

**FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITIES?  
THE POLITICS OF REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
COOPERATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE  
1990-2007**

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I hereby declare that this work is entirely my own, except where otherwise indicated, and that it does not contain materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions.

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Budapest, 3 September 2008

## ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I investigate from a social constructivist perspective *how* international regionalism has become a widespread phenomenon in post Cold War Central and Eastern Europe, although the historical and political circumstances were not pointing towards this development. Existing scholarship on the topic, focusing mostly on the regional intergovernmental arrangements established in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars, seems to agree that the European Union had the decisive role in the process, even if not through direct intervention. Instead, I argue that democratic rather than EU conditionality was mostly at play in this case. At the same time, post Cold War regionalism has been also a race to appropriate better mental spaces in the attempt to be recognised as part of the democratic community. In order to investigate this hypothesis of democratic conditionality and rhetoric action, I analyze comparatively the creation and evolution of the major Central and East European regional intergovernmental initiatives. For this purpose, I use the conceptual frameworks of social constructivism and international regionalism, which I further develop particularly through the introduction of the concept of regional cohesiveness. Prompted by the necessity to find an alternative to the regional integration/interdependence paradigm, this concept refers to the degree to which a group of actors inhabiting a limited contiguous space act and represent themselves as a group. In line with social constructivism, regional cohesiveness has both material/institutional and normative-representational dimensions. At the same time, regional cohesiveness develops in a particular political context, as well as on a certain institutional and normative-representational background. All these aspects form the discursive space of international regionalism as political phenomenon and each could be placed in one of four possible strata of meaning production (background, context, design,

and practices). In order to understand how Central and East European regionalism has developed, one has to identify the features and dynamics within each of these strata, as well as the inter-strata articulations. Mainly due to this conceptual setting, the dissertation is a prospective one, aiming at identifying the potential of the regional cohesiveness concept using the particular case of post Cold War Central and East European regionalism. In terms of methods, I use discourse analysis tools loosely inspired by the archaeological method of Michel Foucault. More specifically, discourse is understood as social practice and its analysis requires a wide set of raw empirical data ranging from common written or spoken text materials such as speeches, interviews and reports, to historical events, ideas and institutions. From this perspective, the research can be classified best as interpretativist, although it has also some positivist allegiances. Finally, in terms of the type of first hand data, the main sources of this dissertation are the major documents that the regional intergovernmental cooperation structures have produced since their creation, particularly founding treaties, statements, charters, resolutions, declarations, minutes of meetings and press releases. These are supplemented with interviews with high-ranked officials involved in the creation and development of the initiatives under scrutiny. Beyond producing a theoretically framed monograph of the most important Central and East European regional intergovernmental arrangements underpinned by a historical account of their constitutive conditions, this dissertation may have relevance for the larger field of regionalism studies, as well as for research on international interaction, especially due to the proposed conceptual innovations and analytical framework.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A far-better storyteller than I am, named Salman Rushdie, once remarked that all stories are haunted by the ghosts of the stories that could have been. This story might have been different in many ways. It could have been very short because, as George Schöpflin commented when I told him its subject at the beginning of my PhD research, “there is not much regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe.” It could also have been perfect but since it seems that only two categories of texts exist – written or perfect, I had to make a choice mostly because the PhD explicitly requires a written one (though sometimes it was difficult to resist temptation to choose the alternative). Not least, this story might not have been at all, for reasons that produced many different stories, each one haunting my research and private life. Despite all these ghosts, this story exists but it would not have been possible in this particular format without the valuable comments, suggestions, support and good intentions of some people whom I like to name here.

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# SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
 <b>PART I</b> <b>BUILDING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b> <b>FOR A CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS</b> <b>OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM</b>	
 <b>CHAPTER 1</b> MAPPING INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM	 <b>31</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 2</b> A CONSTRUCTIVIST RECONSTRUCTION OF REGIONALISM	 <b>55</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 3</b> THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM	 <b>82</b>
  <b>PART II</b> <b>LEGACIES, CANONS, PALIMPSESTS:</b> <b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS AND POLITICAL CONTEXT</b> <b>OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS</b>	
 <b>CHAPTER 4</b> HISTORICAL ANAMNESIS: PREHISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE	   <b>107</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 5</b> REGIONAL IDENTITY PALIMPSESTS	  <b>139</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 6</b> A TRIPLE TRANSITION, MULTIPLE TRANSFORMATIONS: CONTEXT AND FACTORS OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE	  <b>156</b>

**PART III**  
**DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS**  
**IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

<b>CHAPTER 7</b> FROM UNCERTAINTY TO NORMALITY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF POST COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE	<b>191</b>
<b>CHAPTER 8</b> INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS	<b>224</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9</b> RHETORIC DIMENSION OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS	<b>268</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>297</b>



# CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Puzzle	1
Current state of research and hypotheses	4
Conceptual and methodological framework	13
The social construction of international regionalism	13
Methodological approach	15
Units of analysis and case selection	21
Sources	26
Overview of the thesis	28
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>BUILDING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR A CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>MAPPING INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM</b>	<b>31</b>
1.1 The universe of contemporary regionalism	32
1.2 The evolution of international regionalism in world politics	43
1.3 International regionalism as academic inquiry	49
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>A CONSTRUCTIVIST RECONSTRUCTION OF REGIONALISM</b>	<b>55</b>
2.1 Social constructivist premises	56
2.2 A constructivist vocabulary of regionalism	61
2.3 Introducing regional cohesiveness	76
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
<b>THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM</b>	<b>82</b>
3.1 The legal nature of international regionalism	83
3.2 From security to welfare and back	85
3.2.1 The bipolar model	85
3.2.2 A four-dimension alternative	90
3.3 Assessing institutional cohesiveness	97
3.3.1 What scale matters?	98
3.3.2 Institutional design	100

**PART II**  
**LEGACIES, CANONS, PALIMPSESTS:**  
**HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS AND POLITICAL CONTEXT**  
**OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS**

<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
<b>HISTORICAL ANAMNESIS:</b>	
<b>PREHISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM</b>	
<b>IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE</b>	<b>107</b>
4.1 The time of national awakening	108
4.2 Unwanted alliances	113
4.3 Unstable times, improbable projects	117
4.3.1 The Balkan (con)federation	119
4.3.2 The Second Balkan Pact	122
4.4 The Soviet-led regional arrangements	123
4.4.1 Comecon	124
4.4.2 The Warsaw Pact	130
4.5 Hopeful alternatives at the periphery of Soviet power	134
 <b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
<b>REGIONAL IDENTITY PALIMPSESTS</b>	<b>139</b>
5.1. Eastern Europe: The invention of the “Other”	140
5.2 In search of the Middle Ground	143
5.3 Competing marginalities	150
5.4 Marginality without competition	152
 <b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
<b>A TRIPLE TRANSITION, MULTIPLE TRANSFORMATIONS:</b>	
<b>CONTEXT AND FACTORS OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE</b>	<b>156</b>
6.1 The break ups	156
6.1.1 The end of communism	156
6.1.2 The disintegration of Yugoslavia	160
6.2 The triple transition	167
6.3 Rethinking foreign policy in a changing environment	176
 <b>PART III</b>	
<b>DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS</b>	
<b>IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE</b>	
 <b>CHAPTER 7</b>	
<b>FROM UNCERTAINTY TO NORMALITY:</b>	
<b>THE DEVELOPMENT OF POST COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL</b>	
<b>REGIONALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE</b>	<b>191</b>
7.1 The quest for security	192
7.1.1 The Central European Initiative	192
7.1.2 The Visegrád Group	198
7.1.3 The Baltic Cooperation	202
7.1.4 The Black Sea Economic Cooperation	205
7.2 Post-conflict regionalism: From international to regional ownership	209

7.2.1 From the Royaumont Initiative to the Pact for Stability and South Eastern Europe	209
7.2.2 Southeast European Cooperative Initiative	213
7.2.3 The South East European Cooperation Process	214
7.3 The regionalism of democratic consolidation	216
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	
<b>INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS</b>	<b>224</b>
8.1 Institutional design	224
8.1.1. The Baltic Cooperation	225
8.1.2 The Black Sea Economic Cooperation	228
8.1.3 The Central European Initiative	231
8.1.4 The Danube Cooperation Process	237
8.1.5 The Southeast European Cooperative Initiative	241
8.1.6 The South East European Cooperation Process	242
8.1.7 The Visegrád Group	247
8.2 Institutional practices	248
8.2.1 Regional cooperation in political security areas	249
8.2.2 Regional cooperation in military security areas	250
8.2.3 Regional cooperation in the economic security areas	253
8.2.4 Regional cooperation in the societal security areas	259
8.2.5 Regional cooperation in environmental security areas	260
8.3 Factors and mechanisms of institutional cohesiveness	261
<b>CHAPTER 9</b>	
<b>RHETORIC DIMENSION OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS</b>	<b>268</b>
9.1 Internal rhetoric	269
9.1.1 Marginal identities	269
9.1.2 Haunting Balkans	272
9.1.3 The pragmatic Central Europe	279
9.2 Discursive practices:	
The Visegrád Group and the Baltic Cooperation facing enlargement	281
9.2.1 The Visegrád Group	283
9.2.2 The Baltic Cooperation	290
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>312</b>
Appendix 1 Instances of Central and East European regionalism (as of 2007)	312
Appendix 2 Evolution of membership of Central and East European Initiatives (1989-2007)	314
Appendix 3 Membership of Central and East European countries to the main European security and economic organizations (as of 2007)	315
<b>REFERENCE LIST</b>	<b>316</b>

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

### **Tables**

Table 1.1	Regionalism in contemporary scholarship	39
Table 2.1	Categories of regionalism and their normative background	69
Table 2.2	The boundaries of regionalism	72
Table 2.3	Political elites and the representation of interest	74
Table 2.4	Regionalism and the representation of interest	75
Table 3.1	Traditional perspectives on international regionalism	89
Table 3.2	Contemporary security concepts	95
Table 3.3	Dimensions of institutional cohesiveness for international regionalism	103
Table 8.1	Institutional design of the Baltic Cooperation	227
Table 8.2	Institutional design of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation	231
Table 8.3	Institutional design of the Central European Initiative	236
Table 8.4	Institutional design of the Danube Cooperation Process	240
Table 8.5	Institutional design of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative	242
Table 8.6	Institutional design of the South East European Cooperation Process	246
Table 8.7	Institutional design of the Visegrád Group	248
Table 8.8	Synopsis of institutional design indicators	262

### **Figures**

Fig. 1	Strata of meaning production	18
Fig. 2	The constructivist perspective on political/social reality	58
Fig. 3	The construction of a region	63
Fig. 4	Regional identity formation	66
Fig. 5	The field of regionalism	67
Fig. 6	Dimensions and elements of regional cohesiveness	79
Fig. 7	Orientation of regional arrangements	93

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AII	Adriatic Ionian Initiative
BC	Baltic Cooperation
BCM	Baltic Council of Ministers
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSTDB	Black Sea Trade and Development Bank
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CEFTA	Central Europe Free Trade Agreement
CEI	Central European Initiative
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Community of Independent States
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (also COMECON)
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
DCP	Danube Cooperation Process
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EFTA	European Free Trade Agreement / European Free Trade Area
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GUAM	Group of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and R. of Moldova
GUUAM	Group of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and R. of Moldova
ILC	International Law Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IVF	International Visegrád Fund
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NB8	Nordic Baltic Council
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
Phare	Poland Hungary Aid for Economic Reconstruction

Q4	Quadragonale Cooperation
RTA	Regional trade agreement
SECI	Southeast European Cooperation Initiative
SEEDM	South Eastern European Defense Ministerial
SEECF	South East European Cooperative Process
SME	Small and medium enterprise
SP	Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
UN	United Nations
UN/ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
V4	Visegrád Group (since 1993)
WEU	Western European Union
WG	Working Group
WTO	World Trade Organization

## INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I investigate from a social constructivist perspective *how* international regionalism has become a widespread phenomenon in post Cold War Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose, I design the concept of regional cohesiveness as an alternative to the regional integration/interdependence paradigm, and use discourse analysis tools inspired by the Foucauldian archaeological method.

### **Puzzle**

Since the fall of communism, the countries of the area started creating and engaging in numerous regional intergovernmental arrangements.<sup>2</sup> Between 1990 and 2007, over a dozen regional intergovernmental schemes of cooperation and various other smaller regional programs and activities emerged in the area. Among them, initiatives such as the Visegrád Group, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe have also acquired rather high visibility both in the European politics and in international media. Though not equally interested in the regional dimension of

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<sup>1</sup> Although there are many references to Central and Eastern Europe, as well as various criteria to distinguish it from the rest of the neighbouring space, there is no agreement to what exactly it covers. For the purpose of this research, the notion refers to all the former communist but not Soviet space, and partially to the Baltic countries. For more details on this definition, see the methodological section in this introductory chapter, as well as chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup> In this dissertation, regional intergovernmental cooperation refers to those frameworks of multilateral cooperation between neighbouring countries that are established and developed mainly through intergovernmental meetings, and refer to the space of cooperation in regional terms. This working definition does not exclude the existence of intergovernmental cooperation in only one sector of activity but it differentiates between the agreements concluded at the level of heads of state and government and those concluded at inferior levels of the political/bureaucratic hierarchy or between other national actors (i.e. NGOs, academic institutions etc.). In the literature, these intergovernmental agreements and the adjacent institutions are often designated by other terms or expressions such as *regional cooperation*, *subregional cooperation*, *regionalization* and *regionalism*. However, since all these equivalents have also other (sometimes stronger) connotations, the term regional international cooperation is preferred in the present research. A more detailed definition, as well as a discussion of these issues is presented in chapter 2.

foreign policy, all Central and East European countries have involved in the process. All the former communist states acquired membership of at least one post-Cold War regional arrangement. Most of these states are also founding members of such an initiative. On average, every Central and East European state is member of at least three regional intergovernmental groupings.<sup>3</sup> Compared to other regions, the speed to which regionalism spread in the former communist camp is in itself a remarkable phenomenon. In South Asia, for instance, a classic case for regionalism studies, a similar number of initiatives have been created, re-created and developed in almost fifty years (Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001, Buzan 2003). In Latin America, around the same amount of regional processes emerged in thirty years (Hurrell 1998, Sunkel 2000, Frohman 2000). In contrast, with its only one and a half decade of existence, post-Cold War Central and East European regionalism was at least twice faster than similar phenomena around the globe.

Most of the existing arrangements overlap either in membership or goals, while some overlap both in membership and goals. For example, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), both created in the aftermath of the Bosnian war with the purpose to foster the political and economic reconstruction of the Balkans, have almost identical membership and very similar goals. If states aimed only to address the security concerns generated by the end of the Cold War and the break up of Yugoslavia, then, according to the rational actor assumption, the number of initiatives should have been smaller, whilst overlapping, especially in terms of goals, should not be present. Furthermore, the Central and East European governments could have engaged only in larger cooperative structures, such as the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), while for the relations with their neighbours they could have used only the bilateral and trilateral formats. In fact, they

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<sup>3</sup> For a brief overview of the Central and East European membership to the post-Cold War regional intergovernmental arrangements and its evolution, see Appendix 1 at the end of this dissertation.



did so. Most Central and East European states acquired membership to the Council of Europe in the first half of the 1990s. A large majority had been already member of the Conference for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (CSCE) and the rest acquired the membership of this organization throughout most of the 1990s. These, as well as a series of bilateral treaties, helped them normalize their relations with respect to minorities. Yet, all the Central and East European states also engaged in regional arrangements among themselves.

The process is even more surprising knowing that these associative processes have emerged in a region that in the 1990s faced some of the most complex internal transitions in recent times. Unlike the previous waves of democratization (i.e. in South Europe and Latin America), the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had not only to transform their political institutions but also to adopt (sometimes radical) economic reforms aiming at liberalizing their markets (Dahrendorf 1990). In addition, they needed to face the challenge of deep-rooted nationalist problems, a feature that might be considered the expression of incomplete nation-building processes (Offe 1991). In this process, some of the multi-ethnic states, such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, experienced different forms of fragmentation, ranging from state disintegration to civil war.

Furthermore, post-Cold War intergovernmental regionalism seems to be enduring in the area. Many argued that after the main foreign policy targets of these countries were reached (i.e. economic and political security through full participation into major Western institutions), the Central and East European states would no longer be active in regional agreements, as these schemes would not accommodate well into the larger European structures both for legal and political reasons.<sup>4</sup> However, none of the regional initiatives disappeared after the participant countries became members of the NATO and the European

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<sup>4</sup> This has been a recurrent argument especially in the second half of the 1990s. For an interesting collection of articles presenting various versions of this argument, see Lopandić (2002a).

Union. This did not happen even in the cases of the Baltic Cooperation and the Visegrád Group, whose members were all granted EU and NATO membership. Furthermore, most Central and East European regional processes have recently embarked into a profound reform process aiming at making them more efficient in addressing their goals.

In short, after the fall of their communist regimes, all these countries involved into at least one regional framework of cooperation, a choice that generated a significant number of regional intergovernmental initiatives and one of the most dynamic regionalist environments in the world. This happened although the political circumstances of Central and Eastern Europe would have suggested rather a non-cooperative attitude at regional level in this area. Yet, why is there something rather nothing? The reasons for which international regionalism has spread throughout Central and Eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War are far from being self-evident. This dissertation investigates this puzzle.

### ***Current state of research and hypotheses***

The subject of Central and East European regionalism has not been tackled frequently and despite a slightly increased interest in the topic since the mid 1990s, research dedicated to it is still scarce. Much of it emerged from policy briefings on specific regional arrangements and was not particularly interested into an in-depth or rigorous comparative analysis of post-Cold War regionalism in the area. This may partially explain why, to a large extent, literature on this subject is rather technical, descriptive, policy oriented, and limited to more or less schematic chronological fiches or evaluations of the regional processes.

Within the particular academic scholarship dedicated to the topic, comprehensive monographs on these initiatives are quasi-inexistent. Dangerfield (2000), which treats the development of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), is one of the very few examples of such research. Rough examinations of most of the post Cold War regional

initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe can be also found in a number of articles published in journals such as *Journal of South East European and Black Sea Studies* (Routledge for ELIAMEP – the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy Studies), *Chaillot Papers* (European Union Institute for Security Studies) and *South-East Europe Review* (Hans Böckler Stiftung).

The few existing analyses that include a comparative dimension are usually limited to summarizing the historical evolution of regional cooperation in a certain space (e.g. Central Europe, South Eastern Europe). This is the case, for instance, of Duško Lopandić's *Regional initiatives in South Eastern Europe* (2001), which is currently the most comprehensive publication on the topic. Former chief-negotiator for the relation with the European Union in the Yugoslav government, Lopandić reviews the main historical events in the development of the major contemporary regional initiatives that emerged in the area. Using mainly secondary sources, as well as information from his diplomatic career and official documents of these organizations, he provides an interesting summary of the incentives and obstacles in the multilateral cooperation in the Balkans, as well as a comprehensive description of the evolution, objectives and activities of some of these regional arrangements. Another notable contribution in terms of range of regional initiatives under scrutiny is the volume that Andrew Cottey edited within the framework of the prestigious EastWest Institute (Cottey 1999a) but the articles are mainly well-organized chronologies of several organizations, emphasizing the security dimension, even when this is less visible.

Throughout all this literature, the choice of regional initiatives and the research space in general is often arbitrary. A series of randomly chosen arrangements are simply considered as being instances of Central European regionalism, for example. The limits or the characteristics of the region are almost never defined in these studies, despite the fact that there is no common view on what exactly labels such as Central Europe or Eastern Europe

refer to. The usual (implicit) selection criterion is the way in which the respective regional initiatives are classified within the political and academic environment to which the researcher is accustomed. For instance, Lopandić (2001) wrote in the context of a resurgence of regionalism in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis and focused his research around this particular circumstance, while attempting to offer a comprehensive map of post Cold War regionalism. This is how in a book dedicated to South East European regionalism one may read both about the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). Instead, Bunce (1997), which is a contribution in a collective volume dedicated to the recent political use of the concept of *Mitteleuropa*, tends to treat post-communist regionalism as an exclusively Central European phenomenon. Furthermore, her analysis develops mostly around a restrictive concept of Central Europe that was used widely by the Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish governments in the early 1990. This is how many commonplaces and ideological elements from the political sphere are reproduced into academic scholarship. A consequence of this way of approaching the case selection is that inconsistencies are frequently present. For example, in 2001 a major conference brought together key decision-makers, representatives of some of the post-communist regional initiatives and several academics from South Eastern Europe with the purpose of debating the policy implications of regional intergovernmental cooperation in the Balkans. This yielded a conference proceedings volume (Lopandić 2002a) where there are lengthy inputs about the Central European Initiative (CEI) although this arrangement did not have a significant role in South Eastern Europe. Instead, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), which at least for the sake of the name should have been referred to, was scarcely mentioned in the papers and was not included in the comparative evaluations of the Balkan regional organizations that appear in the volume (Minić 2002, Lopandić 2002b), although the conference took place five years after the creation of the SECI.

Irrespective of the nature of the research, none has explicitly attempted to understand how all the former communist democracies have become involved in frameworks of cooperation at regional level, although historical and political circumstances would not have suggested such a path. Existing scholarship offers, however, several possible tracks for understanding this puzzle. Among the first to put forward a more complex narrative about post communist international regionalism was Valerie Bunce. Building her argument around the case of the Visegrád Group (V4), she proposes a list of factors that could explain the development of regional cooperation in Central Europe. These are the geopolitical location of the member states, the leadership commitment, the incentives offered by the European Union, as well as the similarities of domestic political and economic circumstances (Bunce 1997). This explanation has several drawbacks. Geopolitical location is an obvious factor for all states involving in regional intergovernmental initiatives. To put it differently, geopolitical location may explain all cases of regionalism but cannot explain any particular case of regionalism. Similarly, leadership commitment is a precondition of cooperation. Without minimal political commitment, there is no regional grouping in the first place. Furthermore, even in the case of the Visegrád Group the leadership commitment has been manifested only in the early 1990s, the initiative being threatened several times with its disintegration after the leaders of some member countries raised sensitive questions for the others (Cottey 1999b). Since the initiative continued to exist despite such fluctuations, one may infer that the factors do not have an equal input at every point in time. Therefore, different instances of regionalism may be sensitive to different degrees to such factors. However, neither Bunce nor anyone else in this particular scholarship provides an account built around these different sensitivities and for this reason the reader of this literature is left with the impression that regionalism is a static phenomenon, slightly anhistorical and, at the same time, the product of necessary historical circumstances. The similarity argument is also problematic. For

Bunce, in the particular case of the V4, this would be partially caused by similar historical backgrounds dating back as far as the fourteenth century. It is true that in the early 1990s, among the members of the Visegrád group (i.e. Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia and after 1993 the Czech Republic and Slovakia) there were several similarities in terms of political leadership and these countries were more economically advanced than the other former communist countries. However, as I show in chapter 4, this similarity is recent, rather postcommunist, and it is impossible to trace it back to previous decades and even less to several centuries. If this was true, then only some groupings would be possible and these should not overlap but, as already mentioned, this is not the case of Central and East European regionalism. Therefore, only the impact of the European Union remains to be investigated.

The role of the European Union in fostering regionalism in the former communist space has been often emphasized in the literature, particularly in research focused on the Balkans. Though there are many variants of this idea, all its supporters share the view that international regionalism is a residual product of the attempts that the South East European states have made to acquire membership to the European Union (Uvalić 2002, Anastasakis 2002, Anastasakis and Bojičić-Dželilović 2002). This hypothesis of EU conditionality and residual products is explored in much detail in a doctoral dissertation defended recently at the University of Oxford by Bulgarian scholar Dimitar Bechev (2005). This is so far the most advanced comparative research that treats the issue of international regionalism in the former communist space, although the specific aim of the study is to understand the particular dynamic of Balkan regionalism in the aftermath of the war in Bosnia. Bechev suggests that South East European regionalism would be the result of regional functional interdependence, external push and identity politics expressed as a quest for Europeanness and self-image constructions, the last two factors being the most significant. Furthermore,

regional cooperation should also be seen as a new episode of modernization through the import of Western institutions (Bechev 2005).

However, the EU conditionality and residuals hypothesis cannot be easily generalized to the entire region. Around half of the regional arrangements that emerged in the former communist space were created before the European Union adopted its criteria for further accession (1993) and before the submission of the first EU membership applications by the former communist countries (1994-1995). Moreover, initiatives such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) have been only remotely linked to the EU enlargement. Some of the factors proposed by Bechev are also difficult to find in other cases. For instance, external push, namely those “strategies for promoting regional cooperation adopted by major outside actors such as the EU and its members, US, NATO” (Bechev 2005, 23), is hardly visible in the case of the creation of the Central European Initiative (Rupnik A. 2002), the Visegrád Group (Bunce 1997, Dangerfield 2000), the Baltic Cooperation (Cottey 1999b), or the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Pavliuk 1999). Furthermore, as I show later in chapter 2, interdependence is rather an ideological concept, as interdependence cannot be observed but only postulated. This makes all narratives built around it partly ideological. Similarly, framing post Cold War regionalism into the modernization paradigm, particularly in its Westernization variant, has an ideological weight. This paradigm is embedded into an evolutionary and deterministic vision of human relations, which does not accommodate properly the question of change and free will. In an extreme form, it suggests that some states will remain always behind others in terms of development and these states are mostly the same rather irrespective of the historical period.<sup>5</sup> Bechev’s view of modernization is a diluted Westernization version, addressing mostly the discursive level. However, it implicitly shares the view that modernization takes place also at

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<sup>5</sup> This argument against the modernization paradigm has been discussed in detail in various places. For a good review of these discussions, see the contributions to Gaonkar (2001).

institutional level, where regionalism would be such institution. In other words, post Cold War regionalism would be a recent (i.e. post 1989) import from the Western democratic world both at discursive and institutional level. Yet, even in the case of the South East European international regionalism, one may identify previous forms of regionalism, such as the late 1980s Balkan Cooperation. Despite such shortcomings, the interdependence and modernization paradigms are well established in the discipline and opting for them, like the option for less deterministic approaches, is a personal choice and less an epistemological one. Personally, I am more inclined towards worldviews that accommodate more easily the possibility of change, a fact that the interdependence/ integration and modernization grills could offer with difficulty.

