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Edited by Rolf Petri

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Region Building Around the Baltic Sea, 1989–2016: Expectations and Disenchantment

Rolf Petri

ABSTRACT

Nach 1989 wurden hohe Erwartungen in die Neubegründung des Ostseeraums als Geschichtsregion gesetzt. Den Bürgern der Anrainerstaaten sollten damit neue Möglichkeiten geboten werden, sich mit übernationalen politischen Prozessen und dem ungehinderten Austausch über alle Grenzen hinweg zu identifizieren. Die hier versammelten Beiträge würdigen die durch die EU-Erweiterung erzielten Ergebnisse, ziehen jedoch hinsichtlich der anvisierten Etablierung einer „Ostseeregion" eine eher ernüchternde Bilanz. Teils im Vergleich mit dem Mittelmeerraum werden die Strukturpolitik für Inseln, die Bemühungen um Demokratisierung der transnationalen Politik, die intellektuellen Anstrengungen zur Verankerung der Großregion sowie deren Wahrnehmung durch Migranten untersucht. Dabei zeigt sich, dass nationale Interessen und Erwartungshorizonte sowie ältere Raumvorstellungen der Etablierung einer „Ostseeregion" bisher entgegenstehen.

In *Futures Past*, Reinhardt Koselleck argued that it is meaningful to represent past experience through the expression "space of experience" since it merges different layers of time into a whole. He went on arguing that it might be better not to speak of "space of expectation," because expected futures form only a horizon; the new space which will open behind that line cannot yet be seen.[1] When naming our research project *Spaces of Expectation*,[2] we disregarded this recommendation. In the imaginative geography of the

1 R. Koselleck, Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time [1979], New York 2004, pp. 260–261.

2 The Spaces of Expectation Project (https://spacesofexpectation.wordpress.com/) is located at the intersection of contemporary history and political science. It is funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Stu-

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Mediterranean and Baltic Seas, which is the subject of our enquiry, experience and expectation, although "not symmetrical,"[3] are so tightly interrelated to represent reciprocal preconditions. Attempts for region building, like those examined in the following pages, usually start from reinventing their space object in terms of a "historical region." They suggest that the better future they envisage can be achieved by reunifying spaces which in the past belonged to each other, before they were drawn apart by some artifice, for example an "iron curtain." In the following pages we will not go deep into the conceptual deconstruction of historical narratives related to the Baltic Sea;[4] rather, we shall focus on the gratification or disillusionment of expectations that such narratives helped creating. The contributions to the panel "Maritime Areas: Spaces of Changing Expectations" of the 2016 European Social Science History Conference in Valencia form the corpus of the present issue. José Damião Rodrigues's paper was also presented on the same occasion, where it stimulated a vivid debate on the Mediterranean's role for European projections toward oceanic spaces and modernity. It has been placed in the Forum to reinforce the geographical and chronological homogeneity of the monographic section. All contributions of this section will focus on the Baltic Sea area in the post-1989 period; two of them will also look at the Mediterranean for comparison.

I.

In her article, Deborah Paci adopts such a comparative view to analyze the European Union's policies in favour of Mediterranean and Baltic islands. After commenting on the parallel developments of EU regional policies and of academic Island Studies, she looks at the B7 Baltic Islands Network and IMEDOC in the Mediterranean. According to what was determined by the Amsterdam Treaty, islands suffer from structural disadvantages that depend on their geographic position. Brussels' action is directed to improve the connection of insular areas to the mainland, expecting that such improvement might help diminishing the disparities in economic development. While this approach translates "island" with "isolation," the alternative paradigm elaborated by recent Island Studies[5] underlines the connectivity of islands. To turn the latter into a comparative advantage, the islands' relations should be developed in multiple directions and be island-centred and sea-oriented and not only mainland-oriented. The author explains that this view comes close to the approach adopted by the Baltic Sea islands' political representa-

dies/Östersjöstiftelsen, Stockholm. Based at Södertörn University Stockholm, it is run in cooperation with Ca' Foscari University Venice. We thank Östersjöstiftelsen and the project partners for their support.

3 Koselleck, Futures Past, p. 259.

4 See, among others, the pioneering pages by B. Stråth, The Baltic as Image and Illusion: The Construction of a Region between Europe and the Nation, in: B. Stråth (ed.), Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community, Bruxelles 2000, pp. 199–214; see also M. Grzechnik, Making Use of the Past: The Role of Historians in the Baltic Sea Region Building, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 43 (2012) 3, pp. 329–343.

5 G. Baldacchino, The Coming Age of Island Studies, in: Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie 95 (2004) 3, pp. 272–283.

tives, some of whom recently expressed a certain disillusionment over the "continental" approach adopted by the EU. They perceive Brussels as being less interested than it was before the EU enlargement in sustaining a self-governed Baltic island world.[6] Mediterranean islands' representatives seem comfortable instead with the EU's insularity dogma, as long as dramatizing the disadvantages of isolation helps them obtaining the Structural Funds' support. A rhetoric of "Mediterranean-ness" frequently accompanies their claims for reparative assistance from a European Union otherwise seen as unfairly northern-biased. As divergent as they are, both tendencies express a growing distance between regional expectations and the European level of identification.

Along with soothing or mounting international tensions and migration flows, the EU's Mediterranean policies have continued to go back and forth between inclusive and exclusive approaches; also the media representations oscillated between the connective-bridge and the protective-moat metaphors.[7] By comparison, the post-communist reconstruction of the Baltic Sea as a "European inland sea" seemed to be an easier and more rewarding objective for regional policies. Where structural forces of cohesion would not suffice, a discursive construction of the region would do the rest, many politicians and scholars thought. Almost thirty years later, Marta Grzechnik and Jussi Kurunmäki take stock of these efforts in a more disenchanted way.

II.

As Marta Grzechnik points out, in the early days of post-communist euphoria the Baltic Sea region became the object of a region-making effort that favoured border-defying categories and practices. Not only economic relations, inter-state cooperation and transnational political initiatives took part in this effort, also academic institutions and single scholars engaged in region-building, for example by offering the narrative of a "common history" to shape a new sense of regional belonging. As the author argues, in the world of research institutes and scholarly networks a European Baltic Sea region came actually into existence. Yet, it has remained a limited phenomenon. The ideas it was based on were mainly of German, Scandinavian and other western origins. They had scarce penetration in Poland and the Baltic States, where alternative concepts of cooperation emerged in updated versions of proposals that originated from the inter-war and communist periods. From the latter's stronger nation-centred perspectives, the Baltic Sea area was envisioned as a texture of interstate-relations and not a playground of transnational governance. Older imaginative geographies of transnational regions, which persist in the European mind were also at odds with the EU-ropean re-bordering effort. This holds, for example, for the centuries–old west–east divide that instead of permitting to simply

6 See the comprehensive analysis by S.M. Edquist and J. Holmén, Islands of Identity. History-Writing and Identity Formation in Five Island Regions in the Baltic Sea, Huddinge 2015.

7 R. Petri, The Mediterranean Metaphor in Early Geopolitical Writings, in: History. The Journal of the Historical Association 101 (2016) 348, pp. 671-691.

remove and forget the "iron curtain," transformed it into a sort of phantom border or "unspecifiable barrier."[8] The gradual fading of the initial euphoria was therefore not only the result of a history that took paths which had not been foreseen, but also of plural regionalisms that were present right from the start, but the plurality of which was initially overshadowed by the hegemony of western European discourse.

Since 1991, political decision-makers and academic advisors assigned to the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference a major role as a promoter of transnational democracy. The BSPC experiment was seen as a catalyst that could help overcoming the democratic deficits of supranational decision-making. The participants also expected that it's activities would contribute to the shaping of a regional civil society, public opinion, and identity. Jussi Kurunmäki dissects this experience, and makes it a test case for theories of transnational democracy that were predicting the retreat of the nation-state in the era of globalization. Observing the rhetoric used by the Parliamentary Conference members over a quarter of century, the author highlights that the political process took not exactly the expected direction. The EU enlargement risked to transform the BSPC de facto into a component of the Union's multi-level governance framework, which was hard to conceal not only with the external viewpoint of BSCP member Russia, but also with the ideal type of parliamentarian institutions. Overall, BSCP members tended to privilege in their rhetoric the interests of their national constituencies, and represent the state of belonging as if the assembly were a diplomatic arena. Actual regional cooperation was not driven by the deliberations of a transnational representative body, but continued to be governed by nation–state logics. Not only remained the BSCP's contribution to region building modest, it also delivered little evidence for theories of transnational democracy. As Kurunmäki notes, it is for the very reason of its deviation from the theoretical model that the Conference after all may be considered a useful arena where national parliament representatives can meet and interact to preserve peace and cooperation in the region.

Both Grzechnik's and Kurunmäki's analyses confirm that after the EU and NATO enlargement the regionalist activism lost momentum on the northern and western shores of the Baltic Sea, while the Baltic states and Poland had always privileged nation-building over region-building. They corroborate the general picture that Norbert Götz has recently drawn of post-1989 spatial politics in the Baltic Sea, underlining their incompleteness, persistent ambiguity and partial failure.[9] Not that there were no efforts made to establish the region; nor were these efforts destitute of results in terms of increasing wealth and progressing integration. Yet, they also deluded many of the original expectations. In 1989's immediate aftermath a variety of competing or intersecting space-political initiatives emerged. They were promoted by different political stakeholders who represented heterogeneous social and national interests. The already mentioned BSPC, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the EU InterReg programs for the Baltic Sea, the spatial planning network Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) and the visions

8 L. Wolff, Mental Mapping and Eastern Europe. 12th Södertörn Lecture, Stockholm 2016, p. 44.

9 N. Götz, Spatial Politics & Fuzzy Regionalism, in: Baltic Worlds 9 (2016) 3–4, pp. 55-67.

of North European and Baltic Sea Integration (NEBI) generated spaces of expectation that differed from each other, and from those created during the 1945–89 period, such as the Helsinki Commission and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). As a result, the "fuzzy regionalism" produced a plurality of Baltic Sea regions the inland and sea borders of which diverged. Some of the supranational institutions stretch the "Baltic Sea" geography towards the North Atlantic, including Norway, Iceland, the Faeroes, Greenland, Hamburg, and Bremen.

It is easy to infer that a similar tangle of borders, networks and imaginative geographies is a result of diverging economic and political interests. On the one hand, the EU enlargement of 1995–2004 produced a new strategy for a more intensively integrated "EU Baltic Sea region," which rather successfully delivered tangible results in terms of economy and integration. On the other, the attempt to make of the Baltic Sea a EU-ropean instead of a European "inland sea" contributed to the crisis of CBSS and BSPC and to growing tensions with Russia.[10] Bo Stråth observed that towards the end of the 1990s, when "it had become clear that Russia was not following the standard development model of economic and sociological theory, the borderline between Us and the Other began to look insurmountable, and the expectation that it could be transcended through networks and market arrangements vanished."[11] To make of the Russian adjustment to western standards a precondition of regional cooperation would make the process depending on ideological issues. It has been critically noted that the post-1989 EU politics of "openness" in the Baltic Sea area was open only to an imagined "European Us" the border of which was stretched eastwards.[12] In my opinion the risk of ideology driven approaches is that the Baltic Sea area might relapse even behind earlier forms of *realpolitik*-guided cooperation. During the "cold war," cooperation was modest in its cultural and political scope, but comprehensive enough on the diplomatic and technical levels to guarantee both sides a minimum standard of collective security. As Götz adds, the present situation bears some difficulty even for the EU Baltic Sea region itself: "Leaving out the enclave of Kaliningrad and the other westernmost parts of Russia asserts a territorial shape with blind spots that have the potential to disrupt EU efforts. The Baltic Sea region in its EU version is thus a torso with its head disconnected in Brussels and some limbs cut off." [13]

III.

The aftermath of the 2008 crisis damaged the image of the EU as an integrated political and economic space. The debates on debt and austerity reanimated the exchange of stereotypical allegations between northern and southern Europe. The heated "Grexit" and "Brexit" referendum campaigns of 2015–16, along with recent electoral results in

10 Götz, Spatial Politics, p. 62.
11 Stråth, The Baltic as Image, pp. 203–204.
12 P. Aalto, European Union and the Making of a Wider Northern Europe, London / New York 2006, p. 24.
13 Götz, Spatial Politics, p. 63.

various member states exposed the growing estrangement between the EU's political leaderships and their national constituencies. Electoral decisions challenge transnational arrangements that the political leaders long since had declared irreversible. Against this background it is of interest to learn how the spatial imagination of "ordinary people" reacts to the region building efforts we are dealing with here.

One of the most debated issues is immigration. After 2008, increasing unemployment in several EU countries triggered new waves of spatial mobility creating a fresh generation of intra-European immigrants. Southern Europe and the three Baltic states have appreciably contributed to the phenomenon. In his article, Vasileios Petrogiannis reassumes the results of interviews he conducted with migrants from Greece and Latvia in Sweden. His aim is to understand how European citizenship affects their lives and how efficiently identity politics manages to establish national, regional and European spaces of expectation in their mind. The interviews show that national belonging remains the foremost level of self-identification. Notwithstanding a persistent feeling of exclusion from the hosting society, belonging to "Europe," that is, the EU, is another important dimension of the Greek and Latvian migrants' self-definition, if for no other reason than granting them access to a degree of legal protection negated to extra-EU migrants. For Latvian migrants the "Baltic region" of origin comprises only the three Baltic states, whereas their idea of a Baltic Sea region tends to refer to Eastern European spaces from which the Scandinavian countries and Germany remain excluded. Greek migrants prefer to mention the Balkan peninsula as their home region, while they concede their belonging to the Mediterranean only on the condition that the diversity of non-European Mediterranean countries is clearly marked out. The perception of the Baltic and Mediterranean sea regions as unitary spaces, to which the region-building efforts are directed, remains almost absent from their imaginary.

IV.

During the 1980s, key texts by Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and others introduced terms such as "invented traditions" and "nation building" into the scholarly debate. They underlined the invented character of "nation," a concept that previously used to be seen as a self-evident manifestation of a quasi-natural historical necessity. At a certain point political and military circles must have intercepted the constructivist concepts. "Nation building" popped up in the press briefings even of western occupying forces in the wake of successful "nation deconstruction" in countries such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. Fortunately, the post-1989 developments in the Baltic Sea area remained peaceful and undramatic. Not only, cross-border and cross-sea cooperation deepened, economic exchange and wealth grew, and the "EU Baltic Sea region" achieved an unprecedented degree of integration. Notwithstanding its partial success, the transnational region struggles to emerge as a "historical region" capable of drawing

new horizons of expectation, while "past politics are still at their strongest within a national framework."[14]

If we reject the idea that the nation is naturally given and as such immune against whatsoever competing narratives, then we should wonder why transnational visions, which took names such as New Hansa, Baltoscandia, Baltic Sea Region and so on, missed to attract the interest of those whom they meant to address and represent. This is even more striking as it is "always possible to find some link, some pre-history, which can be used to justify the inclusion of a certain actor in a certain region."[15] I believe that the texts presented in this monographic section offer some interesting, if necessarily partial, responses to the question why none of the narratives developed traction enough to replace preexisting representations with a new regional paradigm. It looks as if the unpredictable contingency of change would conspire with the weight of long-term semantic, political and social structures of space to oppose resistance to its wilfully planned reshaping.

When Ole Wæver maintained that a new regional space of political and economic action had already been successfully implemented in the regional stakeholders' minds, the eastward EU and NATO expansion, the growing tensions with Russia and the 2008 economic crisis were still years ahead. The author nevertheless was prudent enough to underline that economic problems or security questions "might cause a rupture ending the Baltic venture."[16] So far, the Baltic Sea region, whatever and wherever it is, or was, did not succumb to a violent rupture. Rather, it seems dimmed and slowly fading away from wide-spread spatial imagination, provided that it had ever managed to penetrate it to an appreciable extent.

It remains nevertheless remarkable the degree to which political and scholarly enthusiasm for Baltic Sea "region building" converged. Given its setbacks and partial failures, we may conclude that it was of no great help for the achievement of the political goals that the "scholarly discussion about networks and regionalisation went hand in glove with the political vision."[17] That historians, geographers and political scientists granted such visions scholarly legitimacy was of no great help to academic research either. Constructivism, in fact, "becomes a critical force only when exercised from a rigid academic standpoint without prescriptive investment in the region-building enterprise itself."[18] This epistemological credo inspires the following pages, and the research effort of *Spaces of Expectation* as a whole.

14 J. Hackmann, History and politics in North Eastern Europe, in: D.J. Smith and M. Lehti (eds.), Post-Cold War Identity Politics: Northern and Baltic Experiences, London 2003, pp. 78-100, at 93.

15 I.B. Neumann, A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe, in: Review of International Studies 20 (1994), pp. 53–75, at 73.

16 O. Wæver, The Baltic Sea: A Region after Post-Modernity?, in P. Joenniemi (ed.), Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space Around the Baltic Rim, Stockholm 1997, pp. 293–342, at 306.

17 Stråth, The Baltic as Image, pp. 203–204.

18 Götz, Spatial Politics, p. 56.

From Isolation to Connectivity? The Views of the European Union on Mediterranean and Baltic Islands in the 20th and 21th Century

Deborah Paci

ABSTRACT

In Ostsee und Mittelmeer spielen Inseln eine wichtige Rolle bei der Umsetzung europäischer makroregionaler Strategien. Der Aufsatz untersucht, wie die EU an die Probleme von Inseln herangeht. Bis zu den Verträgen von Maastricht (1992) und Amsterdam (1997) wurden sie im Struktur- und regionalpolitischen Rahmen kaum beachtet. Seit die Insellage als gesondertes Problem anerkannt wird, bemisst die EU die „dauerhaften strukturellen Nachteile" von Inseln fast ausschließlich an ihrer Entfernung vom nationalen Festland. Demgegenüber haben die *Island Studies* der letzten Jahrzehnte unter Verweis auf die die Vielseitigkeit der Außenverflechtung von Inseln eine stärker Insel- und Netzwerkzentrierte Sichtweise gefordert. Wie die Autorin unterstreicht, schmälert das Beharren der EU auf einem Festlandzentrierten Ansatz das Potential, das durch den stärkeren Ausbau von Inselnetzwerken zur Geltung gebracht werden könnte.

Since the introduction of a macro-regional strategy, the European Union has highlighted the need to link island areas better with the mainland in order to find a remedy to the "permanent structural handicaps"[1] of islands. Declaration 30 of the Treaty of Amsterdam states that island regions suffer from "structural handicaps linked to their island status."[2]

1 A. D. Foschi, X. Peraldi and M. Rombaldi, Inter-island links in Mediterranean Short Sea Shipping Networks, Discussion Paper 52 (2005), pp. 1-27, http://www.ec.unipi.it/documents/Ricerca/papers/2005-52.pdf (accessed 18 January 2017).

2 European Union, Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts – Declarations adopted by the Conference – Declaration on

The aim of my investigation is to focus on European views regarding the Mediterranean and Baltic Islands. The Baltic Sea region and the Mediterranean Arc provide two interesting examples, as both represent a frontier zone the main feature of which is fluidity. This same fluidity characterizes the island world, confirming that the islands' prevailing trait is connectivity rather than isolation. In this paper, I will discuss the European Union's view of islands and the establishment of cooperation networks among them. My hypothesis is that the conceptual basis of the EU's island policies failed to appreciate both the potential and the challenges of connectivity, and insisted instead on educating the actors to behave according to traditional insularity schemes.

At first glance, islands appear to be isolated worlds by definition, that is, inward-looking and jealous of a cultural heritage that has stratified over time. Many of them have been frequently conquered, and represented a mirage for those who aspired to find a refuge or an idyllic place to establish experimental or utopian societies.[3] Although they have on occasion played a leading role in history,[4] island environments remained on the margins of historical reflection. It is only since the early 1990s, that island scholars inspired by the "spatial turn" in the social sciences have drawn attention to the need to shift the focus away from the continent.[5] In particular Godfrey Baldacchino called "for a recentering of the emphasis from mainland to island, away from the discourse of conquest of mainlanders, giving a voice to and a platform for the expression of island narratives."[6] Island scholars have begun to focus on the claim that islands should be studied on their own terms, and some have labelled this interdisciplinary field of study "nissology".

The idea of a new "island science" appeared for the first time in 1982 in *Nissonologie ou Science des îles* by the French sociologist Abraham André Moles.[7] Ten years later, researchers incorporated the concept into island studies,[8] and it was then that *nissologie*[9] or "nissology" emerged.[10] In 1994, Grant McCall proposed the latter concept to provide a better understanding of insular spaces and to encourage international cooperation and networking among islands.[11] One objective of nissology is to reverse the "continental

island regions, in: Official Journal C 340, 10 November 1997, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11997D/AFI/DCL/30 (accessed 17 January 2017).

3 See J.-C. Marimoutou and J.-M. Racault (eds.), L'insularité: thematique et representations, Paris 1995; M. Trabelsi (ed.), L'insularité, Clermont-Ferrand 2005.

4 F. Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1, Berkeley 1995, pp. 148-160.

5 See D. Paci, Spatial turn in history. La dimensione culturale e politica degli spazi insulari, in: M. Di Giacomo et al. (eds.), Piccole tessere di un grande mosaico. Nuove prospettive dei regional studies, Rome 2015, pp. 119-135.

6 G. Baldacchino, Studying Islands: On Whose Terms? Some Epistemological and Methodological Challenges to the Pursuit of Island Studies, in: Island Studies Journal 3 (2008) 1, p. 37, http://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-3-1-2008-Baldacchino-FINAL.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).

7 A. A. Moles, Nissonologie ou sciences des îles, in: L'Espace géographique 11 (1982) 4, pp. 281-289.

8 A. Vieira, The Islands: from Nissology to Nesology, in: Anuário do Centro de Estudos des História do Atlântico 2 (2010), p. 25.

9 C. Depraetere, Le phénomène insulaire à l'échelle du globe: tailles, hiérarchies et formes des îles océanes, in: L'Espace Géographique 2 (1990–1991), pp. 126-34.

10 G. McCall, Nissology: a proposal for consideration, in: Journal of the Pacific Society 17 (1994) 2-3, pp. 1-14.

11 Ibid., 2.

bias" and (re)place the study of islands by treating them as interconnected units of a "world archipelago."[12] As already stated, in parallel with this renewed attention to island spaces in the human and social sciences, since the 1990s there has also been a growing interest of the EU in this spatial reality. Conceptually, however, the EU policies almost ignored nissology, preferring a more traditional understanding of island realities.

1. The Views of the European Union on the island question

In the 1950s, at the time of the birth of the European Economic Community, the interest in island regions was virtually non-existent. The attention of the six-member Europe was exclusively addressed to the continent, as the CECA treaty of 1951 and the EEC treaty of 1957 prove. Although Italy only a few years earlier had granted autonomy status to its two major islands, Sicily and Sardinia, it showed no interest in raising the issue and claiming that the ECC should pay more attention to islands. In addition, Sicily and Sardinia lacked the legal capacity to intervene because their statutes included no provisions relating to international agreements.[13] The European Community only began to take into consideration the needs and requirements of islands in the course of the late 1980s, in a changing international context. During the two decades following the fall of the Iron Curtain, Europe's geography was characterized by the emergence of an integrated supranational economic and political space. Also the islands were involved into the integration effort that went under the name of macro-regions.[14] The European Union introduced a strategy based on these spatial entities with the intention of spreading the effects of economic development to the "periphery."[15]

The conditions that created an environment favourable for the establishment of EU island policies were on the one hand the upgrading of the regions to the position of active players on the European scene, which led to the creation of the Regional Committee in 1992; on the other – in close connection with the development of the regional policy – the granting of structural funds to "disadvantaged regions."[16] Following the creation of the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD) in 1975 and the introduction of the notion of "disadvantaged area" in agricultural regulations, the European Community acknowledged the existence of disadvantaged territories, which included islands, and dedicated certain resources – although these were still modest at the time – to remedying

12 C. Depraetere, The Challenge of Nissology. A Global Outlook on the World Archipelago. Part II: The Global and Scientific Vocation of Nissology, in: Island Studies Journal 3 (2008) 1, pp. 17-36, http://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-3-1-2008-Depraetere2-FINAL_0.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017); on the concept of world archipelago, see also M. Shell, Islandology. Geography, Rhetoric, Politics, Stanford 2014, p. 21.

13 J.-D. Hache (ed.), Quel statut pour les Îles d'Europe?, Paris 2000, p. 54.

14 See K. Mirwaldt, I. McMaster and J. Bachtler, The Concept of Macro-Regions: Practice and Prospects, Discussion Paper, Glasgow 2010, pp. 1-20, http://www.ostsam.no/file=18022 (accessed 17 January 2017).

15 N. Bellini and U. Hilpert (eds.), Europe's Changing Geography: The Impact of Inter-regional Networks, New York 2013.

16 Hache, Quel statut pour les Îles d'Europe?, p. 59.

these disparities.[17] The initiative by Greece proved to be decisive, because it enabled the island issue to be put on the agenda of the Intergovernmental Conference that prepared the Treaty of Amsterdam. France, Spain, and Portugal also coordinated a joint action in support of ultra-peripheral areas.[18]

The first reference to the social and economic constraints involving islands dates back to 1988, when, on the occasion of the Rhodes European Council, it was declared that "the European Council recognizes in particular the socio-economic problems of certain island regions in the Community. It therefore requests the Commission to examine these problems and submit, if appropriate, any proposals which it deems useful, within the financial possibilities offered by the Community's existing policies as they have been decided."[19] In 1992, Article 129b of the Maastricht Treaty determined that "within the framework of a system of open and competitive markets, action by the Community shall aim at promoting the interconnection and inter-operability of national networks as well as access to such networks. It shall take into account in particular of the need to link island, landlocked and peripheral regions with the central regions of the Community."[20]

It was however only in 1997 that the Amsterdam Treaty conceded that "island regions suffer from structural handicaps linked to their island status, the permanence of which impairs their economic and social development. The Conference accordingly acknowledges that Community legislation must take account of these handicaps and that specific measures may be taken, where justified, in favour of these regions in order to integrate them better into the internal market on fair conditions."[21]

The Amsterdam Treaty, which had the objective of lending support to sustainable development, corrected the policies that Europe had hitherto adopted towards islands. Thanks to this Treaty, insular spaces are since then seen as experiencing pronounced ecological, social, and economic vulnerabilities.[22] According to the European Commission, "institutional recognition of the problem of the islands is important because it opens up the possibility of establishing new European programmes centring on the reduction of 'permanent structural handicaps' and suggests that a special effort may be directed towards areas suffering from such structural handicaps linked to natural or geographic factors."[23]

The Treaty of Amsterdam confirmed that the perception of islands was changing, in the sense that they had become a "problem" which the EU intended to deal with on the supranational level: "the approach to islands can no longer rely on compliance with

17 Ibid., 57.
18 Ibid., 60.
19 European Council, Rhodes, 2 and 3 December, in: Bulletin of the European Communities 12 (1988), p. 10, http://aei.pitt.edu/1483/1/rhodes_june_1988.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).
20 Council of the European Communities, Treaty on European Union, Luxembourg 1992, p. 51, https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).
21 European Union, Treaty of Amsterdam.
22 E. Stratford, Islandness and struggles over development: A Tasmanian case study, in: Political Geography 27 (2008), pp. 160-175.
23 Foschi, Peraldi and Rombaldi, Inter-island links, p. 5.

domestic laws, which are the result of historic heritages; it must also be based on an acceptance of geographical evidence and of its socio-economic effect on islands."[24] Article 158 of the Amsterdam Treaty on cohesion policy refers directly to the necessity to reduce the "backwardness of the less favoured regions," which include islands.[25] As noted in Article 158 as well as in the 2002 publication "Off the Coasts of Europe" by the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions, European islands are considered to be areas of "backwardness" within the EU policy community.

