

REGIONALIZATION IN THE BLACK SEA AREA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract:** *The post-Cold War period in Europe was favourable for the development of new regionalization projects which surrounded the EU. The Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea became the centre of new European sub-regions. Each project stands out now through a certain image that it received mirroring its type and level of regionalization emerged at the junction of regional dynamics and external influences. While the Nordic region is addressed as a model of multi-level, locally driven cooperation, the Mediterranean region is embedded in the North-South developmental division approach with little cooperation and strong external influences. The Black Sea's position is debated between the two models mentioned above. Thus, I propose a comparative analysis of these three cases aiming to trace down the similarities and differences between them with the focus on the Black Sea Region. The conclusion of the study places the Black Sea Region in between the cases with a genuine potential to follow the Nordic model but with its future evolution hanging on the EU's policies toward the area.*

Keywords: *Black Sea Region, European Union, regionalization, comparative study, Danube region.*

The Black Sea lies at the crossroads between Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East but part of any of these regions¹. Its difficult geographical position spurred debates over the idea of regionalization around it. Several short referential comparisons are made between the new Black Sea Region (BSR) and the regional cooperation around the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and

political geographical axes² are suggested by different actors.

Mustafa Aydin compares the BSR with the Baltic and the Mediterranean regions advocating for the EU's support of regionalization in the Black Sea area similarly to the Baltic Sea initiative³. In a similar vein, Roberto Aliboni argues in favour of a contractual relation between the Black Sea countries and the EU

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¹ Ronald D. Asmus and Bruce P. Jackson, "The Black Sea and the frontiers of Freedom", *Policy review* no. 125, (2004), p. 18.

² Evaldas Ignatavičius, "Yalta Conference: Partnership Along The Baltic - Black Sea Axis", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, no.4, (1999) available at <http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/1999-4/Yalta.pdf>, (accessed on 14 of April, 2010).

³ Mustafa Aydin, "Europe's next shore: the Black Sea after enlargement" Occasion Paper No. 53, The European Union Institute for Security Studies, (2004), p. 31.

similar with the Northern Dimension⁴. Nevertheless, the focus on instability problems and its geopolitical and geo-economic importance triggered by its position as a link between Europe and Caspian Sea basin rich in fossil fuels brings it more closely to the Mediterranean type of region⁵. Yet, the literature lacks a comprehensive comparison of these three cases of regionalization at the borders of the EU, while playing with short references to support one opinion or another in a wishful thinking.

A comparative study is important for a clear understanding of the regionalization process unfolding at the borders of the EU, the different roles played by the EU in each case and the regional potential for a deeper integration. Moreover, the comparative analysis is useful in revealing patterns of cooperation around the Black Sea recurrent in other cases also and existent geopolitical axis of cooperation between the cases. Plus, it can integrate the newest Romanian and Austrian initiative at the EU level, the Danube Strategy, in a broader picture connecting it to the Black Sea in a strategy that links internal and external politics.

This paper starts by setting the theoretical grounds of the regionalization process answering the question about its triggering mechanisms, its evolution and its end point. Next, a short comparison delineates the similarities and differences between the three cases. Finally the Black Sea regionalization process is redefined including the Danube Strategy initiative.

Theoretical framework:

The post-Cold War period marked the spread of regionalization across the globe. A need for an appropriate theory for the regionalization process opened a new debate across IR theories between rationalists and constructivists. While rationalist approaches take the phenomenon as an example of purposeful cooperation between actors on the international stage, the reflectivist approach sees regionalization as an ongoing process constructed and deconstructed at the junction of material elements and ideational worldviews. Thus, on the one hand we find pragmatic state centric, interest-based and functional explanations which provide us with a clear-cut account of the causal mechanism behind this phenomenon, and on the other hand we have a general and rather open-ended explanation which sees regionalization as a process, an ever changing frame of social international interaction where the world is not given but constructed by the actors interacting at different levels.

Yet, Louise Fawcett argues that the multidimensional feature of regionalism places it as a phenomenon in an eclectic position on theoretical grounds⁶ as several types of regionalism coexist and have different internal and external logics and dynamics. This makes the analytical process more complicated as regionalism represents a combination of material, ideational and discursive elements within

⁴ Robert Aliboni, "Globalization and the Wider Black Sea Area: Interaction with the European Union, Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* vol. 6, no. 2 (2006), p. 166.