At the same time, the evidence from the fieldwork for this dissertation suggests an alternative view, in which the role of the European Union is less relevant. As pointed out frequently in the literature, I find that the European Union has been more present than other actors in the area, particularly in South Eastern Europe after the Dayton/Paris agreements. However, it was not the only external actor that supported regionalism in the former communist space. The US government, for instance, was the initiator of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe provided administrative and financial assistance for this arrangement. The US, Canada, Japan, the Russian Federation, several international organizations, as well as both EU and non-EU member states participate in the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Furthermore, former communist countries initiated the majority of the Central and East European regional cooperation schemes and there seem to be a widespread feeling of ownership within these organizations. In other words, although there is direct involvement of international actors external to the region in some of the arrangements, this is neither the norm nor the most important factor for the entire universe of post Cold War regionalism.



At discursive level, most of the regional groupings refer to the “reintegration” of the participant states into the democratic community. The Central and East European governments seem to have framed regionalism as part of a larger strategy to achieve this goal. This strategy also includes acquiring membership to major Western institutions, among which the European Union and NATO have been considered the most important. Especially in the early 1990s, when these states were not offered a clear answer whether the EU or NATO membership was possible, regionalism was a means to prove the Western partners their democratic credentials through cooperation, as well as to cope with the political security uncertainties generated by the collapse of the bipolar system and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Although EU conditionality played a role in the formulation of the Central and East European states’ foreign policy options, it has not been transferred to a significant scale to the regional intergovernmental arrangements of the area. Therefore, the common denominator for the creation and evolution of Central and East European post Cold War regionalism seems to be the democratization process and the adaptation to the new security environment but not the EU conditionality. Since any international arrangement can be framed from a security adaptation viewpoint, the particularity of this case of international regionalism remains the democratization context. In short, Central and East European regionalism may be regarded as a residual product of the democratization process in the sphere of international relations (*democratic conditionality hypothesis*).

Nonetheless, democratic conditionality may not have been the only element present. The large majority of the actions of these groupings have been political and they have not generated much cooperation at sub-governmental level. These political actions, as well as much of the official documents of the organizations very frequently invoke a particular regional identity. This is not a mere reference to geographical location but it is explicitly framed as a space of common memory and action. In other words, regionalism is politically

represented as the result of particular friendship communities. In the process, a competition also developed among these communities and consequently among different regional identities. However, the regional identities generated by these communities rely heavily on previous regional identity representations, such as “Central Europe” or “Balkans,” which have a history embedded with high normative elements in relation to each other. For instance, “Central Europe” has in general better connotations than “South Eastern Europe,” which is perceived as more neutral than the “Balkans,” which has many negative connotations. In this sense, post Cold War regionalism has been also a race to appropriate better mental spaces in the attempt to be recognized as part of the democratic community. Both to groupings and their members, this type of *rhetoric action* offered more visibility and a relatively unique space on the collective mental map of Central and Eastern Europe, previously empty or blurred by the logic of the Cold War. The race, however, has not been equally spread throughout the region. It was mostly present in the case of initiatives that have been associated with long-established, heavy weighted regional identity concepts such as Central Europe and the Balkans. Instead, those associated with marginal regional identity concepts, such as the Baltic or Black Sea, have been less sensitive to the usefulness of the regional brand. Yet, even these have been affected by the logics of rhetoric action. In the case of the Baltic group, for instance, external parties, especially the United States, have encouraged the creation of a stronger Baltic identity brand. This helped differentiate politically at symbolic level the three republics from the Russian hinterland but, once this goal was achieved, the success of the Baltic identity brand faced the competition of the Nordic and Scandinavian political horizons. Interestingly, this process of rhetoric action and the competition for a better place on the collective mental map continues even after the political contexts that had generated the regional initiatives significantly transformed. In short, post Cold War Central and East European regionalism has not been only a residual

product of the democratization processes in the area but also a product and a channel of the continuous processes of political legitimization at international level and regional identity formation.

### ***Conceptual and methodological framework***

In this dissertation, I investigate this hypothesis of *democratic conditionality and rhetoric action* through a comparative analysis of the creation and evolution of the major Central and East European regional intergovernmental initiatives. For this purpose, I use the methodological and conceptual frameworks of social constructivism and international regionalism, which I further develop particularly through the introduction of the concept of regional cohesiveness. For this reason, the dissertation is mainly a prospective one, aiming at identifying the possible research dimensions of this concept using the particular case of post Cold War Central and East European regionalism. At the same time, it aims at producing a theoretically framed monograph of the most important Central and East European regional intergovernmental initiatives, underpinned by a historical account of their constitutive conditions.

### **The social construction of international regionalism**

The epistemological foundations of this research are constructivist and, within this rich and diverse area, it is closest to the conventional approach (social constructivism).<sup>6</sup> Although constructivism is essentially a social not only a political theory (Wendt 1999), it supports several propositions about political (and international) interaction that are different from the rest of the mainstream positions. First, political action and interaction cannot be conceptualized outside identity (Hopf 1998, Wendt 1999, Guzzini 2000). In other words, all political actions and processes have not only a material but also a normative-representational

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<sup>6</sup> The variants and features of constructivism are presented in more detail in chapter 2.

dimension. Second, political action is mediated by meaning formation. Without minimal reflection on previous actions of self and others, there is no further action. In this sense, political action is characterized by rationality but this resides mostly in transforming information in political interest. Although interest generates action, interest is not possible without the mediation of identity (Wendt 1992, 1999). To put it differently, political action does not depend exclusively on the specific context of political interaction but also of the particular (identity) histories of participants. This denies the essence of the dominant rational choice models for which the action possibilities of participants are dictated exclusively by the configuration of participants to a political process and their interests, exogenous to interaction. Instead, for constructivists, interest is created and developed through interaction (Guzzini 2000).

Social constructivism is a relatively recent paradigm and it has not penetrated significantly international regionalism scholarship, which is the next major research tradition in which this dissertation is grounded. As I show in chapter 1, regional intergovernmental cooperation literature has been dominated mostly by (neo)liberal, (neo)realist and (neo)Marxian arguments. Some attempts to import constructivist elements are increasingly frequent, with the New Regional Approach/Theory (NRA/T) as the most advanced in this respect (Hettne 2003, 2005). However, at a closer look, the NRA/T has an important critical agenda that makes it more radical than conventional social constructivism can digest. Furthermore, irrespective of the camp, current regionalist literature supports the vision that, ultimately, cooperation leads to integration. Yet, as I further argue in chapter 1, the integration paradigm and the embedded concept of interdependence are rather problematic, most importantly because both regional integration and interdependence cannot be observed but only postulated. In other words, the concepts of regional integration and interdependence are not falsifiable. As an alternative for producing a narrative about the way regional groupings form

and evolve over time, in chapter 2 I propose the concept of regional cohesiveness, defined as the *degree to which a group of actors inhabiting a limited contiguous space act and represent themselves as a group*. In order to build this new concept, I first reconstruct the field of regionalism, starting from the concept of region and from a social constructivist perspective. Then, in the remainder of the dissertation, the argumentation develops within this newly established framework of regional cohesiveness, thus aiming to introduce social constructivism to international regionalism in a less critical way than the NRA/T does.

### **Methodological approach**

Mainly due to this conceptual setting, the dissertation is a prospective one. In terms of methods, it uses the methodological framework of discourse analysis, where discourse is understood mostly as social practice. As a large methodological approach, discourse analysis may be described as a “research that is concerned with the production of meaning through talk and texts” (Tonkiss 1998, 246). To understand this concern one needs therefore to understand first what discourse, talk and text mean. From the viewpoint of lay uses, discourse refers to a text that a political actor perform for an audience in order to transmit a message. In an academic sense, discourse commonly means a particular speech act, for instance a conversation between two people, a broadcasted speech of a political leader, or a newspaper article. It may also refer to a type of jargon, such as the legal, medical or philological ones. From this academic viewpoint, discourse analysis indicates a primary concern with language and “the semantic aspects of spoken or written text” (Torfing 2005, 6). In methodological terms, this involves the use of specific tools for the analysis of written materials, such as content analysis and conversation analysis.

Though this is a major approach to discourse, it is neither the only one nor the dominant paradigm. In fact, as Jacob Torfing argues, three alternative views can be identified in discourse theory (Torfing 2005, 5-9). First, there is the above-mentioned strategy, inspired

mainly from socio-linguistics, which treats language as a textual unit. A second generation of discourse analysis research evolved around some of the main ideas of Michel Foucault, particularly around his view on the relation between power and knowledge. In the reading of the representatives of this alternative approach, discourse is defined in terms of social practices, while discourse analysis is a large methodological approach that aims at analysing linguistic and non-linguistic data as discursive forms (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000, 4). This argument is shared also by the representatives of the third generation of discourse analysis but it is extended to the entire social realm. From this viewpoint, social reality and discourse mutually constitute each other. In this sense, “there is nothing outside the text” (Derrida 1967).<sup>7</sup>

In political research, the Foucault-inspired strand generated the methodological framework of critical discourse analysis, most notably through the work Norman Fairclough (Fairclough 1989, 1995) and Ruth Wodak (Wodak 1989, Wodak and Meyer 2001, Weiss G. and Wodak 2003). Their approach, which is fertilized also by several theories of Marxist and (neo)Marxian inspiration, aims at identifying the sources of power relations within society through the analysis of the power relations instituted at discursive level. For this purpose, they use a wide set of raw empirical data ranging from common written or spoken text materials such as speeches, interviews and reports, to historical events, ideas and institutions. The Derriderian camp, in which Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe are among the most methodologically concerned,<sup>8</sup> has similar goals, as well as frequent (neo)Marxian influences, but the distinction between the discursive and non-discursive is abandoned (Torring 2005, 9). In fact, the methodological differences between these last two generations of discourse

<sup>7</sup> This is how the original French version “il n’y a rien de hors-texte” has been most often translated. However, a closer translation is “there is no outside text”, which means that once reality and discourse mutually construct each other, there is no objective reference point in the real world. For an interesting discussion of the way in which the difficult translation of Derrida’s work into English led to several significant misunderstandings of his vision, see the lengthy introduction to the authoritative English edition of Derrida’s *Of grammarology* (Spivak 1997).

<sup>8</sup> See for instance Laclau and Mouffe (1985).

analysis are in general small and rather the different conceptual and intellectual pedigrees set apart various groups (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000, 4-5). Research in both these ontological frameworks can draw, for instance, on the Foucauldian archaeological and genealogical methods or the Derriderian method of deconstruction.

In this dissertation, in line with the second and third generation of discourse theory, I assume that discourse and social reality are mutually constituted. Therefore, all objects and human actions are objects of discourse. They are meaningful, in the sense that through interaction, both at material and discursive level, human agency develops structures of meaning out of which reality could not be thought. Although I share the view that different relations of power manifest throughout the structures of meanings, the dissertation does not have a critical agenda and is not rooted in any way into a (neo)Marxian tradition. I do not aim to offer a critique of the way in which the universe of Central and East European regional intergovernmental cooperation institutes certain relations of material and discursive power but rather to understand *how* different structures of meaning have allowed the emergence and development of this particular case of international regionalism. In order to articulate an explanation of this phenomenon, I employ written or spoken text, such as official documents and interviews, as well as other empirical data of non-linguistic nature, such as events, ideas, identity legacies and institutions related to Central and East European regionalism. This space of raw empirical data is used for identifying arguments legitimizing the creation and development of regional intergovernmental cooperation into certain structures, as well as the context, structure and the construction of the discourse around this political phenomenon. In this sense, the methodological approach of this dissertation is closest but not equal to the archaeological method of Michel Foucault (Foucault 1969).

Figure 1 on the next page is a visual of the way I structure the discursive space of the political phenomenon of international regionalism. In line with the constructivist logic, this

space has both a material (institutional) dimension and a normative-representational one. Each of these dimensions is built through successive strata of meaning production. At the deepest level is the background stratum. On the institutional dimension, this stratum is identifiable through political-institutional legacies. In the specific case of Central and East European regionalism, in order to identify the presence of this layer I first investigate whether regional intergovernmental cooperation developed in the area before the Cold War. In case they did, I look at their characteristics and dynamics. On the normative-representational dimension, the background stratum is identifiable through various regional identity palimpsests, namely through those overlapping and frequently cross-hybridizing collective representations of regions (mostly) within the space delimited as Central and Eastern Europe.

**Fig. 1 Strata of meaning production**

	<b>Institutional dimension</b>	<b>Normative- representational dimension</b>
<b>Practices</b>	Institutional practices	Discursive practices
<b>Design</b>	Institutional design	Internal rhetoric
<b>Context</b>	Security requisites	Socio-political context
<b>Background</b>	Political-institutional legacies	Identity palimpsests



The next stratum is that of context and it has similarly two dimensions. On the institutional one, I frame the research within the security paradigm and therefore I investigate the security requisites that led to the creation and evolution of international regionalism in the area. On the normative-representational dimension, I investigate the larger socio-political context of this creation and evolution. The next stratum is that of specific design of regional initiatives and this can be assessed both at institutional level (institutional design) and with respect to the way the participants to a regional arrangement define themselves for themselves as a group. Finally, the last stratum is that of institutional and discursive practices and here I investigate how the regional groupings act and how they represent themselves to the external world. This strata structure, which in chapter 2 is developed in the context of the regional cohesiveness concept, also represents the structure that the argumentation of the thesis follows.

This approach holds both rationalist/positivist and interpretativist allegiances. It is rationalist in that it accepts most of the principles of normal science or rather the principles of logic on which normal science is founded, particularly the principle of the excluded third. Furthermore, it does not hold the view that there is a hidden sense in the order of the things that needs to be discovered. The world is transparent to research through commonly shared methods accessible to anyone. At the same time, the research is interpretativist in the sense that it does not share the positivist treatment of social sciences as similar to the natural sciences. In this, I agree with Wilhelm Dilthey that in the complex social reality in which we live one may not expect to find causal connections in a similar way in which these can be traced in the natural world (Dilthey 1991). This happens not due to the limits of human knowledge but because the essence of social interaction may be different from the essence of interaction in the physical world. From this perspective, any attempt to uncover social laws and mechanisms of causality within the social realm may be an unfruitful endeavour. In this

sense, the principle of the excluded third is merely a principle of knowledge (and therefore of discourse), not a principle that is embedded in the social or natural reality.<sup>9</sup> From this particular viewpoint, the aim of social (and political) research should be to *understand* rather than *explain* social (and political) phenomena. Since both explanation and interpretation may be regarded as categories of understanding (Rorty 1982, 191-98), it is only a matter of choice which strategy is chosen for understanding our objects of study. When the nature of the social world is conceptualized as different from the natural world, paradoxes may be probably more frequent and regularities less common. For this reason, social research, particularly with respect to complex or large-scale social (and subsequently political) phenomena such as international regionalism, is probably less suited to explanation than it is to interpretation. Yet, this could not be but a personal choice and any attempt to impose such choice as the “correct” one would be as valid as the adoption of the alternative position (Rorty 1982, 198-203).

Due to its embedded time dimension (A and non A can not be true *simultaneously*), the principle of the excluded third is key for the notion of causality, which is the central concept for the paradigm of explanation. However, although explanation could not be conceptualised without it, the principle of the excluded third is not limited to the explanatory approach. In other words, it can be accommodated also to an interpretativist strategy. In my view, this can be done through the notion of precedence embedded in the principle and this does not necessarily imply causality. The principle of the excluded third establishes an order of the events. The notion of causality adds to this order the idea of correlation and thus provides the framework for explaining *why* things happened the way they did. However, the notion of

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<sup>9</sup> When this principle cannot be applied to describe a social or natural phenomenon, one may talk about a paradox. Therefore, like the principle of the excluded third, the paradox is a category of discourse not of reality. Although the principle of the excluded third is more frequently applicable than the paradox, they have equal status as knowledge categories and neither of them should be regarded as more appropriate for knowledge purposes.

correlation is an optional choice for understanding a social (and political) phenomenon. The understanding process may aim at uncovering *how* things came to happen the way they did. This is an endeavour as legitimate as the *why* attempts. In fact, *how* and *why* may be regarded as the different faces of the same coin as they both attempt to offer a coherent narrative for a particular subject of investigation. However, for the purpose of *how* understanding, only the notion of precedence is necessary. Consequently, the principle of the excluded third is fundamental also to interpretativist approaches.

In this dissertation, I investigate *how* international regionalism has become a widespread phenomenon in post Cold War Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, I do not aim either to uncover the causes of international regionalism or to offer an explanatory model of regional cohesiveness based on the Central and East European experience. Instead, I provide a narrative on the way in which regional intergovernmental cooperation has become a major foreign policy choice for the governments in the area, as well as on the dynamic of the interactions within the framework of regional intergovernmental initiatives. This narrative is not mere description of the events. It identifies the points of recurrence, similarity, continuity, and caesura. Furthermore, from such elements of resonance and dissonance I abstract the factors and mechanisms of regional cohesiveness at play in the case of Central and East European regionalism. In this sense, my approach has many common points with the explanatory paradigm. However, the factors and mechanisms are not framed into a causal relationship but from the perspective of a complex process in which the interactions are too much intertwined to attempt to represent them into the linear structure that causality as a knowledge tool presupposes.

### **Units of analysis and case selection**

As regards the cases around which the research develops, these are the regional organizations and processes developed in Central and Eastern Europe (1) at governmental

level; (2) in the aftermath of the Cold War; and (3) that are the most relevant for the area. A rough relevance criterion is that of membership. This dissertation refers only to the initiatives in which the members have been in majority former communist countries since the creation of the respective arrangements. This excludes those instances of regional intergovernmental cooperation in which one former communist country cooperates at regional level mainly with older democracies. It also excludes cases, such as the Council of Europe, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in which the former communist countries acquired membership to a regional framework of cooperation that was created and developed by Western European states before the end of the Cold War. This membership criterion may be further refined with the introduction of the additional clause of explicit focus on Central and Eastern Europe. Cases are chosen only if they aim explicitly to foster the advancement of this particular region. This excludes regional arrangements such as the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE).

These delimitations are not enough without specifying which are the criteria for setting the boundaries of the region. Almost without exception, “region” is for most disciplines a notion that refers to a space whose constitutive elements are highly similar. Despite this relatively straightforward abstract meaning, the notion becomes controversial when one tries to objectively delimit regions, namely to decide which elements are significant and which is the minimum degree of similarity that may qualify a space as a region. Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, studies in geography, history and political economy have shown that every region is in fact an artificial construct and any limit is necessarily arbitrary. Later, scholars from other disciplines increasingly supported the idea that there are no “natural” or “organic” regions but rather more or less traditional conventions.<sup>10</sup> Different conventions can be present simultaneously for a particular point in time. Therefore, the borders of regions are more or

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<sup>10</sup> For recent and influential argumentation on this topic with applicability to Central and Eastern Europe, see for instance Wolff L. (1994) and Todorova (1997).

less fluid at any time. Furthermore, since conventions change over time, so are the limits of the regions. In short, “region” is a notion of time as it is of space.

In this dissertation, more than a geographical notion, Central and Eastern Europe is understood as a *space of memory*. It refers to those European states that in their recent history could not always choose freely their political fate but in which the idea that the Western world is the source of their progress is heavily embedded into the political culture. Therefore, it refers to those states that emerged or have been resurrected since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a consequence of the nation-building processes of the ethnic minorities from the three empires that dominated the area at that time. During the Interwar period, the region was more or less a buffer zone between the Soviet space and Western Europe. After the Second World War, Central and Eastern Europe refers to the European satellite countries of the Soviet power. A rough proxy of Central and Eastern Europe for the post Cold War period may be defined as all the former communist countries that have not been members of the Soviet Union. These states are Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and its successor states (the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and its successor states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and finally the separate republics of Montenegro, and Serbia). To these, one may partially add the three Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) because they share the same type of memory. In short, after 1990, Central and Eastern Europe may be defined as the space of those countries that embarked into a profound democratization process and consequently have aimed at joining the rest of the democratic community through acquiring membership to Western institutions such as the European Union and NATO.

With these criteria in mind, almost a dozen of regional intergovernmental initiatives can be identified in the post-Cold War period. These are the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII), the Baltic Cooperation (BC), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Danube Cooperation Process (DCP), the Quadragonal Cooperation (Q4), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Royaumont Process, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the Visegrád Group (V4). However, not all of these are treated at length in this dissertation. For instance, the recent Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (2002) satisfies the membership criterion but only partially the regional focus criteria. Its major horizon is rather a part of the Mediterranean space and it does not address problems specific to the former communist space. Similarly, the Quadragonale, which evolved from a trilateral cooperation between Austria, Italy and Slovenia through the incorporation of Croatia in 2000, focuses also mostly on the Mediterranean and not Central and Eastern Europe, despite references to it in the founding treaties. The Royaumont Process ceased to exist after some of its principles were incorporated into the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which was also replaced in 2007 with the Regional Cooperation Council. Furthermore, as Bechev convincingly argues, the Royaumont Process and the Stability Pact can be regarded rather as European Union strategies to cope with the uncertainties present at its borders than proper instances of former communist regionalism (Bechev 2005). As for the Regional Cooperation Council, it is a too much recent creation to be suitably assessed. All these special cases are treated in more detail in the part that presents the historical milestones of post Cold War regional intergovernmental cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe. However, the analysis focuses mostly only on the other seven initiatives whose focus is truly on the region namely the BC, BSEC, CEI, DCP, SECI, SEECP and V4.

In terms of temporal limits, the formal time frame of the research is 1990-2007. The inferior limit is the conventional beginning of the post-communist period. It is true that the first phases of the rapid disintegration of the communist regimes could be placed at least one year earlier and for some, even much earlier.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, only in 1990 most countries in the region organized their first free elections after almost half a century of totalitarian and authoritarian rule, which is a rough criterion to establish the beginning of the democratization process. Only one of the regional arrangements under scrutiny, the Quadrilateral Cooperation, later known as the Central European Initiative (CEI), was created before 1990. However, this emerged only shortly before, in November 1989, when the participant states from the Eastern bloc had already embarked upon a democratization process.<sup>12</sup> The major criterion to establish the second limit is the end of transition for the countries in the region. This is difficult to assess because (1) democratization is a continuous process at different levels; and (2) each country has had a different pace. A conventional proxy is the admittance of these countries in the Western institutions, such as the NATO and EU, because the acceptance criteria include specific references to the degree of consolidation of the democratic institutions. This happened in three stages. In 1999, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were admitted to NATO. In 2004, they were also admitted to the European Union, together with five other states - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The same year, these five countries joined NATO, together with Bulgaria and Romania, which were granted the EU membership three years later, in 2007. Therefore, 2007 is a convenient limit to state that transition ended in most of these countries, as well as

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<sup>11</sup> A more detailed discussion of the reasons that led to the disintegration of the communist regimes and the related time frame is included in chapter 4.

<sup>12</sup> The participant countries in the Quadrilateral Cooperation were Austria, Hungary, Italy and Yugoslavia. In November 1989, when the agreement was signed, Hungary was in the middle of its institutional process of regime change. At that time, Yugoslavia, which within the communist camp has had a slightly more liberal regime, also seemed to be embarking on a similar path.

for observing the instances of post Cold War Central and East European regionalism in the longest possible time frame.

Finally, for identifying the previous forms of international regionalism that developed in Central and Eastern Europe, the research does not go further back than the Interwar period but it sets the historical background as far as the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. This choice is motivated by several reasons. First, it derives from the definition of regional intergovernmental cooperation. The notion could be understood either as a very general category applicable to a large domain of historical cases or as a category restricted only to recent historical instances. In this research, like in most international regionalism scholarship, regional intergovernmental cooperation is considered an essentially modern phenomenon occurring in peace times, where “modern” refers mainly to a recent historical period in which nation states have become the major actors on the political scene.<sup>13</sup> For Central and Eastern Europe, this period started in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, like everywhere around the globe, regional initiatives for intergovernmental cooperation emerged in the area only in the aftermath of the First World War. This is the reason for which this dissertation does not tackle the issue of the various regional alliances that developed in the area during Antiquity, the Middle Ages or the Enlightenment.

### **Sources**

In terms of the type of first hand data used for analysis, the main sources of this dissertation are the documents that the regional intergovernmental cooperation structures have produced since their creation. The founding treaties, statements, charters, resolutions, declarations, minutes of meetings and press releases were the most frequent types of such documents. Another important source related to the history and political goals of the organizations under

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<sup>13</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the modern character of regionalism, see Fawcett (1995). Chapter 1 also briefly presents the main historical milestones of international regionalism as a phenomenon that can be identified throughout the world mainly from the 1930s onwards.



scrutiny have been the speeches, declarations, opening keynotes and newspaper interviews of political leaders involved in the process. Most of these sources could be found either in collections of documents or on the official web sites of the institutions. For different reasons, some of the internal documents of the organizations are not publicly available. The large majority of these internal papers are not directly relevant for the topic, therefore their unavailability did not represent a major disadvantage. However, some of the minutes of meetings and drafts of agendas, development plans and proposals could have been very useful for the research and they were not easily available. For such documents, I contacted each organizations but I also had the support of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Such data is supplemented with documents that the institutions of the member states produced in relation or on the topic of Central and East European regionalism, most notably programs of foreign policy and important declarations of Presidents, Prime Ministers or Ministers of Foreign Affairs. These were available mostly through the web sites of the ministries of foreign affairs. In addition, the dissertation uses reports and other official documents of other relevant actors for the region such as EU bodies, UN missions and the international donor agencies involved in the processes of post-Cold War regional intergovernmental cooperation.