According to the European Union, there are certain characteristics that are common to islands and which can affect the conditions for their development. These characteristics usually relate to their degree of "peripherality," which is associated with physical parameters such as insularity. As the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) admitted in 2011, this was the main reason why the characteristics of islands have usually been identified by use of the term "insularity" rather than "islandness,"[26] which is the notion preferred by recent scholarship in order to overcome the stereotypes of geographic isolation.[27]

Instead, the EU preferred "insularity" along with the formal definition by EUROSTAT, according to which an island is a piece of land with a surface area of at least one square kilometre, which is permanently inhabited by a statistically significant population (>50 inhabitants), not linked to the mainland by permanent structures, separated from the mainland by a stretch of water at least one kilometre wide, and does not host any state's capital city.[28] As François Taglioni observes, the attempt to objectify islands by using similar parameters is in fact an illustration of the arbitrary nature of the methodology employed.[29] One should note, for example, that this definition not only excludes island states from being considered to be islands,[30] it also implies that with "mainland" only the national reference territory is contemplated. The formal definition adopted by the EU seemed therefore not even to fully satisfy their own requirements of supranational and interregional governance.

This said, the EU has become an important source of funding for regions through its Structural Funds, and it has made special provisions for islands in its Treaty. The Union

24 Hache, Quel statut pour les Îles d'Europe?, p. 61.

25 Foschi, Peraldi and Rombaldi, Inter-island links, p. 5.

26 ESPON, The Development of the Islands – European Islands and Cohesion Policy (EUROISLANDS), Luxembourg 2013, p. 9, http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/Documents/Projects/TargetedAnalyses/EUROISLANDS/FinalReport_foreword_CU-16-11-2011.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).

27 E. Hepburn, Recrafting Sovereignty: Lessons from Small Island Autonomies?, in: A.-G. Gagnon and M. Keating, Political Autonomy and Divided Societies. Imagining Democratic Alternatives in Complex Settings, Basingstoke 2012, p. 126.

28 C. Panou et al., Universal service obligations in insular areas, Lyon 2007, p. 6.

29 F. Taglioni, Insularity, Political Status and small insular spaces, in: Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures 5 (2011) 2, p. 48, https://hal-univ-diderot.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00686053/document (accessed 17 January 2017).

30 S. Moncada et al., Islands at the Periphery: Integrating the Challenges of Island Sustainability into European Policy, in: European Documentation and Research Centre (ed.), Malta in the European Union: Five years on and looking to the Future, Msida 2009, p. 58, https://www.mepa.org.mt/file.aspx?f=2887 (accessed 17 January 2017).

distinguishes among three categories of islands: 1) islands that are part of "overseas countries and territories" (such as Greenland, French Polynesia, and Bermuda); 2) the "most remote regions", consisting of the French Overseas Departments, the Azores, Madeira, and the Canary Islands; and 3) continental EU islands. The cohesion policies insert the latter among the "regions with handicaps." According to the European Union, "territorial cohesion is about ensuring the harmonious development of all the European places and about making sure that their citizens are able to make the most of inherent features of theses territories."[31]

As affirmed in the preamble to Regulation 1080/2006, the European Regional Development Fund contributes to reducing the development gap by taking provisions for rural and urban areas, declining industrial regions, areas with a geographical or natural handicap, such as islands, mountainous areas, sparsely populated areas, and border regions.[32] Regulation 1698/2005, which supports rural development through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), states that special provisions should apply "to mitigate the specific constraints and structural problems in farming and forestry activities and in adding value to agricultural and forestry products as a result of remoteness, insularity or distant location and of the dependency of the rural economy on a limited number of agricultural products, and to promote a robust rural development policy (Article 60)."[33]

As Moncada, Camilleri, Formosa, and Galea have pointed out, "the European approach to islands may be characterised as incremental rather than comprehensive, and fragmented across a number of policy areas."[34] Almost all European island regions possess a legal status that recognizes their specificity. Today, island regions operate within the European geo-strategic context; decisions that affect them in many different ways are made not by their nation-state of belonging, but in Brussels.

The attention paid to island environments by community policies therefore embeds islands in a new context that to a certain extent seems to contradict their earlier "national" definition: "from being appendages of the states, they have become the periphery of a continent."[35] Whereas islands previously had to negotiate exclusively with a national power, they now have to deal with a supranational structure within which the political relationships and rules are different, or are yet to be established. While certain island environments in the Baltic Sea Region such as the Åland Islands were able to profit from their special status and obtain derogating provisions at the time of Finland's Accession Treaty, it was not possible for others to do the same. Brussels waived the provisions passed in this regard in the summer of 1999 with reference to the Member States of the European Union, and granted the Åland Islands the right to continue duty-free sales of

31 ESPON, The Development of the Islands – European Islands, p. 6.
32 Moncada et al., Islands at the Periphery, p. 57.
33 Ibid., 57.
34 Ibid., 58.
35 Hache, Quel statut pour les Îles d'Europe?, p. 77.

goods on the ships that connect the Archipelago to the mainland.[36] It also granted an exception to the right of domicile (*hembygdsrätt*) [37] in effect on the Åland Islands that contravenes the fundamental principles of the Community's legal system according to which any form of discrimination with regard to nationality or in the context of economic freedom is prohibited.[38]

Between 1991 and 1999, the Commission passed 838 measures on the Mediterranean islands, 184 of which concerned Corsica, followed by Sicily.[39] The EU island activism continued also in the new millennium. As André-Louis Sanguin has observed, the debates on European integration nevertheless reveal a bias in favour of the mainland. When island areas are considered, it is from a national or sector perspective that relates to issues such as fishing, transport, or the environment.[40] References in community legislation to the islands of the Mediterranean area are dominated by agricultural questions, while in the Baltic Sea area the interest in fishing prevails.[41] In all that the recognition of "insularity" as the problem constitutes a *conditio sine qua non* for requesting the enactment of measures to serve the specific needs of island areas. No wonder, then, that also the representatives of islands at the European Parliament conform to this thesis to enhance their bargaining power within the EU.

On 4 February 2016, Salvatore Cicu, the Sardinian MEP from the European People's Party (EPP), put forward a resolution on the insularity of Sicily and Sardinia, earning the support of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the European Green Party (EGP), the Confederal Group of the European United Left / Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL), and the Five Star Movement (M5S), which is part of the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) parliamentary group. The resolution passed with 495 out of 693 votes in favour. The statement by Cicu after the vote was significant: "this is an historic vote for Sicily and Sardinia which for the first time finally sees the island issue represented at a European level. […] The disadvantaged conditions in the two regions have now become concrete facts that will translate into new resources, more

36 G. Baldacchino and C. Pleijel, European Islands, Development and the Cohesion Policy: A Case Study of Kökar, Åland Islands, in: Island Studies Journal 5 (2010) 1, p. 91, http://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-5-1-2010-Baldacchino+Pleijel_0.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).

37 Possession of Ålandic regional citizenship confers voting rights and the right to sit in the Legislative Assembly, to own property, and to carry out a commercial activity. In order to acquire regional citizenship, it is necessary to be a Finnish citizen, to have lived on the Åland Islands for five years, and to demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of Swedish. Article 40 of the law on autonomy also establishes that teaching in schools financed by government funds must be in Swedish. By using this Article, the Ålandic authorities have the right to prevent the use of any other language except Swedish. See S. Spiliopoulou Åkermark (ed.), The Right of Domicile on Åland. A report from the seminar The right of domicile, the right of trade, citizens' rights – cornerstones of Åland's autonomy held in Helsinki on 14 June 2007, Mariehamn 2009; D. Paci, L'arcipelago della pace. Le isole Åland e il Baltico (XIX-XXI sec.), Milan 2016, pp. 193-197.

38 Hache, Quel statut pour les Îles d'Europe?, p. 157.

39 J.-P. Pellegrinetti and A. Rovere, La Corse et la République. La vie politique de la fin du second Empire au début du XXIe siècle, Paris 2004, p. 634.

40 A.-L. Sanguin, Périphéricité et ultrapériphéricité insulaires dans l'Union européenne, in: L'Espace politique 2 (2007) 2, p. 1, http://espacepolitique.revues.org/857 (accessed 17 January 2017)..

41 Hache, Quel statut pour les Îles d'Europe?, p. 65.

opportunities, and more rights. […] Thanks to this decision, which has been passed with a large majority, it will be easy to overcome the legislative obstacles created by the guarantees of the freedom of competition with a principle of territorial continuity: for example, the transport systems of Sicily and Sardinia will finally be entitled to the economic benefits that they require to cover a geographical gap without encountering EU bans."[42] Moreover, in consideration of this acknowledgement, Cicu demanded the creation of "a homogeneous group made up of all island territories," the adoption of new statistical indicators in addition to GDP, and an accurate analysis of the additional costs borne by islands.[43]

Given that from a EU perspective the underdevelopment of islands is caused by geographical isolation, the ultimate resolution of their specific problems would be achieved by creating a "geographical continuity"[44] that "bridges" the distance, both in a literal sense, through the implementation of infrastructure and metaphorically, through the provision of more funding. In an TV interview during the election campaign of February 2008, the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi gave the following answer to a question by a journalist regarding his plans to build a bridge across the Straits of Messina: "I promise the Sicilian people that one of the first things that we will do when we return to government will be to begin the construction of the bridge across the Straits, which is the only major project able to make Sicily fully part of Italy, and Sicilians completely Italian."[45]

By relying on the concept of "insularity" and its underlying geographical determinism, the European Union can present itself as a "charitable" institution ready to intervene with the provision of structural funds in order to satisfy the requests of their inhabitants. In this way the structural funds fuel an insularist mentality, and the propensity of island residents to over-cultivate their insular specificities in order to confirm a particular cultural identity that legitimates their claims for specific benefits.[46] However, in the effort of the construction of an insular identity a variable linked to the island imaginary comes into play that "does not determine, but contours and conditions physical and social events in distinct, and distinctly relevant, ways," as Baldacchino explains.[47] In other words, "islandness" rather than just "insularity" co-determines de facto the political negotiation, whatever the prevalent rhetoric of this negotiation may consist of. The

42 Ue, approvata la risoluzione Cicu sull'insularità: "Un voto storico per Sardegna e Sicilia", in: L'Unione Sarda.it 6 February 2016, http://www.unionesarda.it/articolo/politica_italiana/2016/02/04/ue_passa_la_mozione_di_salvatore_cicu_sull_insularit_un_voto_stor-1-465287.html (accessed 17 January 2017).

43 Ibid.

44 See A. Vieira, Il discorso dell'anti-insularità e il poio maderense come sua negazione, in: Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea 27 (2016) 3, pp. 6-7, http://www.studistorici.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/15_VIEIRA.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).

45 Berlusconi promette il ponte sullo Stretto, 22 February 2008, http://www.lasiciliaweb.it/articolo/2122/italia/ (accessed 17 January 2017).

46 R. Brunet, R. Ferras and H. Théry (eds.), Les mots de la géographie. Dictionnaire critique, Paris 1992.

47 G. Baldacchino, The Coming of Age of Island Studies, in: Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie 95(2004) 3, p. 278.

interplay between both dimensions can be observed also in the case of political networking among Mediterranean and Baltic Sea islands.

2. Networking in the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea Islands

As already mentioned, the admission of regions to the Union's multi-level governance framework, sanctioned by the creation of the Committee of Regions in 1994 and by the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, represented a turning point also for the island areas whose specific features were now officially recognized. Of course, this was the result of efforts with a longer history. During the first twenty years after the establishment of the European Community, Europe's peripheral and ultra-peripheral islands remained in a kind of political and legal "no man's land."[48] The European island environments began to secure some political recognition since 1973, following the creation of the European Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions in Saint-Malo that year. Today CPMR unites one hundred fifty-nine regions across twenty-nine countries to foster the development of Europe's peripheral regions and represents their interests in the European arena.[49] It is subdivided into six geographical committees: Atlantic Arc, Balkan and Black Sea, Islands, Inter-Mediterranean, Baltic Sea and North Sea.

The creation in 1980 of an Islands Commission within the context of CPMR put a new focus on the centre/periphery and mainland/island binomials. The Commission includes all the islands in Europe plus the Isle of Man, with the aim of refuting the idea that "island" must be a synonym of "isolation." Since the 1990s it operates within an institutional context characterized by the principle of multilevel governance which provides for the sharing of decision-making among various institutional actors at different levels – local, national, and regional. The affirmation of this principle made it necessary to adopt a special legal framework for islands, which decided to group together and fight for their rights and their identity within the European Community, in order to emancipate themselves from their subordinate status in relation to the national mainland powers.[50]

The InterReg cross-border cooperation programmes are three: the first one between the South of Corsica and the North of Sardinia; the second one between the South of Corsica and the North of Sardinia on the one hand, and between the North of Corsica and Tuscany on the other; the third one between Corsica, Tuscany, and Sardinia. They pursue the objective of integrating regions and making them reciprocally complementary in accordance with the principle expressed in the document entitled *Europe 2000+. Cooperation for European Territorial Development*. Based on this document, European policy must promote spatial, social, and economic cohesion at a regional level by taking actions to protect the most depressed areas. These actions relate to the protection of the environment and cultural herit-

48 Sanguin, Périphéricité et ultrapériphéricité insulaires, p. 15.

49 Y.-W. Chen, Transnational Cooperation of Ethnopolitical Mobilization: A Survey Analysis of European Ethnopolitical Groups, New York 2009, p. 153.

50 Hache, Quel statut pour les Îles d'Europe?, pp. 29-79.

age.[51] The development plan for Corsica, which was adopted on 29 September 1983 by the Corsican Assembly, drew attention to the function of the island as a "natural bridge" between mainland Italy and Sardinia. The document included an invitation to the South of Corsica to create cultural and commercial links with Catalonia, the island of Majorca and the Arab world, the aim being that it should one day become a hub for the exchange and circulation of ideas and people in the western Mediterranean.[52]

On 17 November 1987, the Conference of Islands of the Peripheral Maritime Regions was created within the Strasbourg Parliament with the aim of promoting dialogue among groups with shared interests. Created on the initiative of the Vice-President of the European Democratic Group, the Corsican MEP François Musso, the Conference of Islands of the Peripheral Maritime Regions focuses on issues such as energy, taxation, and the environment.[53] The objective was to obtain the same provisions of support and assistance that certain ultra-peripheral islands, such as the Overseas Department, the Azores, Madeira, and the Canary Islands, enjoyed thanks to the POSEI programme.[54] The thesis behind these initiatives was, once again, that all islands have fallen behind in their development due to their insular situation. With the usual accent laid on a supposed fragility caused by insularity as such, other specific programmes were implemented; the 1995 Special Programme on Remoteness and Insularity for Corsica (POSEICOR) is one example.[55]

In a speech delivered in Ajaccio in 1989, the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, issued an invitation to "create a general contextualisation that would permit islands to overcome their natural handicaps."[56] In 1995, Lino Briguglio, Director of the Island and Small States Institute at the University of Malta, drew up a vulnerability index based on economic, physical, cultural, and human parameters associated with the fragility of islands. This index was adopted in its entirety by the Economic and Social Council of the Assembly-General of the United Nations.[57] An official report based on that index was prepared for the session of 6 April 1998.[58]

It was in this framework that in the mid-1990s the islands of the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea areas began to formulate new cooperation strategies in order to attain a more central position within the new geopolitical scenarios created after the end of the bipolar world and the acceleration of the European integration and enlargement process. They

51 S. Dühr, C. Colomb and V. Nadin, European Spatial Planning and Territorial Cooperation, London 2010, pp. 201-202.

52 C. Olivesi, La Corse et la construction européenne, in: Annuaire des collectivités locales 15 (1995) 1, p. 55, http://www.persee.fr/doc/coloc_0291-4700_1995_num_15_1_1184 (accessed 17 January 2017).

53 Ibid., 58-59.

54 Ibid., 59.

55 Ibid., 57.

56 Sanguin, Périphéricité et ultrapériphéricité insulaires, p. 15.

57 L. Briguglio, Small Island Developing States and Their Economic Vulnerabilities, in: World Development 23 (1995) 9, pp. 1615-1632, https://secure.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/147257/SIDS_and_their_ecn_vulnerability_Index.pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).

58 United Nations General Assembly, Development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States, Report of the Secretary-General, 6 February 1998, http://islands.unep.ch/d98-vul.htm (accessed 17 January 2017).

underlined that in view of the increasing role of the maritime spaces it was important to bring islands together to address common concerns and challenges. In analogy to the insularity/islandness theoretical divide, from an analytical viewpoint we can interpret this type of argumentation as an example for the social and symbolic practices developed in relation to the sea which have been delineated by the Brazilian anthropologist Manuel Diegues.[59] Here the accent is on the sea space as a connecting medium, whereas the insularity-related paradigm points out the "objective" problems created by the physical presence of water around islands. Island networks can be seen as a synergetic fund raising effort of a sum of "disadvantaged" territories, or as a synergy effort of populations that practically redefines the maritime space they inhabit, placing their islands at its centre.

The end of the Cold War divisions brought new opportunities for cooperation among the islands of the Baltic Sea Region. The idea of regional cooperation attracted a number of different political, social, and economic actors. The demise of communism provoked a redefinition and rewriting of the narratives associated with the Baltic Sea Region. The establishment of contacts with countries formerly belonging to the communist bloc, and their future integration, was presented as a historical necessity.[60] In the process of regional integration, region-building narratives of the past sought to overcome the image of the Baltic Sea as an area conflict, proposing instead cooperation as the common denominator of regional identity.[61] No wonder, then, that also the idea of networks was proposed as a characteristic feature of the Baltic Sea area's past and future, and that the enhancement of island was put on the political agenda. Since 1989, the seven largest islands, that is, Gotland, Öland, Åland, Hiiumaa, Saaremaa, Rügen, and Bornholm, collaborated on issues of common interest creating the B7 Baltic Seven Islands Network, which Bornholm and Öland however decided to leave in 2014, since they did not see the benefits of their inclusion now that according to one of the B7 founders and prominent personalities of Öland, Jörgen Samuelsson, the EU's interest in cooperation in the Baltic had faded in favour of North-South and East-West cooperation.[62]

Samuelsson's critique indicates that the local elites of the Baltic Sea islands expect that the islands' specific problems can be resolved mainly through an island-centred approach and a more autonomously acting intra-island cooperation, a view that comes close to the proposals developed by academic island studies. The B7 organization states that its cooperation "has contributed to putting the islands more in control of their own destiny. Through an exchange of experience, lobbying, and projects, B7 cooperation has helped

59 A. C. Diegues, Ilhas e mares: simbolismo e imaginario, São Paulo 1998, p. 259. See also M. Grzechnik and H. Hurskainen (eds.), Beyond the sea. Reviewing the manifold dimensions of water as barrier and bridge, Vienna 2015.

60 See N. Götz (ed.), The Sea of Identities. A Century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class and Gender, Huddinge 2014; N. Götz. Spatial Politics & Fuzzy Regionalism. The case of the Baltic Sea area, in: Baltic Worlds 9 (2016) 3-4, pp. 55-67.

61 See M. Grzechnik, Making Use of the Past: The Role of Historians in Baltic Sea Region Building, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 43 (2012) 3, pp. 329-343.

62 M. Ståhl, Öland lämnar B7-samarbetet, in: Ölandsbladet 16 December 2014, http://www.olandsbladet.se/ettan/oland-lamnar-b7-samarbetet/ (accessed 5 February 2017).

make the islands more resilient and their populations richer, smarter, and happier."[63] It is true that the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region was a way to reposition the North of the Western European countries after the Cold War, and that island networks fitted with this objective of continental actors. What matters to the B7 islanders, however, is to perceive themselves as members of a group and to achieve the external recognition of the group's existence. These aspects have become crucial for the development of a collective island identity.

In regard to the Mediterranean islands, it is worth looking at IMEDOC, a network that since 1995 has united the western Mediterranean islands (the Balearic Islands, Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily) in order to create a "shared mouthpiece for the islands of the Mediterranean."[64] IMEDOC's main goals are to promote shared interests by ensuring that their status as islands is recognised at the European level; to share experiences among regional administrations; to carry out coordinated activities undertaken by the political and economic actors; to encourage economic, social, and cultural cooperation among islands aimed at the defence of their special island status; and to support projects in a variety of spheres, such as transport and communication, infrastructure, tourism, environment, fishing, and business development.[65] IMEDOC's objective is therefore to create "an area of stable cooperation for the exchange of experiences and the promotion of their shared interests in the European Union,"[66] so as to draw the European Union's attention to the needs of island environments in the hope that the island dimension is present in Community policies. As Farhad Daftary has pointed out, the network has attempted to lobby the European Union to attend to the critical situation in Europe's Mediterranean islands, seeking EU structural funds to facilitate the development of peripheral regions.[67]

In 2010 within the framework of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) another network of the "Mediterranean Archipelago" was established, the acronym of which is ARCHIMED. It was founded by the governments of the Balearic Islands, the Region of Sicily, the District of Larnaca, while Crete joined it later. The aims of this partnership differ little from those of IMEDOC. Notwithstanding the late lip services paid to the "archipelago" concept, the overall route taken by IMEDOC reveals a tendency of the Mediterranean islands' local elites to plainly adapt to the EU's "insularity" paradigm, differently from their northern peers. As the resolution presented by MEP Cicu shows, their chief concern remains to receive assistance by the continental centre. The frequent underlining of their islands' "mediterraneaness" is functional to that effort,

63 B7 Baltic Islands, B7 Info, http://www.b7.org/ (accessed 17 January 2017); see also B7 Baltic Islands, B7 25. 25 years of the B7 Baltic Islands Network, 2014, https://issuu.com/pelagis/docs/b7-25_brochure_pages (accessed 17 January 2017).

64 Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, Imedoc, http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/resources/projects/projects/project/show/imedoc/ (accessed 17 January 2017).

65 Ibid.

66 Olivesi, La Corse et la construction européenne, p. 55.

67 F. Daftary, Experimenting with Territorial Administrative Autonomy in Corsica: Exception or Pilot Region, in: International Journal on Minority and Group Rights 15 (2008) 2, pp. 273-312.

as it suggests that "aid from Brussels" is a fair reparation for the disadvantages suffered from the economic and political hegemony of Protestant northern European countries.

3. Archipelagos in a sea of problems

The concept of "archipelago" introduces an aspect that the EU policies seem to have underestimate for a long time. The words "isolation" and "insular" derive from the Latin word for island, *insula*, whereas the Greek word "for island is *nissos* or *nesos*, etymologically rooted in *nau-, meaning ship, and related to navigation of vehicles."[68] One may say that the insularity concept prevailing in EU policies preferred the Latin meaning over the Greek one. This is not just an academic question without practical relevance. In fact, it is in the practical dimension that all islands prove to be both, isolated *insula* and connected *nesos*. In the Mediterranean, the recent humanitarian emergency caused by waves of mass immigration has revealed how mistaken it is to treat islands only as isolated spaces.

Under the impact of geopolitical tensions and dramatic migration movements, the Mediterranean *mare nostrum* turned out to be perceived as a *mare aliorum*.[69] Also the islands in the Mediterranean have became "fortresses" unprepared to cope with the flow of migrants. They are located along migratory routes that are fluid and continuously recomposed by specific events, such as wars or agreements between countries regarding migration controls. According to Nathalie Bernardie-Tahir and Camille Schmoll, the islands are therefore at the centre of a media-driven social construction of an immigration imaginary that emphasises the aspects of the humanitarian crises. The same media delineate new "geographies of fear" in the European public opinion.[70] Islands, which are a perfect "geographical laboratory," take on the appearance of places where frontier impacts are crystallized. They fall within the complex dynamics of the "teichopolitique"[71] – a neologism coined by Florine Ballif and Stéphane Rosière to denote space control policies originating from the idea that the construction of barriers is sufficient to counter the undesired effects of "liquid modernity."[72] Europe represents a dual division between the territories located on the periphery of the Schengen area – that is, the Mediterranean

68 E. Clark and L. Clark, Isolating connections –connecting isolations, in: Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography 91 (2009) 4, p. 315, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0467.2009.00324.x/pdf (accessed 17 January 2017).

69 C. Fogu, From Mare Nostrum to Mare Aliorum: Mediterranean Theory and Mediterraneism in Contemporary Italian Thought, in: California Italian Studies Journal 1 (2010) 1, pp. 1-23.

70 N. Bernardie-Tahir and C. Schmoll, Iles, frontières et migrations méditerranéennes: Lampedusa et les autres, in: L'Espace politique 25 (2015) 1, p. 4, https://espacepolitique.revues.org/3333 (accessed 17 January 2017).

71 F. Ballif and S. Rosière, Le défi des «teichopolitiques». Analyser la fermeture contemporaine des territoires, in: L'Espace géographique 38 (2009) 3, pp. 193-206, https://www.cairn.info/revue-espace-geographique-2009-3-page-193.htm (accessed 17 January 2017).

72 Z. Bauman, Liquid Modernity, Cambridge 2000.

islands, which perform the function of "guards and prisons,"[73] and the territories in which migrants aspire to settle.[74]

As Paolo Cuttitta has shown, the island of Lampedusa has come to be seen in Europe as the perfect symbol of the Euro-Mediterranean border; after 2011, with the Arab Spring, the Sicilian island has become also an open-air prison.[75] The "frontierization" process means that islands such as Lampedusa and Lesbos form the stage on which the "society of the spectacle"[76] mounts its "border show" on mass invasion, hospitality, rejection, and humanitarian emergency. The political and media discourse depicts a permanent state of emergency that generates feelings of solidarity with the island's population. On 5 July 2004 the then President of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, awarded the towns and ports of Lampedusa and Linosa a gold medal for civil merits for the humanity shown in coping with the emergency. The then President of the Region of Sicily, Salvatore Cuffaro, stressed "the example of the civility of the Sicilians."[77] Lesbos and Lampedusa were recently proposed for the Nobel Peace prize.[78] In a world characterized by what Manuel Castells calls "the information age" and "the network society,"[79] islands have become essential components of the "world archipelago"[80] suggested by Christian Depraetere.

4. Conclusions

As we have seen, the EU's growing attention towards island areas coincided with the shift of island studies from a "continental" view to the full appreciation of island centrality. However, this coincidence remained only chronological. While the EU policies led to an increasing mobilization of resources, they remained tightly linked to the insularity paradigm. According to the emerging discipline of island studies, the isolation felt by islanders is not due to the physical separation from a mainland as such, but to the perception of their concrete living conditions as disadvantageous due to a more complex entanglement. Although the EU policies evolved from the earlier view on islands as mere territorial appendixes of national territories that were handicapped by their physical separation, to a supranational view that mobilizes the island worlds in the effort of interregional integration and region building, the connectivity of islands appears to be constantly underestimated, both as a potential for the development of more seaward and

73 L. Lemaire, Islands and a carceral environment. Maltese policy in terms of irregular migration, in: Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies 12 (2014) 2, pp.143-160.

