theoreticised as one of the fundamental concepts in social sciences, and as such its meaning is highly articulated, often depending on particular paradigms, methodological positions, study areas, and integration within analytical schemes (Ball 1993; Birkland 2001). In newer human geography literature, the concept of policy has gained much attention regarding its key role in relationalist schemes of spatial governance (Cochrane & Ward 2012; Peck & Theodore 2010). These seminal works, focusing on 'the geographies of policy mobilities, assemblages and mutations' seek to conceptualize the policy making as 'a global-relational, social and spatial process which interconnects and constitutes actors, institutions and territories' (McCann & Ward 2012, 328; cf. Benson & Jordan 2011). Policies, in terms of this perspective, are embodied, power-laden 'assemblages of parts of the near and far, of fixed and mobile pieces of expertise, regulation, institutional capacities, etc. that are brought together in particular ways and for particular interests and purposes' (McCann & Ward 2012, 328). For relationalist geographers, the concept of policy allows light to be shed on the 'interscalar and cross-national power struggles that produce the policy harmonisation and differentiation that together constitute internationalising policy regimes' (Prince 2012, 189). Due to the specific study objectives and interests, these studies usually do not provide clear-cut

definitions about the concept of policy but refer to the capability for policy to be created, communicated, and transformed by means of agency of geographical categories, such as bodies, spaces, scales, places, networks, neighbourhoods, etc. However, such an indirect approach underestimates the role of formal institutions in policy formation, as it does not speak much about what kind of geographical knowledge becomes linked to policy formation and how it becomes integrated there. For that, we need to follow a more normative definition, which sees a policy primarily as strategic activity that is oriented towards securing and developing particular collective interests and goals (study **I–IV**). Two satellite concepts can be found through which the concept of policy is usually defined. The first one is the concept of practice. In this case, the policy reflects strategically and rationally planned and executed actions performed by public and private institutions in and through multiple spatial levels. And the second is the concept of power. In that case, the policy is defined as a tool by which power is applied over particular territories and/or community members, as well as *actualised* within socio-spatial network relations (Allen 2004). The policy could be characterised by its aim, formation, and implementation processes, mobility, adaptability, integrity with other policies, and efficiency of outcomes (Howlett & Ramesh 1995). Policies are designed and performed within specific legal and moral regimes as well as governance frameworks. It should also be stressed that policies are always coupled with a particular constitution of space, time, and scale. They regulate, re-organise and improve spatio-temporal relations and processes, and are in turn either reproduced or dissolved by those relations and processes (Prince 2012). The effective reproduction of policies depends not only on their ability to achieve the expected results but also on the coherency of policies. For geographers, the cohesion of policies is often viewed according to the specific spatiality of action and/or power implementation (Agnew et al. 2003; Cochrane & Ward 2012). Because of this, they normally see the integrity and complexity *between* spatially informed policies on the one hand (e.g. foreign policy *vs.* immigration policy) and between spatially informed and structurally informed policies on the other hand (e.g. health policy vs. regional policy) (see also Schön 2005).

As it regards the current thesis, the concept of policy is valuable mainly for two reasons. Generally, the concept of policy fills the missing link that illuminates how the interactions between spatial imaginations, power, and scale are established and reproduced. As we already pointed out, the spatial imaginations that we study in this thesis, roughly speaking, need a power to be actualised and scale to be performed. Therefore, the concept of policy helps us to follow how spatial imaginations are intertwined with mobilisation of power and production of scale, and vice versa. However, it should be recalled that not all kinds of spatial imaginations are necessarily political or even deliberately strategic in character. This is so because spatial imaginations become political when they are formed and/or taken in to support particular interests or goals,

which require intervention or participation within politically constituted power relations on multiple interrelated scales and networks (Jones et al. 2004; Prince 2012). The second reason why the concept of policy matters in this thesis is that it allows us to illustrate the constitutive role of geography in the reproduction of a social reality and demonstrate that the strategic and coordinated use of conceptualised geographical knowledge is important in making governance practices and discourses more effective and communicative (see also Allen & Cochrane 2010; Peck & Theodore 2010).

DATA AND METHODS

The question of how to obtain knowledge about reality is of fundamental importance to any scientific inquiry. In social sciences, the standard deductive study process relies on a complex set of interdependent operations, which usually include interest in a particular topic, pre-knowledge or speculation about a problem or phenomenon, formation of study questions, adoption of the appropriate theory, conceptualisation, operationalisation, choice of research method, collection of data for analysis, data analysis, and reporting (Guba & Lincoln 1998; Outhwaite & Turner 2008). All of these procedural phases are equally valuable for framing and guiding the study process, as well as getting adequate study results. However, in order to communicate with the hidden reality and describe the phenomena and processes under study the choice of appropriate study methods has critical importance (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). Methods can be understood as theoretically grounded and systematic procedures by which particular knowledge is derived from reality. Methods act as 'a set of short-circuits that link us in the best possible way with reality, and allow us to return more or less quickly from that reality to our place of study with findings that are reasonably secure' (Law 2004, 10). Hence, methods are not just individual detailed instructions for data gathering and processing but they are also constitutive frameworks for studied reality, embracing a number of specific and integrated techniques for collecting, organising, systematising and analysing 'communicated' knowledge (Lewin & Somekh 2004). Depending on the aim of the study, methods can be oriented towards obtaining rule-dependent knowledge (predominantly quantitative methods) and/or context-dependent knowledge (predominantly qualitative methods) (Creswell 2009). The quantitative and qualitative methods are not mutually exclusive, and there is a rising 'phronetic' trend in social science studies for them to be freely combined if necessary (Flyvbjerg 2011, 313). Paradoxically, both methods can inform each other correctly if they are regarded as constitutive parts of an *idealist* social reality that is not necessarily the same reality upon which they are applied. This is so because methods, if not linked to the studied reality, do not have any exclusive ontological anchors beside idealist one (see also Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009).

Thus, methods and techniques for analysis, if theoretically informed (e.g. like spatial analysis is grounded on scientific objectivism or discourse analysis draws on poststructuralist thinking), play a key role in linking us with reality and allowing us to obtain knowledge about it. However, they do not provide much help regarding what kind of knowledge we might obtain from reality. To synchronise them with the aims and questions under study, methods should be embedded within particular study approaches, such as structural studies, cross-unit studies, comparative studies, or case studies. The choice of the particular study approach depends not only on the study goals but also on prior knowledge and expectations about study phenomena. For example, the structural approach

is often applied when new theoretical ideas about a study object need to be tested and elaborated. The comparative approach is useful when theories are needed to be tested in different contexts (Hantrais 2009). The case study approach, which in its qualitative form originates from the position of ontological solidarity, is also appropriate when context matters; however, it is more suited to obtaining knowledge 'when the boundaries between pheno-menon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin 1984, 23) or when phenomena are characterised by specific processual or temporal contexts.

This thesis is about relationships between geography and power. The aim is to study how power authorities produce spatial imaginations in order to improve particular governance spheres and achieve policy goals. We focus in particular on how consistent and integrated the production of spatial imaginations is regarding both individual and inter-related (spatial) policies. The integrative efficiency of the production of spatial imaginations is dependent on time and context factors because policies are not isolated from processes and developments in other governance scales and places. Furthermore, it is assumed that the improvement of particular policies through spatial imagination is always unique in different scales and places in a sense that there are no 'universal laws' for communicating the meanings of imaginations between production and consumption processes (Nelson & Seager 2005). Therefore, in the context of policy improvement, spatial imagination could be studied through a more detailed and contextualised approach, which could primarily provide additional knowledge about what is already known regarding the given phenomenon.

Considering these specific characteristics of the phenomenon, the case study approach is adopted in this thesis. Case study can be understood as 'an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. A unit connotes spatially bounded phenomenon observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time' (Gerring 2004, 342). These spatially bounded phenomena can basically comprise any pre-defined process, practice, individual, group, relationship, or scale. If the study deals with aspects of phenomena that are not yet generalised and theoreticised, then more variables are usually included in order to provide cumulative knowledge about phenomena (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). For example, the use of geography for political purposes [in a form of spatial imagination] is relatively well documented in academic literature and there is general theoretical knowledge backed by critical reflexivity of the academic community on how this process works. Although theoretical literature takes into account different production contexts, it speaks little about the interdependence of processes (or policies) within particular imagination contexts (study **I–IV**). Considering this, in this thesis spatial imagination is studied within the framework of two spatial variables – the scale where and through which it takes place (nation-state and urban region) and type of (reform) policy or which process it aims to improve (e.g. socialisation, Europeanisation, regionalisation). Thus, case study is a wise

choice for obtaining knowledge about how interrelated processes and changing time-space conditions affect the character of the phenomenon under study (Lewin & Somekh 2004). Furthermore, this approach advocates complementary principles in the study process so that each individual study should inform the next or parallel study, providing new valuable information for updating or falsifying already established and generalised knowledge about phenomena (Flyvbjerg 2011). Case study can embrace a variety of study techniques, such as statistical analysis, modelling, interviews, observations, document analysis, record analysis, etc. However, when the study object or process has a conceptual nature and meaning matters in the aims of the study, as is the case with spatial imagination, qualitative techniques are usually favoured (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). Qualitative techniques also provide more flexible access to detailed and diverse data that reflect the processual and integrative character of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack 2008).

The following sections provide a brief overview about the particular analytic frameworks, methods, and data used in four case studies.