Not least, to ensure a better coverage and understanding of these sources and have direct experience of both the formal and informal functioning of the process, I also contacted people directly involved in the creation and development of regional organizations, frequently close to decision-making activities. Between 2003 and 2008, I conducted a series of lightly structured interviews with high ranked diplomats and bureaucrats, politicians and foreign policy advisors from the member countries, the regional initiatives and other relevant institutions. Interviews conducted with several key decision-makers, such as former Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Géza Jeszenszky, former Polish Minister of Foreign

Affairs Bronisław Geremek and several former Romanian Prime Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, have been particularly useful in terms of providing first hand accounts of the emergence and development of Central and East European regionalism. From these interviews, I collected mostly information about the context of regional cooperation structures creation and some key points in their development, information about non-implemented projects as well some useful data about the background of the decision-making persons involved in the process. To all these, I added lightly structured interviews or focused correspondence with informants (university professors, researchers, journalists) that could offer me background information as well as alternative accounts of the events. A list of these interviewees and informants is included in the reference list at the end of the dissertation.

### ***Overview of the thesis***

The dissertation is divided into three parts, each containing three chapters. The first part lays down the theoretical foundations of the argumentation, while the other two investigate the strata of meaning production with respect to Central and East European regionalism. More specifically, the first part builds the *conceptual framework for the analysis of international regionalism from a constructivist perspective*. In the first chapter, I map the various meanings existent in the literature for the notion of regionalism and the related concepts, showing that there is frequent overlapping and that much of academic scholarship in this area is characterized by epistemological shortcomings. For these reasons, in chapter 2, I reconstruct from a social constructivist perspective the concept of regionalism and its related field starting from the concept of region. This reconstruction also generates the concept of regional cohesiveness. In chapter 3, I investigate the specificities of international regionalism, examining its legal nature, its features and the possibilities to study them. In the process, I also propose a grill of analysis for the institutional dimension of regional

cohesiveness. The second part investigates the *historical and political foundations of regional cohesiveness*, presenting the background stratum of meaning production, as well as the socio-political context in which contemporary Central and East European regional intergovernmental cooperation developed. More specifically, in chapter 4, I explore the forms of regional intergovernmental cooperation that emerged in Central and Eastern Europe before the end of the Cold War, demonstrating that there is more variation and development in this field than previously assumed. In chapter 5, I examine the most important regional identity legacies that have developed in relation with Central and Eastern Europe, looking at the way borders, centres and margins have been created at symbolic level, as well as at the way such processes have affected the national and regional discourses. Chapter 6 is dedicated to the features of the political context in which post Cold War regionalism has developed in the area, with the purpose of defining the context in which the Central and East European states have created and developed their foreign policy strategies. Finally, the last part of the dissertation is dedicated to the *dynamics of regional cohesiveness*. In chapter 7, I identify the specific foreign policy circumstances in which this particular case of regionalism emerged and has evolved. In chapter 8, I analyze the institutional dimension of regional cohesiveness, using the framework and grills designed in chapter 3 and a cross-sector comparison. The last chapter focuses on the discursive dimension of regional cohesiveness, investigating the way internal rhetoric and discursive practices articulate in the specific case of post Cold War Central and East European regionalism.

**PART I**  
**BUILDING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**  
**FOR A CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS**  
**OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **MAPPING INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM**

In this first chapter, I examine the historical evolution and academic treatment of international regionalism (regional intergovernmental cooperation). In the opening section, I investigate the various meanings that the notion of regionalism and its related concepts have in academic scholarship, and show that conceptual overlapping and confusion are very often present. Under such circumstances, international regionalism is both difficult to define and to place in a clear category. A possible solution to this problem is to take a step back and look at the common features of the political phenomena that generated the concept of international regionalism. For this purpose, in the second section, I review the literature dedicated to the empirical research on the topic. This portrays regional intergovernmental cooperation as a modern political phenomenon, which developed into two major waves, with a third probably under way. However, these are attributes that help describe the historical evolution of international regionalism rather than elements that could contribute to understanding its conceptual field. That is why, in the third and last part of the chapter, I examine international regionalism as specific research area within the field of political science and international relations scholarship, showing that academic interest in it has evolved relatively with the same pace as the development of international regionalism, a fact which indicates its high relevance for the field. However, irrespective of the various traditions, international regionalist literature has an epistemological shortcoming which makes it unsuitable for exploring the case under scrutiny in this dissertation.

### ***1.1 The universe of contemporary regionalism***

Regionalism is an extremely elusive concept. If one browses through what regionalism might currently stand for, the first impression would most probably be that of confusion. It is used in many disciplines with different meanings, ranging from preference for certain international arrangements to separatism on ethnic basis. Even when reading only from one discipline viewpoint, one would find many definitions or meanings particular to certain authors. What all definitions seem to have in common is the fact that the respective phenomenon would take place in a given (mental, political, geographical etc.) space referred to as region. In the last two decades, regionalism has been also presented as a phenomenon accompanying and usually deriving from globalization. Since there is increasing evidence that regionalism could also produce globalization, this commonality is, however, contested. Another point of debate refers to the assumption that regional cooperation would eventually and necessarily produce integration. Interestingly, despite such a multitude of research directions and overlapping tracks, there have not been many attempts to map the field in a more rigorous way. In this section, I present the strengths and weaknesses of the existing efforts of mapping the conceptual field, showing that one might identify several distinct meanings loosely attached to particular fields of research. Most commonly, these appear in security, international politics and political economy studies, but also in research on the nature of state and its relations with the governed population, at political and discursive level.

In security studies and international relations scholarship, regionalism usually indicates the existence of multilateral initiatives at regional level, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the late South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) or the more recent Community of Independent States (CIS). Sometimes, one may distinguish between the large, continental-level arrangements like the ones mentioned above and the smaller

ones, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). For this purpose, the latter type of initiatives may be known as subregional (intergovernmental) cooperation (Hook and Kearns 1999, Cottey 1999a). Unfortunately, this distinction is not widely spread in the discipline or political practice, as subregionalism could be employed equally for regional arrangements that do not have any kind of activity beyond the territory of their membership or simply for those that are less active or relevant from a political security viewpoint.

In political economy research, regionalism refers usually to preferential trade agreements or preferential trade liberalization among neighbouring states (Bhagwati 1993, Ethier 2001). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) and the now defunct Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), for instance, have been the subject of investigation from this particular perspective. Within the field, special attention has been granted to the European Economic Community and later to the common commercial policy of the European Union. This happened partially due to many of the features unique to the EU and partially due the EU's increasing role in international trade. The way in which regional arrangements have affected and had an impact on international trade and the system instituted first by the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and then by the World Trade Organization (WTO) also generated much interest. Due to its major concern with trade issues, this type of regionalism is sometimes known as trade or economic regionalism. In this particular context, regionalism is frequently portrayed as a phenomenon accompanying the globalization of world markets or politics. Most frequently, it has been conceptualized as a competitor of globalization (Bhagawati 1993, Pronk 1998, Ethier 2001). In this reading, regionalism is often a political reaction to economic globalization (Hveem 1999), or, in a more refined interpretation, a political and social reaction to the alleged economic and cultural "homogenization" of the world (Hettne,

Inotai, and Sunkel 1999, Bøås 2002).<sup>14</sup> More recently, however, regionalism and globalization have been considered rather complementary than competing concepts and phenomena (Payne and Gamble 1996, Marchand, Bøås, and Shaw 1999, Breslin, Higgot, and Rosamond 2002, Bøås, Marchand, and Shaw 2005).

At the same time, regionalism is increasingly employed as a synonym for cross-border cooperation (Keating and Aldecoa 1999). This is a relatively recent type of projects developed between the local governments or councils of those cities or provinces close to the border of two or more neighbouring countries. Many of these projects took place in Europe, at the initiative of the Council of Europe. Under the aegis of this organisation, for instance, the governments of two or more neighbouring countries that have a common frontier may agree on the creation of a so-called Euroregion, which is a framework arrangement that allows some of these countries' local governments and councils close to the border to participate in common programs of development.<sup>15</sup> This type of arrangement is designated sometimes as trans-border regionalism, subregionalism and even sub-regional cooperation (Lopandić 2001). The creation of trans-border regionalism may allow local governments gain some more autonomy in their relations with the central government. This is particularly visible through the access of funding within the European Union. For the development of their areas, local governments may access funding directly from supranational institutions and not through the central government. The actions taken by local governments individually and beyond the competences of the national state to which they belong have been recently called paradiplomacy (Keating and Aldecoa 1999). Since local governments represent a

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<sup>14</sup> This view of competing paradigms partially derived from the fact that, from a political economy viewpoint, regionalism is also a strategy initially conceptualized as opposed to multilateralism. The latter refers mainly to the preference for multilateral trade or political arrangements rather than for regional initiatives and is often depicted as a cause of globalization (Mansfield and Milner 1997, Pronk 1998, Hettne 1999a, 1999b).

<sup>15</sup> The first such arrangement was created in 1958 between Germany and the Netherlands. Usually, these programs focus on infrastructure issues, such the opening of new frontier points or the building or reconstruction of roads. For more details on this topic, see the official website of the Council of Europe ([www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)).



certain administrative area (a region) of a state, this phenomenon of bottom-up increase of autonomy could be designated as paradiplomacy regionalism.

Regionalism may also refer to the process of increasing the autonomy of a province within a state through a top-down approach (Keating 1998, Le Galès and Lequesne 1998). This is usually an administrative procedure and may be the result of an administrative reform or of a particular set of regional circumstances. In the first case, it may affect all or a largest part of the administrative subunits of a nation state, while in the second situation it is in general targeted at a specific territory within the nation state. In the same disciplinary context, regionalism is sometimes used for referring to the process of increasing the administrative autonomy of a province, irrespective whether through a top-down or a bottom-up approach (Harvie 1994). In this sense, paradiplomacy regionalism is a category of bottom-up regionalism, which is a category of regionalism as increase of autonomy of an administrative area within a nation state.

Finally, in policy studies, particularly in those interested in the relation between the state, its administrative units and the governed population, the concept of regionalism may refer to an intellectual and/or political bottom-up movement related to regional separatism (Keating 1998, Keating and Aldecoa 1999). When the claims of regional separatism have a dominant ethnic element, which is the common case, the phenomenon is known as ethnic regionalism. Unlike the bottom-up regionalism briefly presented above, this process is not limited to political elites holding official position within the governing structures. Rather, this particular type of regionalism brings in the foreground those voices that, through a political elite,<sup>16</sup> may coagulate an alternative view on the foundations of the nation-state. However, this does not mean that regional separatism could not be linked to the process of increasing

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<sup>16</sup> Here, the term of political elite refers mainly to those elites that voice political claims, i.e. related to the polity. A more detailed definition of political elites is developed in chapter 2.

the administrative autonomy of an area, either through a top-down or bottom-up approach. For instance, the high autonomy of some administrative units in federal states such as Spain or Germany could be seen as a way of dealing with regional separatism.

Irrespective of its link to regional separatism, the type of regionalism related to the process of increasing the autonomy of certain political units of the nation state may sometimes be known as regionalization (Jones and Keating 1995). Yet, regionalization is also a term frequently employed for describing the process of transforming the national territory into smaller parts for administrative purposes (Deyon 1997, Claval 1998). Such transformation may or may not follow the lines of historical provinces and it is usual operated at different levels of decision-making in relation to the central or federal government. For instance, the national territory can be divided into provinces, regions or lands, then into counties, communes, and city councils. In the same vein, regionalization may also refer to the division of the national territory of the EU member states into development regions. These are non-administrative territorial units, without legal personality, created mainly for statistical purposes, which function as frameworks for the elaboration, development and evaluation of the regional policy, as well as of the economic and social cohesion programs of the European Union. In this sense, regionalization is mainly an administrative top-down process, does not necessarily involve the bestowal of any autonomy and only rarely is related to any concept of regionalism. Yet, regionalization may equally designate the process of increasing the number of regional initiatives or the degree of regional integration in a particular geographical area, both phenomena also known as regionalism (Hurrell 1995a, 1995b, Hettne 1999b).

To complicate things even more, the relation between regionalism and regionalization goes also beyond this partially overlapping synonymy. Most importantly, the two terms can be complementing each other, with regionalization conceptualized as the process through which

regionalism is achieved. For example, regional separatism is an instance of regionalism, while regionalization refers to the manner in which regional separatism is produced. Similarly, the creation of regional intergovernmental initiatives is a manifestation of regionalism, while the spread of regional initiatives as a global phenomenon is a manifestation of regionalization. In order to better frame this relation, academic scholarship increasingly differentiates between regionalism as conscious and usually state-led action, and regionalization as an ongoing (and not necessarily deliberate) concentration of activity at regional level (Fawcett 2004). Accordingly, regionalism is a strategy to increase the “regionness” in a given area, while regionalization expresses the fact that within an area there is an increase of “regionness” (either through intentional or non-intentional action).<sup>17</sup> However, regionalization may also express a worldwide increase in the number of areas characterized by a high level of “regionness”, while regionalism could also refer to the phenomenon of widespread preference for the strategy of regionalism. From this viewpoint, regionalism and regionalization could be also understood as opposing phenomena. To grasp this relation, one could look at the dynamics between cooperation at regional level and regional integration. For more than half a century and partially due to the way in which the European Union project developed, regionalism has been often perceived as a political strategy that can eventually produce integration within a given area (Haas 1970, Mattli 1999, Laursen 2003). At the same time, regional integration may be obtained equally in a non-intentional way, through complex interaction at society level and without much deliberate political input (Hurrell 1995a, Mansfield and Milner 1997, Hettne and Söderbaum 2000, 2002). The top-down strategic approach is called regionalism, while the bottom-up process

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<sup>17</sup> The term of “regionness” was coined and popularized by Björn Hettne to refer to a degree of social, economic, and political interaction in a given area, which would make this area distinguishable from other areas, and therefore a region. Thus, regions are characterized and constituted by “regionness” in a similar way in which nation states are characterized by “nationness” (Hettne 1999b, 2005, Hettne and Söderbaum 2000, 2002).

is called regionalization or soft regionalism (Hurrell 1995a, 1995b, Payne and Gamble 1996, Hveem 1999, Kim 2004).

As if things were not convoluted enough, soft regionalism is, however, a term that has been employed also for differentiating within the realm of regionalism as political strategy. In this context, it refers to those deliberate actions aiming at “promoting a sense of regional awareness or identity” as opposed to the “harder” approaches such as the creation of formalized regional intergovernmental organisations (Fawcett 2004, 433). This distinction may be helpful in emphasizing the role of identity and normative factors in shaping the options of actors involved in regional processes (ibid.). However, its usefulness is limited because such factors are present in all forms of regionalism. In this sense, as Kim (2004, 40) put it, regionalism is a “normative concept referring to shared values, norms, identity and aspirations.” At the same time, regional awareness in the sense of “shared perception of belonging to a particular community” does not necessarily emerge through deliberate action (i.e. through regionalism) but also and particularly through the process of bottom-up integration known as regionalization (Hurrell 1995a, 335).

In short, regionalism can be simultaneously a phenomenon and an ideology, while regionalization is rather a phenomenon (Hettne 1999a, Acharya 2002, Kim 2004). As ideology, regionalism is both a project and a strategy (Fawcett 2004).<sup>18</sup> Regionalism as strategy may lead to the phenomenon of regionalization, namely to an increase of interaction in a given area or to an increase in the number of areas within which interaction is higher than usual. However, regionalism and regionalization can be also conceptualized independent of each other. For instance, regionalization as bottom-up integration may be a

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<sup>18</sup> Fawcett (2004, 433) refers to regionalism as both a project and policy, which involves both state and non-state actors, while remaining mainly a state-led action. If one extends this conceptualization to non-state actors, such as the political elites that express demands for regional separatism, the term of strategy is preferable to that of policy. In this section, strategy is employed to refer to any deliberate actions of state or non-state actors that are based on the premise that regionalism is desirable, while policy refers only to the strategies of state actors.

distinct phenomenon from the effect of regionalism as strategy, especially if this strategy does not aim at regional integration. At the same time, regionalism is a project, which, transformed into a strategy and if successful, leads to the creation of a new regional structure and to an increase in the number of regional initiatives. Either of these two results is the phenomenon of regionalism, which, just through a linguistic preference and not through a conceptual relation, may be sometimes known as regionalization.

**Table 1.1 Regionalism in contemporary scholarship**

<b>VARIANTS OF REGIONALISM</b>	<b>EQUIVALENT CONCEPTS</b>		
	<i>As instance or product</i>	<i>As project or ideology</i>	<i>As process or phenomenon</i>
<i>Preferential trade agreements</i>	Trade or economic regionalism	Trade or economic regionalism	Trade or economic regionalism
<i>Regional intergovernmental cooperation</i>	Subregional (intergovernmental) cooperation	Regionalism, regional (intergovernmental) cooperation	Subregional (intergovernmental) cooperation, regionalization
<i>Cross-border cooperation</i>	Trans-border regionalism, subregionalism	Subregionalism, (trans-border) regionalism	Trans-border regionalism, subregional cooperation, subregionalism
<i>Bottom-up increase of autonomy</i>	Paradiplomacy regionalism	Regionalism, regional autonomy	Regionalization, regionalism
<i>Top-down increase of autonomy</i>	Regional autonomy	Regionalism, regional autonomy	Regionalization
<i>Regional separatism</i>	Regional separatist movement	Regionalism, regional separatism	Regionalization, regionalism
<i>Administratively dividing a territory</i>	Regionalization	(Regionalization)	Regionalization
<i>Soft integration</i>	Soft regionalism	-	Regionalization, soft regionalism
<i>Political integration</i>	Regional integration, regional cohesion	Regionalism, regional integration	Regional integration, regionalization, regionalism

Table 1.1 on the previous page summarizes these discussions and shows the linguistic intricacies of these concepts. One can notice that nine different major ways of understanding regionalism could be identified beyond the different disciplinary connections. With the exception of “soft regionalism”, all these nine variants can be conceptualized EITHER as instance or product, OR as project or ideology, OR as process or phenomenon. This multiplication raises the number of versions to refer to regional phenomena to twenty-six. However, these twenty-six different ways of understanding various regional phenomena compete for a significantly lower number of unique terms, with regionalism being the most frequently employed. This situation not only creates confusion but also hardly helps meaningful communication within one field of regional research or across disciplines.

With such a richness of meanings frequently overlapping, one would expect a high number of attempts at putting some order in the field. This is why it is surprising to discover that only few sought to map the field beyond the usual search for a working definition. So far, only two attempts are particularly notable, as they are more developed in this respect. One of them belongs to Marianne Marchand, Morten Bøås and Timothy Shaw, who chose to clear some of the regionalist conceptual fog by separating the meanings of regionalism according to several more distinct research directions (Marchand, Bøås, and Shaw 1999). Accordingly, they identify four directions of research. First, there would be several institutional approaches influenced by neo-functionalism and institutionalism that treat regionalism as an international institution or as a product of international institutions. A second direction would come from the (critical) international political economy, which would frame regionalism as part of a larger process of transformation that took place after the Cold War throughout the world. Third, within international political economy there would be also an alternative set of explanations for the resurgence of regionalism and these would focus mainly on political factors at play at domestic level. Finally, there would be the New

Regionalism Approach/Theory (NRA/T), which treats regionalism in a global perspective and as a multilevel and multidimensional phenomenon that often transcends national borders. Andrew Hurrell proposes a similar classification, yet more complex, as he focuses on the type of problem a certain variety of regionalism would deal with. In his view, there are five directions of regionalism studies or variants of regionalism. These are regionalization (soft regionalism or informal integration), regional awareness and identity, regional interstate cooperation, state-promoted regional (economic) integration, and regional cohesion. The last category would be in fact a combination of the previous four types of regionalism as it refers to the way in which informal and formal integration, as well as state-led economic and political cooperation together with an increase of regional awareness may contribute to the creation of a region as a unit of the international system (Hurrell 1995a, 1995b).

The main problem with both these taxonomies is that they mix the overlapping studies on the nature of regionalism with those that attempt at explaining the resurgence of regionalism or its effects. This shortcoming is most visible in Marchand, Bøås, and Shaw (1999). In the case of Hurrell (1995a, 1995b), the mix is rather between the dimensions of analysis and the types of regionalism. For instance, regional awareness and identity are treated as a category of research similar to regional intergovernmental cooperation, although the two are difficult to compare. At the same time, both these mapping efforts tend to disregard the levels on which regional interaction takes place. Marchand, Bøås, and Shaw (1999) suggest that the multilevel/multidimensional approach of NRA/T would be more interested into that issue but ultimately all regionalism is about the (transforming nature of) relations between states. In contrast, Hurrell (1995a, 1995b) implicitly refers to two levels – the society and the states. However, like Marchand et al., he concedes that state-driven actions are more significant when it comes to regionalism. Furthermore, none of them is much interested in regionalism

within the borders of the state. In fact, more separatist phenomena of regionalism such as the increase of autonomy at regional level or regional separatism are completely neglected by both these cross-disciplinary overviews. For these reasons, they are less useful for identifying the commonalities and the differences of all the versions of regionalism currently researched.

A possible reason for the shortcomings of these attempts at the simplification of the conceptual field of regionalism may be the fact that they bring together different research directions without identifying first what exactly the subject of analysis is. All varieties of research described by Marchand, Bøås, and Shaw (1999) and Hurrell (1995a, 1995b) relate indeed to one subject, viz. regionalism. However, as already shown, this may mean different and non-equivalent things. Without a unifying criterion, the phenomena of regional intergovernmental cooperation and soft regionalism, for example, are hardly comparable. Each has been granted a meaning in a particular research or policy context. However, without the existence of a criterion to make them comparable, the relation between regional intergovernmental cooperation and soft regionalism remains similar to the relation between each of these phenomena and kangaroos, despite the contemporary efforts to bring all instances of regional political phenomena under the same conceptual framework. Only after such criterion is defined the common features can be identified. At the same time, without a criterion for defining the species, the process of grouping categories remains an arbitrary process in which some categories may be forgotten or neglected. Beyond the authors' own disciplinary background, legacies, preferences and focus, the incomplete formulation of such a criterion may explain why neither Marchand, Bøås, and Shaw (1999) nor Hurrell (1995a, 1995b) succeed in bringing together and consistently group all forms of current regionalism.

The shortcoming in establishing the space of regional phenomena has several implications. Most notably, it makes arbitrary any definition of regionalism, including international



regionalism, which is the focus of this dissertation. At the same time, it hardly allows for a meaningful investigation of regional phenomena across disciplines. There are two solutions to this problem. First, one can try to identify the common features of the political phenomena that generated the concept of international regionalism, ignoring any other research on regionalism. In this way, one could choose or re-create a definition based on existing empirical research and academic debates on the topic. The second solution is to re-create the conceptual field of regionalism starting from the only common element, namely region, and then derive the concept of regionalism and that of international regionalism. In the remaining of this chapter, I show that the first solution is not satisfactory.

### ***1.2 The evolution of international regionalism in world politics***

Contemporary regionalism did not appear suddenly or in a historical vacuum, but developed from certain traditions of action in international relations and thought on international order. The first initiatives emerged in the 1930s, with the creation of several regional military alliances and economic agreements within Europe (Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001a, 3, Söderbaum 2003, 3-4). These intergovernmental arrangements were a reaction to the increasing political and military instability, which was partially generated by the unsatisfactory peace settlements that followed the First World War. Initially, the question of international peace and stability should have been exclusively the task of the newly created League of Nations. However, the deceiving results of the negotiations held within the framework of the League, as well as certain political configurations on the domestic scenes favoured the development of several small regional blocks (Vellas 1948, Walters 1952, Marbeau 2001). The main purpose of these regional arrangements was to counterbalance each other. In this way, states tried to gain more security and economic advantages in international interaction (Kissinger 1994). At the same time, the resulting balance of power

should have minimized the possibility of further military conflicts (Haas 1953, Haas and Whiting 1956). In short, the logic upon which such arrangements were built was that of the need to militarily defend or economically protect the participant countries. Moreover, while highly abundant in protectionist provisions, none of these initiatives was created with the purpose of enhancing the common development of its members. For this reason, Interwar regional cooperation may qualify as negative.

The strategies of regional cooperation developed during the Interwar period were not much different from the way states had acted during the previous decades, despite the increasing success of liberal thinking in international relations.<sup>19</sup> In fact, in many respects, they closely followed the regalist tradition that had dominated international politics for centuries. According to this tradition, states would be the key actors in international interaction and they would continuously seek national survival in an allegedly hostile, anarchic, self-help environment.<sup>20</sup> What differentiated the new alliances from their predecessors was an incipient awareness of the fact that international interaction might not be exclusively European. However, in that particular historical context, such awareness was minimal among the political leadership and it is visible rather from a post-hoc review of those times' actions and ideas (Nye 1971, Fawcett 2004, 2005). At the same time, like their forerunners,

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<sup>19</sup> In the first part of the 20th century, most notably after the First World War, there had been several attempts to ensure world peace, most notably through the means of collective security. This goal would have required states to become more trustful with each other and renounce to an exclusively self-centred, protectionist view on world politics. In international politics, this liberal perspective was rather new and was supported by a very active generation of debates on world peace (Boutros-Ghali 1949, Mangone 1954).

<sup>20</sup> This tradition of self-help and prominence of national interest has been most frequently labelled as *realism*. Contrary to a widespread reading of the terminology, "real" referred initially to the regal rights of the sovereign states and not to an interpretation of world politics as close as possible to reality. For this reason, *regalism* rather than *realism* might have been a more appropriate term for describing political action belonging to the respective tradition. Yet, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the development of the discipline of International Relations Theory, the doctrine was often presented by its supporters as "acceptance of facts [and] analysis of their causes and consequences" (Carr 1939, 14) or as "theoretical concern with human nature as it actually is [and] historical processes as they actually take place" (Morgenthau 1960, 4). Given this highly positive (yet distorted) interpretation of the tradition and the fact that the Cold War events confirmed much of its predictions, it is no surprise that *realism* became more frequently employed and better known than its linguistic rival. In this dissertation, however, *regalism* is used to refer to the political manifestations of this particular doctrine, while *Realism* is employed exclusively for referring to academic scholarship more inclined towards justifying a *regalist* standpoint.

the Interwar regional initiatives seem to have remained not only largely limited to Europe, but also much indebted to a widespread Eurocentric view of world politics (Mangone 1954, Marbeau 2001). Regions continued to be equivalent to world leaders, while world leaders continued to behave as if everything that mattered in international politics took place mostly in Europe and exclusively from a European viewpoint.