⁵ Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Haggström "The Wider Black Sea Region: An emerging Hub in European Security" a *Silk Road Paper*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program (2006).

⁶ Louise Fawcett, "Exploring regional domains: a comparative history of regionalism", *International Affairs* vol. 80, no. 3, (2004), p. 442.

a “political engineering”⁷ process. Through this process of social construction a new “politically, economically and socially desirable area is constituted”⁸. The actors are in a continuous interaction and region-building process and one regionalization process might be totally different from the other on behalf of the driven factors, goal, aims and functionality. Thus, there is no clear endpoint as the process of regionalization evolves at the same pace with the actors’ goals and the international contexts which facilitates or hampers new initiatives.

Regional dimensions and characteristics are redefined connecting the material aspects with their inter-subjective meaning for the actors. The first aspect would be the geography’s role in contemporary regionalism. Katzenstein claims that regions have a material and symbolic dimension expressed in the features of modern regions which are geographically given and politically constructed⁹. The unity of a region is determined by the institution formed to facilitate different interactions¹⁰. By creating “webs of functional links”¹¹ organizations play an important role through their functionality and capacity to built connections between members.

Therefore, not every geographical area represents a region from a political and economical point of view. Thus, is important to distinguish between regionalism *per se*, defined as increased horizontal and vertical relations between state and non-state actors in the economic, social and political, and region which define a particular geographical area¹². The existence of several pre-conditions favours the regionalization of the area: the existence of a common historical experience, intense interactions between the members of that region which are more intense than with the outsiders setting the borders of the region, and the existence of a legal and institutional setting of the region¹³. Thus, regionalization is a complex phenomenon with many types and forms in a continuous transformation and adaptation. Systemic factors, regional actors, material features and cultural and ideational factors are intertwined within the process of creating a region.

Methodology

I propose a study of regionalization at the junction of local and external forces portrayed through a process-tracing method. My cases are represented by the

⁷ Michelle Pace, *The Politics of Regional Identity. Meddling with the Mediterranean*, (New York: Routledge: 2006), p. 38.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Peter J. Katzenstein, *A world of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 36.

¹⁰ Björn Hettne, “The new regionalism: A prologue”, in *Comparing Regionalisms: implications for global Development*, eds. Björn Hettne, Andras Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. xii, xxviii.

¹¹ Ramesh Thakur and Luk Van Langenhove, “Enhancing global governance through regional integration” in *Regionalisation and global governance. The taming of globalisation?* Ed. Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W.

Hughes, and Philippe de Lombaerde, (New York: Routledge, 2008) p. 25.

¹² Rick Fawn, “Regions and their study: wherefrom, what for and whereto?”, *Review of International Studies* no. 35, (2009) p. 12-13.

¹³ Michael Smith, “Regions and Regionalism”, in *Issues in World Politics*, 2nd edition, eds. Brian White, Richard Little and Michael Smith (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 57.

regionalization process unfolding at the borders of the EU around the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. The historical process tracing pinpoints the casual mechanisms behind the current stage of regionalization by matching the relation between international context and regional dynamics in building the region.

Thus, I will begin by inquiring about the rationale behind the starting of the regionalization processes (leading actors, aims, context, and mechanisms) testing in each case the role of systemic factors and local dynamics. Second, I will move toward the functionality aspects of the regions pinpointing the linearity or the regionalization, the effects of regionalization upon the participants, the level of cooperation and changes within the process across time. Based on this I will delineate the main factors driving the regionalization process.

Finally the model of regionalization encountered in the Black Sea area is defined and its possible future developments are underlined following comparative study. Here the Strategy for the Danube is analyzed. This study of regionalization explores the interaction between the regional factors and international context which can either contribute to regionalization or hamper the process regardless of any actor's ambitions and initiatives.

Cases

Thus, I will depict each of the three cases of regionalization and underline the Black Sea's position among them. The Nordic region covers the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI) countries, the Mediterranean overlaps with the Union for Mediterranean (UfM) and the Black Sea Region is addressed based on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization's (BSEC) members. The comparison highlights similarities and differences of the regional and external dynamics which influence the construction of each region. The regionalism emerged in the Northern part of Europe is often mentioned as a model of regional cooperation and an inspiration for the European Neighbourhood Policy¹⁴. Thus, I will start with this case moving next to the Mediterranean case and in the end to the newest one, the Black Sea case of regionalization.