In the first study (study **I**), the integrative efficiency of spatial imagination is investigated on the basis of education reform. The study seeks to reveal how legal, institutional, and economic practices affect the efficiency of imagination regarding the improvement of interrelated education and integration policies. To do so, Estonian history and geography schoolbooks produced in the period of 1993–1999 are analysed. In order to apprehend the production process and its links to policy goal laws, education strategies and curricula as well as semi-structured interviews with key participants such as education officials, schoolbook publishers, and authors are also included in the analysis. The analysis framework relies on general programmatic principles provided by proponents of critical discourse analysis (CDA) regarding the production of dominant knowledge in society. CDA analytic schemes are oriented towards revealing sources of power, dominance, and bias in any kind of textual material (Fairclough 1995). They consider the importance of context and practices of imagination and thereby help not only to interpret the meanings of imaginations but also to uncover the ways in which imaginations become monopolised and integrated within social structures in a particular time-space (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000). However, because of the specific study aims, different conceptual apparatus, and large volume of material to be analysed for this study, the explicit analytical scheme(s) of CDA is not followed. Instead, the production of spatial imaginations is analysed as a complex communicative event that embraces the description of socio-political contexts, explanation of legal and institutional frameworks, and role of participants (publishers, editors, authors, and cartographers) in the production process and conceptualisation of spatial imaginations (cf. Fairclough 1995; Van Dijk 2008).

In the second study (study **II**), the integrative efficiency of spatial imagination is investigated on the basis of administrative-territorial reform. This study focuses on how different governmental bodies and media institutions have

reproduced Estonian provincial reality within the administrative reform initiatives and how this process has contributed to needs for the country's regional development. The first part of study addresses general changes made in the entire administrative system in 1989–1996, whereas the second part, as a more detailed analysis, concentrates on the reproduction of the provinces of Tartumaa, Viljandimaa, and Jõgevamaa during the period of postponed administration reform in 1997–2002. Data consist of the thematic articles found in national and regional newspapers (*Postimees*, *Äripäev*, *Maaleht*, *Tartu Postimees*, *Vooremaa* and *Sakala*), official letters of key institutions, strategic documents related to administrative reform, and interviews with governmental and administrative actors as well as secondary descriptive sources. The theory of the institutionalisation of regions, launched by Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi, is applied as a general framework for the analysis (Paasi 1986). Paasi's conceptual framework provides a clear-cut scheme for uncovering the political transformation of administrative units and detecting differences and possible contradictions in their institutional reproduction. According to this framework, the reproduction of provinces is defined by four dimensions of the institutionalisation of regions (territorial shape, symbolic shape, institutional shape, and position in the regional system). Each dimension of institutionalisation is analytically extracted in order to determine, group, and conceptualise the spatial imaginations in the study material. Then, all findings are summarised and discussed considering both practical (activities of reform participants) and representational (imaginations of reform participants) reproduction of provinces.

In the third study (study **III**), the integrative efficiency of spatial imagination is investigated on the basis of border negotiations. The paper examines how Estonian political authorities and media figures have used the spatial concept of 'Baltic unity' in order to justify national claims in the Estonian-Latvian border-making process, and how such imagination has contributed to the practical solution of border issues and the state's foreign policy goals. Data consist of border-related laws, decrees, and stenographic records of the Estonian Parliament, official letters and relevant articles of the national daily newspapers *Eesti Päevaleht* and *Postimees* (covering the period of 1994–2004), as well as semi-structured interviews made with key participants in the process. Drawing from secondary descriptive sources such as media texts and academic studies, the spatial concept of 'Baltic unity' is defined according to three key identity elements of Baltic cooperation. Then the concept of 'Baltic unity' is applied to the study material in order to distinguish the arguments made by public authorities and media figures regarding three cases of political confrontation that emerged during the Estonian-Latvian border-making process. Imagination is thus analysed here in the form of spatially constituted arguments, which aim at justifying or falsifying a particular standpoint or showing 'that a rational account can be given of a [particular] position on the matter' (Van Eemeren et al. 1996, 2).

In the fourth study (study **IV**), the integrative efficiency of spatial imagination is examined on the basis of the internationalisation process. The study aims to show how local public institutions have been promoting the spatial imaginations over cross-border cooperation at the international level and how such formation of international identity has contributed to the key objectives of cooperation and region-building. The case of cross-border cooperation between the cities of Haparanda (Sweden) and Tornio (Finland) is chosen as a study example. Data consist of brochures, maps, web articles, and reports of local development projects collected from local tourist agencies and official Internet websites of Haparanda Municipality, the City of Tornio and the cooperation institution of *Provincia Bothniensis*. The study material covers the period of 1996–2008. Deductive content analysis is used as a method for analysing textual material and the de-constructivist method of map reading is used in analysing cartographic material (Elo & Kyngäs 2008; Harley 1989). Deductive content analysis is often favoured by scholars when the structure of analysis is operationalised on the basis of existing knowledge. This approach is suited for testing theories and concepts in different contexts, research areas, or comparing categories in different time periods (Elo & Kyngäs 2008). Deductive content analysis consists of three main phases: preparation, organisation, and reporting. In the preparatory phase, study material was read through and the three most prevalent narratives of cross-border region-building (cooperation between cross-border cities, physical merging of cross-border cities, and re-symbolisation of the border between cities) were extracted as analytical units. After the preparatory phase, the categorisation matrix, consisting of key categories and study questions related to the analytic concept (international identity of cross-border cooperation), was elaborated by means of theoretical literature. Then each sentence in the study material related to the main categories of the matrix was coded. The final step was description of the meanings of key identity visions and their relation to the region-building process.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY RESULTS

The production of spatial imaginations takes place in all political formations no matter what scale, ideology, and system of governance or stage of socio-economic development they represent. They all transfer geography into conceptualised (spatial) imaginations, which in turn become linked to strategically planned and target-based discourses and practices that we call policies (see also Dorling & Shaw 2002). However, not all policies are filled with imaginative geography. In considering the relationships between spatial imagination and policies, three types of policies can be distinguished: spatial, categorical, and organisational or system policies (cf. Barca et al. 2012). Generally, all policies that are designed to be spatially executed are more or less anchored with spatial imaginations. *Organisational policies* (e.g. accounting policy, staff policy) are not spatially executed, and they normally do not contain spatial imaginations. Spatial and categorical policies, however, are spatially executed. *Categorical policies* (e.g. health policy, tax policy) incorporate spatial imaginations that are not intentionally ideological but rather rationally distributive. Such imaginations are relatively stable in time and generally less contested both by policy makers and people living in a given political formation. *Spatial policies* (e.g. foreign policy, education policy, economic policy) include spatial imaginations that reflect the dominant ideologies of a given political formation. Unlike in the case of categorical policies, the synergy between spatial policies and spatial imagination is never ideal (Hamdouch & Depret 2010). This is so even when the production of spatial imaginations happened to be strategically close to ideal because both spatial policies and spatial imaginations [when attached to spatial policies] are always affected by changing socio-economic and cultural processes, as well as inter-related policies performed within and/or outside of particular political formations (e.g. neighbouring countries, the Schengen area, the EU, WTO). Hence, the problem of political efficiency regarding the production of spatial imaginations is related, quite exclusively, to spatial policies.

The relationships between spatial imaginations and spatial policies differ among political formations. Within well-established and socio-economically stable political formations (e.g. Western nation-states and their administrative regions), the production of spatial imaginations tends to be more institutionalised, periodic, and ideologically coherent. Spatial imaginations are embedded within bureaucratic routines of governance during longer periods of time and they are rather cosmetically revised if changing of particular spatial policies is needed. Therefore, the efficiency of imagination regarding the improvement of particular governance policies is potentially higher because the integration between policies is considered to be adequate and durable. By contrast, in the case of transitional (e.g. post-communist countries, the EU candidate countries) or emerging (e.g. Euroregions) political formations, in which processes of "re-scaling" (Brenner 1999) such as democratisation,

Europeanisation, regionalisation or national consolidation have been driving forces behind the policy formation, the integration between policies is often occasional, and the production of spatial imaginations also tends to be more competitive and ideologically challenged (see also Johnson 2008; Popescu 2008). Considering this, the countries, regions, or localities that are in a state of (re-)formation reflect the process of spatial imagination more diversely and controversially.

In this thesis, the general argument is made that there are multiple ways in which spatial imagination can serve spatial policies. We can distinguish these ways as particular forms of spatial imaginations. Each individual policy can embrace an unlimited number of such forms of imagination; however, in reality, there are always some dominant forms that are used as the most effective for serving particular policy goals. In the current thesis, four forms of spatial imaginations are presented: integrative, reformist, manipulative, and constitutive imagination. Each case study deals with one form of spatial imagination (study **I**–**IV**). These imaginations differ in the sense that they, literally speaking, can serve different goals, yet their process of formation and integration with spatial policies share common characteristics.