74 Bernardie-Tahir and Schmoll, Iles, frontières et migrations méditerranéennes, p. 7.

75 P. Cuttitta, Lo spettacolo del confine: Lampedusa tra produzione e messa in scena della frontiera, Milan 2012.

76 G. Debord, The society of the spectacle, New York 1995.

77 Immigrazione. Cuffaro: "Dal popolo siciliano esempio di civiltà", 5 July 2004, http://www.regione.sicilia.it/presidenza/UfficioStampa/2004/luglio/riconoscimentoimmigrazione.htm (accessed 17 January 2017).

78 F. Gatti, Nobel per la Pace a Lampedusa e Lesbo: perché l'appello di Rosi va sostenuto, in: L'Espresso 22 February 2016, http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2016/02/22/news/premio-nobel-agli-abitanti-di-lampedusa-l-appello-di-rosi-e-l-espresso-1.251430 (accessed 17 January 2017).

79 M. Castells, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, 3 vols, Oxford 2009.

80 Depraetere, The Challenge of Nissology.

outward looking economic and cultural initiatives and for the prevention of tensions and crises that manifest themselves on the islands not because of their isolation, but because of their connectedness.

As long as the island networks are not fully recognized as "archipelagos" that possess their own endogenous synergies, but continue to be seen as a sum of problematic "insularities" that merit charitable help from the centre, their potential of synergetic development will hardly be fully exploited. Especially in the Mediterranean both European and local decision makers abstain so far from adopting a more island-centred and connectivity-oriented approach that would improve the obsolete internal infrastructures of great islands such as Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, incentivize intra-islands transport and communication networks, and foster common marketing initiatives in tourism, wine and food production under a "Mediterranean Islands" brand, and so on. But as long as the term "insularity" recurs in official documents and the eligibility of islands for funding hinges on the assumption that their physical condition is responsible for their delay in socio-economic development, especially in the Mediterranean the islanders and their representatives all-to-easily adjust to the EU terminology, and probably also to the related way of thinking and behaving. The same can be said of the "predictable surprise" regarding the migration crisis. Here, again, it should have been considered long ago that a sea not only separates islands from the mainland, but also connects them to realities inside and outside national and continental borders. A major awareness that these borders remain physically and conceptually fluid, and require permanent negotiation and legitimisation, could help a better handling and prevention of crises.

Space of Failed Expectations? Building a Baltic Sea Region after the End of the Cold War

Marta Grzechnik

ABSTRACT

Nach dem Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs richteten sich viele Bemühungen darauf, die Ostseeregion als einheitlich gestaltete und gelebte Region zu etablieren. Politische und akademische Akteure arbeiteten gezielt und nicht ohne Erfolg an der Verbreitung grenzüberwindender Kategorien. Dies geschah nicht nur theoretisch, sondern auch praktisch in dem Sinne, dass sich grenzübergreifende Netzwerke herausgebildet haben, in denen der Transfer von Ideen bezüglich der „Ostseeregion" reibungslos funktioniert. Die nähere Untersuchung dieser und anderer im 20. Jh. gegründeter Netzwerke zeigt allerdings, dass sie oft nicht die ganze Region umspannen, über die sie reden und die sie erreichen möchten. Der vorliegende Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit den Grenzen der Übertragbarkeit von Ideen über die „Ostseeregion" und stellt sich der Herausforderung, diese Grenzen zu erklären und zu verstehen.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain, a time of new hope came to the Baltic Sea region: hope for a Europe free of the divisions of the Cold War. Where the Iron Curtain had once descended, a new kind of space was being imagined: a space of cooperation and integration; thus, a number of political, scholarly and other projects were being developed which were expected to transform these imaginations into reality. This was helped by the spread in research of approaches favouring border-defying categories, not only as the object of research but also its result, in the sense of connecting regions by networks centred on the transfer of ideas and common regional concepts between scholars.[1]

1 See O. Wæver, From Nordism to Baltism, in: S. Jervell, M. Kukk, and P. Joenniemi (eds.), The Baltic Sea. A Region in the Making, Karlskrona 1992, pp. 26–38; O. Wæver, Nordic Nostalgia: Northern Europe after the Cold War, in: International Affairs 68 (1992), 1, pp. 77–102.

Such approaches were expected to overcome the hegemony of the nation-state approach. Maritime regions have often been defined as networks of interactions and transfers, and their histories as transnational ones. The Baltic Sea region, an example of such a region, thus became a space of expectations.

Yet, in the case of the Baltic Sea regionalism, the transfer of ideas across the region has not been complete. Despite it being quite a compact region geographically, the visions and expectations of its future and its integration have varied considerably. In the present article, my aim is to discuss how these differing expectations were spread across the Baltic Sea region, but also to examine the surprising absence of the transfer of ideas and the challenges of making sense of this absence. This, in turn, leads to questions about the limits of region-building, the creation of collective identities, and the diffusion of ideas in this region, and finally, the question as to whether the Baltic Sea region can be considered a place of failed expectations.

1. Theoretical considerations: alternatives to the nation-state as a unit of analysis

In the age of globalization, it has been argued that the usefulness of the nation-state as the main unit of historical analysis had outlived its usefulness. Connections, exchange, multi-sided flows of influences and trends came to be seen as being able to tell us more about the world in which networks spreading beyond state borders were – and still are, in many respects – expected to replace the dominant framework of the nation state, and in which the mobility of people, ideas and goods is ever increasing. Some proclaimed the decline of the nation-state; its functions were to be taken over by other frameworks, and its power by other levels of governance, both higher and lower: local, regional, transnational and global.

Approaches focusing on transfers, exchange, circulation etc. have been proposed to depict this new kind of world and its new ways of thinking about human societies and their connections. One example is transnational, or cross-national history. As Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor define it, this type of history "seeks to understand reciprocal influences, as well as the ways in which the act of transplantation itself changes the topic under study."[2] The related approach of *Transfergeschichte* (history of transfers) concentrates on the process of spreading of knowledge and ideas across national borders,[3] while *histoire croisée* (entangled history), as developed by Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, refers to the notion of looking at the past as a dynamic process of many-sided interactions which brings changes to all the sides of these interactions, but also to

2 D. Cohen and M. O'Connor, Introduction, in: D. Cohen and M. O'Connor (eds.), Comparison and History. Europe in Cross-national Perspective, New York/London 2004, pp. ix–xxiv, at xiixii.

3 Ibid.

the process itself, and in some cases also to the act of looking – in other words, to the researcher her-/himself.[4]

Another way to attempt to overcome the hegemony of the nation state is to take into consideration the arena in which the process of interactions takes place, with the assumption that this arena no longer has to be the nation state. The interactions occur on the peripheries of the nation-state, in its parts and across its borders. An alternative as the unit of analysis is thus proposed: a region. This category has enjoyed increased popularity, not only in historical studies, since the end of the Cold War, reflecting the disappearance of the bi-polar world order of two competing political blocks. As a response, an idea of "new regionalism" was proposed by Björn Hettne. According to Hettne, new regionalism – as opposed to the old, Cold War regionalism – is characterised, among other features, by being the result of bottom-up, multidimensional processes as well as an alternative both to the bipolarity of the Cold War and the dominance of nation states; at the same time, it is also an answer to the challenges of globalisation.[5]

Definitions, contents and the shape of regions have also been subjects of scholarly disputes.[6] A region can be understood as a part of a state, a grouping of several nation states (e.g. the European Union) or a cross-border region that includes parts of neighbouring nation states. Its borders can be defined by geographical, political, cultural, and other features. Often, however, it remains a question of applying and combining various geographical, political, economic, cultural, religious, linguistic etc. categories that converge to form a region of fluid, and sometimes contested, borders. Historical regions are examples of this, and attempts to define them usually include discussions of identities, memories, shared – or conflicting – narratives, various cultural markers, and even the name of the region itself, which also to some extent defines its nature[7]. Historical regions are, therefore, often defined in terms of networks of interactions and transfers, and their histories as transnational ones.

2. The Baltic Sea region as a space of expectations: the perspective from its north-western shore

As mentioned above, the Baltic Sea region became a popular unit of scholarly analysis in the 1990s, following the fall of the Iron Curtain, because it illustrated emerging

4 M. Werner and B. Zimmermann, Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity, in: History and Theory 45 (2006), pp. 30–50.

5 B. Hettne, Globalization and the New Regionalism: The Second Great Transformation, in: B. Hettne, A. Inotai, and O. Sunkel (eds.), Globalism and the New Regionalism, Basingstoke 1999, pp. 1–24.; L.-K. Williams, The Baltic Sea Region: Forms and Functions of Regional Co-operation, Gdańsk, Berlin 2001.

6 See M. Grzechnik, Regional Histories and Historical Regions. The Concept of the Baltic Sea Region in Polish and Swedish Historiography, Frankfurt 2012, p. 12.

7 See K. Gerner, How to Construct a Baltic History?, in: W. Maciejewski (ed.), The Baltic Sea Region. Cultures, Politics, Societies, Uppsala 2002, pp. 50–54; Grzechnik, Regional Histories, pp. 16–20; J. Hackmann and R. Schweitzer, Introduction. North Eastern Europe as a Historical Region, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 33 (2002) 4, pp. 361–68; M. Lehti, Mapping the Study of the Baltic Sea Area: From Nation-centric to Multinational History, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 33 (2002) 4, pp. 431–46.

opportunities for cooperation in the region. Europe, including the Baltic Sea region, entered this decade with a new hope for a continent free of the divisions of the preceding decades, a hope inspired by the disappearance of the most dominant, in the second half of the twentieth century, of such divisions. The Baltic Sea region, until recently cut in half by the Iron Curtain, thus became the favoured unit of historical analysis. It was felt that past connections and networks, trade and dynastic links, political, social, and economic processes that could only now, after eliminating the harsh political divisions and discarding the nation-state bias, get scholars' attention and thus be fully explored, created a historical narrative of an entirely new kind.

In this way, the Baltic Sea regionalism became an alternative to the nation state in more than one sense. The political transformations encouraged approaches favouring border-defying categories such as transfer and entanglement, not only as the object of research but also its result, in the sense of connecting the region through a network of transfers of ideas and common regional concepts between scholars. The region thus became the very tangible manifestation of Werner's and Zimmermann's *histoire croisée* proposition in which the object of study changes the one undertaking the studying. The scholarly cooperation across borders resulted in the setup of centres for Baltic Sea studies, institutions conducting research and facilitating the exchange of ideas in the region. An epistemic region came into being.

Let us recall here some examples of this cooperation. In 1991 a Baltic University Programme was launched. It is an international programme of cooperation between universities and other institutions of higher education in the region, coordinated at Uppsala University. According to the programme's website, it "focuses on questions of sustainable development, environmental protection, and democracy in the Baltic Sea region,"[8] however in some publications it has also dealt with questions of the region's history. Two examples are: a booklet entitled *Baltic Empires* published in a series called "Peoples of the Baltic,"[9] and a volume *The Baltic Sea Region. Culture, politics, societies,* which dealt with themes of history and culture, development of democracy, society and economy in the region.[10] *Östersjöstiftelsen* (The Baltic Sea Foundation), initiated in 1994 by the Swedish government, funds research projects on subjects concerning the Baltic Sea region.[11] Related to the foundation is a Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), which has existed since 2005 at Södertörn University in Stockholm; it conducts research on the region, organises conferences, workshops, and other forms of academic exchange.[12] Another example available until summer 2016, were Visby scholarships offered by the

8 Baltic University Programme, About BUP, http://www.balticuniv.uu.se/index.php/about-us (accessed 13 July 2016)..

9 K. Gerner and K.-G. Karlsson, Baltic Empires: The Baltic Region in a Macro-Historical Perspective, Uppsala 1993.

10 W. Maciejewski (ed.), The Baltic Sea Region: Cultures, Politics, Societies, Uppsala 2002.

11 Östersjöstiftelsen, Om Östersjöstiftelsen, http://ostersjostiftelsen.se/om-ostersjostiftelsen (accessed 13 July 2016)..

12 Ninna Mörner, CBEES – About Us, http://www.sh.se/p3/ext/content.nsf/aget?open&key=about_us_1301902860317 (accessed 13 July 2016)..

Swedish Institute to researchers at doctoral and post-doctoral levels, aiming to strengthen cooperation and build relations in the region.[13]

These and other programmes, as well as workshops, seminars, and conferences organised by them and other research institutions since the 1990s, created a new kind of network, new entanglements in the region, which to an extent have transformed both the object of research – the region – and the researchers. The researchers have been changed in the sense that the Baltic Sea region has become an established framework in which scholarly cooperation and scholarly investigation take place. The ways of conceptualising their object of study have been changed, the pool of possible and popular – not to say fashionable – subjects now include the Baltic Sea region. The networks and connections of academic cooperation in the region have been changed as well. Here, however, the limits of these networks can be found, which will be discussed in the next section.

The region has been transformed in the sense that, to a certain degree, it had to be "written into existence," to use Iver Neumann's expression. According to Neumann, "[t]he existence of regions is preceded by the existence of region-builders, political actors who, as part of some political project, imagine a certain spatial and chronological identity for a region, and disseminate this imagined identity to others."[14] Not only political actors but also scholars undertook the role of "region-builders," responsible for providing a common identity based on – among other things – the common past, the sense of which was to be provided by historical narratives about the Baltic Sea region.[15] These narratives came in the form of books, articles, and chapters aiming both to present the region's history and discuss the usefulness of such history to regional integration. Again, some examples can be quoted: the two-volume history of the "Baltic World" from 1492 to 1993 by the British historian David Kirby,[16] the Finnish historian Matti Klinge's *Itämeren maailma* (The Baltic World), published in several languages of the Baltic Sea region and beyond (English, German, Swedish, French, Polish, Lithuanian),[17] and *Nordens Medelhav. Östersjöområdet som historia, myt och projekt* (The Mediterranean of the North. The

13 Svenska Institutet, Visbyprogrammet, https://si.se/verksamhetsomraden/stipendier-och-bidrag/visbyprogrammet/ (accessed 13 July 2016). Interestingly, the programme's definition of the Baltic Sea region seemed to be very broad, as scholarships were offered to applicants not only from littoral states of the Baltic Sea, but also Belarus, Georgia and Moldova (Visby Programme Scholarships for PhD Studies and Postdoctoral Research, Study in Sweden, https://studyinsweden.se/scholarship/visby-programme-scholarships-for-phd-studies-and-post-doctoral-research/ (accessed 13 July 2016)). Since summer 2016, however, the programme changed focus, and is now directed to countries of the EU's eastern near abroad: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine (Visby Programme Scholarships for PhD Studies and Postdoctoral Research, Study in Sweden, https://studyinsweden.se/scholarship/visby-programme-scholarships-for-phd-studies-and-postdoctoral-research/ (accessed 7 December 2016)).

14 I. B. Neumann, A Region-building Approach to Northern Europe, in: Review of International Studies 20 (1994) 1, pp. 53–74, at 58.

15 See M. Grzechnik, Making Use of the Past: The Role of Historians in the Baltic Sea Region Building, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 43 (2012) 3, pp. 329–343, at 339–341.

16 D. Kirby, Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period: The Baltic World 1492–1772, London 1990; D. Kirby, The Baltic World 1772–1993: Europe's Northern Periphery in an Age of Change, London 1995.

17 M. Klinge, Itämeren Maailma, Helsinki 1995.

Baltic Sea region as history, myth, and project) by Swedish historians Kristian Gerner, Klas-Göran Karlsson and Anders Hammarlund.[18]

How successful these projects and publications were in the region-building task is a matter of debate. However, whatever the idea's success in terms of creating identities or lasting co-operation, the fact is that the region has been created in the sense of creating a conceptual framework: the Baltic Sea region has become an established unit of scholarly reflection, a frame of reference for projects and research in different fields, which attests to the fact that at least in some sense it has been talked into existence, and some of the expectations have been fulfilled.

3. The Baltic Sea region as a space of expectations: the perspective from its southern shore

Yet, setting out to map the network of connections that have been formed in the region beginning from the early 1990s, one notices that it does not cover the whole of the region. The cooperation, joint programmes and series of scholarly events embraced the north-western shore of the sea: the Nordic and German scholars, with an addition of those from beyond the region altogether, as was visible in the examples quoted above. It is more difficult to find their colleagues from the post-communist countries of the southern and south-eastern coast of the Baltic Sea.

It seems surprising. Firstly, because it was precisely these countries that underwent the deepest change at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, and they were mostly affected by the liberation of this time: both political liberation, allowing them, among other things, to make contacts with researchers and institutions around the Baltic Sea, and liberation from restrictions imposed on scholarship and its methodology. Secondly, because it was in this region that attempts at Baltic Sea region cooperation and research had been made earlier in the twentieth century, first of all in the interwar period. For example, directly after the First World War the Baltic States proposed a Baltic League. It was a project of close regional cooperation, and a way for those states to find a new frame of reference, after the break-up of Tsarist Russia and their liberation from it, and to conceptualise their own place in Europe independently of the regional powers Russia and Germany, which both have a history of domination in the territories of the Baltic states. The project's eventual failure was caused, on the one hand, by conflicts between its potential members (chiefly the Polish-Lithuanian conflict over Vilnius), their divergent interests, and on the other, complete lack of interest on the part of the Scandinavian countries.[19] Also in the Baltic States, and more precisely in Riga, a congress of Baltic Sea historians took place in August 1937. Scholars from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Latvia,

18 K. Gerner, K.-G. Karlsson and A. Hammarlund, Nordens Medelhav: Östersjöområdet som historia, myt och projekt, Stockholm 2002.

19 More on the history of this project, see M. Lehti, A Baltic League as a Construct of the New Europe: Envisioning a Baltic Region and Small State Sovereignty in the Aftermath of the First World War, Frankfurt am Main 1999.

Estonia and Germany participated, and in his concluding speech, the President of the International Committee of Historians, Michel Lhéritier, envisaged a Baltic Sea community, a "common homeland."[20] The idea of the Baltic Sea region as a unit of historical analysis was not, after all, so completely new in the 1990s.

In Poland, in the mid-1920s, a Baltic Institute was established, which promoted Baltic Sea region research in different fields: political science, economy, geography, history, among others. Despite its main interests being the promotion of the maritime idea and active maritime policy in the Polish society and its elites, and giving a scientific backing to the Polish access to the Baltic Sea against German revisionism, it also did make first steps towards an exchange of ideas across the sea. This was done by the founding of a scientific, English-language journal *Baltic Countries. A survey of the peoples and states on the Baltic with special regard to their history, geography, and economics,* established in 1935 (since 1937 *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries…*). International authors and editors from all around the region and beyond contributed to the journal; for example, the editorial board included professors from Aarhus, Copenhagen, Helsinki, London, Lund, Lvov, Oslo, Poznań, Riga, Stockholm, Tartu, and Warsaw.[21] The journal thus had a chance of becoming the first forum of exchange of ideas and research on the Baltic Sea region, had its publication not been discontinued due to the outbreak of the Second World War.[22]

Furthermore, despite the perception of all thoughts of Baltic Sea cooperation freezing in the Cold War, some ideas were still developed. For example, in 1977 geographers Jerzy Zaleski and Czesław Wojewódka proposed a concept of "Baltic Europe" in their book *Europa Bałtycka. Zarys monografii gospodarczej* (Baltic Europe. An outline of an economic monograph).[23] This Baltic Europe was, in their understanding, "the territory adjacent to the sea and having most vital bonds with it," by which they meant the littoral states of the Baltic Sea, but only these parts of Western Germany and the USSR which "either lie directly on the Baltic Sea or clearly gravitate towards it economically."[24] Because of the economic focus of their work, the authors use economic criteria for defining the Baltic Europe. The often-used criterion of the sea's drainage basin, although not without importance, as rivers had throughout history been important routes transporting goods to and from Baltic ports, was not, according to the authors, sufficient for determining a territory's "Balticness." Instead, they proposed three criteria: firstly, the fact of having

20 M. Lhériter, L'histoire international de la Baltique et la coopération des historiens, in: Conventus primus historicum Balticorum, Rigae, 16.-20.VIII.1937: acta et relata, Riga 1938, pp. 577–585, at 585.

21 Editorial Board, in: Baltic and Scandinavian Countries: A Survey of the Peoples and States on the Baltic with Special Regard to Their History, Geography and Economics 4 (1938) 3. The journal was positively received for example in the Swedish historical journal *Historisk tidskrift* (Underrätelser, in: Historisk tidskrift 57 (1937) 1, pp. 81–82).

22 More on this journal, see Grzechnik, Regional Histories, pp. 65–66; M. Grzechnik, Equilibrium in the Baltic. The Polish Baltic Institute's View on the Nordic and Baltic Sea Cooperation in the Interwar Period, in: Ajalooline Ajakiri (2015) 3, pp. 327–350, at 333–334.

23 J. Zaleski and C. Wojewódka, Europa Bałtycka. Zarys monografii gospodarczej, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk 1977.

24 Ibid., 5.

access to the Baltic Sea; secondly, the degree to which a given area was connected to the sea with regard to social and economic phenomena, and the formation of settlement, industry, and ports; thirdly, the hinterlands of Baltic ports.[25]

The reason Zaleski and Wojewódka decided to deal with the Baltic Sea was that it had, according to them, become the centre of European attention. This was down to four main factors: firstly, the fact that it lay at the meeting place of the two political and military blocks, but also its shores had started to become the centre of peace processes. For example, Helsinki became the location of the seat of the World Peace Council in 1968, and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975. Zaleski and Wojewódka also mention Baltic Sea organisations, such as *Ostseegesellschaft,* founded in 1965, with seats in Hamburg and Stockholm, as well as "Baltic Sea weeks" organised annually in Rostock – both as examples of efforts to promote cooperation and "peaceful coexistence" of Baltic Sea region nations across the Iron Curtain. Secondly, the authors postulate closer economic cooperation between the political blocks, as only such cooperation would allow full use of opportunities that the region offers, especially as a route between West and East, which became apparent when communication via the Suez Canal was temporarily closed in 1967. Connected to this is a third issue, namely the question of sea transport on the Baltic Sea, which, according to the authors, was both increasing and changing, e.g. by the development of ferry connections and the use of shipping containers. The fourth and final important issue is ecology and environmental protection of the Baltic Sea. The authors underlined the need for all the littoral countries to cooperate in this area, and pointed out that first steps had already been made, such as the *Convention on fishing and conservation of the living resources in the Baltic Sea and the Belts*, signed on 13 September 1973 in Gdańsk, and the *Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area*, signed in the following year in Helsinki. On the basis of these factors, the authors predicted that cooperation in the Baltic Sea region would deepen in the future, as "people living on the Baltic Sea need each other more and more."[26] As the book focused on the economy, the authors were interested first of all in economic cooperation, which, according to them, could be developed despite the ideological and political differences between the western and socialist blocks. Although they suggested that imposing one of the ideologies on the other side was not a realistic possibility – any attempt to do so would end in a "worldwide catastrophe" – there was room for "peaceful competition."[27] Baltic Europe was thus a space of expectations for regional cooperation that would cross ideological and political frontiers, and create a region of peaceful competition and economic growth.

The concept was further developed by Jerzy Zaleski in subsequent texts, until his death in 2001, and afterwards by his collaborators.[28] It was also used by the Baltic Institute, for

25 Ibid., 111–112.

26 Ibid., 8–15.

27 Ibid., 489.

28 M. Pacuk and T. Palmowski, Przedmowa, in: T. Palmowski (ed.) Europa Bałtycka od idei do rzeczywistości, Gdańsk, Pelplin 2006, p. 7; J. Zaleski, Razem czy osobno? Przyczynek do koncepcji bałtyckiej wspólnoty regionalnej, in: T.

example during a conference "Towards the community of Baltic Europe," organised on 29 November 1994 in Gdańsk.[29] The speakers at the conference – Zaleski among them – both referred to the interwar ideas of the Baltic Institute about the unity of the Baltic Sea region, including referencing the journal *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*,[30] and presented visions of future regional cooperation. This integration, as the speakers of the conference agreed, was a necessity in the post-Cold War situation, as "isolation [was] a losing card."[31]

Was this, then, a sign that the idea of Baltic Sea cooperation that permeated the northwestern shores of the sea at the same time crossed also to the south, contributing to the *histoire croisée* of the Baltic Sea region concept? Can there be found elements of transfer or entanglement in the concept of Baltic Europe and the processes of its conceptualisation? This seems to be problematic: these processes do not seem to refer to any of the ideas of regional cooperation circulating at the same time in Scandinavia, Germany, and other countries. No international scholars were published by the Baltic Institute, or any other publications referring to the concept of Baltic Europe, nor did the Institute's scholars seem interested in publishing internationally. Of course, at least partially it stemmed from practical difficulties: no or poor knowledge of the English language – which became the *lingua franca* of international discussions, including the Baltic Sea region scholarship – and of the academic realities outside of the former Eastern Bloc as a result of the decades-long isolation. However, more importantly, the idea of Baltic Europe – the one discussed in the 1990s paradoxically more so than the 1977 original – follows the tradition of Polish maritime discourse being nation-centred and threat-based, that is, appearing mostly when the country's access to the sea was threatened.

Zaleski himself illustrates this in his contribution to the 1994 conference. He looks at Western Europe with distrust, identifying a long-term tendency of the West to economically exploit Central and Eastern Europe,[32] and keep the countries of the former Soviet bloc economically underdeveloped and passive on purpose, "so that, not allowing the development of strong, competitive economies, [the West] could keep them in a convenient, quasi-colonial state, with a simultaneous calculated brain drain."[33] To this he adds other tendencies: of the powers (Germany, Russia) to make arrangements over the heads of the weaker nations (Poland, the Baltic States, the Nordic countries), and the fact that the West only has regard "either for force, or for arguments following from cold calcula-

Palmowski (ed.) Europa Bałtycka od idei do rzeczywistości, Gdańsk, Pelplin 2006, pp. 9–33. The volume Europa Bałtycka od idei do rzeczywistości [Baltic Europe – from idea to reality] was dedicated to Zaleski on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of his death.

29 For proceedings from the conference see C. Ciesielski, Ku wspólnocie Europy Bałtyckiej. Materiały konferencji naukowej z 29 listopada 1994, Gdańsk 1995.

30 C. Ciesielski, Słowo wstępne, in: C. Ciesielski (ed.), Ku wspólnocie Europy Bałtyckiej. Materiały konferencji naukowej z 29 listopada 1994, Gdańsk 1995, pp. 5–6.

31 See J. Zaleski, Miejsce Polski w Europie Bałtyckiej, in: C. Ciesielski (ed.), Ku wspólnocie Europy Bałtyckiej. Materiały konferencji naukowej z 29 listopada 1994, Gdańsk 1995, pp. 21–26, at 23.