First, is important to trace the historical evolution of cooperation around the Baltic Sea which can shed light upon the current situation and reveal the importance of the preconditions mentioned by Michael Smith. The region has a history of cooperation that goes back to medieval times (the Hanseatic League)¹⁵. Cooperation is supported by the lack of 'security dilemma' as no country constitutes a threat for the other¹⁶. The oldest institutional

¹⁴ Dacian Duna, "Approaching the Northern and Southern Neighbours of the European Union" *Eurolimes* no.7, (2009), p. 10.

¹⁵ Christopher S. Browning, "Complementarities and Differences in EU and US Policies in Northern Europe", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 6, no1, (2003), p. 26-27.

¹⁶ Pertti Joennimi, "Norden as a Mystery. The Search for New Roads into the Future", in *Nordic Security in the 1990s. Options in the changing Europe*, ed. Jan Øberg, (London: Printer Publishers Limited, 1992), p. 50.

framework of cooperation is the Nordic Council established in 1952 as a trans-governmental forum between Sweden, Norway and Denmark joined by Finland in 1955¹⁷. New institutional arrangements locally and externally driven emerge in the '90s redefining the geographical extension of the European North, its end-goal and shaping a multi-level regionalism involving intergovernmental and transnational organizations and networks.

The post Cold War period new regional institutions emerged complementing the existing Nordic Council (NC): the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Arctic Council, the Baltic Assembly (BS), and the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) accompanied in time by several private and NGOs covering sectoral policies in Baltic Sea region¹⁸. Cooperation in low politics (economy and business development, social welfare and environment protection) is a mark of this area¹⁹ together with a decentralized working procedure, with many one-issue working groups and self-funding of each initiative. Thus, we can see that the Nordic region is built on a strong core, the Scandinavian countries, which share a long history of cooperation, similar socio-economic features and a willingness and potential to extend their cooperation to the new neighbours.

The overall impact of the external forces, the US and the EU, did not modify the local dynamics of regionalization. For the purpose of this study it is interesting to see the evolution of the Nordic Dimension Initiative issued by the EU in 1997 as a Finnish enterprise to put the Nordic periphery on the EU's foreign policy agenda²⁰. The main outcomes of the initiative are the emergence of a regional governance multilevel system within highly institutionalized cross-border cooperation and the establishment of a forum for solving the security problems of the area which facilitated Poland and Baltic States' accession to the EU²¹. At that time it was designed as a foreign policy but meanwhile it changed its status to a "common policy" in 2007 when it was renewed²². Moreover, taking advantage of the recent enlargements of the EU in the area a new initiative emerged aiming to build an internal macro-region around the Baltic Sea including all the EU member states²³. This would complement the Nordic Dimension with a new transnational model of cooperation for achieving economic development and sustainable development reducing the disparities between the EU member states.

Apart of all this institutional design internally derived and externally reinforced it is essential to study the socio-

¹⁷ Nordic Council website: <http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council/the-nordic-council/the-history-of-the-nordiccouncil/>, (accessed on 14 of May, 2010).

¹⁸ More information on the particular private and non-profit, non-governmental organizations can be found on the Baltic Sea Portal: <http://www.balticsea.net/>, (accessed on 13 of May, 2010).

¹⁹ Iver B. Neumann, "A region-building approach to Northern Europe", *Review of International Studies* no. 20, (1994), p. 53-74.

²⁰ David Arter, "Small States Influence Within the EU: The case of Finland's <Northern Dimension>", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 38, no. 5, (2000), p. 678-681.

²¹ Dacian Duna, "Approaching the Northern and Southern Neighbours of the European Union", p. 5-6.

²² Anne Haglund-Morrissey, "Conceptualizing the <New> Northern Dimension: A Common Policy Based on Sectoral Partnerships" *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16 no. 2, (2008), p. 206.

²³ Regional Policy-Inforegion: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/index_en.htm, (accessed on 10 of June 2010).

economic image of the area. As we can see in the Annex 1 the region remains divided between the Scandinavian countries and the Baltic States due to clear discrepancy in level of GDP, competitiveness, and quality of life. Plus, the trade patterns reinforce this division. All in all cooperation is built around functional areas keeping the institutionalization of the region within a rather simplistic and decentralized form. The unity of the region is ensured by the lack of enmity, Western values and consistent economic transactions facilitated by a common infrastructure. Moreover, its aim is that of achieving socioeconomic homogeneity among its members by engaging all of them in the project and thus enforcing common ownership of the regionalization process.