More regionally inclined cooperation, however, existed. Unlike in the previous centuries, private interest groups and civil society activists had become more visible on the international scene. At the same time, since the mid 19th century and particularly in Europe, an increasingly active transnational civil society had become involved in international projects. Most of these new international actors promoted universal projects such as the League of Red Cross Societies. These arrangements were created partially under the influence of the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Particularly art. 23 favoured the creation of specialized international bodies for the promotion of international cooperation.<sup>21</sup> However, these newly created arrangements, while regional in scope, were in fact intended to be universal (Fawcett 1995, 2004, 2005). The rare plans of regional collaboration that did not have a universal vocation took the form of federal schemes of European integration but, despite some notable proposals and projects, regionalism was not very appealing for the political leadership of those times. More concerned with the possibility and limits of establishing an international government, political leaders were little inclined to think in regional terms and see the benefits of a regional approach to foreign policy (Fawcett 1995, 2004, 2005).

Only after the Second World War regionalism truly developed (Yalem 1962, Fawcett 1995, Hettne, 2005). To a certain extent, this was a result of the still dominating Eurocentric

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<sup>21</sup> The International Labour Organization (ILO), for instance, was a direct consequence of the provisions included in the art. 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations (Rittberger and Zangl 2006, 5-6) and until the mid-40s continued to be strongly related to the League, partially on these grounds (Schiavone 2001, 6).

tradition of international politics. Regional agreements, while no longer universal by vocation, like in the Interwar period, were still based on the idea that international relations were necessarily global for all the participants. Therefore, regional initiatives reproduced at a smaller scale the agenda and issues of the international system.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, especially in the first two decades after the Second World War, regional arrangements were considered primarily an answer to the international instability and less an effort to deal with specific regional problems. From this perspective, the bigger the regional agreement was, the higher its chances to have a say in international politics were. Partially, the preference for large initiatives was also the result of the ideological race between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. As the bipolar logic spread throughout the world, international relations became increasingly confrontational and a fierce competition for allies started. Two ideological blocks formed. Each of them generated several regional institutions. In security terms, for instance, the Western block created the NATO, while the Communist block had the Warsaw Pact. In this environment, the small states that could not or did not want to be neutral but wanted to maintain a higher degree of autonomy in their foreign policy strategies needed to cooperate with other countries. At the same time, the logic of the confrontation required that each of the two main actors find allies in other governments before these were co-opted by the opponent block. Supporting the creation or development of certain regional arrangements served well such means. In a context in which most international actions were demonstrations of power, the bigger the regional initiative, the more cost-effective the search for allies and the higher the chances to gain some advantage in the race.

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<sup>22</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, this type of thinking was best encompassed in the concept of subordinate system. This was a unity of the so-called dominant system. In that historical context, the dominant system was the one in which the USSR and the US confronted, namely the entire international arena. The subordinate systems were regional blocks that reproduced the problems and confrontation of the dominant system. For more details on this explanatory model and its alternatives, see Ghica (2007).

A simplified representation of the international arena that had emerged in the 1950s and remained fashionable throughout the entire Cold War further reinforced these ideological and political divisions. Countries were considered developed, developing or under-developed. The benchmark on which states were placed under one of the three labels was relative to the countries that scored highest on certain economic indicators. In this sense, the distinction expressed nothing more than the position that each state held on the development trajectory of those countries that were the most economically advanced at that time. The three groups resulting from this classification were known as the First World, the Second World and the Third World, respectively. The first group coincided more or less with the Western Block. The Communist Block also included mostly developing states, while the non-aligned countries were predominantly under-developed.<sup>23</sup> Particularly for political purposes dividing the world into such regions was a practical and ideologically convenient way to deal with an increasingly complex social reality. Within this mental framework and political environment, it is no surprise that, for a long time, decision-makers have continued to focus on large regional arrangements.

However, while for the leaders of the two blocks international politics was necessarily global and total, the smaller states had more limited foreign policy and bargaining possibilities. Moreover, for these states not all of these possibilities could have been expressed in terms of bipolarity. For instance, during the first two decades of the Cold War, the interaction of the Middle East states was motivated primarily by the historical legacies of the area and did not seem to significantly reflect the bipolar tensions of those times (Binder 1958, Brecher 1969). In short, the smaller the state was in terms of power, the more limited to the regional level its foreign policy strategies were and the less likely its chances to directly influence world

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<sup>23</sup> This overlapping was imperfect and many cases did not fit the model. However, instead of questioning the appropriateness of this type of representation of the reality, social scientists have focused for a long time on explaining the existence of the outliers. For instance, especially in the 1970s much of the research efforts were spent on justifying why some developing countries did not belong to the Second World

politics. The increasing awareness of these constraints, as well as of the fact that the international politics horizon of most governments is largely confined to their neighbourhood area favoured a smaller scale approach to regionalism.

The situation changed significantly when, in the 1990s, a second wave of regional arrangements emerged all over the world. Freed from the ideological constraints of the Cold War, local, small and middle-range initiatives could be more easily formed and thus the variety of regional arrangements has become increasingly greater. Their complexity was also much higher, which frequently made unsuitable the distinctions operated throughout the previous period both at theoretical and policy level (Fawcett 1995, 2004, 2005, Hettne 2003). At the same time, one can observe an increase of interaction between regional organisations, particularly on trade grounds. For instance, the European Union has concluded a series of trade arrangements not only with separate states but also with groups of states that already developed stronger trade links, such as the Mercosur in Latin American and ASEAN in South East Asia. This phenomenon has been called inter-regional cooperation and it seems to have high potential for development, announcing perhaps a third wave of international regionalism (Langenhove and Costea 2005).

To sum up, literature on the evolution of international regionalism supports the idea that this is a recent political phenomenon. It also suggests that, irrespective of the historical period, international regionalism can be understood as a form of cooperation at governmental level, which fulfils various foreign policy functions and whose impact on the dynamics of international interaction depends on both overall and particular political contexts. However, although these elements help describe the historical development of international regionalism, they do not contribute significantly to clarifying and mapping rigorously its conceptual field. For this purpose, in the following and last part of this chapter, I investigate

the issue of international regionalism as specific theoretical research area within the field of political science and international relations.

### **1.3 International regionalism as academic inquiry**

A first bulk of international regionalism scholarship attempted to address the issue of how peace could be reached and human conflict ended in the context of the interwar period and in the aftermath of the Second World War. Though occasional influences from political theory and practices developed elsewhere were sometimes present, this was mostly a European debate, generated by political circumstances specific to the dynamics of international relations among the (Western) European states (Rosamond 2000, 20-49). Within this particular context, one may further distinguish among three different research directions. These are federalism, functionalism and transactionalism. Federalism as a strand of international regionalism emerged mostly as a political project that proposed to solve the enduring conflicts within Europe through the creation of federations of states.<sup>24</sup> In federalist terms, intergovernmental cooperation is the first step towards political unification. In this sense, it is a means to solve particular political problems, as well as to achieve the higher goal of peace. The regional character of this type of cooperation is, however, incidental and temporal. At the end of the day, federalism aims at universal peace, which, within the federalist logic, could be most ideally achieved through a federation of all world states.<sup>25</sup> A similarly universalistic approach is functionalism, a research direction developed mostly in the aftermath of the Second World War, especially due to the work of David Mitrany. His

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<sup>24</sup> The idea was not new but in the political and intellectual climate of the early twentieth century, it gained much visibility. This happened particularly after the publication in early 1920s of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's *Pan-Europa*, a booklet that put forward an articulated and provocative vision of a united Europe built upon a federal constitution (Codehove-Kalergi 1988). For an interesting overviews of previous such projects dating back as far as the fourteenth century, see Heater (1992).

<sup>25</sup> This was particularly the perspective of early federalists but the vision of a universal federation remains embedded in federalist thinking even in more advanced refinements such as Etzioni (2001).

proposal for the achievement of a lasting peace was that, instead of looking for the ideal *format* in which international relations should take place, governments cooperate in order to fulfil certain *functions* (Mitrany 1933, 1943). For this purpose, the traditional state system needs to be replaced with functional supranational institutions. In its classic format, functionalism portrays international regionalism as a way to reproduce at a bigger scale the state faults. Therefore, it commonly opposes regional intergovernmental cooperation. However, functionalists do not reject the possibility that, in an ideal functionalist environment, regional cooperation schemes may emerge as result of a functionalist approach (Mitrany 1937, 1948). Even in this case, international regionalism is perceived as a temporal solution to a world of complex functional and rather apolitical interdependence (Taylor P. 1994). The third direction, transactionalism,<sup>26</sup> emerged at around the same period and, like federalism and functionalism, proposed a vision about the way in which the likelihood of violent conflict among states could be reduced. Put forward most notably by Karl Deutsch, this perspective was also proposing supranational strategies but, unlike the other two approaches, it did not deny the traditional role of the nation-state. Instead, the transactionalist project suggested that states might build security communities, namely groups of countries in which “there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way” (Deutsch et al. 1957, 5). Furthermore, also unlike for federalism and functionalism, international regional intergovernmental cooperation is relevant within the transactionalist framework. Security communities in the international sphere may develop easily at regional level because, like human communities, they can form much easier when there is a certain spatial continuity (Deutsch 1969, 4-11).

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<sup>26</sup> Transactionalism is sometimes known also as the communications approach (Haas 1970).



Largely influenced by these three previous traditions, a second wave of regionalist thinking emerged from the debates around the nature and evolution of the European Community project. Within this generation of international regionalism scholarship, two main camps can be identified. These are neo-functionalism, with its many versions and refinements, and liberal intergovernmentalism. The main tenet of neo-functionalism is that regional interdependence has been created among the European states through functional cooperation, which has been a gradual and incremental process (Schmitter 2004, 49-52). The liberal intergovernmental argument is that European integration is rather the result of a series of rational choices that national leaders took under certain economic, political and institutional historical circumstances (Moravcsik 1998). Despite such divergences, both these camps assume that intergovernmental cooperation at regional level may lead to regional integration. From a neo-functionalism viewpoint, this is a certainty when functional logic is applied in cooperative processes. Instead, for liberal intergovernmentalism this is one of the possible results.

Although this EU-centred theorizing dominates the field, recent scholarship has significantly developed around other cases of international regionalism, particularly around trade arrangements and regional (economic) flows of exchanges. Like the rest of the research directions briefly presented above, this one is also characterized by a large variety of approaches. Very roughly, these could be divided into two main camps. Within the first one, which developed partly under the influence of neo-functionalism and institutionalism, international regionalism is a product of international institutions. This camp is further divided on whether these institutions are the result of complex interdependence and increasingly transnational relations and actors (Keohane and Nye 1971, 1977) or whether domestic factors are more frequently at play (Mansfield and Milner 1997). A second category of scholarship emerged after the Cold War, mostly from a (neo)Marxian tradition of

IR scholarship. This is usually known as the New Regional Approach/Theory (NRA/T). From its perspective, international regionalism is a product of the tension between global and regional tendencies, between an inextricable global interdependence and the need to cope with particular local issues (Hettne 1999b, 2005). In this sense, regionalism is a multilevel and multidimensional phenomenon that often transcends the national borders (Hettne 2003).

In short, international regionalism is an academic field in which researchers could choose among well-established and developed traditions, according to their preferences. However, all these traditions have two intrinsic problems. First, all of them are universalistic in nature. This means that the logic expressed in matters of international interaction is necessarily valid also at all other levels of political interaction. In other words, even if these traditions would ignore all the other regional political phenomena, the more they advance in developing explanatory models the more they need to address the issue of regional phenomena other than international regionalism. This makes the treatment of international regionalism as a unique phenomenon distinct from any other form of regionalism theoretically impossible. Therefore, one still needs a criterion to define the space of regionalism and then the species of international regionalism. A second problem relates to the vision that, ultimately, cooperation leads to integration, an idea that permeates throughout most of international regionalism scholarship, irrespective of the particular intellectual legacies. Most visibly, this belief is held in the literature of functionalist and neo-functionalist inspiration, which explicitly derives this position from the concept of interdependence. Yet, even from a liberal intergovernmentalism standpoint, international interaction is constrained by previous behaviour therefore international interaction produces at least a minimal interdependence. When such interaction is created with the purpose of building a common project, or in Deutsch's terminology, a "security community," it generates integration. This integration

paradigm and the embedded concept of interdependence are rather problematic. The most important challenge is to identify regional integration and interdependence. Two different views may be distinguished within the literature that touches this topic. They roughly correspond to the rationalist and (Marxian) critical approaches in IR theory. More specifically, (neo)functionalism, as well as some of the variants of (neo)liberalism (including the liberal intergovernmentalist version) and (neo)realism put forward the idea that regional integration is a consequence of a conscious political strategy. They diverge when it comes to which particular strategic choices lead to regional integration. Instead, the critical camp commonly supports the view that regional interdependence is a consequence of various relations of power in a web of global interdependence. Nevertheless, irrespective of the way they explain the emergence and pervasiveness of regional integration and interdependence, none of these provides convincing evidence that integration and interdependence really exist. To put it differently, interdependence and integration is only postulated but not demonstrated. In this sense, as Ernst Haas pointed out as early as 1970, the notion of integration is not truly falsifiable (Haas 1970, 628).

Except these two problems, there is another reason for which none of the existent traditions is suitable for researching international regionalism in post Cold War Central and East European, namely there is no empirical evidence to suggest that interdependence or integration would at play in this case either as a political motivation or a result of political interaction. As already mentioned in the introduction, in this specific case there is frequent overlapping, both in terms of goals and in terms of membership. If there were such thing as interdependence and integration in the real world of politics then overlapping should not be present. Particularly the case of almost perfect overlap both in goals and in membership between the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) should not exist. Furthermore, unlike in the case of the

European Union project on which most of the classic international regionalist scholarship draws and as I show in more detail in chapters 7 and 8, none of the Central and East European frameworks of regional intergovernmental cooperation aims to achieve the integration of its members.

To sum up, current literature on regionalism has a number of serious epistemological shortcomings. Most importantly, it lacks consistent criteria to define the space of regional political phenomena, which makes it impossible to define non-arbitrarily the field of international regionalism as a species of regionalism. A solution might have been to consider international regionalism a unique phenomenon unrelated to other regional phenomena and to identify its features in existing empirical research and academic debates on the topic. As I showed in the last two sections of this chapter, this solution is highly problematic for several reasons, the most important being the fact that, irrespective of the tradition, this literature is highly prescriptive and ultimately cannot avoid referring to other regional political phenomena. To address these issues, in the next chapter I propose an alternative view by recreating the conceptual field of regionalism and then deriving the concept of international regionalism, which I further develop in chapter 3.

## CHAPTER 2

### A CONSTRUCTIVIST RECONSTRUCTION OF REGIONALISM

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the academic literature on regionalism aiming to place international regionalism in a coherent conceptual framework. However, this proved to be a difficult task as there is much confusion within scholarship on the topic. This happens mostly because there are no consistent criteria to define regionalism and its field, a fact that generates much overlapping and misunderstandings, as well as little communication among different directions of research related to regionalism. As a solution to this problem, in this chapter, I reconstruct the concept of regionalism and its related field starting from the concept of region, which seems to be the only thing that various regional political phenomena have in common. In this attempt, I adopt a social-constructivist perspective mostly because the concept of region has a high normative-representational weight. Since social constructivism is both a recent and an increasingly diverse research direction, in the first section I present the elements of social constructivism that I use for the reconstruction of regionalism. Then, in the second section, I build a theory of regionalism, defining its space and developing its vocabulary without using in any way the notion of regional integration. This allows distinguishing among only four major types of regional political phenomena: international regionalism, trans-border regionalism, autonomy regionalism, and regional separatism. However, renouncing to the concept of integration necessitates an alternative to generate narratives on the degree of stability that regional products have and about the changes that may occur over time. For this purpose, I coined the concept of *regional cohesiveness*, which I develop in the last section of the chapter and then explore in more detail throughout the rest of the dissertation using the case of post Cold War Central and East European regional intergovernmental cooperation.

## 2.1 Social constructivist premises

Social constructivism is a relatively recent paradigm in international relations theory. It emerged in the discipline in the late 1980s mostly through the hybridization of the IR research field with various debates and topics from other disciplines, under the influence of critical thinking. Although there is no widely shared canon with respect to its intellectual lineage, much of the constructivist research is heavily influenced by modernist and postmodernist thinking, among which frequent references are to the work of Michel Foucault on the relations between power and knowledge and that of Jacques Derrida on text.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the field of IR theory, the rest of the political science spectrum still largely ignores this new theoretical perspective. However, especially in the last decade, constructivism has become one of the major approaches for the study of political phenomena that take place within the sphere of international relations. This is easily visible if one evaluates the editorial space and importance that constructivist research has been granted since its emergence in mainstream IR journals, such as *International Organization*, *International Security* and the *European Journal of International Relations*, in prestigious IR collections of publications, such as the Cambridge Studies in International Relations, or in IR textbooks. Even if sometimes critical to it, most of the recent surveys of the discipline also do not fail to treat this new perspective on international relations.<sup>28</sup> Despite heavy influences and borrowings from critical social theory, constructivism addresses most of the classic themes of international relations thinking, such as anarchy, power and interest formation (Hopf 1998). From these traditional research directions, the issue of change is particularly significant to distance itself from the

<sup>27</sup> For interesting analyses of the influences of critical theory and postmodernism thinking in social constructivism, see for instance Price and Reus-Smit (1998), as well as the contributions included in Neumann and Wæver (1997).

<sup>28</sup> In a state-of-the-art article that is often referred to in the discipline, Stephen Walt even portrays constructivism as one of three main directions of IR thinking, alongside (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism (Walt 1998). See also the special issue of *International Organization* dedicated to the survey of IR thinking fifty years after the establishment of the journal, and from those contributions most notably Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner (1998). For comprehensive overviews of the approach, see for instance Hopf (1998), Guzzini (2000) and Zehfuss (2002).

mainstream perspectives in the discipline, though it provides alternative accounts for many of the other topics on the IR agenda as well (Zehfuss 2000, 3-5).<sup>29</sup> My purpose in this part of the dissertation is not to discuss these epistemological foundations of constructivism but to present the premises on which I further reconstruct the vocabulary of regionalism.

The main tenet of social constructivism is that international actors, like humans, develop in a socially constructed world, hence the label.<sup>30</sup> Its specific puzzle is to uncover the way in which “identities are constructed, what norms and practices accompany their reproduction, and how they construct each other” (Hopf 1998, 192). For constructivists, although material world exists, it has a meaning. This meaning is socially constructed, develops through social interaction and may be different for different observers.<sup>31</sup> Social interaction generates structures of collective meaning. Through such structures, actors acquire identity, which is the basis for interest formation, which in its turn is the basis for action. Figure 2 on the next page is a visual representation of this mechanism, showing the way material world can co-exist with the normative-representational field through the continuous processes of meaning, identity and interest formation.

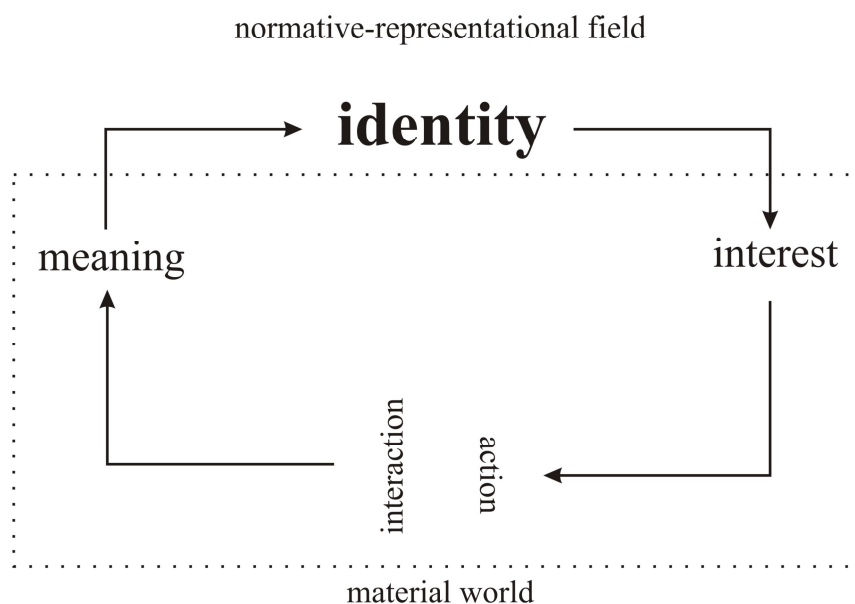
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<sup>29</sup> On some issues, the differences between constructivism and the more mainstream theories are not so evident as they agree on several points. In this sense, (neo)liberal research, such as the work of Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane on transnational relations (i.e. Keohane and Nye 1971), may be regarded as a forerunner of constructivism (Guilhot 2005, 170-4). On the points on which constructivism agree with (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism, see particularly Hopf (1998).

<sup>30</sup> As Steve Smith shows in an overview of the way in which the idea of social construction emerged as an IR approach, the notion of social constructivism was neither the invention of international relations theory nor it develop exclusively within this framework. For instance, as early as mid 1960s, sociologists Peter Berger, Thomas Luckman and Alfred Schutz used extensively the notion of the social construction of reality, while, outside IR, philosopher John Searle recently revived the debate (Smith 2001, 39). In international relations theory, it seems that Nicholas Onuf employed the term and the vision of social constructivism for the first time in his *World of our making* (Wendt 1999, 1n, Zehfuss 2002, 10). First published in 1989, this book would later be considered the founding manifesto of social constructivism in the discipline (Smith 1997).

<sup>31</sup> As some constructivists acknowledged, this vision is heavily influenced by the sociological approach known as symbolic interactionism (Wendt 1999, 170-1).

**Fig. 2. The constructivist perspective on political/social reality**



In the constructivist logic, identity refers to “mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other” (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1997, 59). Unlike in other mainstream approaches, such as neorealism and neoliberalism, the images of the “self” may be extended to include the “other.” This process of *identification* occurs through cooperation and generates collective identity (Wendt 1999, 318-43). Therefore, collective interest is possible due to the formation of a collective identity. In this sense, collective interest is not a mere similarity of self-interests, as neorealists and neoliberals would usually assume, but a different category (ibid., 305-6). The politics of identity is “a continual contest for control over the power necessary to produce meaning in a social group” (Hopf 1998, 180). The fact that difference of meaning is possible across the social group makes change possible but not necessary. Rather the structure of power within that group allows the change. To put it differently, the transformation of collective meanings, and consequently of identities and interests, is a power process that takes place both at material and discursive level.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> In this sense, constructivism incorporates the Foucauldian power/knowledge nexus (Foucault 1980).



The field of constructivism is still very fluid and it is often difficult to classify within the increasingly large amount scholarship that is labelled or self-labelled as constructivist. However, it is commonly subdivided into two tracks – a conventional and a critical one. The conventional version is closer to mainstream theoretical thinking in the sense that it does not completely reject the epistemological conventions of mainstream social science, such as the principles of sampling, process tracing and the methods of difference (Hoffman 1991). This is why it is usually considered a modern theoretical approach, which relies on the principles of modern science, although it may frequently question many of them (Zehfuss 2000, 1-23). Instead, critical constructivism has a more radical attitude and attempts rather to interpret than to explain social reality (Price and Reus-Smit 1998). Most strikingly, this methodological difference between the two strands manifests in relation with the issue of identity. As Ted Hopf nicely summarized it, “critical theory aims at exploding the myths associated with identity formation, whereas conventional constructivists wish to treat those identities as possible causes of action” (Hopf 1998, 184). For this reason, conventional constructivism is perceived as attempting to seize a “middle-ground” between classic positivist methodologies and interpretativist/ reflectivist/ critical/ postmodern approaches (Adler 1997, Checkel 1998). In this sense, conventional constructivism may be considered “proper” social constructivism, while critical constructivism may be regarded as a separate tradition of international relations thinking.<sup>33</sup> However, the methodological distinction is difficult to maintain, even within the work of one author. For instance, Alexander Wendt’s *Social theory of international politics*, which is considered a classic of conventional constructivism, goes beyond the positivist methodology, especially in its last part, when it attempts to question the boundaries of its explanatory model (Wendt 1999). That is why constructivism may be regarded rather as a continuum in which the questioning of the

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<sup>33</sup> For an interesting discussion of the way in which the notion of social constructivism as a middle ground theory is strategically used for gaining legitimacy within the discipline, see Pesram (1999).

“natural” character of normal science concepts is a key issue.<sup>34</sup> The more radical the questioning is and the more it departs from the principles of rationalist methodology, the more interpretativist/ reflectivist/ critical/ postmodern that approach is.

Another distinction increasingly popular in the discipline is one operated according to the major focus of research. Conventional constructivists are usually interested in identity issues – its formation, its possible categories and its role in political decision-making. This is what a large part of Alexander Wendt’s work is about (Wendt 1992, 1994, 1999) and on this line most constructivist meta-theoretical research advances. Yet, there are authors, equally within the conventional camp, that are more interested in the question of norms and rules, their influence on human behaviour and their role in social interaction. Friedrich Kratochwil, for instance, urges for a radical reconsideration of norms in international relations given the increasing but so far almost completely ignored role that cultural factors would have in political interaction (Kratochwil 1996, Lapid and Kratochwil 1996). Similarly, Nicholas Onuf asks questions about the way rethinking the fundamentals of international politics from a social constructivist viewpoint might affect international law (Onuf 2001). This second direction generates much empirical research especially in matters related to human rights and international conflicts.

Irrespective of these division lines, constructivists base their arguments on a series of common assumptions. Most importantly, in opposition with mainstream research in IR (i.e. neorealism and neoliberalism), constructivism challenges the widespread belief that human (and international) actors, their interest and the conceptual framework in which they evolve are exogenous to social (and international) interaction. In Emanuel Adler’s words, constructivism “is the view that *the manner in which the material world shapes and is*

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<sup>34</sup> From this perspective, constructivism is also a descendent of Michel Foucault’s work on discourse and the possibilities of science (Foucault 1971, 1976, 1980).

*shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world”* (Adler 1997, 322, emphasis in original). This perspective has several consequences. Most importantly, behaviour of humans (and political/international) actors is influenced both by material and intersubjective factors but the latter are more significant in the process of interest formation. For that reason, interest is not exogenous to international interaction but it changes with it. From a methodological viewpoint, this means a high sensitivity to context. To put it differently, social and political phenomena could not be meaningfully analysed without understanding the particular circumstances in which they emerged and have developed. Furthermore, both structures and actors matter in social interaction. In fact, they mutually constitute each other. Since human agency is the one that gives meaning to interaction and is thus the engine of both structure and agency, it is the most important to social change. Yet, although social change is possible, it is not particularly easy. In the next section, I show how this framework can be applied to a reconstruction of regionalism, using mostly conventional constructivism and its development of the identity question.

## **2.2 A constructivist vocabulary of regionalism**

As I already pointed out in the previous chapter, what all definitions and categories of regionalism have in common is not just the use of “regionalism” to describe a political phenomenon but particularly the reference to a group of elements that (1) are represented as situated in a particular area; and (2) are represented as different from the rest of the neighbouring space. This area is called *region*. Since the act of representation is a mental process, all regions are arbitrary constructs that exist only at conceptual level, irrespective of the reason invoked to justify the differentiation. In other words, “natural” or organically developed regions (i.e. areas distinguished from the rest of the space based on an immutable

essence) could not exist, a fact widely accepted throughout social science scholarship.<sup>35</sup> However, the process of differentiation may be (but is not exclusively) related to the increased awareness that, at a certain point in time, certain elements are present in higher quantities in some places and less in others. In this sense, regions are not only notions of space but also of time because they indicate a spatial situation placed in a particular time framework, as well as the spatial dynamics within this framework.

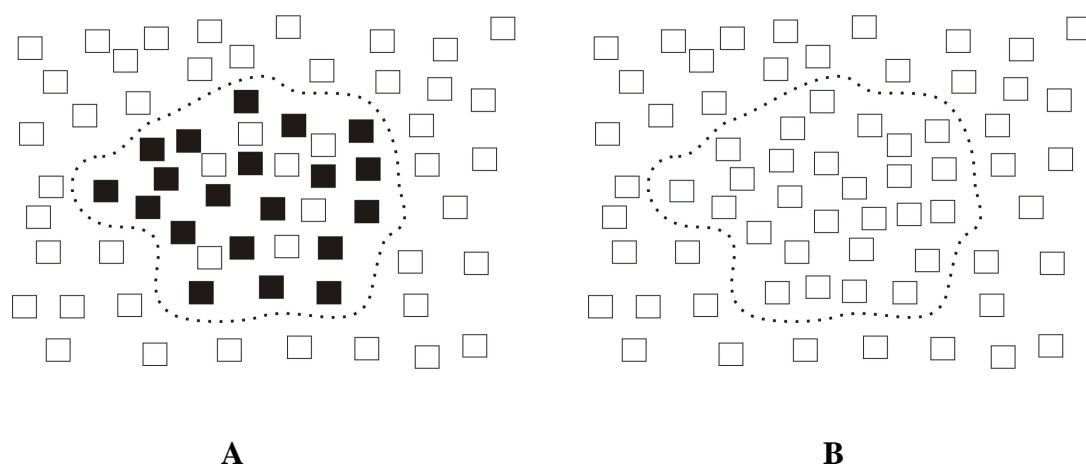
The fact that, in a given area and at a particular moment, some elements are more frequent than in neighbouring areas is an attribute of space that I call *regionality*. Within the particular context of this research, “regionality” refers only to those elements that have relevance for the polity. The embedded distinction between what is relevant and what is irrelevant for the polity expresses a certain hierarchy and relation of power. For these reasons, “regionality” is a political concept. As long as no one becomes politically aware of certain elements, “regionality” remains latent and therefore politically irrelevant. In line with constructivist thinking, the elements of “regionality” are both of material and normative-representational nature. For instance, the amount of foreign investments, the degree of alphabetisation and the rate of criminality are materially measurable elements that may distinguish an area from the rest of its neighbouring space. However, such material elements have normative and ideational dimensions. From a normative viewpoint, they are valued for the benefits and the disadvantages they may bring at individual and societal level. At the same time, these value systems are embedded into particular ideational frameworks. Although it is easier to perceive the material instances of regionality, the normative-

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<sup>35</sup> The notion of “natural region” appeared in the geographic literature after the French Revolution, when scholars attempted for the first time to establish the geologic map of France. Later, this concept and the related “natural boundary” have been increasingly used for expressing the idea that some areas would be naturally distinct from the rest of the space, usually on historical, political, economic or social grounds. However, even from the viewpoint of the most empirically inclined research (i.e. geography and history) no such criteria can be convincingly formulated (Granö 1997, Deyon 1997, Claval 1998). Currently, irrespective of the discipline, it is widely accepted that regions are no more than fictions, while “natural region” and “natural borders” remain nothing more than rhetoric devices for political purposes.

representational dimension may sometimes be equally visible. For example, religious affiliation of people inhabiting a certain area could be assessed through the material-institutional products of religious practices, as well as through the values and ideational representations that these practices convey.

**Fig. 3. The construction of a region**



The act of representing an area as distinct from the rest of the world is a mental process that I call *regionizing*. Since the differentiation is based on certain criteria considered as more appropriate than others, this process creates or expresses the existence of a normative hierarchy, which implicitly conveys a relation of power. Therefore, regionizing is not only a mental process but also a political act. Through “regionizing,” latent regionality becomes actual. This may be the consequence of an increased awareness of that area’s specific regionality. Figure 3 above presents a simplified visual equivalent of regionizing in a world where the only possible elements of regionality are squares. In situation A, at a certain time ( $t_0$ ), an observer considers some of the squares to be black and some white. The fact that, at moment  $t_0$ , black squares are perceived as more frequent in a certain area than in the neighbouring space grants that area the characteristic of actual regionality from the

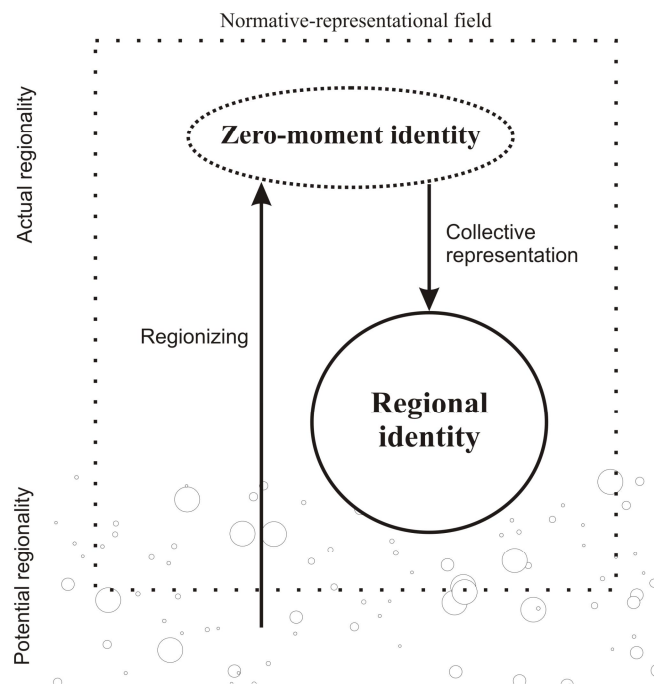
viewpoint of the observer. In this sense, the observer becomes aware of a particular regionality of the area. If the distinction between black squares and white squares is considered relevant, that area is a region for the observer.

Regionizing may not be only the product of increased awareness of specific regionality but also of political projections. For instance, after a combat, a warlord decides that all the land he is able to see from the spot where he defeated his enemy belongs to him. In this way, the latent regionality element “able to belong to someone” that characterises space is transformed into the actual regionality element “belonging to the named warlord.” This transformation institutes a region. This case is illustrated in situation B of Figure 3. Unlike in situation A, the observer does not differentiate between the squares (for simplification, they have been all represented as white) but he distinguishes a certain area from the rest of the space and this distinction is considered politically relevant by the observer. Consequently, that area becomes a region for the observer. In the first case (situation A), latent regionality is transformed into actual regionality on the basis of a certain normative-representational background that makes the observer (1) distinguish between black and white squares; and (2) consider the distinction relevant for the space in which he acts. In the second case (situation B), latent regionality transforms into actual regionality through a political projection. Since a criterion of political relevance is required for the existence of such project, an already existing normative-representational framework should be also presumed. Therefore, irrespective of the situation, regionizing is generated within certain normative-representational environments. In other words, regions do not exist in epistemological and axiological vacuums. Therefore, regions are not only notions of space and time but also notions of culture. In this sense, distinguishing areas from the rest of the space says as much about those areas’ elements of regionality as it says about the values and knowledge background of those that “regionize.”

When an area is mentally framed as a region, it is perceived as different from the rest of the space. Beyond the political character of the process, this differentiation institutes a mental borderline between the region and the neighbouring areas. In the previous example, the limits of the region could be those marked with black dots. Once an area is delimited from the rest of the space through the institution of borderlines, however fluid they may be, that area is conferred a certain identity (*zero-moment identity*). This identity becomes *regional identity* when such frame is increasingly shared and a palimpsest of collective representations develops. To put it differently, an area acquires regional identity only when it is increasingly recognized as a region. To use the same illustration as above, the areas delimited by the black dots acquire regional identity only after the representations of their limits circulate and are accepted as relevant by other members of the polity. Regional identity is a characteristic of an area that differentiates it from the neighbouring space. Therefore, regional identity is a normative-representational element of regionality. Regional identity generates thus regionality, and through awareness or political projections, more regionizing. This repeated process may enhance the sense of difference from the rest of the world, which in turn sharpens the sense of regional identity and strengthens a specific regionality.

Figure 4 on the next page shows these relations. First, from the field of potential regionality a region is separated through the process of regionizing. The characteristics of the region are its borders and an identity (*zero-moment identity*) expressed through actual regionality. The borders of this region are shifting with each new regionizing but its core remains more or less unchanged. Through the process of collective representation, *zero-moment identity* generates regional identity. Since it is the expression of a process of differentiation, regional identity is an element of actual regionality. At the same time, once it appears, it may be a potential element of regionality for further regionizing.

**Fig. 4. Regional identity formation**



In this context, *regionalism* is defined as (1) the belief that politically distinguishing a region from the rest of the world is a desirable means for achieving certain purposes; (2) any action that makes such distinctions; or (3) the political results of such actions or beliefs. The first meaning of the term expresses the idea that regionalism may be an ideology. In the second sense, regionalism is a project or a process, while the third meaning refers to regionalism as a product. In order to avoid the terminological confusions, *regionalization* should refer only to the spread of regionalism as product. In this sense, the difference between the two concepts is that regionalism always expresses an intentional element, while regionalization is nothing more than the unintended consequence of regionalism. Consequently, regionalization is a phenomenon, while regionalism is not. Similarly, the spread or increased preference for regionalism as ideology is also a phenomenon, which may be referred to as *ideological regionalization* to distinguish it from the spread of regionalism as product.



Finally, when the intensification of regionalization is accompanied by significant changes in the nature of regionalism, one could talk about a new *wave of regionalism*.

**Fig. 5. The field of regionalism**

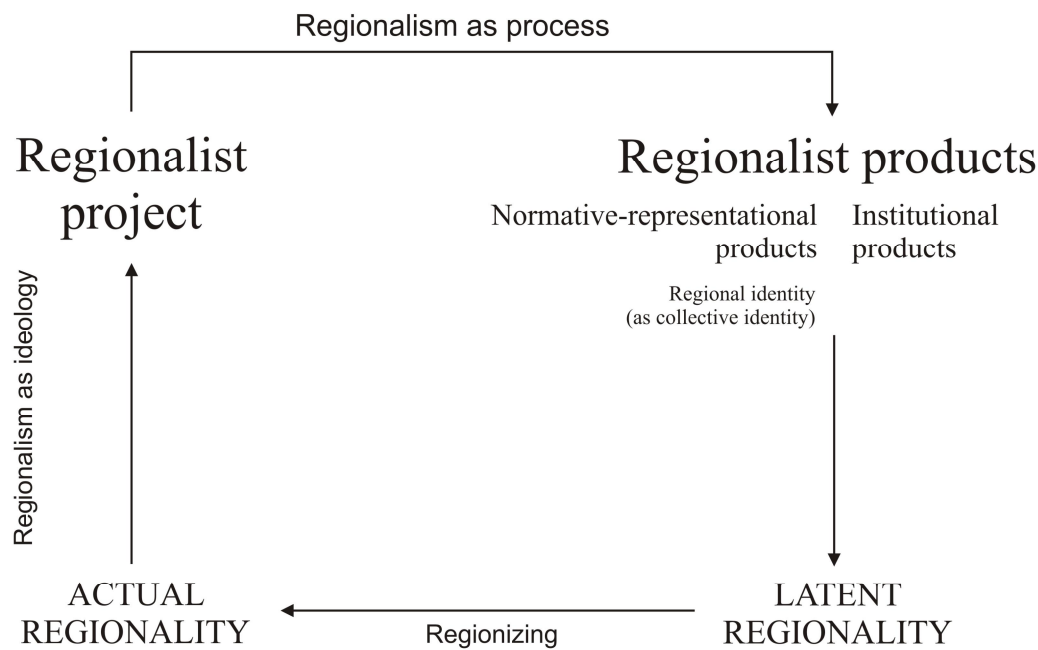


Figure 5 above proposes a visual representation of the relations between concepts within the field of regionalism. Each of the four states of regionalism (i.e. project, process, product, ideology) has an institutional dimension, as well as a normative-representational one. As project, process or product, regionalism creates or relies upon certain political institutions. For instance, a regional security arrangement is an institutional product. However, it conveys certain norms, values and ideas related to what security represents and how it can be achieved. Such norms, values and ideas informed the creation of the project of a regional security arrangement, as well as the process through which the arrangement was created. At the same time, with the creation of this institutional product a certain collective identity emerges, through the process of collective representation of the region. This collective

identity is a regional identity. In this sense, regions are normative-representational products of regionalism, whilst regional arrangements, for instance, are institutional products. Not least, regionalist ideologies, which belong to the normative field, produce institutions of regionalism, particularly through the generation of regionalist projects. In short, all institutions of regionalism have and create representational, ideational and normative elements, which, through political will, may generate more institutions.

The easiest way to observe the instances of regionalism is at the level of institutional products. In the first chapter of the dissertation, Table 1.1 has presented nine different major versions of contemporary regionalism, identified as distinct from academic and policy debates. These are preferential trade arrangements, regional intergovernmental cooperation, cross-border cooperation, bottom-up increase of autonomy, top-down increase of autonomy, regional separatism, administrative division of territories, soft integration, and political integration. However, if one takes into account the normative background (or, in the vocabulary developed in this paper, the ideological project) embedded within each of the different variants of regionalism, the nine versions could be grouped into only four categories. First, regionalism may express the view that the international actions of governments can produce certain desirable effects within the international arena and within the borders of nation-states. Preferential trade arrangements and regional intergovernmental cooperation are based on this vision. They could then form one category, which could be referred to as *regional intergovernmental cooperation*. Second, regionalism may also be a product of the idea that, by increasing the exchanges in areas close to the borders of nation-states, both the local and the national community can benefit. This is the category includes only the instances of regional trans-border cooperation. Accordingly, a potential label for this political phenomenon is *trans-border regionalism*. Third, regionalist products could also be generated based on the view that certain autonomy is necessary at local level for the

(more) efficient functioning of the polity. This is the case of the “increase of regional autonomy” and the “administrative division of the national territory” variants of regionalism. All of them could be grouped within the *autonomy regionalism* category. Finally, *regional separatism* is a category in itself. It refers to the initiatives that intend to produce political territories (quasi) independent from the existent nation-states, based on a regional specificity. Such initiatives may be the result of failed autonomies, like in the case of Kosovo and more recently South Ossetia and Abkhazia. However, irrespective of the degrees and functioning of autonomy, regional separatism is mostly characterised by the existence of a political elite that challenges the established order within a community claiming that regional specificity should produce political territories (quasi) independent from the political establishment of that community.

**Table 2.1 Categories of contemporary regionalism and their normative background**

CATEGORIES OF REGIONALISM	NORMATIVE BACKGROUND	VARIANT OF REGIONALISM
Regional intergovernmental cooperation	Internationals action of governments can produce certain desirable effects within the international arena and consequently within the borders of nation-states	<i>Regional political intergovernmental cooperation</i> <i>Regional trade agreements</i>
Trans-border regionalism	Through the increase of the exchanges in areas close to the borders of nation-states, both the local and the national community can benefit	<i>Cross-border cooperation</i>
Autonomy regionalism	Autonomy is necessary at the local level makes the polity function more efficiently	<i>Bottom-up increase of autonomy</i> <i>Top-down increase of autonomy</i> <i>Administrative division of territory</i>
Regional separatism	Regional specificity should produce political territories (quasi) independent from the existent nation-states	<i>Regional separatism</i>

Table 2.1 on the previous page summarizes the normative background of these four categories, which are based on the possible products of regionalism. They are full categories, which means that they have all the possible elements of regionalism identified at the beginning of this section (i.e. ideology/normative background, project, process, product). When compared to the inventory of regionalism variants identified within current scholarship and synthesised in Table 1.1 in the first chapter, one may notice that this typology excludes the frequently treated cases of soft and political integration. They might indeed group into a fifth category, *regional integration*, which would express the idea that a complex social and political process of interdependence creation takes place within a certain area and this process would make that area politically different from the neighbouring space in an almost irreversible way. Yet, unlike the other four types of regionalism, which can be identified through specific institutional products and ideologies, integration (as interdependence) cannot be observed but only postulated. What one can observe in terms of products is an increase of activity and interaction in a certain area at a given time, viz. an *intensification of regionality*. One may also observe that sometimes an increase of regionality in one field is more frequently correlated with an increase (or decrease) of regionality in another field. Nonetheless, this does not prove the existence of any interdependence but shows only certain co-variation. In time, through repeated observations, this may generate the idea that such co-variation appears in a particular set of circumstances. The existence of such co-variation, at least at conceptual level, has favoured the emergence of governmental strategies aiming at creating integration. However, the link between such strategies and the intensification of regionality is neither necessary nor irrefutable.<sup>36</sup> This is the reason for which, unlike in the case of the other four categories of

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<sup>36</sup> At most, one may argue that, as a regionalist political project, integration may generate an institutional framework. Whether this framework is essentially different from other institutional frameworks of political interaction has been subject of debate for several generations of regionalism scholarship. Until now, no interpretation gained primacy within the discipline, despite the relatively recent resurgence of regional

regionalism, one could not identify a specific institutional product of the project of regional integration. In short, regional integration is an incomplete category of regionalism. Therefore, integration could be meaningfully used only to refer to those strategies deliberately aiming at increasing interdependence within an area. As argued above, interdependence could not be but postulated. In other words, integration is solely an ideology. Furthermore, either as a political strategy, or as increase of regionality, it may be manifested within all the previous four categories of regionalism. For these reasons, regional integration should not be considered a separate category of regionalism.

Apart from this classification, another way of looking to regionalism is the relation it has with the regions it creates. Regions institute within the polity an alternative spatial division to the dominant order. Currently, this order is described particularly through the concept and institutions of the nation-state. For this reason, one could differentiate among the types of regions and regionalism based on the relations between the borders of regions and the borders of nation states. Accordingly, there are regional phenomena manifested only within the administrative territory of nation-states. This is *domestic* regionalism, while the area within the borders of a nation-state where it manifests is a *domestic region*. Second, there are regionalist arrangements, such as cross-border cooperation, which transcend the frontiers of nation-states but do not include states as a whole. *Trans-border* could be a good descriptor for this type of regions, as well as for the respective variants of regionalism. Finally, there is regional interaction that takes place only among national governments and consequently refers to the entire territory of the states involved. This is *international regionalism*. Table 2.2 below presents the variants of regionalism in relation with the type of regions. Accordingly, five possible instances of regionalism could be obtained. First, regional intergovernmental cooperation takes place exclusively at international level and is the only

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integration studies. For comprehensive reviews of these debates, see Rosamond (2000), and Wiener and Diez (2004).

type of regionalism that develops at this level. For this reason, regional intergovernmental cooperation is equivalent to international regionalism. Second, regional transnational cooperation, such as cross-border arrangements, takes place within trans-border regions and thus is an instance of trans-border regionalism. Third, the processes of increase of autonomy of sub-national units are by definition confined to domestic regions. Finally, regional separatism is mainly domestic, as it usually pursues the independence of territories included within a certain nation-state. However, there are cases, such as the Basque Country, where separatism demands include territories of neighbouring countries. In this case, regional separatism can be a case of trans-border regionalism.

**Table 2.2 The boundaries of regionalism**

VARIANTS OF CONTEMPORARY REGIONALISM	REGION		
	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Trans-border</i>	<i>International</i>
Regional intergovernmental cooperation	-	-	X
Trans-border regionalism	-	X	-
Autonomy regionalism	X	-	-
Regional separatism	X	X	-

Not least, irrespective of these three dimensions, regionalism is also a political project that conveys a particular interest. Interests are coagulated politically from the society through political elites, that is through those elites that voice claims related to the polity and are able or intend to govern. Within the community described through the institutions of the nation-state, which is the political framework in which most people live currently, four types of political elites can be differentiated according to the level of political legitimacy and decision-making. First, there are political elites designated to act for the defence and development of public goods at national level. These may be referred to as *central authorities*. They represent the community-wide interests and normally have a community-

wide legitimacy. The political parties elected in the national parliament and those that form the national government are illustrations of this type. Second, there are political elites designated to act for the public interest at the local level. These may be referred to as *local authorities*. Local governments, local parliaments, city councils and mayors are examples of this second type. Third, there are political elites that express private interests but attempt to represent the entire community, without having a community mandate for that. These are *challengers*. Political parties that are not represented in the national parliaments and certain illegal political movements, as long as they have nation-wide claims, are illustrations of this type. Finally, political elites that express private interests but attempt to represent the community at local level, such as the separatist movements, are a fourth type, may be referred to as *local contenders*.

The first two types represent the public interest through mechanisms of representation accepted throughout the entire community. Consequently, these political elites govern usually within the established order of the polity. In contrast, the last two types of political elites speak in the name of the society without having been appointed to do so through mechanisms of representations accepted by the entire community. These political elites want to govern but not necessarily within the established order of the polity. There might be cases, for instance, in which local authorities express the view of local contenders and even act in line with the logic of local contenders. This may happen in areas where national minorities are in majority and where local contenders usually demand for higher autonomy or regional separatism. In my view, all four types of political elites may interact and influence each other, transferring values and even worldviews to one another. In fact, belonging to one elite or another is a feature provided rather by the context than by the essence of participants. In this sense, the distinction between the four types expresses nothing more than the legitimacy that political elites may have within the main system of political interaction acknowledged

by the community in which they act. To illustrate more sharply this distinction, I use Karl Mannheim's terminology and refer to the two main opposing political legitimacies ideological and utopian respectively (Mannheim 1936). Accordingly, the first two types of political elites have an ideological legitimacy, while the last two types have a utopian one.

**Table 2.3 Political elites and the representation of interest**

LEVEL OF INTEREST REPRESENTATION	POLITICAL LEGITIMACY	
	<i>Ideological</i>	<i>Utopian</i>
<i>Community wide</i>	Central authorities	Challenger
<i>Local</i>	Local authorities	Local contender

Regionalism involves different types of elites. Local contenders are most likely to be involved in regionalist projects, as their goals are strongly related to certain representation of regions and the relation between regions and the institutions of the nation state. Due to their legitimacy, ideological elites also have an important role in the development of regionalism, particularly in those instances that are accepted as legitimate throughout the polity. In contrast, challengers are the least likely to be involved in regionalist processes as their goal is to acquire power over the entire community. For this type of elites, regionalism is only of secondary importance. Finally, in each of the four types of regionalism some types of elites are more likely to involve. First, by definition, regional intergovernmental cooperation brings together those political elites designated to act for the defence and development of public goods at national level. Therefore, central authorities are the main actor when it comes to this type of regionalism. Some arrangements can be, however, contested by challengers, or can involve the participation of some local governmental elites. Second, trans-border regionalism usually involves the collaboration of local authorities from areas close to national borders. Yet, for legal reasons, such cooperation also requires a constant dialogue with the central governmental elites. Third, autonomy regionalism is a process



through which ideological elites, sometimes contested by local contenders, administrate the national territory. Lastly, in regional separatism, by definition, local contenders challenge the existent communitarian narrative of the polity both at local and at the community-wide level. Therefore, it is commonly a triangular process involving the ideological elites and the local contenders, though sometimes challengers may add to the equation. Table 2.4 summarizes these relations.

**Table 2.4 Regionalism and the representation of interest**

<b>VARIANTS OF CONTEMPORARY REGIONALISM</b>	<b>INTEREST REPRESENTATION</b>	
	<i>Major actors</i>	<i>Minor or other potential actors</i>
<b>Regional intergovernmental cooperation</b>	Central authorities	Challengers Local authorities
<b>Trans-border regionalism</b>	Ideological elites	Local contenders
<b>Autonomy regionalism</b>	Ideological elites	Local contenders
<b>Regional separatism</b>	Local contenders Ideological elites	Challengers

In this dissertation, only the particular category of regional intergovernmental cooperation (international regionalism) is treated. As showed throughout the section, this is an elite-driven process that engages mostly the central governments of more neighbouring countries. At institutional level, it may be identified through regional intergovernmental agreements and the structures of collaboration instituted by such agreements. At normative level, international regionalism expresses the view that intergovernmental action at regional level can produce desirable effects within the borders of the participant nation-states and within the area. Not least, regional intergovernmental cooperation produces regional identity but at the same time, as a regionalist project, it may rely on particular traditions of regional identity. In this way, regional identity as latent regionality from other spheres is transformed

into actual regionality, which may provide some of the basis for the creation of regional intergovernmental projects.