32 Ibid., 21.

33 Ibid., 25.

tion,"[34] from which follows that the countries of the former Soviet dominated bloc could only be accepted after "they fulfil conditions which will be, step by step, and quite rigorously, imposed on them." For Russia, Zaleski writes, "the West has respect and money, for us – two-faced phraseology."[35] He was, perhaps, most wary towards Western Europe of the speakers of the conference, however, in most of the contributions published in the same volume Western Europe, and by that the perspective of possible EU enlargement, were seen with more caution than enthusiasm.

Again, a space of expectations was formed: of a unified Baltic Europe which could become a strong international player, and which could deal with the rest of the continent, including especially Poland's powerful neighbours to the east and to the west, on equal terms.[36] Thus, the idea of Baltic Europe, although referring to the sea and proposed by the institution with interest in the sea, was in fact to a great extent land-based.

4. The discrepancy of expectations, or making sense of the absence of transfers

What, then, were the hindrances that prevented the two sets of expectations for the Baltic Sea from spreading throughout the region? Why did the enthusiasm for region building that was developing in the Nordic region, Germany and elsewhere, not seem to appeal in the same way to Polish scholars, and what prompted them to develop their own concepts instead of joining in the transnational exchange of ideas about the region's integration?

The Baltic Sea region's turbulent history in the twentieth century did not make the spreading of ideas easy: both world wars and the Cold War created divisions which could not easily be overcome. This, however, does not offer a sufficient explanation for this absence of transfer, especially after the Cold War ended.

The above-mentioned nation-centric and threat-based nature of, for example, the Polish approach to the Baltic Sea, forms a part of the explanation. It should be seen in the context of the Polish tradition of historiography and culture in general, which since the nineteenth century have been based on national premises, and a strong sense of insecurity stemming from the vulnerable position in respect to the neighbouring powers. Its important element has been strengthening the nation state, which, of course, is not fertile ground for approaches questioning the primacy of the nation-state. Approaches based on transfers or crossings, or a region, have not been widely seen as alternatives, mainly because no need has been felt to look for alternatives. Similarly, the need for transferring ideas from other nations has been limited, except for German ones. These, however, have

34 Ibid., 22.
35 Ibid., 23.
36 For more detailed analysis see Grzechnik, Regional histories, pp. 110–116.

been transferred with the explicit aim: to be disputed and questioned, as Germany has traditionally been the significant other in the Polish maritime discourse.

Interestingly, the time of the Baltic Europe idea's first emergence in the 1970s, despite the ongoing Cold War, was relatively stable in the sense of the Polish access to the sea being relatively secure, especially after Polish-West German relations had been settled by the Treaty of Warsaw of 1970, and West German revisionist voices had fallen more silent. Therefore, the idea presented in Zaleski's and Wojewódka's book from 1977 is rather optimistic in its vision of economic cooperation in the region, and steering towards a transnational approach in its discussion of the "Balticness" of different territories around the sea. In the post-Cold War reality of the early 1990s, on the other hand, when it was not yet possible to predict the direction in which European politics would develop, the idea of Baltic Europe was, again, mostly a way of securing one's position in relation to the powerful neighbours. Traditional fear of German military aggression was replaced by a fear of the European Community's economic exploitation of the post-communist countries. However, access to the sea itself, and its ports was not threatened anymore, therefore the interest in the Baltic Sea as such, on the scale that had appeared in the interwar period, did not appear again.

What, then, of the spreading of ideas in the opposite direction? Here, too, success is extremely limited. This applied first of all to projects of political cooperation, as the failure of involving Scandinavia in the projects of a Baltic League in the 1920s shows. The Scandinavian policy of neutrality, the will not to be involved in the continental alliances, were among the main factors behind this reluctance. But also, conceptualisations of the Baltic Sea region, such as the ones proposed by the Baltic Institute, made no impact in Scandinavia. An example is an idea of Józef Borowik, the Institute's director, of a Baltic-Scandinavian cooperation, which he proposed in the journal *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*[37] and in the volume *Contemporary World Politics* published in New York.[38] One explanation can be that these ideas were only published in English in 1939, very soon before the outbreak of the Second World War,[39] and they simply did not have time to spread around the Baltic Sea before the political situation made them outdated (although their applicability even before the war's outbreak was highly disputable[40]). We can only speculate what chances *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries* had to become a platform for the exchange of ideas and research on the Baltic Sea region had the war not broken out. Still, these efforts were quite soon forgotten, so that in the 1990s, when the idea of the Baltic Sea region gained popularity, it could be presented as, and indeed believed to be, new.

37 J. Borowik, The Equilibrium in the Baltic, in: Baltic and Scandinavian Countries: A Survey of the Peoples and States on the Baltic with Special Regard to Their History, Geography and Economics 5 (1939) 2, pp. 95–100.

38 J. Borowik, The Baltic Region, in: F. J. Brown, C. Hodges and J. S. Roucek (eds.), Contemporary World Politics: An Introduction to the Problems of International Relations, New York 1939, pp. 298–315.

39 In Polish they had appeared two years before, in 1937, in a brochure published by the Baltic Institute (J. Borowik, Neutralność Skandynawii, Warszawa 1937).

40 Grzechnik, Equilibrium in the Baltic, pp. 346–347.

The Baltic space, as European space in general, is culturally divided between the East and the West – a division which was consciously constructed, and not innocently so, as discussed by Larry Wolff: it was meant to create for Western Europe a counterpart to which it could compare itself favourably.[41] This division is implicitly hierarchical, and in this hierarchy, it is Western Europe that has the position of power. It is, in the words of Maria Todorova, "the standard against which the rest has to position itself." Being the standard, or an unmarked category, it can also be referred to as just "Europe," without the distinction "Western," whereas "Eastern Europe" is an option or a marked category.[42] As such, Eastern Europe can only represent itself, whereas Western Europe can represent Europe in general, as well as general ideas about itself and others. Moreover, on mental maps thus constructed Eastern Europe, again referring to Wolff, is not only a supposedly inferior, less advanced, part of the continent. It is also filled with blind spots, places where "be dragons": it is hidden in the shadow, as the metaphor of the (iron) curtain so well illustrates. Looking from Fulton, from London, or from Stockholm, one could not – nor wanted to – see what was hidden behind it. Or indeed still is: "the shadow [of the iron curtain] persists, because the idea of Eastern Europe remains, even without the iron curtain."[43] While its political dimension is gone, a mental iron curtain has remained despite the expansion of the EU and NATO beyond it.

What this means for our discussion about the transfer of ideas in and about the Baltic Sea, is that the spread of ideas in this space divided between East and West tends to be only one-way. Ideas originating in the West have a greater potential to be transferred and become generally accepted, while those proposed in the East rarely do so. In the wake of the end of the Cold War, the Nordic countries developed programmes of spreading economic aid and know-how to their Baltic neighbours, a process which was possible thanks to their economic dominance and conditioned on accepting Nordic norms and values. As Kazimierz Musiał describes, the Nordic countries (representatives of the West) were in this process "norm setters," while the Baltic States (the until recently communist East, to which this aid was mostly addressed) – "norm followers."[44] This process, which Musiał calls "cognitive colonisation,"[45] occurs also in intellectual and academic life, including its part concerned with conceptualisations of the Baltic Sea region. It also further complicates the picture in showing that these conceptualisations were not completely free from national interests either: a region conceived as a network of transfers can, after all, also have its centre and internal hierarchies. There are also blind spots: lack of knowledge which does not stem from unavailability of information, but rather disinterest, which in

41 L. Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment, Stanford 1994.

42 M. Todorova, Spacing Europe: What is a historical region?, in: East Central Europe 32 (2005) 1–2, pp. 59–78, at 63–64.

43 Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, p. 3.

44 K. Musiał, Benevolent Assistance and Cognitive Colonisation: Nordic Involvement with the Baltic States since the 1990s, in: Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries. Representing the Periphery, L. Clerc, N. Glover and P. Jordan (eds.), Leiden 2015, pp. 257–279, at 279.

45 Ibid., 257.

turn follows from the position of "norm setter," implicit in which – even if rarely consciously acknowledged – is the assumption about the inferiority of ideas developed be those who are not in such a position.

In other words, setting aside practical problems such as language[46] and money in the 1990s, for the ideas of the Baltic Sea region developed internationally it was problematic to cross to countries preoccupied with their own national security and national identity after a period of dependence on foreign powers, because it was not felt that such ideas could answer to problems and dilemmas which the country faced at the time. And, on the other hand, ideas such as the concept of Baltic Europe encountered hindrances in crossing beyond national borders partly because they were not actively spread by these ideas' authors: they were national in the sense of being for national use. But partly also because from, for example, the Nordic perspective, looking for new ideas on the other side of the mental iron curtain was simply not something that was done.

5. Conclusions

Whether the Baltic Sea region exists or not depends on one's point of view, and the frames of references in which one operates. Already in 1997 Ole Wæver announced that the region had been "talked into existence."[47] And it indeed has in some sense: institutional (with the Council of the Baltic Sea States as the most prominent example), or conceptual, in the sense of becoming a valid and popular frame of academic reflection. In the sense of identity, political or economic cooperation, its existence is more debatable.

Is the region, then, a space of failed expectations? Or, perhaps more to the point: what expectations? It is the diversity of these expectations that is the factor complicating the picture and at the same time their realisation. The concept of the Baltic Sea region lies at an intersection of other regional frameworks of identification. From the north, it partially overlaps with the Scandinavian, or Nordic, region. From the south, with the region defined variously as Central, Central Eastern or East Central Europe – as these names show, in itself a region of competing and contested identities.[48] In broader terms, it is also a meeting point between Eastern and Western Europe, and the diametrically different experiences of the Cold War that were superimposed on this division in the twentieth century. These regions are more established, as ways of identifying and defining oneself

46 The question of language, however, can also be considered in the categories of hierarchies, as they explain why ideas have much greater chances of spreading if expressed in certain languages: nowadays mostly English, and to slightly smaller extent French and German. As Musiał points out, English also became the language of Nordic-Baltic cooperation, for example in the sphere of education, even though it was less spread in the Baltic States, in comparison to Russian, the former language of international cooperation there (Ibid., 260).

47 O. Wæver, The Baltic Sea: A Region after Post-Modernity?, in: P. Joenniemi (ed.) Neo-Nationalism or Regionality. The Restructuring of Political Space Around the Baltic Rim, Stockholm 1997, pp. 293–342, at 306.

48 See N. Götz, Introduction: Collective Identities in Baltic and East Central Europe, in: N. Götz (ed.), The Sea of Identities: A Century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class, and Gender, Huddinge 2014, pp. 11–28, at 15; M. Todorova, Imagining the Balkans, New York 1997, pp. 140–160.

(and others), and as frameworks of cooperation and historical narrative. From these frameworks follow diverging expectations. The idea of Baltic Europe, for example, grew out of the Central and Eastern European context, of the historical experience of being placed in between Russia/USSR and Germany, and from having had to spend forty years on the "wrong" side of the iron curtain; it cannot be understood without this context.
More importantly, the Baltic Sea region also competes not only with other, more established regions but with the nation state. The fate of the concepts discussed in this article shows that this framework is not – perhaps not yet – outdated, and continues to have a lasting impact on both the formation of ideas and on their distribution. Ideas that emerge in it are to an extent dictated by national interest and national traditions.
The case of the Baltic Sea regionalism since the end of the Cold War, therefore, conveys a lesson about limits to regionalism, and about applicability – or lack of it – of regional concepts in an area that is culturally, economically, and politically diversified. It seems that given the persistence of frameworks of both nation-state and other, older regional divisions, the Baltic Sea region has not proved itself to be an attractive alternative.

Challenges of Transnational Regional Democracy: Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, 1991–2015

Jussi Kurunmäki

ABSTRACT

Der 1991 gegründeten Ostseeparlamentarierkonferenz (BSPC) wurde eine wichtige Rolle für die Demokratisierung transnationaler Entscheidungsprozesse im Ostseeraum zugeschrieben. Erwartet wurde, dass sie zur Herausbildung einer regionalen Zivilgesellschaft und politischen Öffentlichkeit beitragen könne. Der Autor untersucht die Arbeit der BSPC in Hinblick auf erfüllte und unerfüllte Erwartungen. Die Theorien der transnationalen Demokratie fanden in diesem Fall keine Bestätigung, da die BSCP-Mitglieder die Interessen ihrer nationalen Wahlkreise in den Vordergrund stellten. Auch in dieser Institution konnte demnach das nationalstaatliche Paradigma nicht zugunsten einer politisch integrierten „Ostseeregion" überwunden werden. Angesichts der Spannungen mit dem mittlerweile einzigen Nicht-EU-Mitglied der BSPC, Russland, kann die Parlamentarierkonferenz jedoch im Rahmen herkömmlicher zwischenstaatlicher Kooperation zu Frieden und Sicherheit in der Region beitragen.

The collapse of the communist Soviet Bloc and the simultaneously emerging notion of an epochal change known as globalization[1] directed our attention to two features of democracy that have sometimes been viewed as mutually supportive, but that also can be seen as contradicting each other to some degree. On the one hand, the political changes the end of the Cold War brought about have made it necessary to deal with questions regarding the transition to and consolidation of democracy within national borders; on the other hand, there has been an increased interest in democracy that would take place

1 See P. James and M.B. Steger, A Genealogy of "Globalization": The Career of a Concept, in: Globalizations 11 (2014) 4, pp. 417–434.

beyond the nation-state.[2] According to David Held, "democracy must be thought of as a 'double-sided process,'" which means that we should be occupied not only with "the deepening of democracy within a national community," but also with "the extension of democratic processes across territorial borders." Being one of the foremost advocates of global democracy, he called for "cosmopolitan citizens" with "multiple citizenships" to be involved in the transformation of democracy.[3]

While Held's account has been criticized for being too much based on the idea of the nation state sovereignty,[4] some political theorists have indicated that the national side of this "double-sided process" must be taken care of before it is possible to advance democracy beyond the nation state. For example, Michael Saward noted that "instituting and deepening democracy in existing national political communities may be the primary appropriate response to demands and issues which cannot by their nature be readily dealt with within one country."[5] It has also been argued that "strengthening the existing political communities in the name of political freedom, participation, responsibility and solidarity is more promising than politically imitating the logic of globalization."[6]

The double-edged request for democracy is notably present in region-building approaches, many of which took place in the 1990s. It has been held that the global era was, in fact, the age of regions or "the regional momentum."[7] In order to mark the novelty of the situation, regions were often discussed under the label "new regionalism."[8] Regions became "spaces of expectations," to rephrase Reinhart Koselleck.[9] Regions fitted well in the ideas of de-territorialization, rescaling, cross-border cooperation, integration, and so forth. The regional framework was also elevated in the discourse of multilevel governance, often presented as an antidote to the democratic deficit the European political integration entailed, and thought of as being able to combine the local, national, and supra-national spheres of democracy.[10] Moreover, regionalization and multilevel governance have been described – welcomingly and critically – as a postmodern or a neoliberal version of the political organization of Medieval Europe with its system of non-hierarchi-

2 For examples of the respective brands of research, see J.J. Linz & A. Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe, Baltimore 1996; D. Held, Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance, Stanford, CA 1995.

3 D. Held, The Changing Contours of Political Community: Rethinking Democracy in the Context of Globalization, in: B. Holden (ed.), Global Democracy. Key Debates, London 2000, pp. 17–31, at 30.

4 See, e.g., J. Hoffman, Sovereignty, Buckingham 1998, pp. 61–64.

5 M. Saward, A Critique of Held, in: B. Holden (ed.), Global Democracy, pp. 32–46, at 35.

6 W. Thaa, "Lean Citizenship": The Fading Away of the Political in Transnational Democracy, in: European Journal of International Relations 7 (2001) 4, pp. 503–523, at 520.

7 R. Fawn, "Regions" and Their Study: Wherefrom, What For and Whereto? In: Review of International Studies 35 (2009), pp. 5–34, at 6; L. Fawcett, Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism, International Affairs 80 (2004) 3, pp. 426–446, at 431.

8 See, e.g., T.M. Shaw and F. Soderbaum (eds.), Theories of New Regionalism, Basingstoke 2003.

9 R. Koselleck, Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten, Frankfurt am Main 1979, pp. 349–375.

10 See, e.g., F. Scharpf, Community and Autonomy: Multi-Level Policy-Making in the European Union, in: Journal of European Public Policy 1 (1994) 2 , pp. 219–242; L. Hooge and G. Marks, Multi-Level Governance and European Integration, Lanham 2001; A. Hurrelmann and J. Debardeleben, Democratic Dilemmas in EU Multilevel Governance: Untangling the Gordian Knot, in: European Political Science Review 1 (2009) 2, pp. 229–247.

cal, integrated networks structure in which political authority shifted depending on the nature of the question.[11]

Accordingly, regional parliamentary assemblies have been pointed out as a remedy for the democratic deficit that the alleged erosion of the national framework of democracy has caused. While Held envisioned effective transnational legislative and executive parliaments alongside a reformed UN General Assembly in his cosmopolitan model,[12] many scholars have discussed the possibilities of the existing inter-parliamentary institutions (IPIs) to bring about democratic legitimacy and transparency to global governance.[13]

This article examines the promotion of transnational regional democracy by analysing how the inter-parliamentary Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) has presented its role as the source of democracy between 1991 and 2015.[14] Previous research has shown that the formal capacities and working methods of the BSPC do not support the idea of the parliamentary conference being a democratic assembly in any higher standards, such as direct elections, legislation, or party groups,[15] confirming a general picture of most IPIs.[16] Rather than aiming to prove the contrary, this study is interested in the articulation of the idea of transnational regional democracy. Therefore, it focuses on the

11 For an approving comment, see P. Joenniemi and O. Wæver, Regionalization around the Baltic Rim Rim – Background Report to the 2nd Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, Oslo, 22nd – 24th April 1992, Nordiske Seminar- og Arbeidsrapporter 1992:521, Stockholm 1992, p. 34; Held, The Changing Contours of Political Community, 27; for critical accounts, see B. Stråth, The Baltic as Image and Illusion: The Construction of a Region between Europe and the Nation, in: B. Stråth (ed.), Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community: Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond, Brussels 2000, pp. 199–214, 202–203; J. Anderson, Questions of Democracy, Territoriality and Globalisation, in: James Anderson (ed.), Transnational Democracy: Political Spaces and Border Crossings, London 2002, pp. 6–38, at 14.

12 Held, Democracy and the Global Order, pp. 272–273.

13 See, e.g., C. Kraft-Kasack, Transnational Parliamentary Assemblies: A Remedy for the Democratic Deficit of International Governance? in: West European Politics 31 (2008) 3, pp. 534–557; C. Kissling, Die Interparlamentarische Union im Wandel: Rechtspolitische Ansätze einer repräsentativ-parlamentarischen Gestaltung der Weltpolitik, Frankfurt am Main 2005, pp. 373–375, 454–466, 655–656; S. Marschall, Transnationale Repräsentation in Parlamentarischen Versammlungen: Demokratie und Parlamentarismus jenseits des Nationalstaates, Baden-Baden 2005, pp. 15–21, 308; Z. Šabič, Building Democratic and Responsible Global Governance: The Role of International Parliamentary Institutions, in: Parliamentary Affairs 61 (2008) 2, pp. 255–271; O. Costa, C. Dri, Stelios Stavridis (eds.), Parliamentary Dimensions of Regionalization and Globalization: The Role of Inter-Parliamentary Institutions, Basingstoke 2013.

14 The member states include the Baltic Sea littoral states Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden, as well as the Nordic countries Iceland and Norway. The member parliaments include also the parliamentary assemblies of the sub-state regions or autonomous areas of Åland Islands, Faeroe Islands, Greenland, Free and Hanse City of Bremen, Free and Hanse City of Hamburg, Kaliningrad Region, Karelian Republic, Leningrad Region, City of St. Petersburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and Schleswig-Holstein. Moreover, the BSPC includes other regional parliamentary institutions, such as Nordic Council, Baltic Assembly, and European Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The observers include intergovernmental institutions, the Council of the Baltic Sea States being the reference institution and thus the most important of them. It is characteristic for the BSPC that it is also a forum for NGOs and other stakeholders.

15 The BSPC does not make any binding decisions but makes recommendations in the form of resolutions, which are formed on the basis of the consensus principle. The members of the BSPC are not elected in any general election or through a vote in a national parliament. The members of the conference usually do not have any commonly shared fixed period of their mandate. See C. Kasack, Interaction of Inter-parliamentary with Intergovernmental Bodies: The Example of the Baltic Sea Region, in: The Estonian Foreign Policy Yearbook, 2005, pp. 135–153, at 137–138; Kraft-Kasack, Transnational Parliamentary Assemblies, pp. 545–554.

16 A.–M. Slaughter, A New World Order, Princeton, NJ 2004, p. 106.

ways in which the BSPC has viewed its role as a democratic forum, paying attention to the aforementioned national, transnational, and multilevel emphases of democracy. The analysis is based on the conference resolutions, reports, and a selection of speeches disseminated by the BSPC.[17]

The period under examination covers the time during which the Soviet Union still existed, EU policies were directed to the region, and all member countries except for Russia became members of the EU or NATO, or both. When the political crisis and military tensions between the West and Russia rose dramatically in 2014, the regional approach around the Baltic Sea came to a crisis, not quite dissimilar from the one that had prevailed when it all began in the early 1990s. The case analysed in this article points out the prevalence of national and political power interests in region-building and highlights the difference between the "real-life" rhetoric of transnational democracy and the theoretical accounts of global democracy. These often take legislation and the so-called all-affected principle – all who are affected by political decisions should be included in the democratic community – as the point of departure.[18] It also shows that theoretical ideas of post-sovereignty[19] and the decline of the relevance of the nation state in globalized politics should be critically re-evaluated.

1. Conflict and Democracy Promotion: The Early Years of the BSPC

The Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, held on 7–9 January 1991 in Helsinki, is today regarded as the founding moment of the BSPC. It was convened by the speaker of the Finnish Parliament Kalevi Sorsa, a Social Democrat and the former Prime Minister.[20] The purpose of the conference bears witness to a highly volatile and unpredictable political situation around the Baltic Sea. On the one hand, it was part of an on-going regional orientation with ambitious aims at furthering a new Europe based on regions. On the other hand, it was a practical context-bound attempt to bring

17 The study focuses on the arguments dealing explicitly with democracy and the role of the BSPC, leaving many politically relevant questions out of scope, such as the issues on environment, maritime safety, and social well-being in the region.

18 For a critical discussion of the all-affected principle in democratic theory, see H. Agné, A Dogma of Democratic Theory and Globalization: Why Politics Need Not Include Everyone it Affects, in: European Journal of International Relations 12 (2006) 3, pp. 433–458; S. Näsström, The Challenge of the All-Affected Principle, in: Political Studies 59 (2011), pp. 116–134; J. Karlsson Schaffer, The Boundaries of Transnational Democracy: Alternatives to the All-Affected Principle, in: Review of International Studies 38 (2012), pp. 321–342.

19 See, e.g., Anderson, Questions of Democracy, Territoriality and Democratisation, pp. 8, 29–30.

20 The conference was attended by parliamentary delegations from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the autonomous Faeroe Island, Greenland, and Aland Islands, as well as Poland, the German states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Schleswig-Holstein and the Free and Hanse Town Hamburg, the Soviet Union, Russian Federation, the Autonomous Soviet Republic of Karelia, and the Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The observers included the Council of Europe, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Helsinki Committee (HELCOM), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and Nordic Council. See P. Väänänen and M. Boedeker (eds.), Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, Helsinki, 1991, pp. 261–266.

about a channel of political communication across the Cold War division that prevailed in the European North, as the Soviet Union still existed and the Baltic countries were not yet independent. The event was aimed at finding a dialogue, but it was characterized by conflict. At the same time as the parliamentary delegations were meeting, the Soviet minister of defence ordered the conscription by sending special Soviet forces to the Baltic republics. This alarmed the conference members from the Baltic countries. The conflict marked many of the speeches given at the conference with the representatives of the Nordic countries (except Finland) and Poland giving their support to the independence of the Baltic countries. The Finnish representatives avoided the issue of independence.[21] Less than a week after the conference, the Soviet military attacked civilians who were protecting the TV tower in Vilnius. Fourteen people were killed.[22]

Granted, no far-reaching ideas of a transnational democratic Baltic Sea region were spelled out at the conference. When a regional framework for democracy was implied, it dealt with the notion of the democratic tradition in the Nordic countries[23] and with an indication of a European sphere of democracy when the representative of the Parliament of the EFTA countries pointed out regional parliamentary organs as a remedy against a democratic deficit in Europe.[24] The rhetoric of democracy dealt mainly with democracy promotion at the nation-state level in the Baltic countries and, more generally, in the post-communist countries.[25] It was mentioned in one of the speeches that re-establishing the independence of the Baltic countries would help democratize the Soviet Union.[26] The representatives of the Russian Federation and the delegation of the Soviet Union had a slightly different tone with regard to the Baltic situation, the former being more understanding,[27] but they did not employ any language of democracy in spite of their vision of a Europe of regions.[28]

When the second parliamentary conference was held at the Norwegian parliament in 1992, the political situation was quite different. The independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had been reinstated and the Soviet Union had disintegrated. The resolution stated that the conference supported "newly emerging and re-established democracies in the Baltic Sea Region for the strengthening of freedom, democracy and representative institutions." A sign of optimism, the resolution also called for the governments to take into account the recommendations and proposals of the conference and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) to report on its activities.[29] The idea of an intergovern-

21 See Väänänen and Boedeker (eds.), Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, pp. 6–16, 118–136, 147–258.
22 K. Gerner and S. Hedlund, The Baltic States and the End of the Soviet Empire, London 1993, p. 150.
23 Väänänen and Boedeker (eds.), Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, pp. 28, 32, 186, 239.
24 Ibid., p. 243.
25 Ibid., pp. 179, 205, 210.
26 Ibid., pp. 106, 247.
27 Ibid., pp. 147, 212.
28 Ibid., pp. 34–35, 186, 235.
29 Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area: The Second Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea

mental Baltic Sea council had been circulating among some prominent politicians for a number of years before the formal step was taken in March 1992, when the CBSS was founded after the initiative by the German and the Danish Foreign Ministers Hans-Dieter Genscher and Uffe Elleman-Jensen. The countries participating in the initial phase were Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, Poland, Russia, and Sweden.[30]

Many of the arguments regarding democracy and the role of the parliamentary conference that came to characterize the BSPC in the following years were already voiced in 1992. They seem contradictory in many ways. On the one hand, it was held that the conference was a moment in which a regional parliament was formed.[31] It was viewed as an instrument that would aim at turning the democratic deficit in the EC to a democratic surplus in a new Europe of regions.[32] It was also argued that the parliamentarians should become "the basis of the democratic international order."[33] On the other hand, it was maintained that the conference should not become an institution with formal characteristics, but a forum for different opinions and new ideas. Sometimes both arguments were made in one speech. For example, the Speaker of the Norwegian parliament said that the Baltic parliamentary conference should be a platform and not an opposition to the CBSS, but at the same time she held that the conference should "formulate the demands of the people" to "our governments" and be a "democratic assembly" and create "a normal interaction between the legislative and executive power."[34]

This kind of confusion with regard to what a regional parliamentary forum should and could accomplish is not surprising. Some political scientists who were crucially involved in region-building downplayed the role of parliament in a manner that was certainly confusing for professional parliamentarians. The Danish political scientist Ole Wæver spoke for the network-like regions and held that the BSPC should not be of a political character in a traditional sense. He did not believe that setting up a Baltic Sea parliament would add to democracy in Europe. The role of the parliamentarians was to further regional processes but not to do so much themselves.[35] Moreover, Wæver and the Finnish peace researcher Pertti Joenniemi argued in a background report for the conference that many of the old state-centric perspectives were insufficient in the new regionalism, including parliamentary democracy.[36] Their point was that representative democracy had been born and developed in the context of the nation-state. As they put it, "[t]he overall

Area. Report from a Conference arranged by the Nordic Council at Stortinget, Oslo, Norway, 22–24 April 1992, Stockholm 1992, pp. 101–102.