Secondly, the Mediterranean case is usually addressed as opposed to the Nordic model. It portrays a stagnant process of regionalization and high levels of external influences. The locally emerged regional initiatives are the Arab League, Arab Maghreb Union²⁴ (AMU), and Arab Co-operation Council (ACC)²⁵. The Arab League is a “regional organization of sovereign states” with pan-Arabic mission of building a framework for dialogue between Arabic-speaking countries which can be used for their own interests especially for the resolution of

conflicts between them²⁶. Its coherence was disrupted by the Cold War with its two camps which split the member states. In the post-Cold War period divergences between the monarchies, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco and the new republics, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Libya stumble the cooperation²⁷. In fact, the institution is regarded as successful on low politics on issue such as education and culture but inefficient on high politics due to its unbinding agreements²⁸. Yet, it remains the only institution covering all the countries along the Southern border of the Mediterranean Sea.

The other two, AMU and ACC divide the shore in two groups: Maghreb and Mashreq. The Maghreb region enjoys preferential relations with the EU; they share a common history of colonialism and a similar culture while their economies complement each other²⁹. All these aspects contributed to the progress made in low politics integration when in 2010 the AMU introduced the custom union³⁰. But in the end they do not reinforce the image of South-South integration³¹. Yet, what remain constant along the Mediterranean shore is the socio-economic and political features (Annex 2): low economic development, large unemployment, unskilled workforce, authoritarian regimes, dependency on external forces for financial and technical help, all this

²⁴ Members: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania.

²⁵ Members: Egypt, Iraq, Northern Yemen and Jordan.

²⁶ Arab League website: <http://www.arabji.com/ArabGovt/ArabLeague.htm>, (accessed on 10 of May, 2010).

²⁷ “Profile: Arab League” (31 March 2009) BBC website, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/1550797.stm, (accessed on 10 of May 2010)

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>, (accessed on 11 of May, 2010).

³⁰ UMA website, <http://www.maghrebarabe.org/en/news.cfm?type=1>, (accessed on 10 of May, 2010)

³¹ EuroMed info: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/medportal/news/latest/21762/Major-survey-assesses-successes-andfailures-of-Euro-Med-Partnership>, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010).

creating the dividing line between the Northern and the Southern Mediterranean shores based on developmental levels.

The image of the Mediterranean region as a whole is constructed by the EU through several initiatives taken toward the area since the Cold War period³². In 1995 the EU reaffirms its interest in the area by issuing the Barcelona Process - The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership together with a Common Strategy for the Mediterranean. Despite a warm welcome of the program among the local states, the initiative failed to build the partnership as the EU played the role of a hegemony and not of a partner. Even though the Barcelona Declaration sets the legal framework for an equal partnership the therein image of the Mediterranean revolves around the idea of a “troubled space”, an under-developed region with deep social and political problems which are the direct causes for the instability and security challenges spread across the region³³. Thus, the region-building is unidirectional following EU’s political views and not a bidirectional process of common construction between the Southern and Northern coastal countries. The inclusion of the Mediterranean in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004 and the new initiative the Union for Mediterranean (UfM) launched in 2008 maintained the EU in the leading position in what is the Mediterranean region-building³⁴. The UfM was designed to promote political cooperation and common construction of the region through new co-owned institutions to

implement regional and sub-regional projects. It remains to be seen which are the effects triggered by the new initiative.

Overall, the Mediterranean region is more or less a discursive and politically constructed area by the EU. It does not reflect the local concerns and inter-state relations. The EU acts as a hegemony imposing its model but its method did not prove to be very successful. It fails to disseminate its model of regionalization to the Southern neighbours. The lack of a coherent institutional partner of dialogue the EU plays the role of the artisan of the region. This can assure a controlled neighbourhood in a certain way through the developmental policies delivered in the area but it is not able to share with the local countries the construction of the area. All the initiatives were taken by European countries, ex-colonial powers (Spain, Italy and France), while the southern countries were the receivers of the new measures. Thus, no core countries can be found among the receivers. The regionalization is discursive, externally driven touching the intergovernmental level mainly while the area is still fraught with unsolved conflicts which hamper the inter-state relations and the economic development of the area.