### **2.3 Introducing regional cohesiveness**

In the previous section, I made the distinction between regionalism as product and regionalism as project, arguing that regionalism as product is the result of particular political strategies that, like the projects from which they emerged, are informed by particular ideologies. In this sense, various forms of regionalism can be differentiated based on a specific normative background that produces particular forms of regionalist products. I also argued that integration is an ideology that can be transformed into a regionalist project but not into a regionalist product. This happens because integration as a product can be only postulated but not demonstrated. For this reason, integration is not a distinctive variant of regionalism. Yet, the integration paradigm has the advantage that could offer a vision about the way in which certain areas develop and remain politically distinct from others. To put it differently, integration has provided a narrative not only about the process but also about the products of regionalism. If this paradigm is abandoned due to the impossibility to falsify it, an alternative is required. A less normative way to assess political reality at regional level than through the integration paradigm might be through the concept of *regionality*. Since regionality refers to the fact that in a particular space some elements are more frequent than in neighbouring areas, the increase or decrease of regionality is an indicator for the way in which the political distinctiveness of that space fluctuates. However, like the usual proxies for integration, this indicator refers to the way in which reality is perceived but not to the political process through which regional products acquire certain stability over time. Therefore, the concept of regionality is not enough to generate a narrative about the degree

of stability that a regional product has during a certain period or about the changes that may occur in this respect.

As a possible solution for this problem, I propose the concept of *regional cohesiveness*, which I define as the *degree to which a group of actors inhabiting a limited contiguous space act and represent themselves as a group*. Two different dimensions may be identified within this definition. First, regional cohesiveness refers to actions occurring within the material world. For instance, the signature of an agreement, the adoption of a common declaration on a particular issue or the imposition of an economic embargo on a third party are actions that happen in the material world and produce physically distinguishable results such as written texts or the sudden stop of trade relations. Since I share the view that interactions within the material world take place within the framework of certain institutions,<sup>37</sup> I call this dimension institutional. Second, the representation of a group as distinct is a normative-representational act. At the same time, the fact that some actors act as a group generates particular representations of the respective actors and of the group they thus form. For this reason, the concept of regional cohesiveness has also a discursive dimension.

From its design, regional cohesiveness is an-output oriented concept. In other words, it does not refer to the process but to the products of political interaction. In the particular case of international regionalism, for instance, it refers to the institutional and to the normative-representational products of international regionalism as project and process. Following the constructivist logics briefly sketched at the beginning of this chapter, these products can be also assessed on two dimensions – material (institutional) and normative-representational. First, one may observe the particular institutional and discursive design that is instituted

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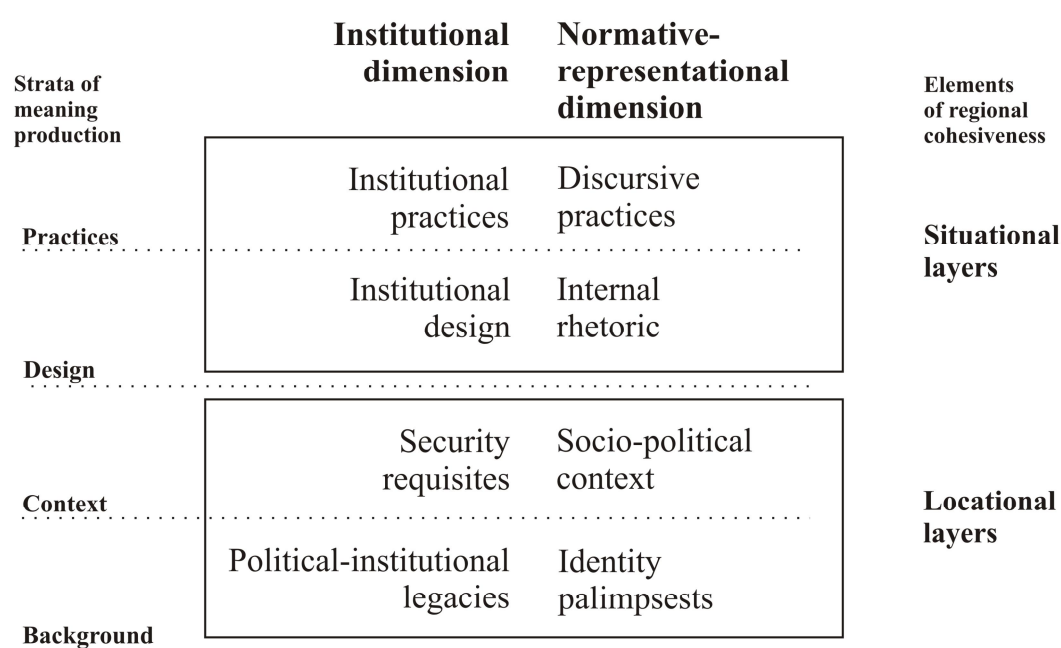
<sup>37</sup> March and Olsen (1984, 1989, 1998) and Olsen (2001) present this institutionalist argument in much detail. For comprehensive overviews of institutionalism and its arguments, see Hall and Taylor (1996), Peters (1996, 1999) and Thoenig (2003).

through regionalism. To use the same example as above, on the institutional dimension, this means that international regionalism creates certain structures that allow the interaction of the group within the particular framework of a regional initiative. For instance, regional intergovernmental initiatives develop through meetings of the heads of state and government, as well as through the work of more technical bodies such as the secretariats of these initiatives. I refer to this institutional dimension as *institutional design*. On the discursive dimension, there is a particular way in which the group represents itself internally and this draws the boundary between the respective group and the rest of the world. In the case of international regionalism, for instance, this may be assessed from the official documents of the respective regional grouping. I refer to this discursive dimension as *internal rhetoric*. The second level on which the products can be assessed is that of institutional and discursive practices. *Institutional practices* refer to the way in which the goals, objectives and programs of the regional grouping are implemented (i.e. activities). Discursive practices (or *external rhetoric*) refer to the way in which the group presents itself to the world. These four aspects may be referred to as *situational layers* because they describe the specifics of a regional group, thus helping situating them in relation with other groups.

Although it is a product-oriented concept, regional cohesiveness has also a dynamic dimension. It emerges in a particular context that is the result of interaction between human actors, their interest and the conceptual framework in which they evolve. Since all these develop in time, the products of regionalism could not be (meaning)fully understood outside their context. This context refers mostly to the particular political circumstances that led to the emergence of regionalism. Such circumstances refer to the specific security requisites that urged the creation of the regional arrangements, as well as to the larger socio-political in which the political phenomenon of regionalism develops. Using the framework of the strata

of meaning production briefly outlined in the introduction, the first type of circumstances constitutes the institutional dimension of the context stratum, while the second type corresponds to its normative-representational dimension. However, in line with constructivist thinking, I represent regional cohesiveness as developing on a certain discursive and institutional background. In other words, regional cohesiveness is not a mere measurement of a political object “thrown in time” but it assesses the consistency of a regional group in a *longue durée* perspective. Consequently, regionalism as a political phenomenon cannot be meaningfully studied separately from its particular environment (i.e. historical and political context). These four aspects may be referred to as *locational* layers because they help establishing the specific political, socio-historical and identity location of a regional grouping within the ensemble of political and social phenomena. Figure 6 below summarizes all these aspects of regional cohesiveness and places them in relation with the strata of meaning production framework.

**Fig. 6 Dimensions and elements of regional cohesiveness**



The concept of regional cohesiveness has several advantages in front of its rival paradigms. I discuss them mostly in relation with international regionalism, as this is the focus of this dissertation. First, unlike integration or interdependence, it is falsifiable. When a group of actors does not act or represent itself as group, then there is no cohesiveness. For this reason, the concept may be regarded as more suitable to analytical purposes than those of interdependence and integration, especially for research on regionalist products. Second, regional cohesiveness is a concept that may be applicable not only to international regionalism but to other categories of regionalism, such as the cases of regional separatism and regional autonomy. Since it describes the way in which certain areas develop and remain distinct from others in terms of political action, regional cohesiveness is a general category applicable to all cases in which regions are created. These include regional separatism and autonomy, for instance. For this reason, regional cohesiveness is a political science concept and not only one limited to the study of international relations, as most examples used so far suggested.

Regional cohesiveness is also useful for accommodating social constructivism to international regionalism. As already observed in the previous chapter, international regionalism scholarship is dominated by (neo)liberal, (neo)realist and (neo)Marxian arguments and the field has not been permeated much by social constructivist debates and. The most significant attempts to import constructivist elements are probably most visible in the New Regional Approach/Theory (NRA/T) agenda, particularly in the version developed by Björn Hettne within the framework of the regionalist studies developed at the United Nations University. From this partially (neo)Marxian, partially (neo)liberal perspective, international regionalism is a product of the tension between global and regional tendencies, between an inextricable global interdependence and the need to cope with particular local issues (Hettne 1999b, 2005). In this sense, regionalism is a multilevel and multidimensional

phenomenon that often transcends national borders (Hettne 2003). Yet, the agenda of this type of research is largely critical, aiming to uncover inequalities and the mechanisms of power relations in an increasingly complex world where states are no longer the unique actor (Hettne 1999a) but are not particularly sensitive to the question of identity dynamics. Therefore, the NRA/T is a means of accommodating critical theories to international regionalism. The concept of regional cohesiveness does not aim to have a critical agenda. Due to the way in which it was defined, regional cohesiveness is a social (conventional) constructivist concept. For these reasons, regional cohesiveness may be a means to introduce more consistently social (conventional) constructivism into the international regionalism debates.

Interestingly, regional cohesiveness may be congruent with the integration paradigm. For instance, for “hardcore” functionalism and the NRA/T, the fact that a group is cohesive may be considered the result of certain types of interdependence. From such perspectives, regional cohesiveness is a proxy for integration. The liberal paradigm can also incorporate this concept and even much easier than functionalism. Instead of using the notion of integration that was developed from the functionalist logic and with the particular case of the European Community in mind, liberalism (especially in the liberal intergovernmentalist form) could opt for this more neutral concept, which is not infiltrated by any vision of interdependency. In this sense, the notion of regional cohesiveness and the vision in which is embedded are close not only to social constructivism but also to (neo)liberalism and institutionalism.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM**

In the previous chapter, regional intergovernmental cooperation (or international regionalism) was defined as an elite-driven process that takes place mostly at international level. More specifically, it is an ideology, a project, a process and a product developed by national governments in the international arena. In institutional terms, international regionalism has certain specificities that differentiate it from the other forms of regionalism and these inform a particular dynamic of regional cohesiveness. In this chapter, I address these specificities of international regionalism. First, I examine the nature of regionalism as defined in international public law, which as I show, does not differentiate between regional and other types of international organizations. In the second section, I examine the way in which international regionalism scholarship assesses the nature of regionalism and identify several shortcomings for the analysis of current forms of regional intergovernmental cooperation. At the same time, I propose a different grill for describing the space of international regionalism and I argue for choosing the national security paradigm as the easiest tool for assessing the rationale and practices of regional intergovernmental cooperation. Finally, I also propose a more rigorous taxonomy of regional initiatives, according to goals, scope, structure of power within the regional initiative, as well as in relation with the member states, and sustainability. The categories defined in this chapter are later used in the analysis of regional cohesiveness in the third part of the dissertation, mostly in chapter 8.



### **3.1 The legal nature of international regionalism**

The international procedures on regional organisations are codified in a more unified way mainly within the Law of International Organizations created around the United Nations system.<sup>38</sup> The question of international organisations (including regional arrangements) had gained some attention in the aftermath of the World War II, as the number of international organisations suddenly increased and both practitioners and scholars became aware of the phenomenon. In 1962, this topic was included in the research programme of the newly created International Law Commission (ILC) of the United Nations.<sup>39</sup> Then, for more than thirty years, the ILC debated and drafted different documents concerning the relations between states and international organisations.<sup>40</sup>

From the very beginning, due mainly to the diversity of existing organisations, the problem of classification, particularly discerning between universal and regional organisations, appeared to be a controversial one. The debates about regional organisations were quite significant and two opposing views were held within the ILC, a point highlighted in all of the six reports that constituted the basis for drafting articles of a multilateral convention on this topic (ILC 1963, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971a). The dominant position supported the argument that regional organisations are too varied so that it would be almost impossible to formulate uniform rules applicable to all of them. For this reason, regional organisations

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<sup>38</sup> The legal system created around the UN is not the only one currently into force. Customary practices and procedures specific to each arrangement are other important sources of legality in international relations. However, in one way or another, international law as codified by UN bodies usually covers most of the procedures, including the customary practices. For detailed discussions of these issues see, for instance, Degan (1997), Cassese (2001), Shaw (2003) and Evans (2006).

<sup>39</sup> The International Law Commission is a group of internationally recognized experts of international law elected by the UN General Assembly and it was created in 1947 based on a similar committee of the League of Nations (ILC 1947, 2004). According to its Statute, art. 1, the role of the Commission is to promote “progressive development of international law and its codification,” particularly with respect to public international law (ILC 1947).

<sup>40</sup> France proposed the topic in 1958. The first part dealt with the representation of states in their relations with international organisations, while the second intended to establish the principles ruling the status, privileges and immunities of international organisations and their officials, experts and other persons engaged in their activities who are not representatives of states (ILC 2004). It is this second part that is more relevant for the discussion on the legal nature of regional arrangements.

should be free to develop their own rules as many have their own codification organs. The alternative position emphasized the idea that relations between states and organisations of a universal character might not differ appreciably from relations between states and similar regional organisations. Therefore, excluding regional organisations from the UN codification would leave a significant gap.

The final draft proposed by the International Law Commission to the UN General Assembly, defined organisations of universal character as comprehensively as possible (art.1) but it did not do the same things with respect to regional organisations. In fact, regional organisations are not even mentioned in any of the draft articles. However, the document left open to states the possibility to decide whether or not to apply the respective provisions to international organisations other than those of universal character and to conferences convened by or under the auspices of such organisations. This means that regional organisations could follow the provisions of this (ILC 1971b, 284-7). In 1975, this draft was transformed into a legal instrument. This is the *Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character* (UN Conference on International Organizations 1975). However, even thirty years after its signature, this convention is not yet in force, as it lacks the required number of ratifications (ILC 2004). Although almost half a century passed since the initiation of this direction in the codification of international law, the discussions on the character of regional organisations did not go further in legal terms. Quite the reverse, given the governments' disinterest in pursuing the matter, the ILC recommended discontinuing the drafting, a decision endorsed by the United Nations (UN General Assembly 1992).

In this context, the legal status of regional intergovernmental arrangements is given solely by the provisions of the treaty that constitute them, as well as by the rules and procedures instituted by the Law of Treaties. In this sense, apart from their scope, there is no significant

legal difference between regional organisations and universal organisations. In other words, regional international cooperation is nothing more than a species of international cooperation. The only specificity of regionalism is that it develops among neighbouring countries. Therefore, the field of international regionalism could be described rather from the perspective of the potential institutional differences within the universe of international regionalism than in contrast to international multilateralism. In the remaining of the chapter, it is treated from this particular viewpoint.

## **3.2 *From security to welfare and back***

### **3.2.1 The bipolar model**

The most common differentiation operated in old regionalism was between economic and political regionalism. In the aftermath of the Second World War, security studies and regional integration theory were each dealing with a certain category of regional agreements – military blocks and economic organisations, respectively. Partially due to the more rigid separation that existed between research areas, the two classes of regionalist activity had been considered for a long time as very different species and no serious comparison was undertaken until the 1970s. Joseph Nye is among the first to treat military and economic arrangements as variations of the same regional logic. Most notably, in his analysis of the 1960s regional arrangements, he introduces the comparison between “macroeconomic organisations” to “macroregional political organisations”, which, according to Nye, would have been the dominant types of international governmental organisations at that time. The main difference between the two categories was that the first targeted economic integration, while the latter aimed at controlling conflict (Nye 1971).

Despite such scholarly advances and although in the aftermath of the Cold War regionalism seems to be more diverse than ever, the distinction between economic and political

initiatives has been maintained. In an almost classic form, it appears frequently in regionalism research developed from an international political economy (IPE) perspective or at its intersection with the new regionalism approach/theory (NRA/T). In IPE studies, for instance, regionalism is portrayed as an economic process with political impact and as a phenomenon that accompanies the globalization of world markets (Wyat-Walter 1995, Breslin and Higgott 2000). In this conceptual context, there is a visible preference for the analysis of regional economic initiatives, though the political arrangements are also increasingly studied (Hurrell 1995a, 1995b, Gamble and Payne 1996, Mansfield and Milner 1999). A similar preference could be observed also within the NRA/T, although in this case the inclination towards economic regionalism is based on the premise that economic development is essential for the centrality of a region in the world system (Hettne 1999a, 2001, 2003, Mittelman 1999, Mistry 2000, Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001b). This view is present particularly in studies with a strong neo-Gramscian flavour, which frame regional initiatives in terms of hegemony, core and periphery (Hettne 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2003, Marchand, Bøås, and Shaw 1999, Bøås, Marchand, and Shaw 2005, Hook and Kearns 1999, Calleya 2000).

There is also a certain attempt at refining this typology of regional arrangements. Fawcett and Hurrell (1995), and Hurrell (1995a, 1995b), for instance, classify regional initiatives by combining the economy-politics dimensions with the size of the organisations. Accordingly, there would be five variants of regional projects. From an economic point of view, there would be two types of arrangements. On the one hand, there are microregional schemes for economic integration, in general small regional trade agreements (RTAs), which could be found throughout the world. On the other hand, macroeconomic/bloc regionalism would be built around Europe, Americas or Japan and are visible most notably through the flows of trade. From a political perspective, there are three categories of initiatives. First, there would

be “regionalist dinosaurs”, big old relics of a bygone era, such as Organization of American States (OAS).<sup>41</sup> To these, one may add those meso-regional security groupings such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which developed usually at continental level. Finally, there are micro-regional bodies such as the agreements developed in the former communist space after the Cold War. This sort of refinement, however, is not fully consistent with the criteria it employs. For political regionalism, the distinction is made between small, medium-sized and large organisations, while in the case of economic regionalism initiatives are divided only into small and large, as if middle range economic agreements did not exist. Furthermore, the distinction between economy and politics is still heavily present, despite the fact that the authors observe that the increasingly complex landscape of international regionalism is not satisfactorily described along this division.

A more refined view on the distinction economy-politics was proposed within the framework of international organisation theory. Archer (1992), for instance, distinguishes among three logics upon which regional organisations may be created. These are cooperation, conflict management and confrontation. The three logics yield a slightly more flexible classification of organisations into three categories along the lines of military security, political security, larger political purposes and economic goals. Yet, the economy-politics distinction is still present and, largely, in a rather rigid way. In addition, since confrontation is no longer an open goal for the existing regional organisations, the classification seems to reflect more adequately the Cold War preoccupations than the current state of regionalism. Table 3.1 on the next page summarizes these different variants of the economy-politics distinction.

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<sup>41</sup> The use of “dinosaurs” is not a metaphor for expressing the merely the size of the arrangement. When employing this term, Fawcett and Hurrell (1995), as well as Hurrell (1995a) openly refer to those very large organisations that were created during the Cold War mainly for ideological reasons and that after the collapse of the bipolar system seem to be rather relics of another era, despite some attempts of reform.

**Table 3.1 Traditional perspectives on international regionalism**

GOAL		THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE		
		OLD REGIONALISM	NEW REGIONALISM	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION THEORY
CONFRONTATION	Confrontation	Macropolitical regional organisations (E.g. NATO, Warsaw Pact, SEATO)	Regionalist “dinosaurs” (E.g. OAU, OAS, NATO)	Military and political security organisations (E.g. NATO, Warsaw Pact, SEATO)
	Conflict management		Meso-regional security groupings (E.g. OSCE)	Political and security organisations (E.g. ASEAN)
			Micro-regional bodies (E.g. Visegrád Group)	
COOPERATION	Trade	Macroeconomic organisations (E.g. EEC, Comecon)	Macroeconomic (bloc) regionalism (E.g. EU, Mercosur)	Economic and political organisations (E.g. EU, ECOWAS, GCC, SAARC)
	Economic integration		Micro-regional schemes (E.g. CEFTA)	

There are several problems with this traditional classification of regional initiatives along the economy-politics line. The main shortcoming of is its roughness. As suggested already in the debates about the legal nature of regional organisations, the variety of regional arrangements, particularly in terms of goals, is much higher than this division suggests. This is especially visible within the regionalist topography of the post-Cold War period. Furthermore, the inadequacy maintains even when refined through the introduction of a size dimension. This happens because the size criterion does not solve the issue of the complexity of goals. Another problem with the dichotomy economy-politics is that it favours highly normative research and policy agendas. A case in point is the new regionalism approach/theory (NRA/T) of neo-Gramscian influence that uses the classic distinction between politics and economy in the context of regionalism to argue that some areas on the globe are politically kept underdeveloped through the means of economic regionalism (Hettne 2001).

Perhaps the most disturbing limitation is that the distinction between economy and politics might not have much analytical value, particularly for the post-Cold War regional environment. This becomes visible when one looks closer to the key issue of economic regionalism scholarship, that is the decades long debate between the so-called strategic-trade argument and the open regionalism argument. In a rough formulation, the *strategic trade argument* advances the idea that states must act strategically to protect key sectors and ensure they are able to acquire or maintain a leader position in the international arena (Gamble and Payne 1996). Strategic trade in a freer world market like the one developed after the Cold War would account for the strong and rather sudden interest in regional projects on the part of policy makers and would ultimately explain the new wave of economic regionalism (Mansfield and Milner 1999). The supporters of *open regionalism* contest this interpretation, maintaining that sustained economic interaction at regional level would lead to optimum specialization in the region (and eventually to regional integration) and this would arise spontaneously through the mechanisms of free-market. Therefore, new economic regionalism would be rather the effect of the trade liberalization and negotiations held within the World Trade Organization (WTO) system (Bhagwati 1993, Bergsten 1997, Panagaryia 1999, Milner and Kubota 2005). These controversies between open regionalism and strategic-trade arguments provide a dilemma for policy-makers, as there is no agreement on which of the two strategies would work better in a given situation. They are also the core of much of the contemporary literature on economic regionalism, multilateralism, international trade, international regimes and other related research fields. Yet, there are certain points on which there seem to be converging views. Most importantly for the issue of classifying regional processes is the fact that new regionalism is considered to be significantly complex, which would make very difficult the task to differentiate among existing initiatives alongside the economic and political dimensions. To a certain extent, the

strategic-trade logic and actions are present in all current regionalist projects. This, however, does not deny the existence of open regionalism (Gamble and Payne 1996). In fact, the difficulty to differentiate may appear because the distinction between economic and political agreements is artificial. Recent research on trade in relation with political decision-making convincingly argue that economic regionalism is not really possible or effective without political will, a finding that contradicts the beliefs of many economists focused exclusively on economic interdependency (Mistry 2000). In other words, all regionalism, including the one that implies mainly economic interactions, is ultimately political (Hettne 1999b, 2003, Falk R. 2003).

### **3.2.2 A four-dimension alternative**

One of the main premises of this research is that the essence of international regionalism is indeed political. Yet, alone, this proposition cannot add much analytical value to the study of regionalism. Furthermore, on empirical grounds, one could not fail to observe that international regionalism is more diverse than this premise suggests. In this section, several common features of international regionalism are singled out as relevant for analysis. At the same time, a new classification is proposed as an alternative solution to the economic-politics debate.

First, one may distinguish among the different logics that reflect the aims of regional initiatives. On the formal dimension, regional arrangements range from those that set the rules of partnership to those more inclined towards finding solutions to specific common problems. The initiatives that aim at setting the rules and offer general guidelines may be referred to as *political*, while the others may be referred to as *policy* arrangements. More specifically, the main purpose of *political* arrangements is to establish and maintain political dialogue in the region. In this sense, *political regionalism* provides a general framework for cooperation. Thus, it covers simultaneously a wide range of sectors of activity, such as



political dialogue, trade development, cultural exchanges and environmental protection. Alternatively, regional initiatives may be created in order to develop regional projects in different areas of common interest. This *policy regionalism* is more sector-specific, as it targets issues that are more limited in scope and that are usually generated by particular problems. Free navigation and pollution control on a river common to several neighbouring countries, for instance, may be issues that produce policy regionalism. In this context, trade areas, which in mainstream scholarship are considered a classic case of economic regionalism, are just a special case of policy regionalism. These two logics are not necessarily exclusive. For instance, in particular circumstances, more politically oriented initiatives can address specific problems, such as dealing with natural calamities or a common security threat. At the same time, policy regionalisms can generate the basis of cooperation for more sectors of activity. This has been, for instance, the case of the European Economic Community, which has gradually transformed from an economic arrangement into a political union. The distinction between the two logics is therefore context bounded, as an organisation may in time move on the politics-policy continuum. The main political and constitutive documents of the respective initiatives could be a good indicator of the position on this continuum. For instance, if the Charter of a regional arrangement states that the members have associated with the purpose of establishing a forum of dialogue, that arrangement may be classified rather as a political one, as long as the political declarations and activities of the organisation do not suggest otherwise. Alternatively, when the founding text of an initiative identifies as the main goal of the grouping the establishment of structures of cooperation in several specific field such as culture, navigation or combating traffic and illicit activities, that scheme may be considered a policy one.

The second dimension upon which regional arrangements can be ranged is that of the basic needs rationale. One may argue that in each society, all actions could be reduced to just two

basic needs, security and welfare.<sup>42</sup> Security is pursued for allowing the development of welfare, while welfare could not be developed without a minimal security.<sup>43</sup> Regional initiatives aim at enhancing both security and welfare. However, for efficiency reasons, these two goals are not addressed equally within an initiative. Therefore, some are more security inclined, while others are more welfare inclined. This distinction between security and welfare is not equivalent with the one operated between, on the one hand, military and political security and, on the other hand, economy. In this dissertation, security is defined as a general category that refers to the absence of threats to certain values and as an absence of the fear that such values may be attacked (Wolfers 1962, 150). From this perspective, security is a complex of different factors. These factors are varied, ranging from those of military and political nature to economic, societal and environmental ones (Buzan 1993, 1991). For instance, initiatives aiming at facilitating cultural exchanges or enhancing trade development aim at providing a more secure societal and economic environment, and consequently could be considered as security enhancing. At the same time, security is a public good whose degree of achievement is strongly connected to the possibility of enhancing welfare (Zulean 2007). For this reason, military security organisations, for instance, could be regarded not only as security enhancers but also as welfare facilitators.