30 L.–K. Williams, Zur Kostruktion einer Region: Die Entstehung der Ostseekooperation zwischen 1988 und 1992, Berlin 2007), pp. 199–203; N. Götz, Spatial Politics and Fuzzy Regionalism: The Case of the Baltic Sea Area, in: Baltic Worlds 9 (2016) 3, pp. 55–67, 59–60.

31 Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, 10.

32 Ibid., pp. 13, 48.

33 Ibid., p. 26.

34 Ibid., p. 99.

35 Ibid., pp. 16–21.

36 Joenneiemi and Wæver, Regionalization around the Baltic Rim, 24.

solution can hardly consist of extending parliamentary representation to cover yet another level, and to instigate a separate parliamentary body for the Baltic Sea region."[37] Instead, the role of the parliamentarians was agenda-setting and guidance as they made the link between the nation state and the society.[38] In their approach regions not only filled the gap between nation-states and the integrating of Europe, but regions also made a new kind of politics possible. These scholars were constructivists taking the role of constructors.[39] As one of the scholars affiliated with the same "Copenhagen school" of International Relations (IR) noted, "[o]nce regions became understood as discursively constructed it followed that they could also be deconstructed and re-made and new regions altogether actively created."[40]

2. The Model Region and Its Representative Body

The mid-1990s have been described as the golden years of the Baltic Sea region-building.[41] Despite its difficult point of departure, the region-building approach was in many ways an immediate success. An institutional framework, including a number of NGOs, was established within a couple of years. The Nordic countries provided both administrative support and the model institutions.[42] The 1994 BSPC resolution included formulations that indicated a gradual change in the ways in which democracy promotion was understood by the parliamentary conference. Besides establishing democratic institutions in national contexts, it also expressed a "strong desire to establish a genuine democratic community around the Baltic Sea."[43] In 1995, the CBSS Commissioner for Democracy and Human Rights, Ole Espersen (Denmark), maintained that the region's parliamentarians were "the basis of democracy,"[44] whereas the 1998 resolution described

37 Ibid., p. 36.
38 Ibid., pp. 24, 36.
39 P. Joenniemi, Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region: Needs and Prospects, Tampere Peace Research Institute Research Report No. 42, Tampere 1991; O. Wæver, Nordic Nostalgia: Northern Europe and the Cold War, International Affairs 68 (1992) 1, 77–102; see also I.B. Neumann, A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe, in: Review of International Studies 20 (1994) 1, pp. 53–74. For a critical remark, see Götz, Spatial Politics and Fuzzy Regionalism, p. 56.
40 C.S. Browning, The Region-Building Approach Revisited: The Continued Othering of Russia in Discourses of Region-Building in the European North, in: Geopolitics 8 (2003) 1, pp. 45–71, at 46.
41 M. Lehti, The Future of the Lost Future? The Baltic Sea Area after the Transition Era, in: NORDEUROPAforum: Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur 1 (2003), pp. 43–53; P. Aalto, European Integration and the Declining Project of Building a Baltic Sea Region, in: J. H. Stampehl, A. Bannwart, D. Brekenfeld and U. Palth (eds.), Perceptions of Loss, Decline and Doom in the Baltic Sea Region, Berlin 2004.
42 See, e.g., C. Archer, Nordic Swans and Baltic Cygnets, in: Cooperation and Conflict 34 (1999) 1, pp. 47–71; K. Musiał, Reconstructing Nordic Significance in Europe on the Threshold of the 21st Century, in: Scandinavian Journal of History 34 (2009) 3, pp. 286–306.
43 The BSPC Resolution 1994, www.bspc.net (accessed 15 December 2015).
44 Towards a Baltic Sea Region, p. 32.

the BSPC as "a representative body" in the region, guiding governmental activities and "endowing them with additional democratic legitimacy."[45]

The increased self-esteem of the BSPC was partly a consequence of the enlargement process of the EU. In 1995, Finland and Sweden became EU member states. In the mid-1990s, even Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland began to orientate towards EU membership. While the enlargement was viewed as a possibility to establish cooperation between the EU and Russia within the framework of the Baltic Sea region, it also caused some discrepancy between the EU member or applicant states and Russia. After the enlargement in 2004, it has been common to view the Baltic Sea as the EU internal sea, albeit with a notion of the Russian enclaves. In order to compensate the marginalization of Russia, the EU developed in the late 1990s a new regional policy orientation, Northern Dimension (ND), which was to manage cooperation and interaction cross the EU border with other countries in the North, including Russia.[46]

Some Norwegian visions of parliamentary cooperation suggest that the Baltic Sea parliamentary cooperation was also viewed as a compensatory solution for the country that had opted out of EU membership. In 1995, the President of the Nordic Council proposed the creation of a "Euro-region" in the greater Baltic Sea area, which would be a political body that would take over some of the tasks dealt with by the Nordic Council, the Baltic Assembly, and the European Parliament. This kind of "Baltic Sea Forum" could, according to him, set a pattern for cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe.[47] Along the same lines, when the enlargement of the EU was again at hand in 2004, the speaker of the Norwegian parliament proposed a particular parliamentarian partnership for Northern Europe, which would function as a driving force vis-à-vis the governments in the region as well as the EU Commission.[48] It would send "the message to the rest of Europe" on "good democratic governance and environmental protection."[49] However, the problem was, as he admitted, that the national parliaments involved should have similar views on the need for parliamentary cooperation in Northern Europe.[50]

Perhaps the most far-reaching idea was presented in 2006 by the President of the Nordic Council Ole Stavad, who pictured a future in the region in which the governments were turning to the parliamentarians in asking for cooperation. He anticipated an "unlimited" power for parliamentarians, once the BSPC was formed by party groups.[51] However, a German representative held that "it is unfeasible for governments to seek assistance

45 The BSPC Resolution 1998, www.bspc.net (accessed 15 December 2015).

46 See, e.g., D. Wallis and S. Arnold, Governing Common Seas: From a Baltic Strategy to an Arctic Policy, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 42 (2011) 1, pp. 103–107; Götz, Spatial Politics and Fuzzy Regionalism, 61.

47 Towards a Baltic Sea Region: Final report from the Fourth Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area held in Rønne from 12–13 September 1995, Stockholm 1995, pp. 11–12.

48 Sustainable Development – Shared Concerns and Responsibilities in the Baltic Sea Region: 13th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Bergen 29–31 August 2004, pp. 22–23. www.bspc.net (accessed 15 December 2015).

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Northern Dimension & the Oceans and Seas: The 15th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Reykjavik 4–5 September, 2006, p. 8. www.bspc.net (accessed 16 December 2015).

from parliamentarians,"[52] and a Russian representative stated bluntly that "the BSPC has already shown how active it is in the Region and that the whole process of co-operation has already happened."[53] Stavad himself admitted that there was a "reduction of the level of priority given to the Baltic Sea co-operation on the part of many governments in the Region," pointing out that "a close and strong participation on the part of Russia" was necessary.[54]

Although the possibilities of an inter-parliamentary institution to influence the decision-making on the intergovernmental level have been limited,[55] they have sometimes been able to develop a substantial political link to an intergovernmental organization (IGO). It seems that even IGOs have shown an increased interest in elevating their democratic legitimacy by creating a relationship with parliamentarians.[56] This was the case with the relationship between the BSPC and the CBSS to a certain degree. We have seen that the BSPC sometimes saw its role not only as a parliamentary dimension of the regional governance, but also as being based on the principle of parliamentary government.[57] However, while commenting on recurring request at the BSPC in 2009, the Lithuanian chairman of the CBSS held that the CBSS will continue to be constructive in its relationship to parliamentarians and that the exchange of information is most important, but she also maintained that the BSPC was not "in a position to exert formal parliamentary influence on CBSS activities."[58]

Rather than in terms of parliamentary government transplanted in regional politics, the regional parliament was viewed in the framework of multilevel governance. After the launching of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) in 2009, the link between the regional approach and democracy was made, for example, in the White Paper on Multilevel Governance of the EU Committee of the Regions.[59] It was held that multilevel governance "reinforces the democratic dimension of the European Union," and is "based on democratic values and principles," and strengthens "the representation and influence of local and regional authorities" in decision-making.[60] Moreover, inter-parliamentary cooperation was seen as a vital component of democratic

52 Ibid., p. 9.
53 Ibid., p. 10.
54 Ibid., p. 8.
55 Šabič, Building Democratic and Responsible Global Governance, p. 256; Kraft-Kasack, Transnational Parliamentary Assemblies, p. 552.
56 See Marschall, Transnationale Repräsentation, p. 309; S. Marschall, European Parliaments in Transnational Organisations: Parliamentary Cooperation beyond the European Union, Paper prepared for the Conference "Fifty Years of Interparliamentary Cooperation," 13 June 2007, Bundesrat, Berlin, organised by Stiftung Wissenshaft und Politik, pp. 2–3, 10–11. https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papiere/070829marschall.ks.pdf (accessed 19 December 2016).
57 See also Kasack, Interaction of Inter-parliamentary with Inter-governmental bodies, pp. 140–141.
58 New Security Challenges: The 18th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Nyborg, Denmark, 31 August – 1 September 2009, p. 15. www.bspc.net (accessed 16 December 2015).
59 The Committee of the Regions' White Paper on Multilevel Governance (CONST-IV-020), Brussels 2009, p. 30.
60 Ibid., pp. 4, 7, 9.

legitimacy, at the same time as the regional approach and "participatory democracy" were deemed important for the European neighbourhood policy.[61]

The idea of multilevel governance was by no means new to the BSPC. Of particular interest is the way in which the CBSS Commissioner on Democratic Development Helle Degn (Denmark) saw the BSPC in the framework of multilevel governance and how she linked it with the question of the relationship between the parliamentary forum and the governmental level, when in 2003 she urged the BSPC to become a "watchdog and counterpart to the governments" in order to counteract the democratic deficit, which, she held, was visible also in the CBSS.[62] According to her, democracy was "at a crossroads" and was "power in transition," which marked the beginning of a new era of "global and regional democratic governing."[63] She held that the growing participation of nation-states in binding international regimes has produced notable democratic deficits, as an increasing number of decisions were taken on an international level without passing the normal national procedures of legislative work.[64] Speaking shortly before the Baltic states and Poland were to become member states of the EU, Degn saw the situation as particularly challenging for the Baltic Sea region. According to her, the enlargement of the EU called for "multilevel aspects of co-operation that ignore state boundaries and that transcend the traditional territorial unit of democratic-based governance."[65] Therefore, the parliaments and governments of the region needed to strengthen the ties between "the executive and the legislative branch." In practice, this meant that the parliaments in the region should have access to "all relevant information" and that parliaments were given the freedom to formulate their own positions and these positions would be taken into account by the respective governments.[66] It is noteworthy that Degn was, in fact, speaking about national parliaments and national governments rather than the BSPC and the CBSS. Despite the language of multilevel governance, the argument was about democracy in the states within the region. This is also why it was possible for her to maintain that "democratic parliamentarism" had been developed in the Baltic Sea region in various ways.[67]

3. Parliament of Expectations (Lost?)

The rhetoric used at the BSPC suggests that it is an institution that has lived on expectations rather than on influence. Although many of the supporting comments regarding its democratic credentials have been made by representatives of intergovernmental or-

61 Ibid., pp. 11–15.
62 The Baltic Sea Region – An Area of Knowledge: The 12th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Oulu, September 8–9, 2003, pp. 60–61. www.bspc.net (accessed 16 December 2015).
63 Ibid., p. 30.
64 Ibid., p. 31.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., p. 32. See also H. Degn, Power in Transition: The Legislative and Executive Branches of Power at the turn of the 21st Century. Survey with Recommendations. Second updated and expanded edition, Copenhagen 2003, p. 5.

ganisations, it does not alter the fact that the role of the BSPC has been overshadowed by intergovernmental actors in transnational politics. Moreover, the fact that the BSPC does not make any decisions based on votes, but instead generates consensus-based resolutions, has led to formulations in which expectations take a central role and in which the political status of the conference has been described as being more influential than what it was, in order to improve the very same status. This kind of rhetoric has also been a way to circumvent political differences in the conference. The major problem was a constant distrust between the Russian and the Baltic participants, in particular. Although the initial crisis was relaxed during the 1990s and in the early 2000s, a number of issues have turned out to be controversial over the years. There is no doubt that the enlargement of the EU and, in particular, NATO in 2004 was a sore point in this respect.

In 1992, Joenniemi and Wæver had mentioned in their report to the conference that there may be classical security problems in the former Soviet area, but they nevertheless held that in an integrated Europe there was no longer any security divisions across the Baltic Sea area.[68] This was in contradiction to what the representatives of the Baltic states felt at the time. A critical mention of the ex-Soviet troops still remaining in their national territory was made in every account of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian representatives at the conference.[69] In fact, the issue of security and national sovereignty led to the apparent suspicion of the whole regional approach among the representatives of the Baltic states as they saw national sovereignty as more important than regional co-operation.[70] In 1995, to take another early example, the Russian deputy minister of foreign affairs, while supporting the parliamentary dimension of Baltic cooperation at the conference, gave an interview in which he threatened to stop the NATO enlargement. It provoked the Baltic and Polish members of the conference.[71] Another controversial topic that has been recurring at the BSPC since the EU enlargement has been in process is the Russian demand for a visa-free access between mainland Russia and the Kaliningrad Oblast.[72] The main issue, however, has been the question on Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia. It was raised already in 1992, as the Russian representatives replied to security issues pointed out by the Baltic members of the conference.[73] In the rhetoric of the Russian participants of the BSPC it has been presented as a question of Human Rights and the rights of minorities, to which the BSPC has been adaptive at the level of its resolutions, though without mentioning the Baltic states.[74]

68 Joenneiemi and Wæver, Regionalization around the Baltic Rim, p. 19.
69 Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, pp. 28, 36, 86, 95.
70 Ibid., pp. 29, 36, 41, 85–86, 92, 95.
71 Towards a Baltic Sea Region, pp. 29, 107.
72 See, e.g., Baltic Sea – Ways of Integration and Co-operation: The 11th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, St. Petersburg, September 30 – October 1, 2002, pp. 11, 13–14; New Security Challenges, The 18th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Nyborg, Denmark, 31 August – 1 September 2009, p. 20. www.bspc.net (accessed 16 December 2015).
73 Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area, pp. 23–24, 32, 44.
74 See, e.g., Resolution in 1997, 2000, 2001, 2012. www.bspc.net (accessed 15 December 2015).

Although the Russian view of region-building has been positive on a sub-national level in the Russian northwest, the federal foreign and security policy towards the Baltic Sea region, and especially towards the Baltic states, has been lukewarm or confrontational.[75] Despite the EU-neighbourhood policy in the framework of the Northern Dimension, the Russian participants of the BSPC have felt that their country was sidestepped in regional cooperation. The Baltic states and Poland, in turn, have been more interested in nation-building and the Western orientation than region-building.[76] It seems also that the Baltic Sea orientation has lost much of its momentum in the Nordic countries after the Baltic states became integrated into the EU.[77]

Moreover, it has been obvious that democratic development in Russia had not been as successful as what was anticipated in the 1990s. For example, Degn pointed out in 2003 that the case of Russia was different from the rest of the countries in the region with regard to democratic reforms. According to her, the situation in the Russian Federation was "for the most part" incomparable with other states in the region, and Russia thus constituted "a very unique case." Despite a number of democratic reforms after the collapse of the Soviet Union, "the imperial past and tradition, the complex and problematic relationship between the centre and the regions and, not least, the size of the country, have all significantly affected the performance of the democratization process."[78]

In 2014, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers at the CBSS was cancelled due to the EU sanctions against Russia following the Russian annexation of the Ukrainian Crimean peninsula, but the BSPC did convene as planned. In its resolution, the conference held that it was "deeply concerned over the crisis in Ukraine" and that it welcomed "all steps that could contribute to a peaceful solution of the crisis."[79] While a Latvian MP wanted to have a condemning statement in the resolution,[80] a Finnish MP held that "it is more important than ever before to build up democracy, dialogue and cooperation between all the actors in the region."[81] In the conference report, the tone was moderating rather than conflictual. It was held, for example, that there was a "rich cultural heritage" in the region that was "associated with variety."[82]

A year later, "strength in diversity" was one of the phrases that aimed at keeping the BSPC and the regional approach alive.[83] While the incoming chair of the intergovern-

75 F. Tassinari, The European Sea: Lessons from the Baltic Sea Region for Security and Cooperation in the European Neighborhood, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 36 (2005) 4, pp. 387–407, at 392.

76 M. Jurkynas, Back to the Baltic Sea Region? in: Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook, 1 (2008), pp. 183–207, 194.

77 See, e.g., Götz, Spatial Politics and Fuzzy Regionalism, 63.

78 The Baltic Sea Region – An Area of Knowledge, 32.

79 Baltic Sea: Quest for Harmony, The 23rd Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Olsztyn, Poland, 24 – 26 August 2014, p. 69. www.bspc.net (accessed 17 December 2015).

80 Ibid., p. 24.

81 Ibid., p. 23.

82 Ibid., p. 47.

83 Baltic Sea Region – A Role Model for Innovation in Social- and Healthcare. 24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Rostock, 30 August 2015 – 1 September 2015, Schwerin 2015, p. 17. www.bspc.net (accessed 17 December 2015).

mental CBSS praised the BSPC as "the *vox populi* of the region,"[84] there was not any mention of regional democracy, democracy promotion or the democratic virtues of multilevel governance in the conference report. Symptomatically, though, one speaker asked "all states to respect democratic rule and development."[85] The resolution emphasized the need for "cooperation and good, peaceful neighbourliness" as well as "the opportunities for parliamentary, governmental and social exchange and dialogue."[86]

4. Concluding Remarks: The Rhetoric of Democracy and Parliamentary Diplomacy

Despite the formulations in which the BSPC was described as "democratic assembly" and "a representative body" or in which the desire of establishing "a genuine democratic community" was spelled out, it is difficult to see them in the light of a *regional demos*, as indicated in cosmopolitan theories of transnational democracy. There were no initiatives presented at the BSPC that would have suggested regional democratic elections or even initiatives that would have stipulated on region-wide legislation. Neither has the idea of a regional referendum surfaced in the investigated sources. A transnational representation is representation without the people.[87]

Nevertheless, the attempts to make the political link between the BSPC and the CBSS, as well as occasionally expressed willingness to bring party-political mandates to the BSPC[88] suggest that there have been ambitions to forge a political representation that would be analogical to the one that can be found at the level of nation states. However, such ideas have also been regarded as unfeasible. Moreover, political scientists actively engaged with region-building have ruled out the analogy between national representation and the regional forum of parliamentarians. Although the idea of a common regional identity has been a crucial part of region-building, and although the idea of a common Baltic Sea civil society has been one of the key objectives of the region-building, the research on the topic has been quite cautious about the realization of either of them.[89] The case of the BSPC shows that there is more nation-state logic in regional democracy than what the theories of regionalism and transnational democracy usually recognize.

Second, transnational democracy can also be understood as being based on networks and different civil society actors operating together with parliamentarians and (inter)governmental actors in a landscape of changing centres of power, in which case we would deal with *a sphere of multilevel governance*. The idea is obviously less demanding

84 Ibid., p. 16.
85 Ibid., p. 26.
86 Ibid., p. 95.
87 Marschall, Transnationale Repräsentation in Parlamentarischen Versammlungen, p. 324.
88 See, e.g., Sustainable Development – Shared Concerns and Responsibilities in the Baltic Sea Region, p. 23.
89 See, e.g., M. Reuter, Networking a Region into Existence? Dynamics of Civil Society Regionalization in the Baltic Sea Area, Berlin 2007, pp. 253–276.

when put in an empirical test case, as there is no need to ask, as Peter J. Taylor has done, "Who ever voted for a governance?"[90] The rhetoric of multilevel governance at the BSPC has been the most enduring theme in the rhetoric of democracy. It was hinted at already in 1991, when regional parliamentary organs were viewed as a remedy against democracy deficit; it can be found in the idea of the BSPC being a platform combining civil society actors, the nation state, and globalized politics; it was explicitly pointed out as the Northern parliamentary cooperation was praised for its good democratic governance, and when the BSPC was seen as an example of multilevel cooperation that transcended the traditional territorial unit of democratic governance. However, it is often difficult to see whether the main actor and the sphere of democracy in question is a transnational regional one with the regional parliament as the main actor or whether it, in fact, deals with the EU together with nation state political institutions.

Third, perhaps less conventionally, transnational regional democracy can also be viewed as a being composed of national democracies within a region, in which case we could view it as *an international sphere of democracy*. We have seen that the objective of democratic transition and consolidation was the main goal in the early years of the BSPC. This objective has been successfully accomplished with the exception of Russia, although we always have good reasons to discuss the definitions of what counts as a democratic regime. It seems that after Poland and the Baltic states became member states of the EU, the question of national democracy was taken as solved for their part. The regional approach had become, to a crucial degree, a matter of EU regional policy, which made the case of Russia less of an internal problem, but rather something that had to be tolerated and domesticated, in order to keep the BSPC as effective as possible in fields other than democracy promotion.

It has been noted that the advancement of transnational parliamentary democracy has not necessarily been the leitmotif of the grounding of regional parliamentary institutions, but the exchange of information, peaceful settlement of disputes as well as regional cooperation in economic and environmental issues.[91] It may thus be better to view the BSPC as a forum for parliamentary diplomacy rather than transnational democracy, a forum in which the delegates represent their respective national parliaments in a congress-like situation in order to further the possibilities for peace and wellbeing of a region.[92] While the weak parliamentary character of the BSPC and its lack of control over the executive branch are problematic in terms of the theory of parliamentary democracy, the same elements may have some diplomatic advantages for forums like the BSPC. For example, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia might have paralysed the region-building process

90 P.J. Taylor, Relocating the Demos? in: J. Anderson (ed.), Transnational Democracy: Political Spaces and Border Crossings, pp. 236–244, at 236.

91 L.M. de Puig, International Parliamentarism: An Introduction to its History, in: Parliaments, Estates and Representation 24 (2004) 1, pp. 13–62, at 14.

92 For parliamentary diplomacy in a historical perspective, see N. Götz, On the Origins of "Parliamentary Diplomacy": Scandinavian "Bloc Politics" and Delegation Policy in the League of Nations, in: Cooperation and Conflict 40 (2005) 3, pp. 263–279, at 263–265.

even more than what we see today, if the BSPC had been a democratic forum with great publicity and substantial political powers.

Spaces of Belonging and Intra-European Migration from Southern and Eastern Periphery to the North

Vasileios Petrogiannis

ABSTRACT

Vor dem Hintergrund erneut wachsender Migrationsströme innerhalb der EU wertet der Autor Interviews aus, die er in Schweden mit Migranten aus Griechenland und Lettland geführt hat. Dabei geht es ihm darum, zu verstehen, wie sich die EU-Bürgerschaft auf die Identifikation mit nationalen, regionalen und europäischen Räumen auswirkt. Es zeigt sich, dass die nationale die wichtigste Ebene der Selbstidentifikation bleibt. „Europäisch" zu sein wird ebenfalls als wichtig erachtet, zumal es im Immigrationsland einen Zugang zu Rechten garantiert, der Dritten verwehrt bleibt. Im Fall lettischer Migranten wird eine regionale Zugehörigkeit zum Baltikum und Osteuropa definiert, die von Skandinavien und Westeuropa abgegrenzt bleibt. Die griechischen Befragten sehen sich mehr zum Balkan denn zum Mittelmeer gehörig, von dessen nichteuropäischen Anrainern sie sich distanzieren möchten. Als Einheiten gedachte Mittelmeer- und Ostseeregionen spielen für die Erwartungen der Migranten kaum eine Rolle.

One of the fundamental pillars of European integration and the most important element of European citizenship according to Eurobarometer surveys is the freedom of movement among the European Union (EU) member states.[1] The institutionalized right of free movement in the EU was expanded after the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargement to the nationals of the new member states in 2011 and 2014 respectively. The difference

1 Report from the European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/files/ptc-free_movement.pdf (accessed 19 January 2017).

Comparativ | Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung 26 (2016) Heft 5, S. 58–75.

between the time of accession and the time of acquisition of the right of free mobility was implemented upon request of some of the older member states in order to protect their labour markets from uncontrollable inflows of low-skilled Eastern European workers. The "Polish Plumber"[2] became a symbol of cheap labour and the stereotypical image of the Eastern European migrant found its place in the common imaginary[3] of the people, especially those in Western Europe. Similar attitudes, accompanied by stereotypes related to laziness and fraud, appeared in the European discourse during the Eurozone crisis[4] hitting mainly the EU-Mediterranean "PIGS"[5] countries, which suffered from record high unemployment rates. Hence, free movement inside the European space received a regional dimension based on the current economic and geopolitical context in combination with stereotypes regarding the eastern and southern European movers and in opposition to a positive caricature of a competitive North, reproduced and perpetuated by mass and social media. This type of hierarchical regionalization contradicts the efforts of the EU to become an institutionalized space whose goal encloses the cohesion and cooperation inside the union both at the micro and macro level.[6]

However, the EU, which provides the framework for people, goods, services, and capital to move inside the union, experienced a series of crises during the last years. Many have expressed fears about the cohesion or even the continued existence of the EU, not least because of the possibility of a "Grexit" (the potential withdrawal of Greece from the Eurozone), that would transmit economic instability to other countries in the periphery of the Eurozone. As a solution to the continuous economic crisis in the Euro-periphery some have even introduced the idea of two different monetary unions: one for the rich north and another for the economically problematic south.[7] Also, the incapability of the EU to cooperate on the current refugee crisis has become another matter of division (the eastern EU member states have been very reluctant to accept the number of refugees allocated to them by the European Commission). Many European countries raised fences between their borders, trying to hamper the migration flows, but at the same time putting extreme pressure on the Schengen area. Furthermore, the first actual turmoil in the EU was realized through Brexit after the UK's secession from the EU. The main is-

2 A. Asthana, The Polish Plumber who Fixed the Vote, in: The Guardian, 29 May 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/may/29/france.immigration (accessed 19 January 2017).

3 The first results of a Google search (12 January 2017) using the key phrase "eastern European workers" include four websites of private labour recruitment companies using the motto "It's never been easier to get workers from Eastern Europe," and using photos of a security worker, an in-house cleaning lady, an office cleaner, and a construction worker. The remaining results are British media discussing the actual number of eastern European workers in the UK.