Having in mind this two opposing models of regionalization at the borders of the EU I will go further portraying the Black Sea regionalization case, the most recent one on the EU’s agenda. The region is fraught with “frozen conflicts” which have recently become “hot”: Chechnya in Russia, Abkhazia, Adjaria

³² Federica Bicchi, *European Foreign Policy Making toward the Mediterranean*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 1.

³³ Helle Malmvig, “Caught between cooperation and democratization: the Barcelona process and the EU’s double discursive approach”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 9, no 4 (2006), p. 357-357.

³⁴ Richard Gillespie, “Union for Mediterranean or for the EU?”, in *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 13, no.2, (2008), p. 279.

and South Ossetia in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, Transdniestria in the Republic of Moldova, and Crimea in Ukraine. In each of the cases Russia is the common denominator either as a participant or as a mediator, using the conflicts as blackmail tools for limiting the western turn in the foreign policies of the post-soviet republics³⁵. Plus, the interstate relations in the area are instable, especially between Romania-Ukraine, Ukraine-Russia, Armenia-Azerbaijan, and Turkey-Armenia³⁶. These strained relations are not facilitating the process of building trust and deeper cooperation among the local states. In the same vein the rivalry among regional countries starts a competition for the leadership position but no clear winner can be seen.

During the Cold War period the Black Sea was a Soviet sea with the majority of the surrounding countries tied to the Soviet Union as members or satellites³⁷. The new order emerged after the Cold War left more leeway to the countries from the region to decide their own foreign policy and redefining their interest and identities. The first locally-driven initiative was the BSEC established in 1992 as a Turkish political initiative to preserve the Westerners

interest in the region in light of the new post-Cold War order³⁸. There were eleven signatory countries committing to a close economic cooperation: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, joined in 2004 by Serbia and Montenegro³⁹. The BSEC manifested openness toward cooperation with the EU which was granted permanent observer status in 2007⁴⁰. The expected outcomes, such as the establishment of a free trade area were blocked by the difficult social, economic and political situation from the area, and especially by the different foreign policy allegiances of local countries⁴¹. New initiatives emerged at regional and sub-regional level coping with sectoral problems of the area.

In the early '90s new organisations emerged such as: BSEC, GUAM, and CIS. They are all used by the local countries as foreign policy tools to declare their political allegiance to one or other big power (the EU, US or Russia). Yet, countries' weakness and low socio-economic development downplays the regional preoccupation for a more individualist approach and self-regard. Nevertheless, the functional cooperation

³⁵ Dmitri Trenin "Russia, the EU and the common neighbourhood", Essay, UK: Center for European Reform, (2005), p. 5-6.

³⁶ Sergii Glebov, " <Eastern > Concerns of 'Big Mediterranean': Europeanization, the Black Sea Region and Ukraine" in *Europeanisation and Democratisation. Institutional Adaptation, Conditionality and Democratisation in the EU's Neighbour Countries* ed. Roberto Di Quirico, (Florence: European Press Academic Publishing, 2005), p. 231.

³⁷ A Black Sea Journey website: History <http://www.ceoe.udel.edu/blacksea/history/index.html>, (accessed on 14 of May, 2010).

³⁸ Ekavi Athanassopoulou, "Turkey and the Black Sea Initiative", in *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 1, ed. Richard Gillespie, (London: University Press, 1994), p. 130. (130-137).

³⁹ Sergiu Celac and Pangiotă Manoli, "Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area" in *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, (2006), p. 193.

⁴⁰ Svetlozar Andreev, "The future of European neighbourhood policy and the role of regional cooperation in the Black Sea area", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 8, no.2, (2008), p. 99.