Such intricacies make a clear-cut division of regional initiatives into two types rather meaningless. Therefore, instead of classifying regional organisations into security or welfare enhancing based on one particular feature, it is more appropriate to identify within each initiative the elements and mechanisms of security and welfare enhancing, respectively. For instance, when, within an arrangement, the number of security-enhancing elements is higher

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<sup>42</sup> This idea can be derived, for instance, from the concept of liberty as it was framed by Isaiah Berlin (1992).

<sup>43</sup> The relation between security and welfare is not linear. More security may mean more welfare. Nevertheless, at some point, the increasing of security may lead to a drastic decrease of welfare because exchanges are controlled to the extent that they can no longer produce enough welfare. Not least, the threshold for the optimal security-welfare balance cannot be established otherwise than post-hoc.

and the member countries explicitly pursue security goals, such an arrangement may be considered a security-enhancing one. In this sense, like the political-policy dimension, the security-welfare dimension is rather a field of continuums in which regional initiatives develop.

**Fig. 7. Orientation of regional arrangements**

O R I E N T A T I O N			
P O L I T I C A L		P O L I C Y	
G O A L	Establish and maintain political dialogue in the region.	Security-enhancing	Develop regional projects in specific fields of common interest.
		Create structures and instruments allowing each of the participant countries to feel more secure at regional level.	
		Welfare-enhancing	
		Promote welfare for participant countries through the development of common projects and smoother exchanges at regional level.	

Figure 7 above expresses these relations. Rather than representing the two dimensions in a four-cell matrix, it shows that the distinction between the political and policy orientation is fluid, while organisations can aim at enhancing welfare and security at the same time. The model allows the four logics to be simultaneously present, although in different quantities. In other words, by allowing the four logics to have a different weight at different point in time, it provides the framework for conceptualizing flexible accounts of the evolution of regional initiatives. In this way, contemporary international regionalism is more accurately described.

Despite its advantages briefly outlined above, the distinction along the politics-policy and welfare-security dimensions does not provide, as such, a clear-cut typology of regional intergovernmental cooperation based on which research choices could be easily made. Since all these four dimensions are different aspects of the same object of study, a possible solution may be to focus on the categories that only one dimension can generate and then

treat the relations and implications for other three dimensions. In the literature, security has been granted the most attention and around it developed many categories that could be used for analysis.

In Checa Hidalgo and Ghica (2007), three different contemporary security concepts are identified. The oldest of them is the concept of national security. Traditionally, this referred mainly to the protection of national interest through the presence of military forces and deterrent aggression (Walt 1991). However, the increasing complexity of modern conflicts could no longer be easily assessed exclusively on these grounds. Therefore, already in the 1980s, the perspective on security enlarged to accommodate other aspects. First, there has been a restructuring of the national security concept, which, following mostly the work Barry Buzan, came to be described along five distinct but interdependent sectors - military, politics, economics, society and environment (Buzan 1983, 1991). Second, the concept of national security has been supplemented with the concept of societal security. According to this perspective, in the contemporary world not only state sovereignty would be an object of threat, but also the identity of different communities, especially the national identity (Wæver et al. 1993). Finally, the concept of national security has been put completely under the question through the concept of human security, which expresses the view that for the majority of people, insecurity is not necessarily triggered by the fear of cataclysmic events such as war but rather by everyday life realities such as hunger, epidemics, criminality and repression (United Nations Development Program 1994).

Table 3.2 on the next page presents these three concepts. They can be mapped according to several criteria. First, as mentioned in the brief outline above, they are distinct according to the object of threat. The state remains the classic object of concern for national security, the nation is the object of threat for the supporters of the societal security perspective, while from the viewpoint of the human security concept, the entire humankind is at stake, both at

individual and collective level. These views express different values with respect to the object of threat. In the national security paradigm, sovereignty and especially national territory are the main value that must be defended against any kind of aggression, while in the societal security framework the nation is valued most. Instead, the human security view is embedded into less abstract notions, as it is mostly concerned with the survival of individuals, as well as with the quality of life in different areas around the globe.

**Table 3.2 Contemporary security concepts**

	CATEGORIES	OBJECT OF THREAT	SOURCES OF THREAT	THREATEN VALUES	SUBJECT OF INTERVENTION
NATIONAL SECURITY	Military security Political security Economic security Environmental security Societal security	State	Other states Non-state actors	Territorial integrity Sovereignty	Affected states
SOCIETAL SECURITY	Security of the polity	Nation	Alien cultures Unstable states	National unity Identity	Affected states International society
HUMAN SECURITY	Economic security Food security Health security Environmental security Personal security Security of the community Political security	Individuals Humankind	Unstable states Individuals Social instability	Survival Quality of life	Affected states International society

*Source:* Adapted after Checa Hidalgo and Ghica (2007)

The source of insecurity is also conceptualized differently. From the national security perspective, the main source of threat are the other states and increasingly non-states actors, such as the terrorist organizations. Instead, from the viewpoint of the societal security concept, the nation is threatened by the contact with different cultures, usually through migration, as well as by the existence of unstable states in its vicinity, which could destabilize the internal cohesion of the respective nation. The unstable states are identified as

a main source of insecurity also within the human security paradigm but to this, one may add also individual actions, such as suicidal attacks or personal dictatorships, as well as different other factors produced by social instability. Such different views on the nature of insecurity trigger also different approaches in terms of intervention for removing the source of the effects of insecurity. From the traditional national security perspective, the affected states are the main actor of intervention. They can cooperate with other states for this purpose, especially for preventing certain types of threat, but the strategic decisions remain at the attribute of each sovereign state (Walt 1991). A similar view is shared within the societal security camp, although international intervention, particularly for limiting the effects of unstable states, is much easily accepted than in the case of the national security paradigm (Wæver et al. 1993). Finally, the human security vision puts forward the idea that the international society should be as legitimate as the nation states to act in order to prevent and manage the effects of insecurity (United Nations Development Program 1994).

Regional intergovernmental cooperation may be regarded as fitting best the national security concept. In the previous chapter, international regionalism was classified as an elite-driven process in which central governmental elites play the most important role. As they were defined, these elites defend the interests of the entire community they represent. In security terms, although they act also for safeguarding the identity cohesiveness of the entire nation, central governmental elites are primarily concerned with safeguarding the national territory and sovereignty, especially when they act at international level. However, the fact that national security can be analysed along the lines of the five sectors of security proposed by Barry Buzan does not mean that regionalism could be classified into five categories. Rather, cooperation at intergovernmental level takes place along these five dimensions. Within each of these five sectors of security, one may identify several areas of cooperation. For instance, in the political sector, the different national interests are articulated through political

dialogue that aims at establishing the priorities for more specific cooperation among the participant countries. In the military sector, cooperation may refer to the military reform or to the coordination of military capacities. The economic sector may include cooperation related to the common development of trade, transport, infrastructure, stimulation of the foreign direct investment (FDI), tourism, science, technology, telecommunications, agriculture and cross-border cooperation. In the societal sector, one may include cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs, such as migration, fight against organized crime and anticorruption. In this sector, one may also include the cooperative arrangements in the areas of culture, education, youth and human resources. Finally, the environmental cooperation may address the issues of waste and water management, the harmonization of environmental norms or the prevention of ecologic disasters. Nonetheless, such classifications of the potential areas of governmental collaboration are sometimes difficult to make. For instance, cooperation in the field of tourism has both an economic and a societal component, as it answers both economic and cultural needs. Similarly, cooperation in the field of human resources, though usually a societal area, may refer also to the development of military human resources. Therefore, when assessing the official documents of the organizations under scrutiny, it is important to correlate the objectives that define the scope of the cooperation with the programs and activities of the respective initiatives.

### ***3.3 Assessing institutional cohesiveness***

The framework of national security presented in the previous section is used in the analysis of the institutional dimension of regional cohesiveness, in chapter 7. Apart from this, the institutional analysis needs several criteria for assessing the institutional characteristics of the different regional initiatives under scrutiny. This last section of the chapter proposes a series of such criteria, addressing the issues that appear most frequently in the debates on the

nature of regionalism within both regionalism and international organisation scholarship. These issues are the scale and the institutional design of the organisations.

### **3.3.1 What scale matters?**

After the Second World War, the most visible, as well as the largest amount of initiatives at regional level were those designed at grand scale, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Warsaw Pact, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The interest in such arrangements derived partially from the particularities of the Cold War international relations. In a context in which most international actions were demonstrations of power, the bigger the regional initiative the higher the chances to increase its leverage (Nye 1968). Yet, such arrangements could not always answer appropriately the specific regional problems that they were intended to address and, due to such shortcomings, their influence in world and regional politics increasingly eroded (Fawcett 1995). For this reason, several of these large regional initiatives needed to be reformed, replaced with other arrangements or simply phased out even before the collapse of the bipolar system.<sup>44</sup> These reforms frequently expressed the need for a smaller, more efficient scale. This became even more necessary after the collapse of the bipolar system (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995). Under these historical circumstances, the issue of scale indicates primarily the importance that the member states grant to the respective regional arrangements, from the viewpoint of these states' foreign policy goals and within the international system. In the particular context of the Cold War, this classification reflected largely the importance of the respective arrangements in the ideological confrontation (Fawcett 2004, 2005). In the post-Cold War

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<sup>44</sup> For instance, the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), an initiative that could no longer fulfil the collective security purposes for which it was created, simply disappeared in the 1970s, only two decades after its emergence. Similarly, in the Caribbean, the Caribbean Free Trade Agreement (CARIFTA) replaced the shortly lived Caribbean Organization and in its turn was soon replaced with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Around the same period, in Africa, several smaller regional arrangements emerged a decade after the peak of the decolonization process and the creation of the pan-African initiative OAU. For an overview of such transformations see, for instance, Schiavone (2001).



order, this dimension is more difficult to grasp and is usually measured through the number and context of references to the respective arrangements. For instance, with a similar number of participants, a regional initiative may be considered more important than another, because it appears more frequently in contexts of higher political visibility. A second indicator of the scale is the number of participants. There are regional initiatives, such as the OSCE, which have a very large number of members, while others, such as the European Free Trade Agreement, may be more restrained. From this perspective, regionalism may range from multilateralism to localism. In this context, the relevant question is related to the minimal and maximal thresholds for considering an intergovernmental arrangement regional. Usually, the minimal standard is a number of members equal or greater than three countries. The maximum standard refers to whether the membership of an arrangement is limited to a certain area, either explicitly in the founding documents or *de facto* through political declarations and actions of the participant countries. If such is the case, then the arrangement is considered regional; otherwise, it is considered simply multilateral and potentially universal. Not least, the scale of an initiative can be assessed according to the scope of its activities. An indicator for this variable is the number of goals as they appear in the founding documents and in the official texts of the organisations related to its procedures. In this respect, one may distinguish among three types of regional arrangements. First, there are *one-dimension* initiatives. These focus only on one sector of activity, for instance, military security. Second, there is *intensive* regionalism. This develops in several fields of a larger area. An arrangement that proposes the enhancement of cooperation mostly in the fields of transport, energy and infrastructure, for example, may be classified under this label. Finally, there are *extensive* regional arrangements. These are instances of cooperation in different areas, which may not be closely related to each other.

### 3.3.2 Institutional design

For the institutional cohesiveness of an arrangement the number of participant countries is not particularly relevant, as long as the structure of power within the organisation and in relation with the member states allows for efficient mechanisms of decision-making. In this respect, particularly significant is the number of dominant actors within the arrangement. First, there may be cases where one actor dominates the decision-making processes. In other instance, there might be a group of dominant actors. Finally, there is also the possibility that no significant actor or group of actors dominates the respective initiatives. To differentiate among these three different situations, I propose to refer to them as *hegemonic*, *clustered*, and *plural* regionalism respectively.

When it comes to the division of powers between the initiative and the member states, within international organization scholarship there are two major approaches. From a first perspective, one should assess the power relation between the organization and the members in terms of establishing norms and rules. In this respect, intergovernmental organizations may either set norms and rules or implement norms and rules. Rittberger and Zangl (2006), refer to these two logics as programme and operation, respectively. In their view, the UN is a programme organization, while the World Bank is an operational one. The problem with this approach is that even the operational organizations set certain norms and rules in relation both with the member states and with third parties (Kratochwil 1989). Therefore, the distinction is not particularly useful for analysis purposes. From a second perspective, one may classify international organizations according to the degree of independence the organization has from its member states. In this sense, Archer (1992) classifies international organizations into three categories. First, they may be operational, that is they have the power and the possibility to take and apply decisions independently from the member states. Second, they may be consultative, which means that such regional initiatives are just

consulted on the matter by the member states. Finally, they may be executive, namely the organization only executes what the member states decide. Drawing on this taxonomy, I propose that regional intergovernmental initiatives be classified into three categories. First, similarly to Archer's operational international organization, *operational* regionalism refers to the instances in which the regional initiative has the power to set and apply its own norms and values, independent of the member states. Second, *executive* regionalism refers to the regional organizations that execute or coordinate the execution of specific projects decided jointly by the member states. Finally, *consultative* regionalism refers to regional arrangements in which the members consult each other with respect to issues of common interest.

From an organisational perspective, regional intergovernmental cooperation can also range from loose talks and regional conferences to more institutionalised structures such as free trade agreements and regional organisations. The loosest variants of international regionalism are the meetings and conferences where heads of state and government and/or other high-ranking political actors discuss, periodically or not, certain issues important for the region. These are rather multilateral diplomatic and political forums at regional level. For this reason, they may qualify as mostly politically oriented initiatives. Often, the issues under scrutiny are related to harder security sectors, such as the management of a regional armed conflict. Sometimes, these meetings can transform into more enduring processes of cooperation (such as regional organisations or cooperative frameworks) but usually they are isolated events. I refer to this category of international regionalism as *ad-hoc political dialogue*. Apart from these, there are also forms of cooperation that require closer cooperation at several levels. They involve many layers of the political apparatus, frequently allow the participation of the business environment and sometimes finance projects that are developed at non-governmental level. Within this type of cooperation, several specific fields

of interest are usually identified. From this point of view, they may qualify as mostly policy arrangements. Regional trade agreements (RTAs) or free trade arrangements at regional level are a species of this cooperation, limited only to the economic sector and to commercial exchanges. This entire class of arrangements may be referred to as *regional frameworks of cooperation*. Finally, there are also more institutionalized forms of regional cooperation, namely regional organisations. Unlike regional frameworks, which are rather decentralized in structure, regional organisations have a general secretariat with a headquarters permanently hosted by one of the participant countries. In addition, they also develop more or less complex bodies with various procedures of decision-making. This is the case of the Council of Europe, for instance. One could further differentiate between such organisations taking into account their complexity in terms of bureaucratic structure. However, given the many variants of complexity, this should be seen rather as a continuum.

These three categories of regionalism may be also placed on a continuum. Political dialogue at the level of heads of states and government is present among all the three types. However, the ad hoc political dialogue does not go much further the level of conferences and similar reunions that set the principles for further cooperation. The secretariat functions are usually fulfilled on a rotation basis by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the participant countries. The regional frameworks may evolve from such conferences when guidelines that are more specific for cooperation are adopted and some institutionalized structure, including various coordinating centres, are established. Political dialogue, directly or through the intermediary phase of a regional framework, may generate also regional organizations. Apart from having explicit goals and objectives that must be put in practice through an institutional structure, they also have a unique permanent secretariat. These various degrees of institutionalization may be an indicator of administrative sustainability. For instance, the more institutionalized,

the stickier that regional arrangement may be (Peters 1999) and consequently the more it may contribute to regional cohesiveness.

**Table 3.3 Dimensions of institutional cohesiveness for international regionalism**

DIMENSION OF ANALYSIS		INDICATOR	TYPE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION
SCOPE	Number of areas	One	One-dimensional
		Several, clustered around one sector of activity	Intensive
		Many, belonging to different sectors of activity	Extensive
STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING	Number of dominant actors within the arrangement	One	Hegemonic
		Group of dominant actors	Cluster
		No dominant actor	Plural
	Division of powers between the initiative and the member states	The initiative has the power to set and apply its own norms and values, independent of the member states	Operational
		The initiative is a channel for consultation among the members on issues of common interest	Consultative
		The initiative executes or coordinates the execution of projects decided jointly by the members	Executive
	Degree of institutionalization	Political dialogue at governmental level, without permanent secretariat, and with focus on political security	Ad hoc political dialogue
		One or a series of arrangements that establish the guidelines, framework and structures of cooperation in certain policy areas	Cooperative framework
		Organisation with permanent secretariat (with permanent headquarters) and other bodies, with focus on one or more security sectors	Regional organisation
SUSTAINABILITY	Financial sources and resources	The initiative relies only on its own income generating instruments	Self-sustained
		The initiative has its own financial instruments but it relies mostly on the contribution of the members	Partially supported
		The initiative is fully supported by the member states	Fully supported

Yet, the administrative sustainability should be assessed also in financial terms. The financial sustainability refers to the financial sources and resources of the respective regional

initiative. From this point of view, regional initiatives may be classified into three categories. First, when they have their own budget they are *self-sustained*. When they have some income generating institutions but still rely on the contribution of the member states they are *partially supported*. Finally, they can be *fully supported* by members.

All these elements of institutional cohesiveness are summarized in Table 3.3 on the previous page and are used in chapter 8 for the analysis of institutional dimension of post Cold War Central and Eastern European regionalism.<sup>45</sup> The usefulness of this grill resides mostly in providing ordering criteria for the complex reality of international regionalism processes. It may also help hypothesizing the relation of this institutional design with the degree of regional cohesiveness, although at theoretical level no yielding proposition is straightforward. For instance, in the case of the organizations' scope, each of the three possible cases may produce opposing hypotheses. Cooperation in only one area might become too technical to support the maintaining of close political links between the participants. At the same time, extensive cooperation could be too diluted to give a particular substance to political friendship. Yet, under the right circumstances, both one-dimensional and extensive cooperation might produce more cohesiveness. One-dimensional cooperation, for example, if developed in hard security issues might generate higher cohesiveness when security threats increase. Instead, continuous extensive cooperation might be an indicator that a group maintains at least a certain level of cohesiveness. Similarly, the degree of institutionalization could indicate opposing situations if not correlated with other factors. For instance, the existence of a regional organization might suggest the existence of strong links between the member countries, which chose to institutionalize more their relations. At the same time, the fact that a grouping is institutionalized as a regional organization might be

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<sup>45</sup> One can notice that the distinction between sustainability and the structure of decision-making is marked with an intermittent line. This expresses the fact that the degree of institutionalization may refer both to the structure of decision-making and to the degree of administrative sustainability of the respective arrangement.

just an incident emerging from technical discussions at the creation of the initiative. To decide which is the case, one needs to investigate the circumstances of creation and development of regional initiatives, as well as the institutional practices around these initiatives. In short, institutional design may indicate or contribute to a certain degree of cohesiveness but at the end of the day the analysis of the practice of cooperation within the established institutional design offers more information about the degree of institutional cohesiveness of a regional intergovernmental cooperation agreement. These issues are further developed in the third part of the thesis, after the second part establishes the historical background and political context in which international regionalism has developed in Central and Eastern Europe.

**PART II**  
**LEGACIES, CANONS, PALIMPSESTS:**  
**HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS AND POLITICAL CONTEXT**  
**OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS**



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **HISTORICAL ANAMNESIS: PREHISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

The previous part presented and discussed the conceptual framework through which the case of post Cold War Central and East European regionalism is analysed in this dissertation. This framework was built around the concept of regional cohesiveness, which I designed as a social constructivist alternative to representing how certain regions remain distinct from others. In line with constructivist thinking, regional cohesiveness does not appear in a vacuum but on a particular historical, cultural and political background. In this second part, I explore this background, identifying the regional institutional and identity legacies, as well as the political context in which this specific case of regionalism has developed. In this chapter, I examine the forms of regional intergovernmental cooperation established in Central and Eastern Europe before the end of the Cold War and shows that, partially with the exception of late 1980s regionalism, these forerunners are instances of negative cooperation (i.e. generated by fear of threat rather than will to develop long lasting frameworks of common political, economic and social development). In the first section, I review the historical and political context in which the nation-states of Central and Eastern Europe formed identifying the main problems of the process. The next section is dedicated to the Interwar alliances, while the last three sections present the evolution of international regionalism in the area during the Cold War.

#### **4.1 The time of national awakening**

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, all Central and East European nations were incorporated into one or more of the three empires that competed for power in this part of the continent. From the viewpoint of ethnic diversity, the Habsburg Monarchy was in the forefront. Its authority covered territories inhabited by Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, Croats, Slovenes, Serbs, Rhutenians, Poles and Italians. The European lands of the Ottoman Empire were just as diverse. Within its ethnic mosaic, the Greeks, the Romanians, the Serbs, the Montenegrins, the Bulgarians, and the Albanians were the most numerous, as well as the most politically vocal. The Russian Empire had a similarly multiethnic character. It ruled over most of the Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, as well as over a large Polish population. A significant number of Poles were also under the rule of Prussia, a state with increasingly strong imperial behaviour. In addition, communities of Germans, who had moved into the area from the twelfth century onwards, were scattered throughout much of the region. Even more dispersed groups but equally prominent were the Armenians, the Gypsies, an important number of Muslims, usually of Turkish or Tatar origin, a numerous Jewish population, as well as several communities of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples such as the Vlachs. With few notable exceptions, these ethnic groups were Christians of different denominations. As imperial subjects, these nations<sup>46</sup> experienced different degrees of autonomy, assimilation, political and cultural awareness, and socio-political rights. Sometimes such differences reflected a situation that had existed before the

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<sup>46</sup> The notion of nation may not be appropriate for all the groups that could be identified on ethnic grounds at that time because not all of them had raised their collective cultural identity at political level. To solve this problem, Kahn (1983a) proposes the concept of “historiopolitical entities,” referring to those groups that organized in their history at least once in a state or quasi-state entity. Yet, while offering an easily applicable criterion, Kahn’s concept excludes groups such as the Jews or the Gypsies. As Banac (1984) argued, the identity puzzle is more complex and cannot be exclusively defined in terms of ethnic belonging, which is a monist measure that does not fit well the pluralism of identity building. In this chapter, nation and nationality are used interchangeably to refer to that group of people, usually defined on ethnic basis, whose political or cultural elites had developed a minimal concept of collective identity for the respective group.

imperial rule. For instance, ethnic groups that had consolidated political structures before their incorporation in an empire usually enjoyed higher degrees of political or cultural autonomy within the empire or at least higher degrees of political and cultural awareness. This was particularly the case of Hungarians in the Habsburg Empire or of Greeks in the Ottoman state (Kann 1983a, 109-49, Jelavich 1983a, 174-9). Similarly, certain religious denominations had more political advantages than others. For example, Catholicism as religion of the Habsburg House had been frequently privileged in the political hierarchies and relations of the Habsburg Empire, especially until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Sked 1989, 47, 143). In the same way, in the Ottoman Empire, Muslim Albanians enjoyed large political advantages within the top levels of imperial administration (Marmullaku 1975, 15-9, Jelavich 1983a, 83-4).

The religious, political and ethnic relationships among different populations in the region were, however, more complex than the patterns of relation with the imperial power suggest and, in the configuration of political interactions, the local context had a significant weight. For example, the political differentiation among different groups was not expressed only in relation to the imperial power but also in contrast with the neighbouring ethnic or religious groups that did not have certain political and social rights. Even when higher degrees of autonomy or socio-political rights had been obtained during the imperial rule, it frequently happened that these were granted rather on the expenses of the neighbouring ethnic or religious groups than by considerable concessions of the imperial power. Particularly within the Habsburg Empire and later within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, these differences were exploited politically in order to maintain a more stable imperial control over some of the territories (Kann 1983a, 29-38). For these reasons, deep mistrust of the neighbours commonly accompanied the processes of national identity formation and political emancipation that took place during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was increasingly visible

since the mid 1800s, when national awareness movements spread throughout the region. Despite the gradual decline of the imperial powers, the distrust and prejudices, as well as different political circumstances frequently hindered cooperation among the emerging nations.

When the First World War began, only six nations succeeded in seceding from imperial power and establish independent states. These were the Greeks, the Romanians, the Serbs, the Montenegrins, the Bulgarians and the Albanians. All had gained independence from the Ottoman Empire and mainly through or after armed conflicts. The Greeks were the first to achieve this goal. Their independence was granted through the Treaty of London (1830) after a series of violent uprisings of the Greek population of the Peloponnesus, as well as after several diplomatic and military incidents related mainly to the Mediterranean politics of the Great Britain, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire (Jelavich 1983a, 214-29). The Romanian and Serbian provinces of the Ottoman Empire had been also experienced high levels of political unrest in the early 1800s and the weak Ottoman government accepted the demands of the Russian Empire, which instituted the protectorate of these territories. After the Crimean War, the protectorate was changed into international supervision, which, after more local national uprisings and an armed conflict between the Russian and the Ottoman forces, ended with the Treaty of Berlin (1878). This gave full independence to Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and created the principality of Bulgaria (Jelavich 1983a, 193-213, 352-61). The abrupt decline of the Ottoman power allowed for further territorial reshuffle. At the same time, it prompted for further national awakening, especially among Albanians. They succeeded in establishing their own state in 1913, with the help of the great powers and after several

Balkan states gave the Ottoman rule in Europe one of the last blows before its collapse, in two consecutive wars (Jelavich 1983b, 100-5).<sup>47</sup>

To these, one should add the particular case of Hungarian autonomy within the Habsburg Empire. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there had been growing tensions between Austria and Hungary. Most importantly, Hungarians wished the restoration of the constitutional rights of the Hungarian Kingdom, many of which had been lost in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Kann 1983a, 118-25). In 1848, the Hungarian elites achieved this goal but only for a short time span, before their revolutionary forces were crushed. Only two decades later, after Prussia defeated Austria in the competition for supremacy in the German world, Hungarians succeeded in obtaining a “compromise” (*Ausgleich*) with Austria. This allowed the Hungarian Kingdom to be self-governed in everything with the exception of foreign affairs, defence and finances (Taylor A.J.P. 1990, 146-8, Sked 1989, 190-7). In this way, a different power-sharing mechanism had been created within the newly branded Austro-Hungarian Empire. Except for the Germans, Hungarians had become the strongest in political terms among all the other nations of the multiethnic state (Taylor A.J.P. 1990, 142). Nevertheless, this type of self-government was not equivalent to full independence but rather to an extraordinarily high degree of autonomy (Williamson 1991, 13-14).<sup>48</sup>

All the same, these were significant political advancements, as most nations in the region were still struggling for political rights and more autonomy. The Czechs, for instance, which were the largest minority in the Austrian lands of the Dual Monarchy, sought to obtain a

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<sup>47</sup> In 1912, in what is known the first Balkan War, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia attacked the Ottoman Empire with the intention of dividing among them Albania and Macedonia, territories still under Ottoman rule. Their advancement was stopped through the intervention of the great powers, who, for strategic reasons insisted on the creation of an independent Albanian state. Unsatisfied with the results, which had left Greece and Serbia with several important territorial acquisitions that she would have liked, Bulgaria attacked these two countries and generated a second Balkan war. With Romania and the Ottoman Empire joining in, Bulgaria was rapidly defeated (Hall 2000).