Firstly, the *integrative imaginations* (study **I**) are included in policies that seek to establish or re-produce common spatial consciousness and secure control and surveillance over territories and communities. Characteristically, integrative imaginations are used both for *rationalisation* and *ideologisation* of a particular space. Rationalising, in this sense, implies the standardising and abstracting of the geographical data through the technologies of spatial governance. The most widely used technologies of spatial governance are spatial statistics and mapping [of socio-economic processes, activities, and resources] (Crampton & Elden 2007; Häkli 2001, 413–414). Therefore, in a rationalised form, integrative imaginations are characteristic of nearly all kinds of spatial policies. For example, any rational division of space (e.g. Estonian islands, Harju County, Jõelähtme Municipality, border areas, developed or lagging regions, constituencies, etc.) represented on the map or named in the newspapers is an integrative imagination. Geography is intended to be perceived as integrating people and territories by means of measurable or calculable features of social reality that are globally shared. However, in this thesis (study **I**), the focus is on the narrative-based way of integrative imagination. This means the ideological systematising and conceptualising of the geographical and historical data through visualisation, mapping, and story-telling. National flags, currencies, celebrations, monuments, national borders, governmental structures, military forces or even nationally subsidised traffic between the mainland and islands, for instance, are integrative imaginations in this sense, too, or, to be more accurate, they are materialised integrative imaginations. Still, integrative imaginations are usually formed into arguments which seek to justify why the people living in a certain territory or holding certain common characteristics, abilities, and interests are or should be linked

together. For example, the argument that Estonia is the homeland of Estonians comes from the integrative imagination targeted for ethnic Estonians, whereas the argument that Estonia is the homeland of Estonians and other nations comes from the integrative imagination targeted for all people living in Estonian territory. An argument itself, it could be added, is not an imagination, but the idea or vision on which this argument is based, so there can be a number of arguments that represent an individual integrative imagination. Perhaps most often, this way of imagination is linked to the policies of spatial or territorial socialisation, which aim at integrating the controllable population with controllable territory (Paasi 1996). Typically, the production of integrative imaginations is a highly institutional and ideological practice. The power institutions, especially those in education and the media, are considered effective sites for monopolising, legitimatising, and communicating official and/or dominant ideologies through the imaginations of common time-space (Robertson 2011). Finally, it is also worth mentioning that similarly to other forms of spatial imagination, the integrative imaginations are not produced only on the national scale. They are, for example, linked to the cohesion policy of the European Union, as well as policies that seek to create a shared identity across state borders (e.g. Euroregions).

Secondly, *reformist imaginations* (study **II**) are linked to a variety of reform policies that aim at re-organising and improving spatial governance (e.g. administration reform, education reform, amendment of the electoral system). For instance, the argument that the number of local municipalities in Estonia is too high or that Piirissaare Municipality is too small could reflect the reformist imagination about bigger, more effective municipalities that are able to drive socio-economic development in peripheral areas. Reformist imaginations are formed during a limited time period and they lose their actuality when the particular reform is abandoned or postponed. However, if the reform is abandoned or postponed, then these imaginations can be reused when power institutions decide to re-launch the reform process. Compared to integrative imaginations, the formation of reformist imaginations differs in two main aspects. Firstly, reformist imagination is normally related only to selected aspects of the spatial reorganisation. Because of this, such imaginations are not considered to be integrative but functional. For example, the re-imagination of administrative districts is usually not initiated by the ambition to link people to certain areas, but rather by the need for more effective management of capital and better availability of services at all related sites and scales of governance. Secondly, the production of reformist imaginations tends to be more visible and open for public contribution. The initiators of reforms often prefer to fill in drafts – reform agendas, strategies, and documents – with spatial imaginations that they expect to be potentially modifiable and replaceable during the reform process (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger 1998). This also means that reformist imaginations are not ideologically exclusive. The final imaginations that are put into reform practice are formed in political and public debates by a number of

institutions, consultants, and social groups that may support different ideologies and interests. It is expected by reformers that open debate between participants over spatial imaginations often helps to sift out the most productive way of spatial governance (see also Hammarlund 2004). This flexible approach to imagination allows them also to secure societal support for reform policies and make the execution of reform easier.

Thirdly, *manipulative imaginations* (study **III**) are, briefly speaking, spatial imaginations that help to back up political arguments that pretend to satisfy the common interests of all parties involved but, in fact, would provide the biggest benefit for the one making the argument. For instance, the idea that the Ukrainian-Russian border is a border between Europe and Asia is a manipulative imagination if it is intended to support Ukrainians' ambition for the EU membership [for the EU, more territorial power is provided and for Russia, more relational power is provided]. Thus, such imaginations are primarily used for justifying the rationality and efficiency of governmental arguments and decisions in the particular spatial policy process. Manipulative imaginations are often simultaneously presented in political affairs and mediated through media institutions in order to gain popular support for particular policies. The formation of manipulative imaginations differs from other forms of imagination presented in this thesis in the sense that they are not necessarily created but actualised for particular policy strategies or actions. That is to say, they can be in a state of popular imaginations, which are composed with dominant geopolitical visions, stereotypes, and banal geographical knowledge (e.g. the historical peculiarity of certain regions, positive or negative image of certain states, difficulties in relations with neighbour states, etc.) and recognised both by political authorities and society members as taken for granted (Dittmer & Dodds 2008). However, what makes such popular imaginations manipulative is their context and aim of use. We can say that perhaps most typically the manipulative imaginations are related to policies in which conflicts of interests with other governance structures or political authorities are expected and there is a need to agree with other parties or at least minimise tensions that could arise from sensitive political decisions and actions (Megoran 2004). Accordingly, manipulative imaginations are especially characteristic of foreign policy (e.g. border negotiations or regulation of the border regime) and defence policy (e.g. military alliance-making or justifying the relocation of military bases) discourses and practices. In the current thesis too, manipulative imagination is analysed in the context of foreign policy.

Fourthly, *constitutive imaginations* (study **IV**) are related to policies which aim at establishing new or fundamental re-organisation of existing political formations. In this thesis, constitutive imagination is analysed in the context of cross-border cooperation policy. For example, the argument that the border between the city of Valga [in Estonia] and the city of Valka [in Latvia] is a part of the past represents the constitutive imagination that these two cities should form a common urban region in the future. Typically, constitutive imagination

is an important part of different kinds of territorial region-building (e.g. cross-border regions, urban regions, administrative districts) and regional and urban networking. Constitutive imaginations are similar to integrative imaginations in the sense that they too seek to integrate people with a certain territory and form particular socio-spatial communities. However, we should point out four important aspects that are characteristic specifically of constitutive imagination. Firstly, they are oriented towards forming both the spatial consciousness of people living within a territorially defined political formation (i.e., for example, how people think about a cross-border region) and the spatial identity of a political formation (i.e., for example, visions and stories created about the cross-border region). The former is important in mobilising people to do things collectively as well as in gaining support for policies. The latter helps to (re-)establish a political formation as a socio-economic actor within a wider socio-spatial organisation. This is, for example, reflected also in the process of regionalisation, in which certain areas become institutionalised and linked to the competitive regional systems (Allen & Cochrane 2007). Secondly, constitutive imaginations are oriented towards attracting capital from outside the political formation. This function is often part of the marketing of a region, in which the territorial concentration of capital and enhancement of regional competitiveness is sought. Thirdly, constitutive imaginations are integrative both territorially and relationally. Alongside territorial integration, the political formations increasingly build up their spatial identity through positive interdependence with other but not necessarily territorially adjacent political formations (MacLeod & Jones 2001). For example, it is ineffective for regional development if regions define themselves only in the way in which they differ from other regions. Their attractiveness for capital flows depends much more on their ability to be effective as a part of the regional system. Fourthly, constitutive imaginations are formed on multiple scales of governance. This is so because no one political formation has a monopoly over the construction of constitutive imaginations. Regional actors construct and translate stories and visions about their region for other sites and levels of governance. This means that they internationalise their spatial identity (Terlouw 2009). However, other sites (e.g. international media) and scales of governance (e.g. the European Union) can also construct stories and visions about that region, forming thereby the socio-spatial consciousness of people who do not live within the given region and participate, positively or negatively, in the marketing and development of a given region.

The main characteristics of these four types of spatial imaginations demonstrate that normally the specific policy goals define the nature and scope of spatial imagination, yet the spatial imaginations, when linked to policies, are not immune from policies performed at other sites and scales of governance. The meaning and particular context of use of all four of these types of spatial imaginations can definitely change during the policy process (e.g. border negotiations, administration reform, region-building). However, the logic of

their construction and the reasons why they are attached to particular policies are relatively constant. This is not the case only with constitutive imaginations. We already pointed out that constitutive imaginations, for example, such as those created by regional authorities in order to improve the process of regional formation, are not exclusively defined by that aim because constitutive imaginations regarding a given region can be part of some spatially executed policies performed on multiple scales of governance (e.g. state-level tourism policy, education policy, culture policy). Literally speaking, constitutive imaginations are not only affected but also partially created by others. For others, it should be kept in mind that they are normally *not* constitutive imaginations, except if they are part of the policies which seek to build up or reorganise political formations.

In this thesis, however, the focus is not on how other political formations affect the production of spatial imaginations or how the discourses and practices performed somewhere else contribute to the spatial imagination (for that, see e.g. Prince 2012; Allen & Cochrane 2010; Peck & Theodore 2010). Considering this, we can say that all four types of imagination presented in this thesis are primarily defined by political authorities or their partners that construct them; therefore, the efficiency in using geography for political purposes depends highly on how well-reasoned, strategically planned, and integrated the spatial imaginations are regarding the policies within which they are included.