⁴¹ Sergiu Celac and Pangiotă Manoli, "Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area", p. 196.

worked even in economic and security matters such as maritime safety and cross-border issues. On institutional level the BSEC enjoys the status of comprehensive organisation covering all the states including Russia. At the level of external influences, the limited conditionality of ENP downplays the role of the EU as the major player, whereas Russia reasserts its regional position using energy and economy to influence countries' foreign policies

The region is included for the first time in the EU's policy in 2003: the Neighbourhood Policy was launched including among the Mediterranean countries also Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. In 2004 the framework was extended to include also the South Caucasus countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The EU's interests in the post-Soviet space are security energy and democratization⁴². Yet, its strength to project its power is limited through the ENP due to the lack of membership incentive which worked well with the enlargement policy for the Eastern European countries⁴³. Moreover, the ENP continued the bilateral agreements and did not engage with the whole Black Sea region. This has changed in 2007 with the launch of the *Black Sea Synergy - A new regional Cooperation Initiative*⁴⁴ (BSS) addressing the region as a whole and not each country separately. Yet, the document is merely a political acknowledgement of the region and its geopolitical and geo-

economic importance for the EU as an energy hub. Nevertheless, 2009 is the year of launching the Eastern Partnership (EaP), a new EU's foreign policy instrument targeting only the post-Soviet republics from the Black Sea region: Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. The EaP's similarity draws it closer to the enlargement policy⁴⁵ and this might raise question about the potential membership for these countries. This new initiative connects the Black Sea with the Baltic Sea in an attempt to stabilize the neighbourhood through economic development and democratization downgrading the securitization of the energy issue.

The regional dynamics characterized by "frozen conflicts", inter-state conflicts, soft security issues such as organized crime and drug trafficking, weak states, and slow economic development combined with the competition among the big powers for energy resources impede the creation of a unitary and cohesive region around the Black Sea. Moreover, the available data (see Table 3 below) show an interconnection on social and economic features among the CIS members from the Black Sea Region. These countries are similar also on the political level with authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes. Thus, even if at the political intergovernmental level these countries adopt an anti-Russian stance their economy is tighten to the Russian one and to the other post-Soviet republics.

⁴² Irina Pop, "Assessment of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the South Caucasus: What the European Union can do?" in *EuroTimes* vol. 7, (2009), p. 23.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁴⁴ EU Commission: "Black Sea Synergy - A new regional cooperation Initiative", (2007), available at http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf, (accessed on 30 of March, 2010).

⁴⁵ Michael L. Nash, "The Boldest Outreach: The Eastern Partnership Initiative Of The European Union" *Contemporary Review* vol. 293, no 169, (2009), p. 310.

All in all, the EU's interest in the area is caught by the post-Soviet space thus creating the boundaries of a geographically defined group and dividing the BSEC's definition of the area between members and friend states and the post-Soviet republics. Poland, Sweden and Baltic States lobby with regard to Ukraine's and Moldova's accession to the EU and for linking the Baltic region to the Black Sea Region⁴⁶. This positive lobby might help the BSR to come closer to the Baltic Sea model of regionalism and distance itself from the Mediterranean negative image and low level of integration. Building

state capacity is essential for facilitating the regionalization based on economic and political cooperation. The success of the EaP redirected the role of core state toward Poland and the Nordic states of the EU while Romania and Bulgaria failed to push their aims on the EU's agenda.

Conclusion

The present analysis of the cases can be summarized as follows based on the emergence pattern, the existence of pre-conditions and the current functionality status:

Region-building aspects	Nordic	Mediterranean	Black Sea
Emergence			
	Common problems	Hegemony	Weak states' strategy
Pre-conditions			
Common history of cooperation	Yes	No	No
Local core states	Finland, Sweden , Norway	Spain, Italy, France, Morocco	Turkey, Russia, Ukraine (rivalry)
Intense socio- economic interregional relations	Transnational, multilateral	Intergovernmental bilateral	Intergovernmental, bilateral and multilateral
Homogeneity (tables)	2 groups	N-S division	2 groups
Functionality			
Institutional arrangement	Not so complicated, merely informal agreements	Externally imposed and supported	Internally developed
Cooperation areas	Environment, nuclear safety, health , business, social welfare, illegal immigration, organized crime	Cultural, education, Economic	Maritime security, environment, borders security, transport, migration

⁴⁶ Krassimir Y. Nikolov and Burcu Gültekin-Punsmann, "Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea Area: Analysis of the opportunities to foster synergies in the region", Policy Department of the Directorate-General for External Policies of the European Union, published by the European Parliament, (2007).