4 D. Barret, Immigration Surge Driven by Eurozone Crisis, in: The Telegraph, 29 August 2013, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10274266/Immigration-surge-driven-by-eurozone-crisis.html (accessed 19 January 2017).

5 The original acronym was PIIGS, which included Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, and also Ireland.

6 J.W. Scott (ed.), EU Enlargement, Region Building and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion, Abingdon 2006.

7 J. Stiglitz, A Split Euro is the Solution for Europe's Single Currency, in: Financial Times, 17 August 2016, https://www.ft.com/content/dbbd151c-62f4-11e6-8310-ecf0bddad227 (accessed 19 January 2017).

sue for the UK, which is also shared with other, mostly northern EU member states, is the migration from other EU countries and the so-called welfare state tourism of other EU citizens. In general, there is an obvious and strong movement in the European continent of introversion towards nationalism and the nation-state in combination with a regionalization of the continent between the binary opposition of north and south, east and west.

In a volatile environment where the EU confronts the rise of nationalism and various types of populism and where the continent seems to be divided between a rich centre and a economically dependent periphery in the south and the east, human mobility is more vibrant than ever before and a core issue of European politics. However, the EU citizens are migrating inside the union for various reasons and relocating their lives in different spaces.

This article examines how intra-European migrants from the southern and eastern EU-periphery relate themselves to three spaces of belonging: the national, the regional, and the European.[8] There are different levels of institutionalization among these three spaces of belonging as the nation, and the EU as a region, have a clear institutionalized structure whereas the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea regions have been pointed out by the EU as institutionalized regional frameworks.[9] More specifically the focus is on migrants from Greece and Latvia representing the Mediterranean PIGS countries and the three Baltic states, two areas that both experienced a financial crisis after 2008 and that belong to the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea regions respectively. Sweden has been chosen as a host-country example as it belongs to the industrialized and rich part of Europe having a one of the most liberal policies when it comes to migration (both labour and asylum-seeking) and the naturalization process of the migrants. Furthermore, the field work was conducted in the urban space of Stockholm and its broader area, which has been a popular destination for both internal, intra-European, and international migration, especially after the economic crisis, making it, according to Adrian Favell's typology, a new Eurocity.[10]

This article addresses the question of how the migrants from Greece and Latvia relate themselves to the national (Greek, Latvian, Swedish), European, and regional space of belonging. It examines how these three spaces of belonging affect their migratory experience in Sweden. It deals with a crucial aspect of the contemporary intra-European migration, which is under-researched and which is significant for the lives of thousands of EU citizens that are residents in an EU country other than their home country.

8 "National" in this study means the country of origin and the country of destination to which the migrants might have sentiments of belonging. Regional refers to transnational regions, mainly the Baltic and the Mediterranean area without excluding any other possible regional space of belonging. "European" indicates primarily the geographical aspect of the notion without limitation to the institutional regionalization that EU has imprinted on the continent.

9 L. Bialasiewicz et al., Re-scaling 'EU'rope: EU Macro-Regional Fantasies in the Mediterranean, in: European Urban and Regional Studies, 20 (2012) 1, pp. 59–76.

10 See Statistical Year-book of Stockholm 2016, http://statistik.stockholm.se/attachments/article/38/arsbok_2016.pdf (accessed 19 January 2017)

1. Two Main Conceptual Tools: Intra-European Migration and European Macro-Regionalization

1.1. Intra-European Migration

International migration has taken place in Europe throughout the twentieth century with changing directions, trajectories, and volume. Contemporary migration flows are often multidirectional and transient, mixing different kinds of migration and mobility such as tourism, commuting, and student migration.[11] This can be observed in the European space and especially in the EU, as open borders inside the union have facilitated inner EU-mobility. The EU-citizen status defines the practicalities of migration (the legal presuppositions for establishing oneself in another EU country) and it also creates a particular category of migrants who are both internal and international. The EU internal migration includes different kinds of migrations meaning that Europeans move around Europe for various reasons making European mobility a very complex phenomenon. David Ralph[12] studies the motivations for mobility of Irish cross-border commuters who felt forced out of Ireland after the 2008 economic crisis when the "Celtic Tiger" joined Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain to form the PIIGS. These people, Ralph argues, deal with many complexities in their lives and have to deal with problems that are related to mobility and their need to settle down. He is critical of the expression "EU free movers" because in "their (relatively privileged) lives, [they] are far more nuanced, far more protean than any simplistic picture of nomadic, peripatetic 'free-moving Europeans.'"[13] Michael Braun and Ettore Recchi[14] state that "we know surprisingly little about the objective and subjective profile of the emerging population of free-moving Europeans," and we know even less about the movements that are a by-product of the recent economic crisis, which, in addition to east-west migration, has created a recent south-north one as it has moved southern Europe closer to the social and economic reality of post-communist Eastern Europe, more boldly reflecting the core-periphery structure in the continent.[15] Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas[16] state that by 2014 there were no other academic studies on the topic with the exception of a study on Ireland by Irial Glynn,

11 T. Krings et al., Polish Migration to Ireland: "Free Movers" in the New European Mobility Space, in: Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 39 (2013) 1, pp. 87–103; R. King, Towards a New Map of European Migration, in: International Journal of Population Geography 8 (2002) 2, pp. 89–106; K. O'Reilly, Intra-European Migration and the Mobility–Enclosure Dialectic, in: Sociology 41 (2007) 2, pp. 277–293.

12 D. Ralph, Always on the Move, but Going Nowhere Fast: Motivations for "Euro-Commuting" between the Republic of Ireland and Other EU States, in: Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 41 (2015) 2, pp. 176–195.

13 Ibid., p. 191.

14 M. Braun and E. Recchi, Free-Moving West Europeans: An Empirically Based Portrait, in: H. Fassman, M. Haller M, D. Lane (eds), Migration and Mobility in Europe: Trends, Patterns and Control, Cheltenham 2009, pp. 85–101.

15 J. Magone, B. Laffan, and C. Schweiger (eds), Core-Periphery Relations in the European Union: Power and Conflict in a Dualist Political Economy, London 2016.

16 A. Triandafyllidou and R. Gropas, "Voting With Their Feet": Highly Skilled Emigrants from Southern Europe in: American Behavioral Scientist 58 (2014) 12, 1614–1647.

Tomas Kelly, and Piaras McEinrin.[17] Furthermore, Triandafyllidou and Gropas[18] in an e-survey that they conducted on 1,820 high-skilled Greeks and Italians who had decided to emigrate showed that the migrants moved not only because of deprivation and anxiety about the general conditions in their home country, but also because mobility is nowadays a fundamental element of career and professional self-growth.

1.2. Greek and Latvian Migration to Sweden

The mobility of the Greeks to Sweden was at its most vibrant during the 1960s and 1970s. It was the period with the strongest migration flows from the Mediterranean area to Sweden. The Greeks tried to flee from the authoritarian regime that ruled Greece in 1967–1974 and the overall bad economic conditions in the country during these decades. According to Christina Markopoulou,[19] who has studied the level of integration of the Greeks who were living at that time in Sweden, states that they expressed their satisfaction on how the Swedish state had welcomed them as a labour force, but they also stated that they felt like strangers and that they probably would not manage to integrate into the Swedish society as equal members.

For the Latvians, the mobility of individuals from the Baltic states to Sweden during the Soviet period took place primarily in the context of "refugism" because of the political situation in the region. It was rather insignificant in terms of size.[20] In the post-Soviet period, the independence of Baltic states and the 2004 EU enlargement were the two political factors that facilitated the migration from the Baltic states to Europe (including Sweden).[21] However, it was the economic crisis of 2008 and its consequence of high unemployment that boosted migration from the "Baltic Tigers"[22] to other regions of Europe.[23] A 2013 OECD report[24] states that the three Baltic countries have experienced a continuous emigration the last years, with negative consequences for their working-age population, and also a negative impact on the labour market, the general economy, and on social developments.

17 I. Glynn, T. Kelly, and P. McEinrin, Irish Emigration in the Age of Austerity, Dublin 2013.

18 Triandafyllidou and Gropas, "Voting With Their Feet,"1614–1647.

19 C. Markopoulou, Sociocultural Effects of Intra-European Migration: A Cyclical Research Study in Greece and Sweden, University of Goteborg, Göteborg 1981.

20 K.B. Mayer, International Migrations of European Workers, in: Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 1 (1972) 3, pp. 173–182; A.M. Ekengren, Soviet Refugees in Postwar Sweden: Asylum Policy in a Liberal Democracy, in: Baltic Worlds 4 (2014), pp. 57–59.

21 Sweden, Ireland, and the UK were the three old EU member states that put no restrictions in place regarding the mobility of workers from the new Eastern European EU member states, the so-called A8.

22 Baltic Tigers is a term (nickname) used for the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania especially with reference to their huge economic growth between 2000 and 2007.

23 J.W. Holtslag (ed.), Making Migration Work: The Future of Labour Migration in the European Union, Amsterdam 2013; E. Apsite, E. Lundholm, and O. Stjernström, Baltic State Migration System–The Case of Latvian Immigrants in Sweden, in: Journal of Northern Studies 6 (2012) 1, pp. 31–51.

24 J. Joost and G. Engbersen, Emigration from the Baltic States: Economic Impact and Policy Implications, in: Coping with Emigration in Baltic and East European Countries, Paris 2013, pp. 13–27, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/coping-with-emigration-in-baltic-and-east-european-countries/emigration-from-the-baltic-states-economic-impact-and-policy-implications_9789264204928-4-en.

1.3. European Macro-Regionalization

The European power differential as well as the migration trajectories that it establishes, create the notion of two major regions inside Europe: the core, which includes the central and northern part, and then the eastern and southern periphery.[25] In addition to this type of regionalization, there is an institutional one that is not only embodied by the EU as "a post-national cosmopolitan polity based in a regional territorial logic"[26] but is also operated by the EU as a region builder.[27] Most scholars who study regionalism tend to agree on the social constructivist dimension of regions.[28] This notion of region is similar to the concept of nation as an imagined community with common cultural characteristics.[29] As Rolf Petri has noticed, there are similarities in nation and region building. [30] In the case of the EU, identity making accompanies the Europeanization process that is illustrated in the plethora of tools of nation building that have been used (common institutions, flag, anthem, constitution).[31] Furthermore, the EU as region builder has taken initiatives for two macro-regions,[32] the "Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region" (EUSBSR) around the Baltic Sea and the EU-funded project "MEDGOVERNANCE" in the Mediterranean, which lie in the periphery of Europe and include both economically developed and less developed member-states. Regarding the Baltic Sea region, since the end of Cold War, intensified regional cooperation emerged and the EU's interest in the region became vibrant after its expansion to the east, constituting the Baltic as an internal EU sea (with the exception of the enclave of Kaliningrad and the area of Saint Petersburg).[33] Though the EU's effort to regionalize the Mediterranean area began much earlier than in the Baltic Sea case,[34] high diversity and institutional division between EU

25 R. King et al., Eurocity London: A Qualitative Comparison of Graduate Migration from Germany, Italy and Latvia, in: Comparative Migration Studies 4 (2016) 1. pp. 1-22.

26 E. Recchi and A. Favell (eds.), Pioneers of European Integration: Citizenship and Mobility in the EU, Cheltenham 2009.

27 According to the Oxford Dictionary, the etymology of the word "region," which comes from the Latin "regere," to rule, to direct is very illustrative on how regions have been used through centuries as a governmental tool.

28 D. Gregory (ed.), The Dictionary of Human Geography, Blackwell 2009; V. Petrogiannis and L. Rabe, What Is It That Holds a Region Together? in: Baltic Worlds, in-house issue (2016).

29 B. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Rev. ed. London 2006.

30 R. Petri, The Resurgence of the Region in the Context of European Integration: Recent Developments and Historical Perspective, in A. Bauerkämper and H. Kaelble (eds.), Gesellschaft in der europäischen Integration seit den 1950er Jahren, Stuttgart 2012, pp. 159-171.

31 J. Fornäs, Signifing Europe, Chicago 2012.

32 Macro region, a political concept borrowed from the field of international relations, according to EU's administration terminology is "an area including territory from a number of different countries or regions associated with one or more common features or challenges (…) geographic, cultural, economic or other" (European Commission, 2009: 1 and 7), that contributes to "Europeanization" (A. Stocchiero, Macro-Regions of Europe: Old Wine in a New Bottle?, 2010, http://www.cespi.it/wp/wp%2065-cespi%20macroregioni%20europee%20_eng_.pdf (accessed 19 January 2017).

33 N. Götz (ed.), The Sea of Identities: A Century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class, and Gender, Huddinge 2014.

34 L. Tsoukalis, The EEC and the Mediterranean: Is "Global" Policy a Misnomer? in: International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 53 (1977) 3, p. 422; L. Bialasiewicz et al., Re-scaling 'EU'rope: EU Macro-Regional Fantasies in the Mediterranean, in: European Urban and Regional Studies, 20 (2012) 1, pp. 59–76.

and non-EU countries make the construction of the Mediterranean into an EU macro region a much more complex task than the Baltic Sea[35] as the external element is much more extensive (in the Baltic Sea macro region, only Russia is a non-EU country). The initiative towards a "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" (EMP) was "aiming at integrating the two shores of the Mediterranean, not just at the political or economic levels, but also at the social and cultural levels."[36] However, in both cases this diversity (political, economic, cultural) makes EU macro-regions and macro-regional strategies a tool for European integration and increased territorial cohesion.[37] The EU's regionalization of the Baltic and the Mediterranean Sea areas implies a formation and reproduction of a regional identity that is meant to support the process of regionalization. However, as Anssi Paasi[38] has emphasized, this identity-building never comes to a final completion, but is rather continually reproduced by social communication.

2. Focus Group and Method of Sampling

The material analysed in this article is the product of eight semi-structured face-to-face interviews with migrants from Greece and Latvia who moved to Sweden after 2004 and whose profiles are presented in table 1. The sample is balanced in terms of gender and level of education, as it includes four male and four female participants who either have tertiary (having university degree / are highly educated) or do not have tertiary education. The advantage of this balance is that it makes the research inclusive in the sense that different voices and opinions are shared from both men and women with high and low educational capital. The "age" and the "time of arrival in Sweden" are two additional variables that offer a plurality of opinions based on the distinctive experiences the participants have as individuals who belong to different age groups and have lived through different time periods as migrants. The interviews were conducted between June 2015 and December 2016 and their length varied from one hour to a maximum of two hours.
The technique used to gather the current sample was a "selective snowball sampling" as the intention was to create a group of people with specific characteristics. Initially, the first participants were recruited through the researcher's personal network in Stockholm and also via social groups on Facebook (especially for the Latvians) who later introduced to me some of their acquaintances that fitted to the needs of the sample. For the organi-

35 J.C. Tourret and V. Willaert, 3 Scenarios for a Mediterranean Macro-Regional Approach, in: S. Terracina (ed.) A Mediterranean Strategy is Possible, Turin 2011, pp. 75–121; A. Jones, Making Regions for EU Action: The EU and the Mediterranean, in: L. Bialasiewicz (ed.), Europe in the World: EU Geopolitics and the Making of European Space, Farnham 2011, pp. 41–58.

36 S. Panebianco, A New Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Identity, CITY HERE 2003.

37 A. Dubois, EU Macro-Regions and Macro-Regional Strategies – A Scoping Study. Nordregio Working Paper 2009:4, http://www.nordregio.se/Publications/Publications-2009/EU-macro-regions-and-macro-regional-strategies/ (accessed 19 January 2017).

38 A. Paasi, The Institutionalisation of Regions: A Theoretical Framework for the Understanding of the Emergence of Regions and the Constitution of Regional Identity, Fennia 164 (1986), pp. 105–146.

zation of the interview a questionnaire was used that was divided to six themes. The first part of the questionnaire includes general questions to acquire personal information about the interviewee as an individual, but also to have a complete picture of his/her life both in Sweden and in the home country. The second cluster of questions discusses issues related to migration and integration in the host society. The third thematic unit of questions addresses the notion of the nation and interviewees' identification with it. The fourth part of the interview discusses issues related to Europe and the EU. The fifth section concerns the connection between regions, regional identification, and migration. The last part of the interview is the conclusive one where the interviewees are asked to freely add any comments or bring up issues that have been already discussed previously.

Table 1

Preudonym	Country of Origin	Gender	Age	Education	Arrival in Sweden
Sofia	Greece	Female	38	No Tertiary education	2012
Nikos	Greece	Male	55	No Tertiary education	2013
Eleni	Greece	Female	32	No Tertiary education	2007
Konstan-tinos	Greece	Male	31	No Tertiary education	2013
Maiya	Latvia	Female	41	No Tertiary education	2004
Emma	Latvia	Female	53	No Tertiary education	2009
Ludis	Latvia	Male	47	No Tertiary education	2010
Kalvis	Latvia	Male	28	No Tertiary education	2011

The informants are listed according to their country of origin and chronologically based on the date of the interview from the earliest to the most recent.

Both the small number of participants and the non-representativity of the sample of the migrant population makes it challenging to generalize the findings of the study. Each migrant had a unique life story, individual experiences, and personal approaches to their identifications and spaces of belonging. Despite these circumstances, I will suggest some generalizations and track some patterns, which may reflect overall experiences of the Greek and Latvian post-2000 migrant population. Some of the Latvians were inter-

viewed in English instead of their native language while the Greeks were interviewed in Greek. However, the highly educated Latvians had a very good command of the English language and they did not have any difficulties expressing themselves. The non-tertiary educated Latvians, who did not speak English fluently, were interviewed with the assistance of a Latvian interpreter in order to minimize the language-bias and to have an unhindered discussion.

3. Analysis – Three Spaces of Belonging

The analysis of the material is divided into levels of identification and belonging of the Latvian and Greek migrants in Sweden according to three territorial units: the nation, Europe, and the trans-national regions Baltic Sea and Mediterranean.

3.1. The Nation

Generally, and expectably, the Greek or Latvian nation among the spaces of belonging is the one to which the migrants feel the strongest relation. Each of the eight interviewees showed a different level of attachment to their home country, but for all of them their nation is what has affected them the most, both in their lives back in the home country and in Sweden. The time period of migration affects this sentiment for most of the participants. Sweden, despite not being a primary space of belonging, is a very important one because it is a goal for the migrants to integrate into Swedish society and be perceived as part of it. It seems that time gives a certain legitimization for belonging in Sweden to the migrants, regardless of the level of integration (knowledge of Swedish, socialization, acculturation). This probably reflects the fact that the process of naturalization is universally based, among other criteria, on that of the total period of residence.

For the Greeks, it seems that their conscious decision for a permanent migration to Sweden is related to deprivation in their home country and a feeling of insecurity and pessimism for the future of Greece. For those who arrived in Sweden after the 2010 economic crisis, the reasons for a permanent migration are the reasons for the migration itself, which is linked to the socioeconomic effects of the crisis. For Eleni, who is highly educated and moved to Sweden in 2007, the decision to emigrate is first and foremost related to career ambitions and lifestyle choices, but for her the 2010 crisis and the following socioeconomic consequences are what steer her life decisions. Scholars who have conducted research in the post-2008 economic crisis intra-European migration trends have found and discussed similar results.[39] Sussane Bygnes,[40] for example, stated that

39 C.G. Enríquez and J.P.M. Romera, Country Focus: Migration of Spanish Nationals during the Crisis, 2014, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/gonzalezenriquez-martinezromera-espana-emigracion-espanoles-crisis-spainmigration-crisis#.VKPdiKPKyUk (accessed 29 January 2017); R. Gropas and A. Triandafyllidou, Survey Report, Emigrating in Times of Crisis: Highlights and New Data from an E-survey on High-skilled Emigrants from Southern Europe and

highly skilled Spanish migrants in Norway avoid mentioning the economic crisis as the reason for their relocation and instead emphasize the overall negative social and political situation in the country. Regardless of the level of education or gender, all four Greek migrants are negative about the Greek state mentioning the corruption, clientelism, and nepotism. Especially in this matter the comparisons with Sweden, and generally with Scandinavia, were many. Ranging from more sophisticated to more vulgar expressions regarding this comparison, statements on the overall development level in comparative terms between Sweden and Greece were very negative towards their home country. For the non-highly educated Greeks, the migration was initiated and realized and facilitated through contacts (family, friends) who were already residents in Sweden, while for the highly educated, the movement took place through more institutionalized methods like post-graduate education or job applications.

Similarly, for the highly educated Latvians their decision to move and stay in Sweden and become integrated in Swedish society is related more to lifestyle choices, even though the bad economic situation in Latvia and the low salaries were mentioned during the interviews. For them, migration was a personal choice and not a relocation of need because of the current politico-economic condition in their home country. The Latvians who did not have a higher education decided to immigrate to Sweden because of the effects the 2008 economic crisis had on peoples' lives and is specifically related to unemployment, low demand for services, and loan debts. Again, the non-highly educated Latvians, similarly to the Greeks, used acquaintances as a medium for their relocation to Sweden, but employment agencies were also involved in this process.

Despite the fact that all participants have, to different degrees, showed sentiments of belonging and clear identification to their country, their sometimes contradictory or unclear answers to questions related to national identity show the existence of an implicit hierarchy between the national identifications: Greek vs. Swedish and Latvian vs. Swedish, with Swedish perceived in the supreme position. Several participants stated ironically that their primary national identification was Swedish instead of admitting to being Latvians or Greeks. For example, Sofia's identification to her home country is very strong. She feels proud to be Greek and she would not like to be anything else. She states, "I would like to be neither Swede nor German." However, this statement suggests that Sofia positions Sweden and Germany on a higher level than Greece and that, rationally, she would have wanted to be a Swede or a German, although she actually does not. This becomes clearer when the participants were asked about how they position themselves in relation to Swedish society; they showed a will to become or a desire to be Swedes. They would like to identify themselves with the Swedish nation and, if possible, acquire Swedish citizenship. However, they think that it is rather difficult to become Swedes or to

Ireland, Florence 2014; A. Triandafyllidou, and R. Gropas, "Voting With Their Feet,", pp. 1614–1647; S. Bygnes, Are They Leaving Because of the Crisis? The Sociological Significance of Anomie as a Motivation for Migration, in: Sociology (2015), pp. 1–16.

40 S. Bygnes, Are They Leaving Because of the Crisis? pp. 1–16.

start feel like Swedes because either a strong identification to their nation or the thought that they would never manage to succeed. The majority of the participants have applied for or intend to apply for Swedish citizenship for various reasons, which are related both to Greece and Latvia. Mainly this concerns a feeling of insecurity for the future of their country. In migration theory there are "push factors" (economic situation, political corruption, external threats to sovereignty) and "pull factors" (economic and political stability, welfare state, acquire all the benefits that the Swedish citizens have). When asked about their EU-citizenship status, the migrants answered that the naturalization will bring more rights, in comparison to those derived from the EU-citizenship, and a sense of stronger belonging to the country but also to the fact that they worry about the future of the EU or the position of their country inside the EU (mainly Greeks).

All the Greek interviewees had a negative overall attitude towards their compatriots, especially those who migrated to Sweden earlier than they did. For the non-highly educated Greeks the complaint or the accusation against the early Greek migrants is related to a general lack of solidarity or empathy for the newcomers who are in need, while for those with high education the problem is mainly about a lack of cosmopolitanism, non-synchronization with the current cultural trends, and an inclination for nation-centrism. None of the four Greeks was actively participating in the Greek community, though all of them at a certain point came in contact or participated in some of the events organized by the Greek community.

However, this is similar only for Maiya, a highly educated female Latvian and not for the other three Latvians who seem to have a smooth relationship with their compatriots and who might also participate in the activities of the Latvian community. For Maiya there is a difference between the early migrants, who in most cases were refugees, and the migrants who moved to Sweden after Latvian independence. She finds the early Latvian migrants irritatingly curious about her personal life and furthermore, she mentioned that they think that they have rightfully been in Sweden in comparison to the newcomers who are merely economic migrants and this is something that, according to her, makes her feel uncomfortable. She feels that she is being seen stereotypically as an economic migrant only because she moved from Latvia to Sweden after 1990.

Integration into Swedish society is a goal for almost all interviewees. The only exception is Konstantinos whose left-wing political views obliged him to suggest a more cosmopolitan, non-nationalist perception of his identity and belonging, though he said at the end of the interview that he tries to comply with the social conventions of the country (he always uses the zebra crossing, he quit smoking and started chewing tobacco instead), indicating at least an intention to feel and become part of the new society. The level of integration is apparently related to the overall period of residence each individual has in the country, but a factor that is crucial in this process is language skill, primarily English and Swedish. Especially the Greek non-highly educated migrants, and to same degree the Latvians, are lacking or only have a basic knowledge of English, something that forces them towards co-national socialization. In contrast, all the highly educated migrants had at least proficiency in English and this was an advantage for a more rapid integration into

the host society by breaking the co-national circle of socializing and the possibility of meeting locals and people from other countries. Because the informants all lived in the broader Stockholm area, which is an internationally oriented metropole, the command of English worked for them as a tool of basic integration to the new society.

Another issue, which refers mainly to the Swedish space of belonging, is related to the stereotypical Swedish phenotype, something mentioned directly or indirectly from some of the migrants. The similarity to the Swedish phenotype, it seems, enhances the sense of belonging to Sweden among the Latvians who said that they feel happy when the locals perceive them as Swedes because of their northern European outer characteristics. For example, Maiya said that she even sometimes avoids speaking Swedish in order not to expose her Latvian and national origin and in that way, be taken for a Swede. In her analysis Guðbjört Guðjónsdóttir[41] illustrates a similar social acceptance or social "(in)visibility" as she states, based on the characteristics of "whiteness" of Islander migrants in Norway enhancing their sentiment of belonging to Norwegian society in comparison to other migrants. Stereotypes also follow the Greek migrants whose phenotypes might not be identified with either Swedish or Greek spaces of belonging. Eleni who is blond with bright-coloured eyes has been asked why her outer characteristics are such despite her coming from Greece. The much darker Konstantinos, who has chosen also to grow a beard, has experienced some incidents of hostility because he was taxonomized as a Muslim Arab.

The majority of the interviewees, both Greeks and Latvians, when they were asked about their integration to their host society stated that it matters more to them and it more substantially affects their lives in Sweden how the others see them rather than what they believe, where they position themselves or how they identify themselves. For all Greek and Latvian participants (Konstantinos was again an exception) the word migrant brought negative connotations linked to experiences and discourses they brought from their home countries (people in need, refugees, economic migrants, or people not integrated in the society). However, they admitted that in practice they were also migrants and said they do feel sometimes as such when the others, intentionally or unintentionally, make them feel like strangers.

Some informants mentioned personal experiences of discrimination and difficulties in accessing the labour market or in their career development, which were related to the Swedish language or to the fact that they were coming from low status countries. The issue of national stereotyping was also discussed with the participants who said that national stereotypes do exist and those who follow the Swedish media added that they were created or reproduced by them. However, everybody had an overall satisfaction for the quality of life and well-being in Sweden and no unpleasant experience to share during their everyday interaction with the local society.

41 G. Guðjónsdóttir, We Blend in with the Crowd but They Don't: (In)visibility and Icelandic Migrants in Norway, in: Nordic Journal of Migration Research 4 (2014) 4, pp. 176–183.