The first paper (study **I**) shows how spatial imaginations have been formed through the history and geography schoolbooks in post-Soviet Estonia. These imaginations are considered to be integrative because they are legalised and institutionally reproduced by Estonian state authorities and officials, and their function is not only to provide selected historical and geographical knowledge about Estonia but to form pupils' socio-spatial consciousness. As mentioned above, this is important for facilitating the process of territorial socialisation, in which people become linked to the territory they occupy. Well-integrated territorial communities legitimise power policies and secure the continuity of political formation. As study **I** reveals, the production of imaginations about Estonian time-space through school textbooks was often controversial and failed adequately to contribute to policies of territorial socialisation. This failure concerned with poor strategic preparation and execution of the production process. Generally, state authorities pre-defined what topics regarding Estonian geography and history needed to be imagined, but they did not give any direction as to how the selected topics should be narrated and imagined. State authorities expected the dominant national ideological lines at that time (e.g. Estonia is a natural part of the Western world, Russia is a threat to Estonian sovereignty, and the national identity of the Republic of Estonia is equivalent to the identity of ethnic Estonians) to become transferred into spatial imagination by means of proper legislation and institutional control. In reality, the link between the dominant ideology and spatial imaginations was not secured by an effective institutional control system. Instead, the publishers and authors of

history and geography schoolbooks preferred to avoid potential ideological conflict with the control institution. Taking a rational approach, they decided to produce imaginations [about the Estonian time-space] that could be expected by the controlling body. However, the state authorities had no strategic vision of what the nature of the Estonian spatial identity should be that these imaginations were aimed to form. Moreover, the control body also paid little attention to coherency between produced imaginations. The outcome was that different schools taught different knowledge [about the Estonian time-space] depending on which particular textbook was used in the schools. Imposing strict ideological lines and ignoring the inconsistency of imagination also shows that state authorities turned a blind eye to the link between territorial socialisation and integration of the ethno-culturally divided Estonian society.

One could argue that the standardisation of history and geography knowledge in school textbooks is a matter of controversy. Such standardisation can obviously be justified only if shared (spatial) identity that is created through teaching history and geography is considered an important premise for the stable and successful development of any political formation.

The second paper (study **II**) demonstrates how Estonian provinces were imagined and reproduced in the practices of the administrative reform initiatives. Among the key arguments behind administrative reform in the 1990s were ideological opposition to the Soviet administrative legacy and the claim that the Estonian administrative system was ineffective in tackling the growing peripherisation and uneven socio-economic development. As a part of these key arguments, the state authorities argued for the need to revise the status of provinces in the Estonian administrative system. It was often lamented that the vague political status and weak functional capability of provinces had a negative impact on the process of reconstructing regional economy and made it difficult to obtain the maximum benefit from EU financial instruments. However, state authorities had no clear vision of which role provinces should have within the Estonian administration system. For different reasons, including political ones, they decided not to force administrative reform and change the status of provinces in the administrative system without public support. Therefore, reaching public consensus for the optimal re-organisation of the Estonian spatial administration was seen as the proper way to redefine the identity of provinces within reform practices. As a result of this, a large number of spatial imaginations about provinces were produced by different governance bodies, media institutions, and interest groups during the reform process. Yet, as the study **II** shows, this approach did not give the expected effect to reform policies. Two important reasons can be pointed out for that failure. Firstly, state authorities did not pay attention to the need to coordinate and focus on the process of imagination. In particular, they did not determine firmly enough that the status of provinces within the Estonian administrative system should be revised primarily for socio-economic reasons. Because of this, the reform participants often tended to imagine the future of provinces on the basis of self-

interests using historical, political, as well as cultural arguments for justifying their claims. Such imaginations had provided little to policies that aimed at optimising Estonian spatial administration and regional development. Secondly, the competitive and ineffective imagination of provinces was not only triggered by poor coordination and lack of strategic focus – the state authorities also did not consider that spatial organisation and communication of reform practices (incl. taking county governments as key engines of the reform process) affect the outcome of reformist imagination. As a result, the imaginations that supported consolidation of the power of provinces in the administration system and ignored the need for revising the status of ineffective provinces were unintentionally favoured by state authorities.

The third paper (study **III**) sheds light on how Estonian political authorities and public media have reproduced the spatial imaginations about 'Baltic collectivism' as part of the national territoriality policies and practical constitution of an EU-eligible nation-state. Baltic unity is generally regarded as a geopolitical concept referring to the common political fate of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian nations after the World War II, and their shared wish to regain independence from the Soviet Union and integrate with Western political and economic structures. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, Baltic solidarity has been widely promoted by the political elite and public media, as well as positively perceived among societies in all three Baltic countries. The study **III** shows that the popular concept of the Baltic unity has also been actualised by Estonian political authorities within intra-Baltic affairs, including border negotiations and debates regarding an agricultural free trade agreement. We can say that there is nothing wrong with linking positively perceived (spatial) concepts to foreign policy debates. Normally, the imaginations that are drawn from shared (spatial) concepts are helpful for prioritising common foreign policy goals, creating a general positive atmosphere for negotiations and reaching quicker and optimal compromises. However, the use of positively perceived spatial concepts in foreign policy debates that are concerned with sharing of territorial power can hardly be effective if they are applied to *justifying* the claims of one or the other party. More precisely, the promoted political solidarity cannot serve the ways in which to do things (e.g. where exactly the borderline should be drawn between countries) but why to do things (e.g. the need for constitution of an EU eligible nation-state); otherwise, it slows down the process of negotiations and postpones the end of the dispute because the manipulation of spatially constituted political solidarity discredits the trust between national governments. As the study **III** demonstrates, this was also the case with territorial and trade disputes between Estonia and Latvia. Estonian political authorities often tended to use the principles of the Baltic unity for justifying the ways in which things must be done. In reality, this strategically short-sighted way of using geography for foreign policy argumentation did not provide any positive results for the Estonian side. In the end, some border-

related disputes between Estonia and Latvia lost relevance only when both countries joined the EU and Schengen agreement.

The fourth paper (study **IV**) focuses on how local partnership institutions of the cities of Haparanda (Sweden) and Tornio (Finland) have been promoting spatial imaginations over cross-border cooperation at the international level and how such formation of international identity has contributed to the key objectives of cross-border cooperation. Region-building across national borders is considered one of the key pillars of the EU cohesion policy. The process of cross-border regionalisation is seen as important for tackling uneven socio-economic developments and peripherisation in the EU. The local initiatives to form effective policies of cooperation and partnership relations, as well as local capability to attract capital flows (e.g. EU financial aid, investments and skilled workforce), play a critical role in successful regionalisation. Therefore, in order to build up competitive regions across borders, the local partnership institutions also need to address identity policies that should aim at marketing the cooperation area for the international community. Such identity policies normally need extensive use of raw geographical knowledge that becomes systematised and conceptualised into spatial imaginations [about cross-border cooperation] and communicated to other sites and levels of governance. Ideally, the created spatial imaginations should reflect, for example, why the given cooperation area is an economically rational choice for public and private investments, a valuable partner for regional cooperation and a qualitative living environment for the potential workforce, as well as an interesting place for tourists to visit. In order to support the objectives of cross-border cooperation effectively, the production of spatial imaginations could be carefully reasoned, coordinated between the relevant institutions, and integrated within strategies of identity policy.

Indeed, the study **IV** shows that the need for promotion of cross-border cooperation at the international level is generally well recognised by the local partnership bodies. The particular stories about cooperation are constructed, popularised, and communicated by identity promoters. However, it can be argued that the promotion of such identity narratives often remains ineffective because there is no strategic vision elaborated and agreed on between the responsible institutions regarding how to imagine the cooperation for the international community so that it could support the policies of cross-border cooperation as effectively as possible. The spatial imaginations created and incorporated into the identity narratives by local partnership institutions tend to be controversial and disintegrated from cooperation policy objectives. As a result, insufficiently coordinated and executed identity-building hinders the process of regionalisation of cross-border cooperation and provides little assistance for implementation of the EU cohesion policy as well.

The four case studies presented in this thesis highlight that the use of geographical knowledge for political purposes can be productive when the policy makers take the link between policies and spatiality seriously. If we

agree that social reality is indeed spatially constituted, then the policies intended to improve and change social reality can be enriched with geographical knowledge, or, more specifically, they could be equipped with what we can call ideal spatial imaginations, which make it possible for policy makers to be effectively involved in the reproduction of a spatially organised social reality. The case studies also point out that the use of geography for political purposes can be productive when policy makers do it strategically and in a coordinated manner. However, the case studies show that with regard to policy-making at any scale of governance, the use of geography could not only be institutionally organised and legitimised, but also strategically reasoned considering the interdependence between particular spatially executed policies. This means that besides the definition of institutional responsibility and ways of coordination and consultancy, there is also a need for the ideological coherency and limitation of the content of imagination. Ideological coherency makes sense in helping to maintain the consistency and synergy of interrelated (spatial) policies. Limitation of the content of imagination and regulation of *access* to the process of imagination are necessary for guaranteeing that imaginations correspond to policy tasks, especially if there is a large number of actors involved in the production process (e.g. non-governmental organisations, private enterprises, political parties). Meanwhile, the strategies of imagination could also consider the aspect of *reception* or the expected contexts in which particular (spatial) policies are executed. Just as the outcomes of any policies more or less depend on one's capability for compromise with those who have intersected interests, so is the case with the geography that is intended to make these policies productive. Therefore, with respect to Habermasian communicative rationality (Richardson 1996), the political authorities who use geographical knowledge as a part of policy-making could take into account the potential conflict of imagination and its influence on policy outcomes as well.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we are going to discuss, on the basis of study results, why this thesis matters. So far, this introductory chapter has sought to illustrate, among other things, that the relationships between power and geography are both constitutive and practical. The recognition of the ontological bond between geography and power means that there cannot be such a thing as geography-free policy-making. Since all policies are set up by human subjects, they reproduce spatially constituted social reality, even if it is unintended (Lefebvre 1991; Thrift 1983; Zieleniec 2007). However, the ontological link between power and geography does not speak much about the efficiency of reproduction that this thesis studies (study **I**–**IV**). The efficiency normally requires more or less rationalised intervention. This means that geographical knowledge is systematised, reasoned, and conceptualised considering certain (political) purposes. In this thesis this process is defined as spatial imagination (study **I**). The practices through which imagined geography [spatial imaginations] can enhance the efficiency of targeted actions such as policies include not only (re-)organising of a geographical knowledge according to some rational grounds and/or ideological perspectives, but also planning and coordination as well as considering the interdependence between policies. In all of this, the challenge that policy makers face regarding the use of geography is definitely complex, and this is where the collaboration with geographers could be welcomed both in forms of policy-relevant research and the participation of well-trained specialists (Harvey 1974; Massey 2001).