Role of the EU	Extending the geographical border; Anchoring it into the EU community	Developmental policy, (N-S relations) Extending the geographic limit	Anchoring the space to the EU Deconstruction (Balkans, BSR)
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As it can be seen from the table the Black Sea Region is positioned in between the two referent cases. On pre-conditions, it sides with the Mediterranean region due to the lack of common history of cooperation, and an intergovernmental pattern of interstate relation. Nevertheless, even if the common history of cooperation does not apply to the whole region it does apply to the post-Soviet countries where the Soviet past connects them even today. Moreover, the interstate relations are dominant forms of interaction but at the same time new initiatives emerged in different areas which involve multilateral and trans-governmental cooperation (environment, border issues, and maritime safety). At the same time, the BSR shares with the Nordic region the existence of core states and the overall division of the region in two groups (Euro-centric, Russo-centric) due to different economic and political ties. Yet, the core states' rivalry freezes the region-building process in its current stage and contributes to its already existent division in sub-regional institutional arrangements.

On functionality the BSR struggles again in between the two models. It shares with the Mediterranean Region an image of a problematic and instable region which threatens the EU's security: organized crime, illegal immigration, conflicts, and border disputes. Moreover, the external forces exert a major influence on regional dynamics, their involvement

or their lack of it triggers the local states in different alliances. Here it is notable the EU's inconsistent strategy in the Mediterranean and its lack of commitment in the Eastern border which does not help the countries from the region to rally along the Western community. This aspect is a real troublemaker in assessing the Black Sea region along the Nordic model, where the initial scope was tight to the Baltic States accession to the EU. Even so, the BSR makes some good points in defining itself along the Nordic model.

All in all, the BSR has some assets that can bring it closer to the Nordic model along the Baltic Sea-Black Sea axis of cooperation due to the existence of a genuine regional cooperation at functional levels, internally developed institutions, a growing trade relation with the EU, and EU member states supporting this initiative. Thus, if the NDI is one dimension of the EU-Russia partnership the BSR might be another one. Thus, the BSR has a genuine potential to grow as region along the Nordic model but not alone. Its anchorage to the EU is essential for building regional trust and stronger states with potential to shape their own region.

The Strategy for the Danube confirms the willingness to emulate the Nordic model of cooperation and to gain distance from the Mediterranean model. The Romanian and Austrian initiative stresses the need to create an internal macro-region following the Baltic European

macro-region model⁴⁷. The Danube River links ten European countries, six of them members of the EU and connects the North Sea with the Black Sea. The Strategy aims to promote cooperation in low politics (economy, culture, navigation and environment protection). The long history of cooperation witnessed through the Commission on the Danube established in 1856 represents in a solid base for this new initiative lead by the EU. Similarly to the BSEC, the Commission on the Danube ensures the backbone of the regional confines and goals whereas the EU is called to give an impetus to the already existent project of cooperation and to include it among its internal economic and political priorities encouraging the economic interdependence and the NGO sector.

This new initiative could help the new member states to change their competition attitude acquired along the EU accession process for a cooperative one following the Nordic model of transnational cooperation in low politics. By doing this they can build a block at the EU level promoting their political goals and vision of what to do in the Eastern border based on their experience and expertise. Learning to cooperate inside the EU might make it easy for new member states to export this way of doing things outside the EU. Plus, similarly to the Baltic macro-region where the Nordic Dimension ensures the framework for the internal macro-region⁴⁸, this Danube macro-region can be built within the Black

Sea strategy as a branch of this. Thus, the Danube strategy, even if it is labeled as an internal regional policy contributes to the coherence and consistency of the EU's presence in the Black Sea wider area linking it to the Baltic Sea in an attempt to transfer the Nordic model of cooperation at the Eastern border.

Restating the main idea of the theoretical framework, the regionalization is a complex phenomenon in a continuous creation and recreation process which depends upon the relation of power (material and ideational) between the actors involved in the process of designing the region. Actors are playing with the geographical boundaries, matching material and ideational features in a complete image of the overall outcome. Tracking the regional dynamics helps us to see the patterns of interaction and the potential evolution of the project especially having in mind some comparative cases. As far as the Black Sea regionalization is concerned stating a clear end-point is impossible due to the ever changing political and economic landscape of the area. In this situation is important that Romania keeps its role of promoting inside the EU the role of a stable Black Sea region and using successfully proven solution such as those from the Northern Europe might be the winning card. But first, is imperative to build a group of countries inside the EU that support the same idea having similar priorities and interests. Thus, the Danube region might be a solution for this.

⁴⁷ European Parliament-Documents: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0008+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>, (accessed on 2nd of June, 2010).