The Greeks reported an overall positive attitude towards them as a great majority of the Swedish people shared memories of being tourists in the country. However, Eleni who moved to Sweden before the 2010 economic crisis mentioned a shift in the attitude towards her not only from the locals, but also from other migrants, as the perception of the Swedish society about Greece changed from tourist-related towards another type of generalization, reflecting the bad economic performance of the country.

The Latvians were also satisfied with the way they were treated by the local society. However, some of the Latvians also referred to stereotypes the Swedes have about them. These were seen as both positive and negative, related to how skilful and hardworking the Latvians are, but they were also seen as imported cheap labour threatening the rights of the local workers in Sweden. Maiya in particular shared an experience of discrimination at her workplace during the incident of *Vaxholmskonflikten*.[42] Furthermore, the Latvian women participants noted a gender-related stereotype in Swedish society as Latvian women are perceived as easy to have an affair with.[43] Some of these stereotypes and generalizations are spread to the public through the media. Maiya said that she has several times corrected false information or stereotypes about Latvia that her Swedish friends and co-workers listen to and reproduce from the Swedish television.

3.2. Europe

In the minds of the participants, Europe is a region that coincides with the European Union. When reference was made to Europe, the migrants understood it as the EU, and when they mentioned Europe they meant (most of the time) the EU. Konstantinos again was the exception as he was very clear when he differentiated the geographical from the institutionalized notion of Europe expressing negative sentiments towards the EU, though he recognized some initial good intentions. Though all the interviewees have a sense of belonging in Europe, either the continent or the EU, or both, none of them believes that a common European identity exists. They rather argue – sometimes very explicitly – that national identities are still strong and that they will continue to be so in the future. Some of the informants, not only the highly educated, recognized a certain political intention on the part of the European elite to construct a European identity. However, they believe, especially the Greeks, that any progress achieved in the European identity project has been cancelled by the recent economic and refugee crises.

42 The Latvian company Laval Un Partneri Ltd came in conflict with the Swedish labour unions after its refusal to sign the Swedish collective agreement and applied it to the Latvian workers employed in an infrastructure project funded by the Swedish state. The labour unions went on strike and the company brought this case to the European Court of Justice; see: Case C-341/05, Laval un Partneri Ltd v Svenska Byggnadsarbetareförbundet and Others, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?isOldUri=true&uri=CELEX:62005CJ0341 (accessed 19 January 2017).

43 According to Jenny Olofsson, the main gateway among immigrants from Russia, the Baltic States, and Poland to Sweden before 2004 was marriage and maybe that is the reason for the existence of this stereotype that Maiya is referred to. J. Olofsson, Go West: East European Migrants in Sweden, Umeå 2012.

Furthermore, there is a consensus among the informants, even those who clearly showed a negative stance against the EU, on the benefits they have received because of the EU and EU citizenship. This is mainly related to visa-free movement and relocation inside the EU, and to some social benefits that they have in the EU-country that they have decided to reside in. For some of the interviewees the EU citizenship is the reason, or the excuse, that makes them argue for the lack of adoption of an immigrant identity as they ascribe the identity of immigrant to non EU citizens or refugees. For some participants, both Greek and Latvian, Europe is associated mainly with Christianity as they showed in their answers some negative attitude against Islam and Muslim migrants.[44] Similarly to Guðjónsdóttir's[45] Islanders in Norway who used their white phenotype, common language, and assumed same racial link, Greeks revoke religion and geography to enhance their belonging not only to Europe but also to Sweden. These efforts of achieving a level of belonging through strategies of identification, which are formed by notions of exclusion and inclusion,[46] declare the need of the informants to associate themselves closely to certain spaces of belonging and make their presence more legitimized.

For the interviewed Latvians, Europe has only positive connotations related to freedom, democracy, free mobility, and to common values that all Europeans share. All Latvian informants associate themselves with the continent and the EU as they answer positively to the question about whether they feel like Europeans. When it comes to the definition of Europe it seems that Russia is the limit that defines the continent and the EU. Although some of them recognized a partial common cultural heritage with Russia (mainly the western part), there was a general agreement on the position of the country as definitely outside the EU. The only consideration expressed from the Latvians against the EU is the concern regarding efforts from the EU to homogenize the culture and identity of the member states.

The Greeks, both those with and without tertiary education, are more political in their answers mentioning the power relations and the hierarchical constructions inside the EU. They position Greece at the lower level of this hierarchy, something that affects them, and they have a much more negative attitude towards the EU than the Latvians. They are sceptical towards the idea of belonging to something that is European and they reject, as the Latvians also do, the existence of a common European identity. For them, Europe is a suppressive institution, which creates a certain hierarchy inside and outside the continent. European identity symbolizes either a differentiation between the supreme European countries and the others, or an economic differentiation inside the EU between the rich and the poor.

Most of the interviewees think that there is a hierarchy among the European nations that is mostly based on the economic power these nations have. The Greeks stand criti-

44 The interviews took place in a period when many terrorist attacks committed by radical Islamists hit Europe.

45 Guðjónsdóttir, We Blend in with the Crowd but They Don't, pp. 176–183.

46 F. Anthias, Intersectionality, Belonging and Translocational Positionality: Thinking about Transnational Identities, in: G. Rosenthal and A. Bogner, Ethnicity, Belonging and Biography, CITY 2009, pp. 229–249, p. 232.

cal against this while the Latvians, though they recognize this hierarchy, would like to be placed among the Nordic countries, which are at the top of the ladder. Furthermore, Maiya said that this hierarchy is reflected also in the Swedish society where the Anglo-Saxon countries are more appreciated than others and that this hierarchy hinders her from finding a better job. Maiya mentioned that she once lost a position because, despite the fact that knowledge of Swedish was a requirement for the job, an English woman with no skills in the Swedish language was chosen instead of her.

3.3. Baltic and Mediterranean Regions

The space of belonging related to the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea regions is rather weak and also quite fragmented in the minds of the people. It appears to be difficult for the migrants to identify themselves with such an amorphous geographical region. Sub-regions within the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea appear to be closer to a sense of belonging for the interviewees. This shows that cultural and historical factors create a space of belonging rather than top down efforts to institutionalize regions and create regional identities.

All the Latvian informants identify themselves with the three Baltic states as a region and in a more general way with the Baltic Sea as part of Eastern Europe, excluding Scandinavia and Germany. For them, the Baltic Sea is the sea of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, and perhaps Russia. Maiya, for example, recognized the superior role of Germany and Scandinavia for having the know-how for many issues and problems and operating as a paradigm that the Baltic states should follow. This hierarchical and patronizing and discriminating attitude which Maiya referred to has been mentioned by several scholars[47] who studied the post Iron Curtain relations in Europe. This negative attitude found in public, political, and private discourses, which reflects the east-west division, takes also a macro-regional dimension, which is translated into the supreme role of specific countries (Germany) and areas (Scandinavia) in the Baltic Sea over the three Baltic republics. Maiya stated emphatically that she comes from the Baltic states. In her mind, there is a strong connection between the three Baltic nations that is associated not only with their common Soviet past but also with the period of the Hanseatic League.[48] All four Latvians showed a distance towards Russia and attempted to create historical, cultural, and geographical links to Sweden and the Nordic countries as they mentioned the time Latvia was part of the Swedish empire, experienced the Viking era, or by positioning Latvia as part of "northern Europe" instead of eastern. The Latvian interviewees even mentioned

47 M. Krzyzanowski and F. Oberhuber, (Un)Doing Europe: Discourses and Practices of Negotiating the EU Constitution, Brussels 2007; R. Wodak, and B. Matouschek, We Are Dealing with People Whose Origins One Can Clearly Tell Just by Looking: Critical Discourse Analysis and the Study of NeoRacism in Contemporary Austria in: Discourse & Society 4 (1993) 2, pp. 225–248.

48 The Hanseatic League is the name of the commercial and defensive federation of mainly German merchant guilds and their towns in the Baltic and North Sea in which they based their economic activities in the period between the 13th and 15th century. "Hanseatic League." Britannica Academic, Encyclopædia Britannica, 11 May. 2016, academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/39167 (accessed 20 January 2017).

that during the Soviet period the three Baltic states were considered to be different from the rest of the Soviet Union; they were the "West" of the "East," a richer region with its people being seen as something exotic.

For the Greek interviewees, the Mediterranean is not a region that they would identify themselves with, though they find some cultural similarities with the other EU Mediterranean countries. They distinguish southern Europe from the North African and Asian part of the Mediterranean without forgetting to add that the region has been connected throughout history for many centuries. Sofia, Eleni, and Nikos identify themselves with the Balkan Peninsula and they feel closer culturally to the Balkan countries. Nikos said ironically, maybe because of lack of historical references that connect Greece and Sweden, the region he is coming from is Scandinavia, adding immediately after that Greece, including himself, belongs to the Balkans. Konstantinos, on the other hand, finds similarities in the way of life among European Mediterranean countries mainly because of common climatological conditions in the area, adding that he feels comfortable associating with individuals from the region.

The Mediterranean region as a space of belonging does not appear to influence the migratory experience of the Greeks much. Regarding Nikos and Sofia this may be related to the fact that they speak only Greek, which leads to a co-national socialization constraining their social circle and their perceptions from a local Swedish or international environment. However, the Latvians, who all interact in a more substantial way with Swedish society, feel that their region of belonging affects their lives as migrants in Sweden. Some of them had experienced some incidents of discrimination, which were mainly related to their nation. But since Swedes tend to mix up the three states, their capitals, and treat them as one country, it can be argued that this has a regional aspect. Maiya and Emma, for example, expressed their disappointment and irritation about the attitudes some Swedes have towards the Baltic states.

4. Conclusions

The main analysis illustrated that the significance of the three spaces of belonging is related to the level of institutionalization the spaces have, but also to the geographical and historical context the interviewees position in their nation of origin. Nation is still, despite the predictions,[49] about the decline of its importance after the end of Cold War, the most important space of belonging. The EU migrants from Greece and Latvia see themselves and are seen by Swedish society mainly through the lens of the nation-state. The country of origin and the host country are the key spaces of belonging that define the lives and the migratory experience. The first serves as the identification that accompanied the migrants when they first came to Sweden and the latter as the identification with which they have started a dialogue for the possibility, however pessimistically un-

49 See F. Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man, New York 1993.

likely, of belonging to it. The majority of migrants choose not adopt the migrant identity for themselves stating that the local society created and imposed this identity on them. When it comes to identification with the national space Alexandra Wangler confirms what the Latvian and Greek migrants stated regarding the Swedish identification: "The concept of national identity is therefore closely interconnected with the way that people are identified by others and how they react to it."[50]

Europe, despite being a massively bigger space, a greater and much more heterogeneous region in comparison to the nation-state, has managed through years of EU integration and institutional development to infuse a sense of belonging to the residents of the Union, however often in a controversial and unclear way. Moreover, the EU and Europe are two notions that overlap in the minds of the interviewees because the use of the word Europe most of the time signifies also the EU. Michael Krzyzanowski and Florian Oberhuber[51] reported this overlapping of the geographical with the institutional aspect of Europe in negotiations among the participants for the conference for the European Constitution. This is an indication that the EU's elite has succeeded in overriding geography in favour of the political agenda in the continent in the minds of the Europeans. All the migrants acknowledged that free mobility inside the Union facilitates the relocation from one EU member-state to another. Generally, the Latvians had a positive attitude towards the EU and identified themselves with this space of belonging. This positive attitude towards the EU is part of the binary opposition West–East where the EU now is the continuation of what the West meant for Eastern Europeans during the Soviet times. These notions are opposite to the experience that the three Baltic states had during the Soviet period, both because of the authoritarian Soviet regime and because of the restriction of people's mobility. On the other hand, although the Greeks were quite negative towards Europe and the EU and they had no explicit identification with it, they linked themselves to Europe through exclusion. Third-country migrants (people from countries outside the EU) and Europe's neighbouring areas functioned as the Other that made it clear that Greeks were part of Europe and the EU respectively. For Latvians, the "Otherness" comes from an exclusion of Russia, if not from Europe as such then definitely from the EU, and the "sameness" is operated by their whiteness. This mechanism of enhancing a sentiment of belonging through exclusion is similar to the way the Islandic migrants position themselves in Norwegian society.[52] Besides their North European phenotype, which is a justification for including the Nordic regionalization has created another spatial entity in which free movement applies. The Nordic citizens enjoy more premium mobility and residence rights than the rest of the EU citizens inside the Nordic macroregion. Hence, this type of regionalization creates new spaces of inclusion and exclusion similar to the EU member states and third-country status.

50 A. Wangler, Rethinking History, Reframing Identity: Memory, Generations, and the Dynamics of National Identity in Poland, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 197.

51 M. Krzyzanowski, and F. Oberhuber, (Un)Doing Europe: Discourses and Practices of Negotiating the EU Constitution.

52 Guðjónsdóttir, We Blend in with the Crowd but They Don't, pp. 176–183.

Despite the fact that the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea regions are much smaller than Europe, the institutionalized framework of the EU creates among the migrants a feeling of belonging, but also a negative attitude and criticism against Europe. The Mediterranean and Baltic Seas are not particularly important for the interviewees and it seems that these regions do not affect their migratory experience in Sweden in terms of social ("Mediterraneans" or "Baltics" socialise with other "Mediterraneans" or "Baltics") and personal identity (regional self-presentation). An explanation to this could be that the national discourse is so strong that it covers other possible identification, such as the regional one. For the Latvians, the Baltic Sea is a space that unites the countries around it through a common past but also a space that divides the area between the progressive and backwards because of the Cold War division. However, the Latvians express a clear sentiment of belonging to a sub-region of the Baltic Sea, the Baltic states. They feel close to their neighbours in terms of culture and history, and they also noted that the Swedes also tend to see the three Baltic states as a common region although in a fuzzy way. For the Greeks, the Mediterranean Sea is a region with a great variant of cultural elements that they find difficult to identify with. They would group themselves mainly with the northern Mediterranean, without excluding, however, other parts of the region because of their long historical coexistence. A smaller region that some of the Greeks find more intimate is the Balkan Peninsula, again for cultural and historical reasons.

In conclusion, the sentiment of belonging to various spaces varies significantly in each individual in terms of density, but it is certainly more abstract, more blur and for that more inclusive. The participants showed some kind of attachment to all national, regional, and European spaces. However, an identity, which the migrants consciously bear and which attributes to the formation of their status in the host society, it is much more demanding than simple belonging. The construction of collective identities presupposes the existence of the "Other," of "insiders," and "outsiders,"[53] and this construction is more rigid inside an institutionalized space. Hence, only the national space succeeds in this and, secondly, the European one through the EU.

53 B. Stråth, Belonging and European Identity, in: G. Delanty (ed). Identity, Belonging, and Migration, Liverpool 2007, p. 37.

FORUM

Widening the Ocean: Eastern Atlantic Islands in the Making of Early-Modern Atlantic

José Damião Rodrigues

ABSTRACT

Über Jahrhunderte hinweg spielten Inseln als„natürliche Brücken" eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Verbindung von Ozeanen und Weltregionen. Manche nahmen eine „zentrale", andere eine mehr „periphere" Rolle für Schifffahrtswege und Handelsnetzwerke, die Kontrolle der Meere und die Besiedlung von Kontinenten ein. Die Konstruktion und Integration der atlantischen Welt nahm seit dem 15. Jahrhundert ihren Ausgang von den Makaronesischen Inseln, die den Mittelmeerraum mit dem Atlantischen Becken verbanden. Auf den Kanaren, Madeira, den Azoren und Kapverdischen Inseln, aber auch auf São Tomé und Príncipe wurden traditionell mediterrane, soziale und ökonomische Muster an neue geographische und historische Kontexte angepasst. Dabei bildeten sich Prototypen der nachfolgenden Kolonisierung Amerikas heraus. Der Beitrag betrachtet die frühneuzeitliche ostatlantische Welt als frühen Schauplatz der europäischen „Moderne."

Islands have dominated the Western imagination since the Bronze Age. In fact, in Western thought, islands have always enhanced human imagination as realms of possibility and *reservoir of myths.*[1] From Atlantis to the paradisiacal islands that the tourism industry offers to today's societies, the multiple functions and "figures" of the island – the island-

1 See, among others, S. Stephanides and S. Bassnett, Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability, in: Transtext(e)s Transcultures [on line], Hors série, 2008, on line on 15 October 2009, [URL: <http://transtexts.revues.org/212>] (accessed 18 September 2015); A. M. Fallon, Global Crusoe: comparative literature, postcolonial theory and transnational aesthetics, Farnham 2011.

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microcosms, the island paradise, the island-lab, among others[2] – lay at the foundation of some of the most important texts of our tradition. During the Middle Ages, people continued to travel for several reasons. Travel and exploration were the source of many circulating texts and islands remained a fascinating subject.[3] The late medieval and early modern *isolarii* condensed "multiple forms of knowledge" and a mixture of experiences that illustrates how islands and archipelagoes both real and imaginary were critical in travel writing and in the shaping of territorial identities[4].

In 1528, in Benedetto Bordone's *Isolario*, all the islands of the world are supposed to be described and depicted and the city of Tenochtitlan, then recently discovered by the Europeans, already has a place in it as one of the most famous islands known to men.[5] Let us also recall the long cultural tradition binding the islands and the project of a new political and social order that we may find in works such as *Utopia*, by Thomas More (1516), *The City of the Sun*, by Tomasso Campanella (1602) or the *New Atlantis*, by Francis Bacon (1623, with a Latin edition in 1624). It was not by chance that these authors, like so many others in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, placed the islands at the core of their texts. After all, as the historian and geographer John Gillis said, "many Europeans came to think of the world archipelagically."[6]

1. From the periphery of modernity back to its early center

It is perhaps by an irony of history that we are to analyze and comment on the pioneering role of the Atlantic archipelagoes in the "first modernity." This means that in a precise moment of history these spaces embodied a dynamic of "modernity," a concept that the triumph of liberal and capitalist ideology has related to associated concepts such as "development" and "progress." In our days these same islands, once at the centre of a oceanic network, are now described under Article 299(2) of the EC Treaty and within the institutional framework of the European Union as "ultra-peripheral regions," featuring social and economic indicators that positions the islands between the poorest and least developed regions of Europe and in the context of chronic uneven development.

Determining the level of isolation of any given island involves a case-by-case evaluation and taking into account the historical context of each island. There may be an "isolation

2 See A. Meistersheim, Figures de l'île, Ajaccio 2001.

3 See D. A. Vinson, The Western Sea: Atlantic History before Columbus, in: The Northern Mariner / Le Marin du nord, vol. X, n.º 3, July 2000, pp. 1-14, at 5: "Islands were endlessly fascinating for Europeans, whether they lived on the shores of the familiar Mediterranean or the more foreboding Atlantic."

4 See B. Wilson, Assembling the Archipelago. *Isolarii* and the Horizons of Early Modern Public Making, in: A. Vanhaelen and J. P. Ward (eds.), Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe: Performance, Geography, Privacy, London 2013, pp. 101-126.

5 See S. Gruzinski, A Águia e o Dragão. Portugueses e Espanhóis na Globalização do Século XVI, Lisboa 2015 [original edition: 2012], p. 109.

6 See J. Gillis, Islands in the Making of an Atlantic Oceania, 1500–1800, in: J. Bentley, R. Bridenthal and K. Wigen (eds.), Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges, Honolulu 2007, pp. 21-37, at 25.

factor" higher than the ones observed in any other places when islands are remote and geographically isolated. However, when islands are strategically located at the crossroads of maritime routes, they are central hubs open to the outside world and less isolated than certain mainland regions of the hinterland and of the mountains.[7] Generally speaking, it will be possible to argue that the "remote" character of the islands was a consequence of the nineteenth century changes in technology and in the transport system, a century that all saw the birth of a romantic representation of the islands.[8]

From the fifteenth century onwards, with the beginning of the European expansion and the interconnection of the continents, islands and archipelagoes clearly emerged as "natural bridges between oceanic worlds"[9] proving to be crucial in terms of navigation, sea power and even as a basis for European settlement, trade or conquest in other continents.[10] In this context, the islands and archipelagoes of Macaronesia were "corridors through which institutions, economic patterns, and people of the Mediterranean region began to pass into the Atlantic basin."[11] It is precisely because of their centrality in the process of construction and articulation of the Atlantic world that we cannot accept the uncritical or essentialist vision of the islands as a "lost" or an "isolated" space. As John Gillis reminds us: "There was nothing at all insular about the islands or the islanders."[12]

If it seems difficult to deny the islands their pioneering role in the making of the Atlantic world and, through it, in the very process of creation of the "first modernity," how then can we understand the fact that several historiographies of the Atlantic ignore both the history of the Eastern Atlantic islands and the historiographical research done by scholars from the Canary islands, Madeira, the Azores or the Cape Verde islands?[13]

A substantial body of work has been written on the Atlantic world over the past few decades. However, despite the importance and the thickness of their history, in general, most of these islands and archipelagoes continue to occupy a secondary place, especially within the academic universe of English language,[14] even when well-known historians or some recent works have pointed out the pioneering role of the archipelagoes, though not always for the best reasons.[15] In 2009, two of the most notable scholars of Anglo-

7 See F. Braudel, O Mediterrâneo e o Mundo Mediterrânico na época de Filipe II, Lisbon 1983 [original edition: 1949; 4th ed., rev. and corr.: 1979], vol. I, pp. 172-174.

8 From the nineteenth century onwards, generally speaking, the small islands and archipelagoes almost disappeared from history and historiographic analysis itself, being relegated to the backstage of the "big history."

9 See R. Ueda, Pushing the Atlantic Envelope: Interoceanic Perspectives on Atlantic History, in: J. Cañizares-Esguerra and E. R. Seeman (eds.), The Atlantic in Global History, 1500–2000, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2006, pp. 163-175, at 164.

10 See J. R. Gillis, Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World, New York 2004, pp. 83-100.

11 See R. Ueda, Pushing the Atlantic Envelope, pp. 163-175, at 164.

12 See J. R. Gillis, Islands of the Mind, p. 99.

13 Although now slightly outdated, see A. T. Matos and L. F. R. Thomaz (dir.), Vinte Anos de Historiografia Ultramarina Portuguesa 1972–1992, Lisboa 1993; A. Vieira (coord.), Guia para a História e Investigação das Ilhas Atlânticas, Funchal 1995; AAVV, Os Arquivos Insulares (Atlântico e Caraíbas), Funchal 1997.

14 See for example T. Benjamin, The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and Their Shared History, 1400–1900, New York 2009.

15 See P. D. Curtin, The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History, Cambridge 1990; A. Su-

Saxon historiography and, in particular, of Atlantic history, Philip D. Morgan and Jack P. Greene, in the "State of the art" which both wrote stated: "Most of the studies of Atlantic islands are somewhat old; there is much opportunity for new work here."[16] The authors were certainly thinking in the case of the Anglophone historiography, unaware of the research currently being done in the Portuguese, Spanish and French universities, not to mention in the Caribbean universe. In 2015, the "first encyclopedic reference on Atlantic history" does not have a general entry on "Islands" and the entry "Creolization" forgets the previous experience of the Eastern Atlantic islands to focus on the New World.[17]

This dominant "narrative of modernity," which explains the disappearance of the Iberians since the seventeenth century, the consolidation of "secondary" spaces, such as the Atlantic islands or Africa, and the definition of centres and peripheries both in the past and in the present from an Anglo-Saxon perspective, finds echoes in other historiographies.[18] Not surprisingly, some European scholars consider "Atlantic history" to be nothing but a kind of Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism and a new form of intellectual colonialism.[19]

Challenging this dominant paradigm and the imposition of a "hegemonic historiographical logic" over the past and, to some extent, over the present,[20] I would like to quote John Donne: "No man is an *Island*, entire of it self; every man is a piece of the *Continent*, a part of the main…"[21] Regarding islands, we can say that no island is actually isolated, it is always a part of a larger world. Within the frame of global history or of Atlantic history, localities, microhistory and "local knowledge" (Clifford Geertz) can prove enlightening and invaluable. I suggest that a critical reappraisal of the dynamics of Atlantic

ranyi, The Atlantic Connection. A History of the Atlantic World, 1450–1900, London 2015, pp. 15-16, at 16: "The Atlantic islands were also the location where Europeans first pioneered plantation slavery, the harshest form of slave labor."

16 See P. D. Morgan and J. P. Greene, Introduction: The Present State of Atlantic History, in: J. P. Greene and P. D. Morgan (eds.), Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal, New York 2009, pp. 3-33, at 30, note 26.

17 See J. C. Miller (ed.), The Princeton Companion to Atlantic History, Princeton 2015.

18 See P. A. Coclanis, *Drang Nach Osten*: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History, in: Journal of World History, vol. 13, nº 1 (2002), pp. 169-182; J. Cañizares-Esguerra, The Core and Peripheries of Our National Narratives: A Response from IH-35, in: American Historical Review, vol. 112, nº 5, December 2007, pp. 1423-1431; P. Butel, Histoire de l'Atlantique de l'Antiquité à nos jours, Paris 1997 [English translation: The Atlantic, London 1999].

19 See F. Morelli and A. E. Gómez, La nueva Historia Atlántica: un asunto de escalas, in: Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos, nº 6 (2006), on line on 5 April 2006 [URL: <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/document2102.html>] (accessed 20 June 2007): "una especie de etnocentrismo anglosajón o una nueva variante de colonialismo intelectual disfrazado de una forma legítima de hacer historia."

20 See J. T. Carson, When is an ocean not an ocean? Geographies of the Atlantic world, in: Southern Quarterly, vol. 43, nº 4, Summer 2006, pp. 16-45, at 19. Regarding Atlantic history, this has been so far mainly a history of the North Atlantic and in particular of the English or British North Atlantic. For criticism of this field of research, see R. Ferreira, Biografia, Mobilidade e Cultura Atlântica: A Micro-Escala do Tráfico de Escravos em Benguela, séculos XVIII-XIX, in: Tempo, vol. 10, nº 20 (2006), pp. 23-49, at 24. Referring to Bernard Bailyn, a Harvard scholar and a major reference of north-american and Atlantic history, Ian K. Steele spoke of Bernard Bailyn's "American Atlantic," saying that "Bailyn's genealogy of Atlantic history is deliberately American": see I. K. Steele, Bernard Bailyn's American History, in: History and Theory, vol. 46, nº 1, February 2007, pp. 48-58, at 51.

21 See J. Donne, Meditation XVII, *apud* K. Wilson, The Island Race: Englishness, empire and gender in the eighteenth century, London 2003, p. ix.

history through an archipelagic framing of analysis can provide an essential counterpoint to the major premises of dominant historiographies.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, beginning with the conquest – as it happened in the case of the Canary Islands – or with permanent settler societies, far from being just a geographical periphery, the external frontier of the Iberian societies of Portugal and Castile, the Eastern Atlantic islands were in fact at the forefront of Europe's maritime expansion and served as "laboratories" for the new European overseas empires.[22] However, after the first centuries of European settlement and of demographic and economic growth, due to environmental constraints – the destruction of the preexisting ecological system, the shortage of land – and the dynamics of external markets, these small insular societies failed to respond positively to the new challenges presented by the process of industrial modernization.