David Harvey (1984, 7) has once declared that 'Geography is too important to be left to geographers. But it is far too important to be left to generals, politicians, and corporate chiefs.' Still, it is often lamented by academic geographers that expected collaboration between geographers and policy makers has been woefully limited (Murphy 2006; Peck 1999; Ward 2007). In particular, it has been claimed that geographers tend to provide policy studies that 'generate knowledge about the policy process but are of limited relevance in terms of contributing knowledge to the policy process' (Rydin 2005, 74–75). It seems that the spatial analyses regarding policy processes often tend to be rejected by power centres as types of stories that could have some value as interesting intellectual exercises but lack the coherence with prearranged models of policy performance. There are different reasons why policy makers tend to look at spatial knowledge as other than needful for feeding technologies of spatial governance with persistent suspicion. Firstly, spatial analyses offer knowledge and expertise that often push for radical change in the ways in which policies should reproduce a social reality. These claims are not necessary ideological or structural, as is the case with, for example, the works of radical Marxist geography, but rather categorical. The mantra that space matters in policy-making can be true but it cannot be absolute. Geographical research regarding policy processes is just one possible way to reveal shortcomings in

policy-making, but there are always others, and more commonplace ways also in the market. The second problem is related to poor communication. Some scholars have complained that spatial analyses of policy processes have a tendency to be theoretically saturated and ambiguous with regard to methods and conceptual apparatus (Martin 2001). The lack of theoretical transparency and misunderstandings regarding basic concepts can make it difficult to convince an audience that considering the spatial knowledge could add some extra quality for policy formation. As a result, spatial factors are often seen by policy makers as secondary compared to, for example, economic or ethno-cultural ones, if enhancing of the efficiency of policy-making is at stake (Peck 1999). The third and no less important problem is translation. The majority of geographical analyses which have the ambition to provide practical knowledge for policy processes tend to be highly context-sensitive. This is so because spatial factors are never universal in the sense that they '(re-)act' differently in different places. As such, the knowledge that the studies provide is not always easily adaptable and applicable for other political formations, even if the policy performance takes place on a comparable scale of governance (cf. Banks & MacKian 2000; Martin 2001).

In addition to the specific character of geographical knowledge and occasionally confusing approaches used for policy analyses, the deficit of policy-relevant geographical research is due to academic standards, which makes it unattractive for geographers to *politicise* their research and establish an open dialogue with policy makers (Dorling & Shaw 2002; Murphy 2006; cf. Beaumont et al. 2005). Contrary to the prevalent attitude, however, some authors have suggested that the proper way to enhance the attractiveness of geography studies regarding policy formation is to integrate them with policy-relevant agendas. For example, Jakob & Marques (2014, 28) have emphasised that 'research without a political project (why) and applicable ideas (how) will continue to trail behind in its practical relevance'. This plea is partly based on the view that social scientists, including human geographers, cannot just distance themselves from policy cycles and policy formation by avoiding ideologically sensitive themes and ignoring the dialogue with society (Woods & Gardner 2011). Hanging on the belief that academic immunity guarantees the reliability of social research is illusory because social research, even if it is conducted at a very abstract level, can never be politically neutral. In the end, whether the knowledge can be declared politically innocent depends on the contexts in which it is used – for whom, when and what the produced knowledge applies. Furthermore, the changing power relationships between academic and governance spheres occurring during the last decades in many Western countries undermine the myth of academic neutrality even more clearly. As a result, scholars are witnessing academic and social pressure to do contract works for governance institutions and participate in shaping policy through various expert groups and consulting. It is also worth mentioning that we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that much of academic studies is still

directly financed from governmental funds and, as such, is monitored and evaluated by politically responsible officials and experts. Considering this, some authors have suggested that geographers could take more responsibility and control over their research outcomes. This means, for example, that geographical studies about policy processes could be politically positioned and targeted by framing them with 'discussion of the political and practical goals that the researchers are trying to achieve' (Jakob & Marques 2014, 26).

Strategic engagement with policy-shaping processes definitely has its strengths and weaknesses. It seems that geographical studies attached to political declaration can be a real deal for improving non-governmental policies that seek to change policy courses chosen by power centres, such as state governments or headquarters of international organisations. However, we should remain more sceptical regarding political marketing of geography research *for* the political elite. There is no way to ignore that studies with a political agenda are obliged to follow some dominant policy lines, otherwise they tend to be just overlooked by policy makers. Even if such politically informed research is taken in the policy-shaping process, there is no guarantee against its intentional mistreatment or what Beaumont et al. (2005) have disappointedly described as 'a serious reduction in the political relevance of [our] work by the way the research was reoriented, interpreted and even discredited by practitioners and policy makers at various levels of government' (see also Banks & MacKian 2000). Considering this, we can indicate that the biggest concern regarding the production of politically enlightened research is not the fear of being academically discredited by 'doing dirty business' (Peck 1999, 133) or a pressure to 'vulgarise' academic research for practical reasons, but rather the alarming trend that the activity and capability to promote one's own academic works as well as making and holding effective contacts with power representatives become more important than the quality of knowledge produced (see also Castree 1999).

Despite the warnings of sceptical voices, recent debates in human geography have witnessed a growing belief that the creation of closer links with policy makers, politicising of the research projects, as well as favouring of more theoretically transparent and practically oriented research, are all more or less inevitable ways for enhancing the policy relevancy of geography research and making geography more visible in the process of social change. The proponents of the above-mentioned suggestions tend to be certain that all one needs is to make oneself more attractive in order to get spotted, heeded, and taken into the policy-shaping process (Woods & Gardner 2011). However, all of these recommendations are based on the idea that we, as geographers, should take our geography [in the form of knowledge and body] and bring it to them [policy makers] in order for them to perform better. As such, the critical question is how to do it without terms of rivalry, because policy makers normally do not cry for a lack of geography. They have it anyway and use it also without us. Keeping this in mind, it seems that our success in being taken in cannot be

grounded on our mastery of politicising geography [in the form of knowledge and body] but rather on our mastery of speaking out on how to use geography more productively in relation to policy formation. This claim seems to be even more justified if we acknowledge that geographical research, even if it is well politicised, has no real potential to *direct* policy-making processes that are controlled by power centres (Pain 2006). Perhaps the only area of expertise where our expectations regarding this could be met is in spatial planning.

There are definitely a myriad ways of speaking out about the productive use of geography regarding policy formation. Banks & MacKian (2000, 253), for example, have pointed out 'geographers' ability to source, synthesize and extrapolate from "local knowledge" as one key reason why they have become more centrally integrated into policy formulation'. In more systematic terms, geographers'ability to 'use a magnifying glass' is nothing less than building up and re-negotiating, on the basis of accumulating evidence, the spatial logic of policy-making and drawing from that logic, considering also a variety of contextual circumstances, the knowledge that informs on the mechanisms of productivity between geography and policy formation. However, it could be added that our contribution could be drawn from any scale, network, and site of performance, and through any available research methods, until we avoid taking directions from some ideological lines or even particular policy courses for that. We should just keep in mind that our task is not to do policy but geography. Therefore, it cannot be our business to do geography for policy makers [e.g. to fill maps with ideology] but to indicate what policy makers could consider in using geography more productively [e.g. how it affects policy outcomes]. From a critical point of view, our study aims still tend to be too often restricted with ambition to reveal or deconstruct how policy makers have used geography to dominate and reproduce uneven socio-spatial relations. This might be a valuable contribution to the accumulation of knowledge and theory building but has little chance to enhance the policy relevancy of our work. Apparently, policy makers know very well that they are not perfect, and they usually do not prefer to hear how 'badly' they perform but rather how they could improve. If this is the case, paradoxically, more attention should be paid to the sources of failure in their performance [to reproduce spatial injustice].

In this thesis, considering the calls for policy relevancy, the three above-mentioned suggestions are followed as well. Firstly, the systematic level of policy formation is studied. This means that knowledge we provide could be equally useful for all policy makers no matter what ideologies or policy courses they follow. Secondly, the contribution to the reproduction of spatial logic in policy-making and to the public debate more broadly is made on the basis of comparative evidence by highlighting four individual forms of spatial imaginations (integrative, reformist, manipulative, and constitutive imaginations) and describing their characteristics both regarding their differences from each other and their usefulness within particular policy areas. Thirdly, in order to move one step forward from the phase of knowledge

accumulation and provide 'knowledge to the policy process' (Rydin 2005, 75), the study results are drawn from the cases in which spatial imagination has not been successful. Cases where the failure of imagination occurs are valuable sources of practical knowledge because of their instructiveness: namely, they indicate the degree of efficiency between policy-making and geography. In the context of the current thesis, however, efficiency is not as much a degree of rationality as one might guess but rather the ability for holistic and socio-spatially balanced policy-making. It is related to the ideal integration and coherency between: a) spatial imaginations that are attached to particular policy strategies (e.g. regional policy); and b) spatial imaginations that are attached to related policy strategies (e.g. regional policy and education policy). Seeking the ideal integrity of spatial imaginations is an important strategic aspect that policy makers could bear in mind when they use geography in order to improve their policy outcomes. Stead & Meijers (2009, 321) have argued that 'policy integration concerns the management of cross-cutting issues in policy making that transcend the boundaries of established policy fields, and that do not correspond to the institutional responsibilities of individual departments'. As previously mentioned, the majority of goal-oriented performances that we call policies are spatially informed and executed. Thus, the management of cross-cutting issues that transcend the boundaries of established policy fields cannot ignore the need for planning, cooperation, and coordination of the use of geography as well.