⁴⁸ Regional Policy-Inforegion: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/index_en.htm, (accessed on 10 of June 2010).

ANNEXES

Annex 1: General Overview on the members of the Northern Dimension (except Russia)

Indicators	Politics		Economy				Social	
	NATO	EU	GDP per capita (euro) 2007	FDI inflows (2006) Mil. euro	FDI inflows stocks (2006) % of GDP	Competitiveness rank 2009-2010	Social spending % of GDP (2005)	Gini Index
Country								
Denmark	yes	yes	41 700	8 272	46.7	5	30.1	24.7
Estonia	yes	yes	11 400	1 815	72.7	35	12.5*	36
Finland	yes	yes	34 000	6 193	30.3	6	26.7	26.9
Germany	yes	Yes	29 500	37 205	24.5	7	29.4	28.3
Iceland	yes	candidate	46 900	-	-	26	21.7	-
Latvia	yes	Yes	8 800	1 595	35.8	68	12.4*	35.7
Lithuania	yes	Yes		1 412	35.3	53	13.2*	35.8
Norway	yes	EEA	60 400	-	-	14	23.9	25.8
Poland	yes	yes	8 100	12 831	34.7	46	19.6	34.9
Sweden	yes	yes	36 300	13 728	49.4 (2005)	4	32.0	25

Sources: Data from EUROSTAT Database, World Economic Forum (Global Competitiveness Report 2010), NATO official website, European Commission – DG Enlargement, *Human Development Report* - UN 2009

Notes: *The lowest proportion of GDP allocated for social spending among all the EU states, pp. 25

Annex 2: General Overview of the Southern members of the Union for Mediterranean

Indicators Country	Politics	Economy				Social		
		GDP per capita (euro) (2006)	FDI inflows % of GDP (2006)	GDP composition per industry% 2009 *		Fertility rate	Unemployment rate 2006	
				A.	I.	S.		
Algeria	Partly free	2770	1.54	8.3	62.5	29.4	2.32	12.3
Egypt	Not free	1068	8.95	13.1	37.7	49.2	3.10	11.2 (2005)
Israel	Partly free	15868	10.39	2.6	32	65.4	2.88	8.4
Jordan	Partly free	1873	23.17	3.7	29.9	66.5	3.20	14.0
Lebanon	Partly free	-	11.75	5.1	18.7	76.2	1.90	7.9 (2004)
Morocco	Partly free	1708	3.75	18.8	32.6	48.6	2.47	9.7
Palestine Occupied Territory	-	1024**	0.38	5	14	81	4.60	23.6
Syria	Not free	1382	2.01	19	34	47	3.60	8.1
Tunisia	Partly free	2459	10.70	10.9	35	54.1	1.99	14.3
Turkey	Partly free	4400	5.00	9.4	25.9	64.7	2.18	8.4

Sources: Data from EUROSTAT (Euro-Mediterranean statistics 2009), UN Database, CIA World Factbook, Earth Trends

Notes: *A = agriculture, I = industry, S = services

Annex 3: General overview upon the EaP countries

Indicators	Politics	Economy				Social				
		GDP per capita \$ (2008)	Competitiveness rank (2009)	Trade with CIS countries *(% of total trade 2009)	GDP composition per industry % 2009	Unemployment rate 2008	Population below poverty line (% out of the total population) (2009)			
Country	Civil and political liberties (2009)			exports	imports	A.	I.	S.		
Armenia	Partly free	3876.9	97	20	32	18.6	35.5	48	7.1	26.5 (2006)
Azerbaijan	Not free	5298	51	8	30	5.8	60.5	33.7	6.1	11
Belarus	Not free	6230	-	44	64	9.3	39.7	51	0.8	27.1
Georgia	Partly free	2970	90	36	28	12.1	25.9	62	13.3	31 (2006)
Moldova	Partly free	1664	134 (2008)	38	35	21.8	17.6	60.6	4.0	29.5 (2005)
Russia	Not free	11857	63	15	13	5.2	37	57.8	6.3	15.8 (2007)
Ukraine	Free	3921	82	34	43	10	31.2	58.8	6.4	35

Sources: Data from Freedom House, CIA World Factbook, UN Database, World Economic Forum (Global Competitiveness Report 2010), Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent states

Notes: *CIS Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan

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