This broad interpretation, which I apply to the archipelagoes of the so-called Atlantic Mediterranean – "cet espace virtuel commun aux limites floues, incertaines" (this common virtual space with blurred, uncertain borders), as François Guichard wrote[23] –, but also to the archipelagoes of Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe, finds an important support in the work of the anthropologist Sidney W. Mintz with regarding the Caribbean. In fact, underestimating the pioneering role and the contribution of the Eastern Atlantic archipelagoes for the making of the early-modern Atlantic world, Sidney Mintz argued that between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the crops, through a merger of several factors and a large-scale production, "were landmark experiments in modernity."[24] This, in fact, can be said of the Castilian and Portuguese islands of the Eastern Atlantic from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century.

The transfer of political, social and economic models from the Iberian Christian kingdoms to the insular spaces that were conquered or settled in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries introduced a continuum, a horizontal flow of people and goods from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Institutions, technologies, ideas and plants that had been in use in various regions of the Mediterranean Sea were introduced in the new territories, not to mention the presence of people from Italy alongside Portuguese and Castilians in the oceanic adventure and the peopling of the new lands. This was the first stage of a larger process in the making of "a world on the move."[25]

22 See E. B. Barbier, Scarcity and Frontiers: How Economies Have Developed through Natural Resource Exploitation, New York 2011.

23 See F. Guichard, La Méditerranée atlantique, mirage ou réalité?, in: Arquivos do Centro Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian, vol. XLII (2001): Le Portugal et l'Atlantique, pp. 33-52, at 48.

24 See S. W. Mintz, Enduring Substances, Trying Theories: the Caribbean Region as Oikoumenê, in: Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, N. S., vol. 2, n.º 2, June 1996, pp. 289-311, at pp. 294-296. Sidney W. Mintz's best known work will probably be Sweetness and Power. The place of sugar in Modern History, New York 1986 [original edition: 1985]. For a general overview of his work, see D. Scott, Modernity that Predated the Modern: Sidney Mintz's Caribbean, in: History Workshop Journal, vol. 58, nº 1, Autumn 2004, pp. 191-210.

25 See A. J. R. Russell-Wood, A World on the Move: The Portuguese in Africa, Asia, and America, 1415–1808, Manchester 1992.

In this sense, the "modernity" of this first "European Atlantic" was the heir of a Mediterranean modernity, following on the heels of the Genoese navigators and merchants who had sought to explore the Atlantic, like the Vivaldi brothers, or of the Majorcan expeditions to the Canary Islands in the middle and in the second half of the fourteenth century.[26] Must we remember that this Atlantic was also an African space, especially Maghrebi?[27] Felipe Fernández-Armesto, among others, posits that the Mediterranean Atlantic region or basin constituted "an extension or transplantation of traditional Mediterranean civilisation in the new oceanic environment."[28] This perspective does not diminish the role of archipelagoes in the creation of the Atlantic world to come in the following centuries. On the contrary, it allows us to reevaluate the traditional chronological divisions between "medieval" and "early-modern," emphasizing, in addition to the alleged novelty that had occurred, the contribution of cultural heritages in the processes under way in the fourteenth and in the fifteenth centuries.[29] As for the integration of both sides of the Western Mediterranean, the Atlantic *Algarves*, we know that during the twelfth-fourteenth centuries sailors and merchants from the North African city of Ceuta traded with the people of Algarve. Furthermore, African slaves, gold, copper and several other commodities were sent to North Africa via Trans-Saharan trading routes reaching the ports of Catalonia, Valencia, Andalusia and of the Algarve and from there shipped into the Mediterranean. It is not, therefore, surprising that the so-called *Catalan Atlas* (*c.* 1375) provides detailed information on the political and economic geography of the Niger. Such an excellent source of information regarding these flows of commerce suggests that by the end of the fourteenth century a certain knowledge of inland African societies was available on both margins of the western Mediterranean. Hence, the coastal regions of the "Extreme West" of the Mediterranean participated actively in the North-South relations.[30] Although in a peripheral position regarding the heart of the European Christendom, the Western Iberian kingdoms were a part of a dynamic world. The Mediterranean-African axis was a vast space where economic and cultural exchanges were taking place over centuries thus helping to establish some of the earlier foundations of the future Atlantic dynamics.[31]

26 See F. Fernández-Armesto, Before Columbus: Explorations and colonisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229–1492, Houndsmills 1987, pp. 156-159.

27 See M. Balard and A. Ducellier (dir.), Le Partage du Monde. Échanges et colonisation dans la Méditerranée médiévale, Paris 1998.

28 See F. Fernández-Armesto, Before Columbus, pp. 151-168 and 152 for the quotation. See also pp. 169-202.

29 About this subject, see the Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, vol. 37, nº 3, Fall 2007.

30 See V. Cortés Alonso, Valencia y el comercio de esclavos negros en el siglo XV, in: Stvdia, nº 47 (1989), pp. 81-145; A. Franco Silva, La esclavitud en Andalucía a fines de la Edad Media: problemas metodológicos y perspectivas de investigación, in: ibid., pp. 147-167; C. Picard, La présence des gens d'al-Andalus dans l'Occident maghrébin aux XIe et XIIe siècles. Les raisons économiques, in: M. Balard and A. Ducellier (dir.), Le Partage du Monde, pp. 475-483, at pp. 482-483; R. Botte, Le Portugal, les marchés africains et les rapports Nord-Sud (1448–ca. 1550), in: Cahiers des Anneaux de la Mémoire, nº 3 (2001): La Traite et l'Esclavage dans le Monde Lusophone, pp. 85-107, at pp. 86-90.

31 See L. A. Fonseca, Os descobrimentos e a formação do oceano Atlântico (século XIV–século XVI), Lisboa 1999, p. 46.

2. A blueprint for the colonization of the Americas

With the beginning of the Iberian overseas expansion, the Ocean at the western edge of European Christendom was transformed into a new open space, a new borderland, which, despite its novelty, did not break up with the traditional medieval schemes.[32] When one considers the political, social and economic organization of the new territories, it is clear that settlers reproduced the patterns of a "frontier culture" that had been tested in the Iberian Peninsula throughout the Middle Ages in the Christian borderlands.[33] As for the concept of "borderland," it must be understood not just as a political, military, ethnical and religious boundary line, separating Christians from Muslims, but also as an interface region between different but connected societies, a space characterized by fluidity, the circulation of people and the exchange of goods and ideas.

The new frontier societies that formed in the islands did not merely reproduce the forms of collective life of the Iberian societies. Indeed, the islands served as "laboratories" and were the cradle for a "founding moment" of modernity through the creation of new ecosystems and societies. In fact, according to some historians, the frontier societies that arose in the Eastern Atlantic islands in the late fourteenth century and throughout the fifteenth century were the result of the fusion of several elements: a new physical geography, a white settler population coming from a late-medieval society, joined afterwards by other populations, especially from Western Africa, and the demand of the European markets.[34]

The first phase of the Atlantic islands colonization anticipated future events in the Caribbean Islands and in the American mainland. The Canary Islands, known to the Ancient world as the Fortunate Isles, were rediscovered during late-medieval commercial expansion. The archipelago was known and had been visited since 1339. After the expeditions of the fourteenth century, the Castilian conquest of the Canary Islands from the indigenous Guanche population lasted the whole of the fifteenth century, though not in a systematic and continuous way during the first decades of the century. Nevertheless, the process was essentially a military one. It was an extension of the political and military process of the Iberian *Reconquista* and it wiped out much of the original native population.[35]

32 See G. Céspedes del Castillo, Raíces peninsulares y asentamiento indiano: los hombres de las fronteras, in: F. Solano (coord.), Proceso histórico al conquistador, Madrid 1988, pp. 37-50, at 44-45.

33 "La Péninsule Ibérique est une zone frontière qui a élaboré une culture de frontière […]." See P. Chaunu, Civilisation ibérique et aptitude à la croissance, in: P. Chaunu, Rétrohistoire, Paris 1985 [orig.: Tiers-Monde, 4, 1967], pp. 1005-1022, at 1010. See also R. Bartlett and A. Mackay (eds.), Medieval Frontier Societies, Oxford 1989; T. Herzog, Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas, Cambridge, MA, 2015.

34 See R. S. Brito, As Ilhas do Atlântico e os Descobrimentos Portugueses, Lisboa 1987; I. C. Henriques, L'Atlantique de la modernité: la part de l'Afrique, in: Arquivos do Centro Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian, vol. XLII (2001): Le Portugal et l'Atlantique, pp. 135-153, at 141-150.

35 See E. Aznar Vallejo and F. J. Clavijo Hernández, Las islas Canarias en el proceso expansivo de Europa de los siglos XIV y XV. Reflexiones sobre un periodo historico, in: Stvdia, Lisboa, nº 47, 1989, pp. 203-227; E. Aznar Vallejo, La Integración de las islas Canarias en la Corona de Castilla (1478–1526): Aspectos administrativos, sociales, y económicos, Sevilla 2009.

The conquest of the Canary Islands was contemporary of the conquest of the Muslim kingdom of Granada (1492) and of the first voyages of Christopher Columbus. The conquest of these islands put forward a domination system and the practice of forced migration that the Spaniards would later implement in the Caribbean, where a rupture in the aboriginal ecosystem occurred between 1492 and 1525–1530, especially after the discovery of gold around 1500. As David Abulafia suggested, this was a movement that led from the "old" to "new Canary" islands. Within this context and chronology, the archipelago can be considered as the original "New World."[36]

Regarding the archipelagoes with Portuguese settlement, their situation was distinct from the one which characterized the Canaries. Initially, these were uninhabited islands. Therefore, a different model was put in place. These insular spaces were seen as an extension of the realm. Given the distance and the insular discontinuity, the uncertainty regarding the success of the settlement and the shortcomings of the political center in terms of resources, especially when, in the fifteenth century, the military conquest of Morocco was the main objective pursued by the Portuguese monarchy and the nobility, the crown decided to use a traditional system already known in the Mediterranean: the donation of lands to a nobleman, the *donatário* (donatory) of the islands. The donatory would have to insure their settlement by appointing a captain, a small nobleman who would represent him and be the direct responsible for controlling the settlers. This political and administrative model was initially applied in Madeira, where Portuguese settlement started around 1425 or 1426, even before the king donated the archipelago to Prince Henry in the 1430s. Until 1440, when it was granted the Charter of the captaincy of Machico to Tristão Vaz Teixeira (May 8), the jurisdiction of the captains was carried out apparently without a document that defined their jurisdiction. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly regarding the pioneering role of the archipelagoes in the Atlantic world, we must point out that this was the model that framed the settlement of the Azores, the Cape Verde islands and São Tomé and that would be applied, with adaptations to local contexts, in Brazil, initially with the captaincies created in 1534–1536 and then with other donations; in Angola, through the donation of the conquest to Paulo Dias de Novais, by the Royal Charter of 19 September 1571; and even in an unsuccessful attempt to promote Portuguese fixation in Sierra Leone, at the turn of the sixteenth-seventeenth century.

Hence, the Castilian conquest of the Canaries and the Portuguese settlement of the Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verde islands set the precedents which would be staged in other colonies. Perhaps even more important than the framing of a political and administrative pattern in the Eastern Atlantic islands and with even greater consequences when one considers the formation of the Atlantic world was the pioneering role of the islands in terms of their social and economic impact.

36 See D. Abulafia, The Discovery of Mankind: Atlantic Encounters in the Age of Columbus, New Haven, CT, 2008; D. A. Vinson, The Western Sea, pp. 1-14, at 6: "In every sense of encounter and impact, the Canaries were the first "New World.""

3. At the origins of the Creole plantation society

The historical process of settlement continued over the centuries turning wild, uninhabited spaces into humanized landscapes. The Eastern Atlantic islands actually became important centres of production and consumption. With the introduction of the slave labor, associated with the plantation economy and the emphasis on the production of sugar, especially in the islands of Madeira and São Tomé, a new kind of relationship developed between land, capital and labor. It was on these islands that the first experiments with African slave-based sugar plantations were carried out and this relationship proved to be decisive to several Atlantic societies in the centuries to come.

The prosperity of Madeira and the elevation of the *vila* (town) of Funchal to the status of *cidade* (city) in 1508, less than a century after the beginning of the settlement, are associated with the sugar boom that took place from the late 1470s, with the sugar production reaching its peak in 1506. It was also the dynamism of the sugar-based economy that attracted the Italian, Flemish and French merchants to Madeira. Foreign traders and bankers were active in Lisbon in importing and re-exporting capital and commodities all over Europe. Noteworthy, the merchants-bankers of Florence invested in the early establishment of Portugal's trading empire and through their network of collaborators and partners, they acquired a dominant position in the Madeiran sugar trade.[37]

The plantations of Madeira and São Tomé, but also those in the agricultural islands of the Cape Verde archipelago, where cotton was of greater economic importance, were fed with the regular entry of slaves, first from the Canary islands or from Northern Africa and, later, from sub-Saharan Africa. In the region of the "Rivers of Guinea," the slave trade received a boost with the settlement of the island of Santiago, in 1462, and of the smaller island of Fogo, in the late fifteenth century. The Senegambia region was, until the late sixteenth century, the dominant area in the supply of slaves to the Atlantic world and, in the context of the export of slaves, between 1460 and 1560, due to the policy set by the Portuguese Crown, the regional slave trade depended much on the dynamics of the inhabitants of Santiago, an island which served as the "Portuguese outpost of Guinea," in the words of Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão. This situation changed dramatically in the early 1560s, with the decreasing importance of the "Rivers of Guinea" and the loss of the Portuguese monopoly of the slave trade. In the Gulf of Guinea, the island of São Tomé, an important producer of sugar in the sixteenth century and, consequently, a consumer market of slaves, played a similar role to that of Santiago as a trading outpost, a slave warehouse and a centre for the redistribution of the "pieces" that were redeemed on the African coast.[38]

37 See A. Vieira, Sugar Islands: The Sugar Economy of Madeira and the Canaries, 1450–1650, in: S. B. Schwartz (ed.), Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680, Chapel Hill 2004, pp. 42-84.

38 See M. M. F. Torrão, Rotas comerciais, agentes económicos, meios de pagamento, in: M. E. M. Santos (coord.), História Geral de Cabo Verde, Lisboa-Praia 1995, vol. II, pp. 17-123.

The presence of African population in the islands and the development of a plantation system had long-range consequences especially in the Cape Verde islands and in São Tomé and Príncipe, though not so much in Madeira, where the sugar economy was limited in time and the African contingent was thinning.[39] Despite different social statuses and economic roles, the encounter between European men and African women resulted in an original "miscegenation" (a biological process) and in the creation of the first Creole societies (a cultural process), which would be reproduced in a large scale in the New World.[40] The emergence of populations of mixed origins in the Atlantic islands had a considerable impact in the processes of settlement and in the development of future colonial models. Perhaps contrary to expectations framed by the idea of colonial domination, one of the key elements stressed by Jack P. Greene in his analysis of the policies of colonization in the Atlantic world is the Creolization of what he called the "metropolitan cultures."[41]

If sugar played a central role in the construction of the modern world between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, as suggested by Sidney W. Mintz, then the *engenho* (sugar mill) was a symbol of the rising Atlantic system.[42] For better or for worse, we must consider that in the context of European oceanic expansion. Madeira, the Cape Verde islands and São Tomé and Príncipe set the stage for the development of a given social and economic model – the plantation system – and of the Atlantic slave trade. Once again, in the course of that process, the islands served as corridors through which institutions and technologies of the Mediterranean region passed into the Atlantic basin and into the New World.[43]

Therefore, as we have seen, and contrary to the view of some historians, the "plantation islands" were not a creation of the Dutch, the British or the French, even though it was only in the eighteenth century that an integrated transatlantic economy attained its fullest articulation. In the words of Donna A. Vinson: "The value and importance of the Atlantic islands should be seen not only in light of their *historical* role as prototypes of what was to come but also in their *contemporary* role in the formation and definition of the European Atlantic."[44]

39 On the genetic evidences of miscegenation and creolization see, among others, R. Gonçalves, H. Spínola and A. Brehm, Y-Chromosome Lineages in São Tomé e Príncipe Islands: Evidence of European Influence, in: American Journal of Human Biology, 19 (2007), pp. 422-428.

40 See I. C. Henriques, L'Atlantique de la modernité, pp. 135-153, at 142-146.

41 See J. P. Greene, Elaborations, in: William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, vol. LXIV, nº 2, April 2007, pp. 281-286, at 286.

42 See S. B. Schwartz, Introduction, in: in: S. B. Schwartz (ed.), Tropical Babylons, pp. 1-26, at 21.

43 See S. B. Schwartz, A Commonwealth within itself. The Early Brazilian Sugar Industry, 1550–1670, in Revista de Indias, vol. LXV, nº 233 (2005), pp. 79-116, at 83: "The Brazilian sugar industry adapted the technology of the Mediterranean and Atlantic sugar industries to local conditions."

44 See D. A. Vinson, The Western Sea, pp. 1-14, at 12.

4. Crossroads of transoceanic trade and power

As I wrote before, the islands were "natural bridges between oceanic worlds."[45] Within the context of the Atlantic navigation and commercial networks, certain islands actually occupied a more "central" rather than "peripheral" position inside that system. Benefiting from that position, the islands served as a nodal point in the intersection of different maritime spaces. At a time of imperial competition and of a growing European sea power, seaports were of fundamental importance to colonial and maritime trade, but also in terms of naval logistics and defence. The study of a seaport requires a multifocal analysis. For the purpose of the present paper, let me just point out that the main ports of the Eastern Atlantic islands served as gateways and hubs of trade and information connecting the more local and closed spaces of the islands with the outside world. Not all port cities looked alike, nor can they be reduced to a uniform model. However, in the long run, in spite of all the geomorphologic features of these ports and of the political and socio-economic circumstances, the implementation of infrastructural interventions in the seaport areas allowed the islands' harbors to play a crucial role in the making of early-modern Atlantic as intercontinental trading posts and centres of economic growth.[46]
First let us consider the case of Madeira and the Azores in the early-modern period. Both because of their geographical position but also due to commodities such as sugar, woad or wine, Italian bankers and merchants were already established in Madeira by the late fifteenth century and English merchants were living in both archipelagoes from the sixteenth century onwards, and especially after the mid-seventeenth century. A few decades after their arrival in the Azores, the second and the third generation of English descendants were already local landlords and office-holders.[47] Further south, off the coast of Senegambia, the Cape Verde islands lay "at the very crossroads of the Atlantic" assisting vessels bound for Brazil or India. Commodities like orchil and nonagricultural products (salt, hides, pelts, salted meats) entered the Atlantic trading routes and English ships returning from the Americas called at the "salt islands" of the Cape Verde archipelago.[48] Thanks to the "English connection" and the English island-based trading houses the Portuguese Eastern Atlantic islands were in contact with the ports of the Baltic Sea, the Northern Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Western Atlantic world.

45 See R. Ueda, Pushing the Atlantic Envelope, pp. 163-175, at 164.

46 See A. Polónia and H. Osswald (eds.), European Seaport Systems in the early modern age: a comparative approach. Proceedings, Porto 2007; A. Polónia, Seaports as centres of economic growth. The Portuguese case. 1500–1900, in: R. Unger (coord.), Shipping Efficiency and Economic Growth. 1350–1800, Boston/Amsterdam (printing); A. Polónia, European seaports in the Early Modern Age: concepts, methodology and models of analysis, in: Cahiers de la Méditerranée [Online], 80 | 2010, on line since 15 December 2010 [URL: <http://cdlm.revues.org/5364>] (accessed 22 January 2017).

47 See T. B. Duncan, Atlantic Islands. Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation, Chicago/London 1972; A. D. Francis, The Wine Trade, London 1972; J. D. Rodrigues, De mercadores a terratenentes: percursos ingleses nos Açores (séculos XVII-XVIII), in: Ler História, n.º 31: Açores: peças para um mosaico, 1996, pp. 41-68; J. G. Lydon, Fish and flour for gold, 1600–1800: Southern Europe in the colonial balance of payments, Philadelphia 2008.

48 See T. B. Duncan, Atlantic Islands, pp. 158-238.

David Hancock's work has shown the importance of the personal and business networks connecting the islands of the Mediterranean Atlantic to the islands of the Caribbean Sea (Barbados, Jamaica) and the American mainland. British merchants played an important role in the production, distribution, and consumption of Madeira wine and of "Fayal" wine – in fact, the Azorean wine was mainly produced in the island of Pico – in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, helping to create transimperial networks of suppliers and customers across the Atlantic world. By the early nineteenth century, the Madeira wine was a major Atlantic commodity.[49] But the English were not the only merchants who were active in the Portuguese islands. Illicit trade played an important role in Dutch commercial strategies and the islands of the Easten Atlantic proved crucial for this purpose. During the Twelve Years' Truce, Dutch ships regularly set sail from Holland each year to the Azores. There, the cargo was transferred to the *navios de registo* (authorized ships) and then transported to Brazil where the ships were loaded with sugar, brazilwood, and other Brazilian commodities. However, one must say that the Dutch didn't pay any duties on their homeward bound voyages, thus defrauding the Spanish Crown.[50] Finally, local Customs' archives show that in the eighteenth century ships coming from North American, English, Irish, French, Dutch, and Baltic port cities called at the three main Azorean ports – Ponta Delgada, Angra, Horta.[51] The intersecting networks and trading routes connected the islands with Europe and America, thus underlining their crossroads character and the cosmopolitan dimension of these local communities.

There is yet another dimension in the history of the islands that must be highlighted. As a part of the Atlantic trading system, the islands' main port cities and towns served as trading outposts as well as naval stations. The Canary Islands, Madeira and the Cape Verde islands provided ports of call to ships heading into the South Atlantic. The Azores lie in the path of the prevailing westerlies. Thus, the islands were essential to navigation in the deep ocean, especially before the discovery of longitude in the eighteenth century. Not surprisingly in this context, French or British maps, logbooks and travel narratives include a more or less accurate description of the islands' main geographical landmarks as reference points.[52] The strategic geographical position of the Azores in the central

49 See D. Hancock, Citizens of the World: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735–1785, Cambridge 1995; D. Hancock, The British Atlantic World: Co-ordination, Complexity, and The Emergence of an Atlantic Market Economy, 1651–1815, in: Itinerario. European Journal of Overseas History, 1999/2 [URL: <http://www.itinerario.nl/Itinerario_new/hancock.htm>]; D. Hancock, The Trouble with Networks: Managing the Scots' Early-Modern Madeira Trade, in: The Business History Review, vol. 79, n.º 3, Autumn 2005, pp. 467-491; D. Hancock, Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Organization of the Atlantic Market, 1640-1815, New Haven 2009.

50 See Á. Alloza Aparicio, Portuguese Contraband and the Closure of the Iberian Markets, 1621-1640. The Economic Roots of an Anti-Habsburg Feeling, in: e-Journal of Portuguese History [on line], vol. 7, nº 2, Winter 2009, pp. 1-18, at 6 [URL: <http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/html/issue14/pdf/aaparicio.pdf>].

51 See A. F. Meneses, Os Açores nas encruzilhadas de Setecentos (1740–1770), vol. II: Economia, Ponta Delgada 1995, p. 230, Table nº 13, p. 231, Table nº 15, p. 239, Table nº 26, and p. 244, Chart n.º 5.

52 See Amédée François Frezier, Relation du Voyage de la Mer du Sud aux Côtes du Chily et du Perou, Fait pendant les années 1712, 1713 & 1714, Dediée à S. A. R. Monseigneur le Duc d'Orleans, Regent du Royaume. Par M. Frezier, Ingenieur Ordinaire du Roy., Paris 1716; C. P. Claret (Charles Pierre Claret), Voyage fait par ordre du Roi

North Atlantic transformed Angra, on the island of Terceira, in the main port of call of the archipelago between the early sixteenth century and mid-seventeenth century. Indiamen regularly called at Angra with Asian and American commodities. The presence of homeward-bound vessels in Azorean waters attracted pirates and privateers. In the context of the early-modern imperial rivalries and the dispute over the control of the sea, which extended to the territories outside Europe, the Azores' geostrategic centrality transformed the archipelago into a major scenario of military and naval operations, especially in the final decades of the sixteenth century after Portugal's annexation to the Hispanic Monarchy in 1580–1581.[53]

The islands were important centres of trade and, as such, local port cities and towns were hubs of maritime, business and political information as well as cross-cultural spaces. Local authorities, national and foreign merchants, seamen were the first to hear the news coming from Asia or from the Americas and sources as different as the Portuguese *gazetas* (journals) or the French consular documentation clearly show that warships or trading ships calling at Lisbon usually brought news days or weeks earlier regarding the arrival of the fleets from Brazil or of some Portuguese or French ship coming from Asia that had just reached one of the Azorean islands.[54]

Thus, the islands were also a platform or hub of information, helping to transmit the *news* across the ocean. In the steam-boat era, the islands remained crucial to transatlantic navigation. At the crossroad of different maritime trading routes, the islands of the Iberian Atlantic archipelagoes played a major role as coaling stations, from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Once again, British capital and British businessmen were pivotal in these networks.[55] The small town of Maio, on the island of Maio, in the archipelago of Cape Verde, is locally known as *Porto Inglês* (English Harbour), which illustrates the importance of the British networks in the development and creation of a wider Atlantic. And even during the first years of transatlantic flights the Azorean islands proved, once more, their centrality.

en 1768 et 1769, à différentes parties du monde, Pour éprouver en mer les Horloges Marines inventées par M. Ferdinand Berthoud […], Paris 1773, 2 vols.; J. D. Rodrigues, São Miguel no século XVIII: casa, elites e poder, Ponta Delgada 2003, vol. I, pp. 92-94.

53 On the conquest of the Azores by the Spanish forces and the presence of English privateers in Azorean waters, see A. F. Meneses, Os Açores e o Domínio Filipino (1580–1590), vol. I: A Resistência Terceirense e as Implicações da Conquista Espanhola; vol. II: Apêndice Documental, Angra do Heroísmo 1987; J. D. Rodrigues, "off the Islands": os Açores no contexto da primeira expansão inglesa, in: O Faial e a Periferia Açoriana nos Séculos XV a XX, Actas do IV Colóquio: No Bicentenário do Consulado dos E.U.A. nos Açores: O Tempo dos Dabney, Horta 2007, pp. 87-100 [now also in J. D. Rodrigues, Histórias Atlânticas: os Açores na primeira modernidade, Ponta Delgada 2012, pp. 45-60].

54 See M. L. Almeida, Notícias Históricas de Portugal e Brasil (1715–1750), Coimbra 1961.

55 See M. Suárez Bosa, The role of the Canary Islands in the Atlantic coal route from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century: Corporate Strategies, Milton Keynes 2008.

5. Conclusion

The pages above are but an attempt to condense a rich and complex history. In this brief historical overview, I could not cover the full range of the historical processes running through the Atlantic world which had an impact on small spaces like the islands. Several key issues merit further study and additional research should make it possible to explore more deeply the links between global and local phenomena. My overview nevertheless suggests that conceptualizing modernity as a distinct social and cultural transformation is important to both understand world history and criticize hegemonic narratives that tend to impose the culture of the centre of the "world-system." By taking into consideration the history of the Eastern Atlantic islands we can critically evaluate the role of the core-periphery model and achieve a different perspective on the course of modernity.

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