Finally, one may argue that we should not be prisoners of our own experience. If it is really so, have we any chance to receive a call if our contribution to policy-making pretends to be nothing more than theoretically well-reasoned and practically watertight knowledge? Are there any ways at all to be contacted without being forced to search for political patronage or make our knowledge otherwise politically attractive? It seems that our limited ability to step up to the plate is related to a lack of adequate communication strategies in the sense of knowledge integration. This means that we tend to produce knowledge about policy processes that might be adequate and practically useful, but which still remains largely isolated from [our] knowledge *to* policy processes or expertise which have already received the green light. Thus, considering the interdependence between spatial policies and calls for policy integration in general, we could link our knowledge better to popular policy domains like spatial planning and territorial cohesion. If we prefer to do geography in a place of policy then it might be just that next challenge we could take on.

CONCLUSIONS

Critical human geography teaches us that geography and power are integral parts of a social reality. Geography plays an important role in consolidation, distribution, and implementation of power. Therefore, it is also instrumental in shaping economic and social processes, cultural relations, and political affairs at any site of performance. To a great extent, if geographers speak about relationships between geography and power, they refer to the embeddedness of geography [both as a *spatiality* and *knowledge*] within the policy-making processes. Broadly speaking, what concerns geography as spatiality in this sense then is mostly how society as 'a spatial environment' shapes, transforms and transfers policies. As for geographical knowledge, it is mostly about how society as 'a spatial environment' becomes shaped and transformed by policies. Geographical knowledge has been used within the policy-making processes in different forms as it has been oriented to serve different policy goals. One of the most common ways in which the formation and implementation of policies has been improved by the instrumentality of geography is the organisation and conceptualisation of geographical knowledge into politically integrative and ideologically coherent spatial imaginations (Livingstone 1992; see also Schön 2005; Stead & Meijers 2009; cf. Daniels 2011).

In this thesis, a close look is taken at the process of spatial imagination, or, more literally, how policy makers use geographical knowledge in order to improve policy outcomes, and why it often turns out to be unsuccessful. In particular, I am interested in the quality of integrative efficiency of the spatial imagination in the formation of spatial policies. Integrative efficiency means the conceptual, functional and ideological correspondence of spatial imaginations both within individual and interrelated policies. Such strategic efficiency, it is expected, should ideally lead to better reproduction of social realities and reduction of spatial injustice. Therefore, I focus on how spatial imaginations are formed within different reform policy contexts and how they correspond to the policy objectives they are intended to support and mediate. The evidence is drawn from the conditions of policy change at local and national scales. Both policy reforms (e.g. administrative-territorial reform, education reform) and shaping of new policy prospects (e.g. cross-border region-building, border negotiations) provide interesting insights concerning the shortcomings of the use of geography in policy-making and the formation of spatial imaginations more specifically. Furthermore, political and economic processes of re-scaling (e.g. democratisation, Europeanisation, regionalisation), that transitional political formations such as Estonia has experienced often give rise to unexpected changes in policy shaping that challenge policy integration and holistic policy-making.

This thesis consists of four case studies that draw from different reform contexts. The first article (study **I**) studies the setbacks regarding spatial imagination in the context of Estonian education reform. The transformation from Soviet totalitarianism to democracy resulted in the introduction of new legislation and reformation of governance systems, shifting to the free market

economy and replacing communist ideology. Especially in the case of a multicultural society like Estonia, the drastic reorganisation of the society's basic structures is also coupled with needs for territorial socialisation and integration of the country's population. Thus, to obtain support for reform policies and guarantee stability in the transitional society there is an urgency to form and promote a shared spatio-temporal consciousness in the society. The national education system is among the key mechanisms through which state-scale identities are promoted and ethno-cultural integration sought. The production of geography and history textbooks and teaching of history and geography play important roles in how these aims are achieved. Through history and geography textbooks a particular spatio-temporal 'truth regime' becomes legalised, institutionalised, and imposed. This study demonstrates that the imagination of Estonian time-space through the production of geography and history textbooks was indeed well in accordance with the ideological views expected by state authorities. This expected restitutionalist ideology mainly rested on three pillars: to oppose the Soviet legacy, to stress Estonia's belonging to Europe, and to equate the ethno-territorial identity of Estonians with the Estonian national identity. However, the process of knowledge production and the ideological content of imagination in textbooks were never strictly controlled and oriented by state authorities. The ideological coherence of imagination was rather a result of weakly regulated institutional procedures and specific market factors. It is concluded that although the imagination of Estonian time-space through schoolbooks contributed well to the national identity policies, it failed to support the ethno-cultural integration of Estonian society.

The second article (study **II**) illuminates the setbacks regarding spatial imagination in the context of reforming the administrative system. Administrative reform aims at optimising the spatial organisation of people, resources, structures, and relations in state territory. Changes in the system are often imagined and practised through reorganisation of spatial division. If the reform is initiated for socio-economic reasons, usually redistribution of power between spatial units takes place (e.g. regions, provinces, municipalities, and districts). Some of them will lose power or disappear, just as some of them will gain more power. This means that they become produced (e.g. establishment of new regions), re-produced, or dissolved by governmental practices and (spatial) imaginations. At the beginning of the 1990s, the transition from the Soviet administrative system to the Estonian administrative system was carried out as a part of general re-ideologisation and democratisation of governmental structures and laws. Because of the urgency to re-establish national independence, the reform process was generally conventional and embraced mainly symbolic and legal changes in the system. This also meant that what was imagined regarding Estonian provinces by power authorities was also put into practice. However, in the post-Soviet transition period, ineffective administrative division and the vague status of provinces were often regarded as accelerators of peripherisation of rural areas and obstacles to effective regional development. This led to the

initiation of a new reform (later postponed), which also aimed at diminishing the power of the provinces in the administrative system. This study demonstrates that the plan to cut the power of provinces produced contradictory outcomes. The imagination of provinces contributed positively to this task, whereas practical reform activities tended rather to cement the power of the provinces. However, one of the key reasons why authorities failed to reduce the importance of the provinces in the administrative system was not the practical re-production of provinces but the conflicting and self-centric imagination of provincial reality by participants in the reform process.

By drawing evidence from the process of redefining the Estonian-Latvian border in 1992–2004, the third article (study **III**) uncovers the setbacks regarding spatial imagination in the foreign and territoriality policies. The study argues that Estonian state authorities and national media used spatial imaginations about Baltic solidarity as a part of the argumentative apparatus for justifying national interests and securing national foreign policy goals during the sensitive process of redefining the Estonian-Latvian border. These claims were based simultaneously on wishes to incorporate the maximum size of territories into the Republic of Estonia, to get as much control as possible over regulation of the border regime between Estonia and Latvia, and to achieve accession into Western political, economic, and military organisations as quickly as possible. In order to justify the border-related national interests, the spatial imagination about Baltic solidarity was anchored with arguments for shared urgency to complete common foreign policy goals – to withdraw from Russia's sphere of influence and integrate with Western structures. Because Estonian authorities were well aware of Latvia's different pace regarding Western integration, they deliberately used imagination about Baltic solidarity as a manipulative tool to bolster the logic of national claims. However, this strategy did not provide much support for better management of border-related problems. Moreover, the one-sided exploitation of sensitive spatial imaginations had in sum negative effects on bilateral relations by amplifying rivalry and incredulity between the neighbouring countries.

The fourth article (study **IV**) portrays the setbacks of spatial imagination in the context of the EU cross-border cooperation. It is often recognised in the EU cohesion strategies, regional policy goals, and spatial planning visions that the promotion of spatial identities across national borders is a valuable tool for effective development of the EU border areas. In the case of the EU cross-border cooperation, there is a number of different ways in which and where such spatial identities are produced. For example, this geographically informed process is not only restricted to formation of common spatial consciousness about cooperation at the local level as one might guess, but it can also take place simultaneously on multiple scales and places (e.g. state authorities, national media, and private tourism companies can re-produce imaginations about the given cooperation area through various practices). Furthermore, for the EU peripheral areas there is an elevated need to be recognised and attractive to

international governance bodies, public and private organisations, and various partnership networks. In order to achieve this, local cooperation authorities are increasingly interested in showing off who they are, where they are, and with whom they are, as well as what they are doing, what they are providing, and why they should be favoured. Therefore, the formation of spatial identities for cross-border cooperation at the international level is becoming an important part of any region-building process, helping to magnetise 'outside resources' like human and financial capital, facilitate knowledge and information exchange, and establish emerging regional association within the EU competitive urban and regional system. However, this study reveals that the local cooperation authorities tend to pay little attention to the need to do it strategically and in a coordinated manner. As a result, the promotion of spatial imaginations about cooperation is poorly integrated with the general objectives of cooperation and their efficiency in contributing to the formation of viable and competitive cross-border regions in the EU peripheral area is limited.

All four case studies show that concurrent with the need for policy integration in general, there is also a need for conceptual, functional and ideological integration between spatial imaginations that are produced for improving these policies. Conceptual integration reflects the shared understanding of what kind of geographical knowledge should be included into the framework of individual policy. To achieve this, it is important to establish effective cooperation between the responsible institutions, as well as build up the capability for consensus over imagination. Functional and ideological integration, on the other hand, reflect how geographical knowledge could be presented within all related policy frameworks. Functional and ideological integration is generally not that large of a problem within the individual policy field because communication between policy makers and officials tends to be closer. It is much more difficult to achieve this between responsible institutions that serve different but interdependent policy areas (e.g. defence policy and environmental policy). Consequently, we can argue that geographical knowledge, if not strategically planned and coordinated between responsible institutions, can negatively affect policy outcomes and reduce the efficiency of governance. The efficiency of governance, as we understand it, is not just the ability to apply power over particular territories, people, structures, and resources, but it is primarily the ability to do it with limited bias.

These studies also highlight that spatial imaginations designed to support policy goals have multiple forms. In general, the forms of imagination are task-oriented, and, as such, they are determined by policy goals. However, they are not exclusive in terms of policy goals, but each individual form of imagination can be applied for multiple policy goals and policy areas. In this thesis, for example, four forms of spatial imaginations are distinguished and analysed: integrative, reformist, manipulative, and constitutive spatial imagination. Each of them has some original characteristics of formation that could be considered also in stages of planning, coordination, and formation of conceptual integrity.

However, what makes the knowledge about their original characteristics especially valuable is the need to consider the structural factors of imagination. This claim is mostly related to three aspects. Firstly, there is a different degree of *access* to the process of imagination which participants can enjoy (e.g. non-governmental organisations, private enterprises, media institutions, and authors of textbooks). Secondly, there is a different degree of *actuality* or the timespan in which imaginations really count (e.g. period of negotiations, reform period, and region-building period). And thirdly, there is a different degree of *reception* or audience that has different expectations regarding the imaginations (e.g. foreign governments, regional partners, tourists, investors, the country's population, and school children).

Finally, it has been claimed that academic knowledge about spatial processes and phenomena often tend to have practically limited relevance in terms of policy shaping. There are a number of ways to link geographical knowledge to policy processes. For example, it can be done by improving our communication with policy makers, binding the studies with particular political agendas or instructions, as well as ideologising them on the basis of dominant policy courses. This thesis, quite differently, suggests that if geographical studies aim at contributing to policy processes, they could be better conceptualised with and linked to the geographical expertise which is already more or less effectively normalised and bureaucraticised within policy cycles. Apparently, we can find such expertise in the strategies of spatial planning and supra-national cohesion policies. These geographically informed areas of regulation increasingly occupy a prominent place in policy agendas and strategies. They have an impact on policy processes and practices that any other area of geographical expertise can only still dream of.

The integration of our knowledge with the more established fields of geographical expertise in policy-making is definitely an interesting challenge, but we should not forget that there is still much work to do with spatial imaginations as well. Obviously, the question of how policy makers could communicate geographical expertise between the responsible institutions could primarily be a matter of interest in governance studies. For geographers, however, the additional forms of spatial imagination in policy making and impact of structural factors to such forms of spatial imagination (access, actuality and reception) are interesting study areas. A promising study perspective seems also to be the relationships between spatial imagination and distant policies (see also study **IV**). For that, comparative studies that could provide evidence from different levels of policy performance (e.g. the EU, large-scale regions such as the Baltic Sea region, urban networks) and reform areas (e.g. post-communist countries in Central Europe, the EU external border areas) are welcome. Having said that, we can now take a closer look at that 'local knowledge' (Banks & MacKian 2000) from which this introductory chapter is sourced, synthesised, and theoreticised, as well as the contribution to the debate on policy formation made.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Geograafiast ja võimust: poliitikate kooskõla, ruumiline teadmine ja sidusate visioonide loomine

Kriitilise inimgeograafia üheks keskseks huviks on olnud võimu ja geograafia seoste uurimine. Märkimisväärne osa antud valdkonnale pühendatud töödest püüavad näidata, kuidas võimu diskursused ja praktikad kujundavad ühiskonna sotsiaal-majanduslikku kihistumist, repressiivseid sotsiaalseid suhteid ning ruumilist ebaõiglust. Valdavalt lähtuvad need uurimused kahest teineteisega seotud eeldusest. Esiteks ollakse seisukohal, et võimu peamiseks eesmärgiks on iseenda taastootmise ja järjepidevuse tagamine teatud kindlate ideoloogiliste programmide elluviimise kaudu. Nii sotsiaalne reaalsus kui ka ruumilised suhted on seetõttu eelkõige ideoloogilised tooted. Teiseks ollakse veendunud, et võim kasutab nii geograafilist ruumi kui ka geograafilist teadmist strateegiliselt efektiivselt ehk võim on ruumilise ebaõigluse põhistamisel alati pigem edukas. Nendest eeldustest tulenevalt nähakse tasakaalutu sotsiaalse reaalsuse kujundamist võimu olemusliku tunnusena ja taotlusliku praktikana. Antud uuringute pakutav kriitiline teadmine tõstab esile vajadust toetada valitsemise ideoloogiate ümberkujundamist ning muutusi (ruumilise) valitsemise korraldamises, rõhutades et mida hajutatum, delegeeritum ja ligipääsetavam on võim ning sotsiaalselt kõnetavam ideoloogia, mida võim hoiab, seda suurem on tema võime luua positiivseid muutusi sotsiaalses reaalsuses ning ruumilistes suhetes.

Erinevalt peavoolu ideoloogia-kriitilisest käsitlusest pakub käesolev väitekiri võimu ja geograafia uuringutesse konstruktiivsema rõhuasetusega kaastööd. Väitekiri lähtub arusaamast, mille järgi demokraatlikus poliitilises süsteemis ei ole *a priori* halvemaid ega paremaid ideoloogiaid, vaid on halvemini ja paremini vahendatud või rakendatud ideoloogiad. Ruumiline ebaõiglus, mille kujundamise ja kahandamise viisid on kriitilise inimgeograafia keskne huviküsimus, ei tulene niivõrd võimu ideoloogilistest valikutest, kui ebaõigluse kahandamise puudulikust teostusest ehk võimu ebatõhusatest poliitikatest. Siinne uurimustöö ei keskendu seega võimu ideoloogilisuse kriitikale, vaid püüab selgitada ruumiliste poliitikate kujundamise süsteemseid ja institutsionaalseid puudusi ning vastuolusid. Uurimuse üldine eesmärk on pakkuda teadmist ruumiliste poliitikate parendamiseks, heas veendumuses, et pakutav teadmine inspireerib kaasa mõtlema ka geograafia rolli üle sotsiaalse reaalsuse kujundamisel laiemalt.

Väitekirja põhihuvi on selgitada, kuidas võimuinstitutsioonid kasutavad geograafilist teadmist erinevate ruumiliste poliitikate kujundamisel ning miks see sageli soovitud tulemusi ei anna. Uurimustöö argumendid tuginevad seisukohal, mille järgi võimu mis tahes poliitikate tõhusus on sõltuvuses nende funktsionaalsest, kontseptuaalsest ja ideoloogilisest sidususest. Ruumiliste poliitikate puhul, mille eesmärgiks on esile kutsuda ruumilisi muutusi sotsiaalses reaalsuses, laienevad need näitajad ka geograafilisele teadmisele. Inimgeograafia kirjanduses on olnud valdav seisukoht, mille järgi poliitikate

kujundamisel on geograafilise teadmise ülesanne teavitada poliitikaid sotsiaalse reaalsuse ruumilistest tingimustest ning rakendatavate poliitikate mõjudest sellele. Kriitilise inimgeograafia vaatepunktist ei ole geograafiline teadmine aga pelgalt passiivne, ratsionaalselt organiseeritud ruumiliste andmete allikas või vahend ruumiliselt põhistatud sotsiaalse elumaailma tõlkimiseks ja tõlgendamiseks. Geograafiline teadmine mängib olulist rolli mitte ainult poliitikate informeerimisel, vaid ka nende kujundamisel ja vahendamisel sotsiaalsesse elumaailma. Seetõttu on poliitikate tõhusus ruumilise ebaõigluse kahandamisel sõltuv ka kasutatava geograafilise teadmise funktsionaalsest, kontseptuaalsest ja ideoloogilisest sidususest nii üksikutel poliitika väljadel (nt. hariduspoliitika) kui ka seotud poliitika valdkondade (nt. hariduspoliitika ja integratsioonipoliitika) vahel. Sidususe järgimise olulisus tuletub asjaolust, et kasutatav geograafiline teadmine ei esine poliitikates reeglina juhuslike ruumiliste faktidena, vaid see on vähemal või rohkemal määral mõtestatud poliitilisi eesmärke toetavatesse visioonidesse, mida antud väitekirjas nimetatakse ruumilisteks imaginatsioonideks. Sellised imaginatsioonid on ideed, mis tuginevad ruumilistel kategooriatel (nt. koht, regioon, skaala, võrgustik, lähedus-kaugus, meienemad, naabrus, kaugus, funktsioon, piir jne) ja valitsemise ideoloogiatel, mis annavad neile tähenduse. Ruumilised imaginatsioonid on poliitikates esitletud peamiselt läbi (ruumilise) valitsemise tehnoloogiate nagu ruumiline statistika, kartograafia, visuaalsed imidžid ning kirjutatud või kõneldud tekstid. Ruumilise imagineerimise vorme on palju ning nende valik sõltub enamasti poliitika eesmärkidest, mida nad on ette nähtud toetama.

Siinne väitekiri koosneb neljast teemakohasest uurimusest. Iga artikkel keskendub ühele konkreetsele ruumilise imaginatsiooni vormile. Esimeses artiklis on vaatluse all *integratiivsete* imaginatsioonide loomine Eesti hariduspoliitika kontekstis. Uuritakse Eesti ruumilise identiteedi konstrueerimist ajaloo- ja geograafiaõpikute tootmise protsessis ning selle vastavust riigi integratsioonipoliitika eesmärkidega. Teises artiklis jälgitakse *reformistlike* imaginatsioonide kujundamist Eesti regionaalpoliitikas. Põhitähelepanu on pööratud Eesti maakondade imagineerimisele teostamata jäänud haldus-territoriaalses reformis aastatel 1997–2003. Kolmandas artiklis heidetakse valgust *manipulatiivsete* imaginatsioonide rakendamisele Eesti-Läti piiriläbirääkimistel. Selgitatakse, kuidas Eesti meedia ja võimuinstitutsioonid kasutasid Balti solidaarsuse argumenti kolmes Eesti-Läti riigipiiri taastamise ja piirirežiimi kujundamise konfliktis (Eesti-Läti merepiiri määratlemine Liivi lahes, arutelud Valka linna Savienība tänava liitmise üle Valga linnaga ning erimeelsused Balti riikide põllumajandustoodete vabakaubanduslepingu tõlgendamise osas Eesti ja Läti vahel). Viimases artiklis on huvi all *konstitutiivsete* imaginatsioonide loomine Haparanda (Rootsi) ja Tornio (Soome) linnade piiriülese koostöö raamistikus. Antud töös analüüsitakse piirilinnade rahvusvahelise identiteedi kujundamist ning selle vastavust linnade piiriülese koostöö põhieesmärkidega.

Väitekirja uurimused kinnitavad, et geograafilise teadmise kasutamine ruumiliste poliitikate kujundamisel on tihti vastuoluline, kuna võimuinstitut-

sioonid ei pööra piisavalt tähelepanu strateegilise lähenemise ning institutsionaalse koordineerimise vajalikkusele. Poliitilised agendad ja strateegiad sisaldavad harva viiteid või juhiseid geograafilise teadmise kontseptuaalse ja ideoloogilise sidususe järgimise kohta. Vastutavatel institutsioonidel puudub seetõttu tihti motivatsioon piiratud ajalises raamistikus kokku leppida, milline geograafiline teadmine peaks olema sisestatud individuaalse poliitika raamistikku, et see toetaks ka seotud poliitikate eesmärke. Samuti ei pööra ruumiliste poliitikate kujundamise eest vastutavad institutsioonid piisavalt tähelepanu sellele, millise ideoloogilise käsitluse kohaselt tuleks geograafilist teadmist mõtestada. Ideoloogilise kooskõla puudumine teineteisest sõltuvate ruumiliste poliitikate vahel (nt. kaitsepoliitika, välispoliitika, majanduspoliitika) tuleneb sageli nõrgast strateegilisest koordineerimisest ning ka vastutavate võimuinstitutsioonide ideoloogilisest rivaalsusest. Geograafilise teadmise mõtestamise ideoloogilise ühtsuse tagamine ei ole siiski üldjuhul probleemiks ühe poliitika valdkonna eest vastutavate institutsioonide vahel, kuna institutsioonid ning vastutavad isikud on teineteise tegevusest paremini informeeritud ning valdkonnad on sageli juhitud ning kontrollitud sarnast ideoloogiat kandvate poliitiliste jõudude poolt.

Erinevate ruumiliste imaginatsioonivormide analüüsimine näitab, et geograafilise teadmise mõtestatus ja sidusus ruumilistes poliitikates on olulisel määral mõjutatud reformiprotsesside eripärast, poliitikate eesmärgist ning geograafilise teadmise tähtsustamisest poliitikate kujundamisel üldiselt. Lisaks toovad juhtumuuringud välja kolm olulist tegurit, mille mõju geograafilise mõtestamise tõhususele poliitikate kujundamisel kaldutakse sageli alahindama. Esiteks on tihti nõrgalt määratletud *ligipääsu tingimused* ehk kes, kuidas ja millises ulatuses kaasatakse imagineerimise protsessi. Tavapäraselt on ruumiliste poliitikate kujundamine piiratud võimustruktuuride ning nende poolt välja valitud kindlate partnerite koostööga. Kolmandate osapoolte kaasamine on sageli iseloomulik niisuguste poliitikatele puhul, mille eesmärgiks on kas drastilised muutused materiaalses keskkonnas ja/ või mis võivad olla otseselt negatiivse mõjuga sotsiaalsete gruppide või institutsioonide suhtes, kelle toetusest või lojaalsusest on võimustruktuurid eluliselt huvitatud. Näiteks kohalikul tasandil on sellisel juhul tihti tegemist kohaliku elanikkonna kaasamisega visioneerimise protsessi (nt. linnatranspordi planeerimine), riiklikul tasandil aga meedia, regionaalsete partnerite, valitsusväliste organisatsioonide ning ka erasektori koostööga (nt. haldus-territoriaalsete üksuste teenuste optimeerimine). Avatud ligipääs ruumiliste poliitikate kujundamisele on oluline praktika tõstmaks poliitikate sidusust ja efektiivsust ning kindlustamaks laiemat toetust poliitiliste eesmärkide teostamisel. Samas toob see sageli kaasa protsesside venimise, kuna kaasatud osapooled kalduvad sageli lähtuma pigem oma huvide kaitsest kui kollektiivsetest vajadustest. Seetõttu on oluline protsessi kaasatute jaoks selgemalt määratleda oodatava osaluse tingimused. Eelkõige puudutab see kaasatute panuse vastavusse viimist seatud poliitiliste eesmärkidega.

Teiseks oluliseks ruumiliste poliitikate tõhusust mõjutavaks teguriks on geograafilise *mõtestamise ajakohasus*. See seondub peamiselt imaginatsioonide kaasajastamise, muutmise või asendamisega ruumilistes poliitikates. Geograafilise mõtestamise järjepidevus on hea indikaator näitamaks, kui kõrgelt poliitikate kujundajad üldiselt geograafilise teadmise rolli hindavad. Ideaalis võiksid muutused poliitikates kajastuda ka ruumiliste imaginatsioonide muutustes. Juhtumuuringud kinnitavad, et aktuaalsuse probleem on tavaliselt valdavam selliste ruumiliste poliitikate puhul, mille eesmärgid ei ole piiritletud kindla ajalise raamistikuga ning kus ideoloogia ja poliitiliste eesmärkide seos on tugevam. Näiteks identiteedipoliitika või integratsioonipoliitika ümberkujundamisel kantakse ruumilised visioonid sageli rutiinselt üle uutesse strateegiatesse ning tegevuskavadesse või jäetakse vanad visioonid kõrvuti uutega käibesse, arvestamata muutunud sotsiaal-poliitilisi tingimusi, poliitikate sidusust ning eesmärkide sisu teisenemist.

Ruumiliste poliitikate kujundamine on rohkemal või vähemal määral sõltuv ka *sihtgrupist ja rakendamise kontekstist*. Poliitiliste eesmärkide seadmisel ja poliitikate elluviimisel on mõistlik arvestada, milliseid huvisid omavad sotsiaalsed ja poliitilised kogukonnad, institutsioonid või võimu struktuurid, keda kujundatavad poliitikad eeldatavalt puudutavad. Samuti on oluline järgida, kus ja millisel perioodil teatud poliitilisi eesmärke soovitakse saavutada. Juhtumuuringud näitavad, et geograafilise teadmise mõtestamisel jääb poliitikate elluviimise aeg-ruumiline aspekt tihti tahaplaanile. Sageli eeldatakse poliitikate rakendumist ideaalsetes tingimustes, kus erinevused sihtgruppides ja rakendamise kontekstides ei mõjuta otseselt poliitiliste eesmärkide saavutamist. Poliitikate tõususe seisukohalt nõuab poliitikate raamistamine (nt. keskendumine välisriigi ärieliidile väliskaubanduspoliitikas või vähemusrahvustele hariduspoliitikas) ka vastavaid poliitikaid toetava geograafilise teadmise kontekstualiseerimist. Ja mitte ainult. Sihtrühma ja konteksti arvestamine võib tagada küll kvaliteetsema geograafilise mõtestamise (poliitilistele eesmärkidele vastavad ruumilised imaginatsioonid), kuid ei pruugi tagada tõhusamaid poliitikaid. Geograafilise teadmise kaalutletud vahendamine ehk kus, kellele, millal ning mil viisil ruumiline teadmine saab kättesaadavaks tehtud on samuti olulise tähtsusega.

Siinne töö kinnitab kriitilise inimgeograafia kesket arusaama, mille järgi geograafia pole pelgalt ruumiliste objektide ja suhete kogum, korrastatud teadmine skaaladelt või sotsiaalse elu organiseerimise tehnoloogia, vaid ka sotsiaalse(s) maailma(s) olemise määr. Geograafia omab poliitikate (kui sotsiaalse reaalsuse vormimise ja muutmise kesksete instrumentide) kujundamisel ja elluviimisel ning seeläbi ka (ruumilise) ebaõigluse põhistamisel määravat rolli. Seetõttu on geograafilise teadmise olulisuse teadvustamine eelduseks kvaliteetsemate poliitikate planeerimisel ja elluviimisel ning õiglasema sotsiaalse maailma kujundamisel. Võimu struktuuride jätkuv väljakutse on institutsionaalse ja poliitilise võimekuse tõstmine geograafilise teadmise sidusamal mõtestamisel ja rakendamisel ruumilistes poliitikates.

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