<sup>48</sup> From a certain viewpoint, neither the independence of some Balkan states was truly complete during the period. Greece remained under the protectorate of Great Britain, France and Russia until 1923, Serbia became a client of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878 and remained so until 1903, while Bulgaria was under direct Russian influence almost a decade after the Treaty of Berlin (Jelavich 1983a, 299).

similar “compromise” as the Hungarians. Less organized than the latter and facing a large German bureaucracy in their lands, they did not succeed (Kann 1983a, 182-91). In contrast, the Croats had their own version of the *Ausgleich* (Nagodba), which should have granted them extensive self-government rights (Jelavich 1983a, 65-6, Taylor A.J.P. 1990, 149-50). However, the policies of national homogenization within the Hungarian kingdom rendered formal these rights (Kann 1983a, 233-59, Williamson 1991, 24).

In the Russian Empire, ethnic groups were even worst off in terms of political and cultural autonomy. During the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century, this state led a politics of high centralisation and it frequently attempted to russify the socio-political life of its ethnic minorities. Poles, for instance, enjoyed some local freedom in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but, after several notable uprisings in the context of national awakening, their kingdom was subjected to fierce centralisation, while the Russian language was imposed in courts and education in the detriment of Polish (Polunov 2005, 143-4). The Uniate (Greek Catholic) church was also dissolved in some parts of the empire, for fear that Uniates would have had allegiances rather towards the Pope or the Habsburg emperor than towards the tsar (Wandycz 1974, 21). Not least, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German-influenced educational system in the Baltic provinces had become russified.

The emergence of the new independent states on the map of Europe added more entropy to the already widespread turmoil. Most importantly, they had not settled the difficult question of borders. Large ethnic groups were outside their nation-state. After the creation of the Albania, for instance, a sizeable Albanian population was left out in Kosovo and Metohija. A large Romanian population lived in Transylvania. Greek, Albanian and various Slavic groups lived in Kosovo, Thessalonica and Bitola.<sup>49</sup> These ethnic configurations and the

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<sup>49</sup> Within the Ottoman state, these three were the so-called Macedonian vilayets. After the Second Balkan War (1913), they were divided between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria through a treaty signed in Bucharest (Hall 2000, 123-5).

existence of nation-states that could have claimed and acquired more territories fuelled the visions of states in their “natural limits.” For instance, the political fragility of the Ottoman rule favoured the political projects of Greater Greece, Greater Bulgaria or Greater Serbia. The increased ethno-national awareness of other Slavs from the region, most notably Slovenes and Croats, also contributed to the emergence of different plans of union or political collaboration in the Balkans. Similar ideas were spread among the nations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Most notably, the decline of the Austrian power and the increasing centralization of the territories under Hungarian rule strengthened the project of national homogenization within the Hungarian Kingdom. Yet, in an area so much ethnically mixed, these projects of “greater” political entities could not but lead to conflicts with neighbouring countries.

#### ***4.2 Unwanted alliances***

In this context, the outbreak of the First World War appeared to all nations within the region as an important political opportunity to achieve the goal of national unity. For the European powers, this was also a chance to establish a new system of security and stability on the continent after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This opportunity was to be exploited for both purposes but the results had been hardly imagined. Instead of an empire less in the region, all three empires had disappeared. This meant the emergence of new states, new borders and new power relations within the area and in Europe through various peace agreements concluded between 1919 and 1923. After having been dismantled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Poland could re-emerge as an independent state. At the same time, the political agreements between Czechs and Slovaks led to the creation of the new state of Czechoslovakia. The Kingdom of Romania was also greatly enlarged. On the other hand, Bulgaria was deprived of some of the territory previously acquired, while Hungary’s borders

dramatically shrank. From the ruins of the Russian empire also appeared the independent Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Former subjects of the Dual Monarchy, Croats and Slovenes joined in 1918 the already independent states of Serbia and Montenegro to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later to become the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929). This also included Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Slav and partly Muslim territory, as well as the province of Kosovo, inhabited by a numerous population of Muslim Albanians.

Instead of cooling down the political European climate, many of these arrangements generated further tensions, particularly territorial disputes. This happened partially due to the fact that the peace agreements were general in terms and the details were frequently left for later settlement by whatever means might be found appropriate by the parties involved. Sometimes, like in the case of the Polish-Czechoslovak dispute over Teschen and the Polish-Lithuanian dispute over Vilnius, the divergences were dealt through armed intervention. At the same time, with the new territories, many of these states had gained sizeable minorities. In fact, almost all the newly emerged or enlarged states were empires in miniature and reproduced many of the older empires' behaviour in terms of political rights and freedoms for the non-dominant groups. For instance, in Poland around 35% of the population was not Polish, while in Czechoslovakia around 33% of the citizens were not Czechs or Slovaks (Bogdan 1991, 263-5). Similarly, in expanded Romania almost 28% of the population was not Romanian, compared to 8% before the territorial acquisitions brought by the First World War (Crampton and Crampton 1996, 113). Even in the more democratic and ethnically balanced Czechoslovakia, Czechs had a dominant position compared to Slovaks and even more compared to its German minority (Bošák 1991, Bogdan 1991, 318-25). In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Serbs also acquired a leading role, which fuelled political tensions most notably with the Croats and Slovenes (Pavlowich 2003, 63-6).



Not least, the unstable external environment enhanced the frailty of the new states. Beyond the threat of revisionist neighbours, the countries in the region faced the increasingly aggressive politics of the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy. The governments of the Central and East European states feared particularly the territorial ambitions of these three countries and in the 1930s, increasingly also their ideological propaganda. The ideological and political ambitions of the USSR were considered the biggest menace of the three (Rotschild 1992, 5). However, before the Second World War, Germany proved to have been a much more important subject of concern, of which the Central and East European governments became aware rather late (*ibid.*, 5-8). The peace settlement left Germany the largest country in Europe, except for Russia. Its economic influence had spread throughout the entire region through bilateral intergovernmental arrangements or aggressive trade. The Weimar Republic directed its revisionist pressure almost exclusively against Poland but with the advent of Hitler, Germany's political and territorial ambitions in the area no longer had limits (*ibid.*, 6). In comparison, Italy had a more limited program but it affected directly Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece (Fischer-Galați 1992, 6-8). The development in most of the region of politically organized groups that were ideologically akin to Nazism, Fascism and Communism, which were increasingly enjoying popular and political support, made these external threats even more palpable for the governments of the newly independent or enlarged states.

For these reasons, a series of alliances emerged in the Interwar period. All of them were motivated by strategic considerations and / or fear of war. The first such alliance was established between Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia through a series of bilateral agreements concluded between 1920 and 1922. Supported by France, the purpose of this arrangement was to prevent the restoration of the Habsburg dynasty in Hungary, as well as to defend against this country's revisionist policy. In 1933, the participant states signed a pact in Geneva, known as the Little Entente or the Pact of the Organisation, which legally

bounded them to collaborate. More specifically, the parties should have consulted each other in matters related to their foreign policy, particularly in security issues.<sup>50</sup> In political and security terms, instead of providing long-term stability in the increasingly tensioned climate in the region, the Little Entente forced Hungary to be more receptive to collaboration with Germany and Italy (Hanák 1992, 180). Accordingly, in 1934, Austria, Hungary and Italy signed the so-called Rome Protocols, an agreement for greater economic and political cooperation among them. Soon, this new alliance sided with Nazi Germany, which generated further tension in the region (Rothschild 1992, 10). The same year, Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia established the Balkan Entente, a treaty of cooperation whose signatories agreed to mutually recognise their borders as they resulted from the Peace arrangements in the aftermath of the First World War. This helped normalize the relations between Greece and Turkey. However, after Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy and the Soviet Union refused to sign the agreement, it was increasingly clear that such a system of alliances would not last for long.

In the Baltic area, during the Interwar period there had been several failed attempts of creating a system of alliances. The most important obstacle for such an endeavour had been the highly tensioned relation between Poland and Lithuania, who had several territorial disputes throughout the period, some involving the use of armed forces (Rodgers 1975). In 1934, when the German danger had become evident, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania finally signed an agreement. This Baltic Entente came, however, too late. Furthermore, confined to mutual consultation and without any military clauses, it could not have been an instrument of war (Anderson 1988, 93). For this reason, when the armed conflict broke in Europe, the three Baltic countries declared themselves neutral, hoping that they will stay far from the

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<sup>50</sup> On the occasion, the Little Entente also designed a more developed institutional framework. Its most interesting feature was that, beyond a political body (Permanent Council) and a secretariat, the alliance set an Economic Council as a means to coordinate the economic interests of the members. Yet, the economic exchanges among the three countries were never boosted through the arrangement.

turmoil (O'Connor 2003, 108). Despite such measures, Estonia and Latvia were forced to sign non-aggression treaties with Germany (Crow 1993). After the USSR occupied eastern Poland, all three were forced to sign "mutual assistance treaties." Through rigged elections and military occupation, this strategy led to the loss of independence of the three republics and their incorporation in the Soviet Union (O'Connor 2003, 110-6, Anderson 1974).

During the Second World War, the alliances developed in the region were exclusively driven by the political and security necessities of the war times. Particular cases were the projects of a Balkan Union between Yugoslavia and Greece and that of a Central European Alliance between Poland and Czechoslovakia (Bán 1997, 8-9). These were drafts of regional integration concluded by the governments in exile of these countries at the suggestion of the Great Britain. Open for other countries as well, these proposals envisaged a complex institutional structure. The potential federations should have had a political body coordinated by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, an economic financial body, a military body and a common staff. The Balkan Union should have prepared also a convention on a Balkan monetary union. By 1943, such projects of federation no longer suited the context and ceased to exist (Lopandić 2001, 48-50).<sup>51</sup>

### ***4.3 Unstable times, improbable projects***

The political climate after the Second World War was as tensioned as during the previous decades. The traumas of the war had left deep traces at all levels in all the Central and East European states. Most countries were socially and economically exhausted after the war effort. Their resources had been systematically plundered and material losses were equivalent to almost 30% of the national assets (Berend and Ránki 1974, 340-2). Human

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<sup>51</sup> During the early 1940s, within the European diplomatic circles several other (con)federative projects were discussed in relation to the region but none materialized. According to most of these, Central and Eastern Europe could have comprised of three large federative structures - a Balkan, a Danubian and a Polish-Baltic one (Bán 1997, 1-35).

losses across the region mounted to over 12 million people (Bogdan 1991, 390). Instead of reconciliation, retaliatory actions took place across the entire region. These targeted particularly the German community, who were accused in bloc of having collaborated with the Nazi regime. Consequently, a sizeable number of Germans were deported or fled the region (Prauser and Rees 2004). Minorities belonging to ethnic groups whose nation-states had been allied to Germany during the war were also affected by retaliation. For instance, in 1945, Czechoslovakia initiated an ethnic cleansing of the country deporting more than two million Germans, as well as several hundred thousands Hungarians, many of whom were put into forced labour (Pykel 2004; Apor 2004). Almost four million Germans were expelled from Poland, of which more than half from East Prussia (Fitzmaurice 1998, 13). But Germans and the other minorities that had been on the losers' side at the end of the war were not the only ones affected by such practices. Most notably (in terms of quantity), two million Poles had been expelled from the Soviet Union by 1948 (Bogdan 1991, 391).

Politically, the Central and East European regimes were highly unstable. The few remaining elements of democracy were on the verge of extinction. Unsupported externally and under heavy pressure from the Soviet Union, the Central and East European states became communist in less than three years from the end of the war, mostly through rigged elections. With the notable exceptions of Yugoslavia and Albania where communists acquired political power through their own efforts, all the other communist parties across the region had been greatly supported by their Soviet counterpart to whom they were obedient (Skilling 1966, 36-8). Internally, the new communist states reproduced most of the Soviet policies. By the second half of the 1960s, the nationalization of property, collectivization of land and agricultural processes, five year economic plans, the cult of personality of the party leaders and show trials had been experimented in most of the region (Skilling 1966, 72, 93). In fact, in the first decade of communist regimes, in each of these countries (with the exception of

Yugoslavia) Soviet advisors were so influential that they had developed parallel structures of control within the state structure (Schöpflin 1993, 77). Externally, the forced treaties of cooperation and mutual aid signed with the USSR limited much of their foreign policy. Despite the fact that the Central and East European states' politics was increasingly dominated by the Soviet Union both in internal and external affairs, several projects of regional intergovernmental cooperation developed immediately after the Second World War. These manifested particularly in the Balkans, which were slightly further from the Soviet influence. Some of them were older projects revived in the new political context. Others were new alliances intended to help the member states get out of the Soviet sphere.

#### **4.3.1 The Balkan (con)federation**

One of the most ambitious of these plans was the creation of a Balkan (con)federation. The idea had emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the debates concerning the nature of state that Southern Slavs might create. At that time, within the context of national emancipation within the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, the gathering of Southern Slavs in an independent federation was a politically appealing and mobilising idea. Such a state, most probably a federation, would have united the Christian Southern Slavs, namely the Slovenes, the Croats, the Serbs and the Bulgarians (Trgovčević 2003, 230, Velikonja 2003, 84). For various political reasons, Bulgarians were not included in the final political project of Yugoslavia, which emerged politically in 1918 as Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.<sup>52</sup>

During the Interwar period, an ultranationalist Macedonian group called the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) made resurface the plans of a Balkan wide union. While a part of IMRO proposed that Macedonia should be annexed to Bulgaria instead of remaining under the authority of the Kingdom, another part militated openly for communism and the creation of a Balkan federation, beyond national or ethnic affiliation

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<sup>52</sup> Instead, through territorial acquisitions, Yugoslavia incorporated a sizeable number of Muslims, many of whom Albanians. Yet, the Yugoslav concept of nation-state did not diminish its strong ethnic dimension.

(Djordjevic 1992, 320-1, Held 1994, 21). Within the same period, the Comintern also strongly supported the idea that Yugoslavia should have been replaced with a Balkan federation (Cviic 1991, 14-5, Marmullaku 2003, 312).

After the Second World War, the communist project gained a new impetus with the Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito. Although the Comintern would have liked that the arrangement to included Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia, Tito preferred to resurrect the idea of a Balkan federation as a means to distance Yugoslavia from the USSR influence and become an important player in the area (Lopandić 2001, 50). Under these circumstances, a partnership with the increasingly Stalinist Romania was not likely in the 1950s. Yet, several attempts at collaborating with Bulgaria, Albania and Greece had been made during the period. Most notably, between 1944 and 1948, the Bulgarian and Yugoslav governments discussed the possibility of uniting their territories in a federal state (Jović 2003, 163). Despite the fact that in 1948 they even signed an agreement in this sense, the two parts had opposing views. The Yugoslav government would have liked that the new state had seven federal units: Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro and Macedonia. The borders between these provinces would have remained the same as before the creation of the new federal state. The Bulgarian government, however, wanted parity between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, as well as the partition of Macedonia (Marmullaku 2003, n16). The situation was complicated also by the fact that Tito's hesitation to abandon the ethnic concept of Yugoslavia even in an enlarged Balkan federation generated tensions with Albanians in Kosovo. The Albanian population of Yugoslavia felt alienated to be part of a state built on a concept of national unity that excluded them (Jović 2003, 163-4). The arrangement was also opposed externally, particularly by the Great Britain and the USSR. For Great Britain, the new state would have meant a stronger communist presence in the Balkans, and consequently closed to the

Mediterranean, where it had strong political and economic interests. The revolutionary dimension that the new Yugoslav identity was planned to have after the incorporation of Bulgaria also distanced Great Britain from backing such a development in the region. The Soviet Union had a more ambiguous attitude. While such a federation of communist states was perceived as a means to strengthen the power of communists in Europe and in the region, the fact that Tito's ambition seemed to be the unification and leadership of the Southern Slavs was regarded with much circumspection in the USSR. Most importantly, the strong ethnic dimension of the envisaged federal state of Southern Slavs was a deviation from the internationalist principles. Not least, Stalin opposed the 1948 agreement because through such projects Tito could have been a potential rival in the socialist camp (Jović 2003, 162-3).

Although highly dominated by the ethnic dimension, Tito's view of a Balkan federation was not limited necessarily to the Southern Slavs. Apparently, during the first official visit to Yugoslavia of Enver Hoxha, the Albanian communist leader, Tito discussed the possibility that Albania became a Yugoslav republic (Marmullaku 2003, 312). The idea of a federation between the two countries might have been a suggestion of Stalin (O'Donnell, 1999, 23, Jović 2003, 163) but Tito and Hoxha used it for their own purposes.<sup>53</sup> The two governments signed on that occasion an Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation, which had an annex of two secret articles. This annex was an agreement that the Kosovo and Metohija would be united to Albania, if Albania had ever joined Yugoslavia or a Balkan (con)federation (Marmullaku 2003, 312-3).<sup>54</sup> Shortly after, however, the relation between the two countries

<sup>53</sup> Even if Stalin had not suggested the rapprochement between the two, the increasing economic interdependence between Albania and Yugoslavia in the second half of the 1940s might have prompted further political cooperation (O'Donnell 1999, 20).

<sup>54</sup> A former official of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Ramadan Marmullaku found about the existence of this secret annex from the first Yugoslav ambassador in Albania, Josip Djerdja, who served as Tito's and Hoxha's translator during the visit of the Albanian leader to Belgrade. In 1960, after Albania broke off the diplomatic relations with the USSR, the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia attempted to find the secret annex in Tito's archives but without any success. The document was not found

deteriorated, as Albania sided with the USSR following a spilt between Belgrade and Moscow. Accordingly, the arrangement on Kosovo and Metohija was no longer possible.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4.3.2 The Second Balkan Pact

The regional project of intergovernmental cooperation with Greece emerged later, in the mid-1950s, and did not take place within the conceptual framework of a Balkan federation. Like the latter, it also revived an older idea of cooperation in the Balkans, namely the Balkan Agreement Pact (Entente) of 1934 between Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia. This time Romania no longer participated but, like its Interwar predecessor, the new project was mainly a defensive alliance. Although it existed for only two years (1953-1955), the Second Balkan Pact yielded four treaties and several institutions of cooperation. The first agreement was signed in Ankara (February 1953) and took the form of a treaty on friendship and cooperation. Open to other parties, it mainly provided the basis for consultation on all issues of common interest. Among these, the treaty expressly mentioned common defence and the establishment of a framework for cooperation in spheres of economy, technology and culture. Half a year later, a supplementary agreement to the Ankara Treaty set a permanent Secretariat. This consisted from a Committee, which was a political body, and a Permanent Bureau, which was a technical body. The secretariat, whose status was of international organization, had also four sections: political, military, economic, and one dedicated to culture and education (Lopandić 2001, 52-4). The Pact's most important development was, however, the signing of the Bled Treaty in August 1954, which established formalized military cooperation among the parties. Through this arrangement, the Pact became a

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either in Tirana, most probably because both Tito and Hoxha destroyed them after the deterioration of the relation between Albania and Yugoslavia (Marmullaku 2003, 312-3, n15-16).

<sup>55</sup> A side effect of this evolution in the Albanian-Yugoslav relation was the aggravation of the situation of the Yugoslav Albanians. They supported Tito's attitude towards the USSR, partly because this might have stopped the Soviet type policies within Yugoslavia, including the collectivisation in agriculture, which discontented the predominantly peasant Albanians from Kosovo. However, Yugoslav Albanians were considered second-hand citizens and during the 1950s, when the Yugoslav government feared a Soviet attack through Albania, many were encouraged to register as Turks and emigrate to Turkey (Marmullaku 2003, 313-4).



political and military alliance for a period of 20 years (Lopandić 2001, 53-4). Most importantly, it included a clause similar to the 5<sup>th</sup> article of the North Atlantic Treaty that established NATO. Accordingly, a military attack towards one of the signing parties was to be considered an attack on the entire alliance. If such a case occurred, all means could have been employed to assist the attacked country, as long as they were in accordance to the provisions of the UN Charter. Since both Greece and Turkey were NATO members, this treaty made Yugoslavia at least a *de facto* NATO partner. The new agreement also instituted a Permanent Council, which was reunion of ministers of foreign affairs and other government members that should have taken place twice a year (ibid.). The final agreement of the organization was signed in March 1955 in Ankara, with the purpose of establishing a consultative parliamentary assembly. The purpose of the newly designed institution was to examine the possibilities for further cooperation between the signing parties. The Assembly should have had 20 representatives from each of the participant countries and its decision-making procedures were based on a majority vote system. Yet, this body never became a reality. The entire organization became obsolete, shortly after the signing of this treaty, mostly because that year the relations between Greece and Turkey seriously deteriorated in their quarrel over Cyprus. At the same time, Yugoslavia had normalized its relations with the communist bloc, especially with the USSR. For this reason, the Balkan Pact was no longer attractive to the former allies (Lopandic 2001, 51-53, Held 1994, 73). In security terms, from this moment onwards the communist states were left to the Soviet sphere of influence.

#### **4. 4 The Soviet-led regional arrangements**

By the mid of the century, the entire Central and Eastern Europe was under communist rule. Before the Second World War, this influence was limited mainly to the communist parties and was exercised especially through the Comintern (The Third International), an

organization created in Moscow in 1919 with the purpose of overthrowing bourgeoisie throughout the world and instituting an international Soviet republic (Broué 1997, 85-7). Officially, the Comintern was independent from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In reality, however, it was a section of that Party's Central Committee and it remained so until the dissolution of the organization in 1943 (Broué 1997, 550).<sup>56</sup> The Soviet control over the other communist parties was institutionally re-established in 1947 through the creation of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties (Cominform). The purpose of the new organization was to coordinate the actions of the communist parties under Soviet direction (Berend 1996, 35, 96). In practice, after the Soviet supported communist parties gained power throughout the region, this meant that the Soviet Union had a tool to influence the governments of the Central and East European states, especially with respect to their foreign policy. This tool did not survive much Stalin's regime. In 1956, with the normalization of the relation between the USSR and Yugoslavia, the Cominform disappeared. However, by mid-1950s the Soviet control of the region had already spread beyond the ideological dimension and entered into the economic and security realms.

#### **4.4.1 Comecon**

After the Second World War, the economic situation was disastrous in most of the European countries. In order to help their recovery, the United States offered for almost five years about 1% of its annual GNP as financial assistance for economic reconstruction (Berend 1996, 334, Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 534). This was the so-called Marshall Plan and initially it targeted all the European countries that had been affected by the war, including the Soviet Union and the newly communist states. Its announcement was made public in June 1947. Shortly after, Germany was tipped to be included in the financial program, while

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<sup>56</sup> The circumstances under which this organization was dissolved are still subject of debate. Yet, among the various factors, it seems that a war agreement between Churchill and Stalin contributed mostly to its disappearance (Claudin 1975).

the Central and East European governments that were not fully under communism control, namely Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, manifested interest in receiving such aid (Turnock 2006, 293, 351). This prompted the Soviet government to call a conference of the communist parties in order to settle the question. On the occasion, the Cominform was created and the Marshall Aid was forcibly rejected (Skilling 1966, 216).<sup>57</sup>

However, the Central and East European states, as well as the Soviet Union seriously needed strategies for economic recovery. Accordingly, at the beginning of January 1949, the representatives of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania met in Moscow at the initiative of the Soviet Union in order to discuss the framework for closer economic cooperation among them. At the end of the month, the six governments made public the establishment of a Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or Comecon). Yugoslavia declined its participation. Albania joined a month later. The German Democratic Republic followed in 1950 (Spulber 1957).

From the very beginning, the Soviet Union had not only a leading but also a controlling role. According to the founding documents, the organization should have fostered the exchange of experience in the economic field. The participant countries were supposed to offer assistance to one another in technical matters, as well as with respect to raw materials, foodstuff, machinery, equipment and other products (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 535). Yet, the reasons for which the USSR promoted Comecon were mostly negative. Stalin never searched for integrating the participant countries into a genuine market or to maximize integration through trade.<sup>58</sup> Instead, the organization should have only provided a protected environment

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<sup>57</sup> This was probably the decisive moment for the fate of the Central and East European states in the next four decades, as they might have escaped the Soviet control if Poland and Czechoslovakia had been allowed to benefit from the Marshall Program. This would have triggered the participation of other states and soon after the region would have been rather within the Western sphere of influence than in the Soviet one (Fischer-Galați 1992, 12, Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 535).

<sup>58</sup> Like the USSR, the new communist regimes opted for rather autarkic economic strategies based on the development of the heavy industry but largely neglecting trade (Skilling 1966, 216, Spulber 1957, 358-63).

within which to maximize power, stability and economic growth of the socialist states. Thus, Comecon was rather a means to keep the satellite countries out of the economic reach of other powers (Wallace and Clarke 1986, 1-3). For this reasons, it “was often dismissed in the West as little more than a figleaf with which to cover the nakedness of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe” (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 536).

Despite the obvious imbalance and the security implications of the designed mechanisms of cooperation, the communist states were forced to collaborate with each other economically. Most importantly, they had lost the Western economic partners and markets. This was partly the result of the economic sanctions imposed upon the communist regimes by the Western countries (Skilling 1966, 216-7). In addition, the system of trade put forward by newly established General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) insisted on the non-discriminatory treatment of trade partners. This requirement was against the notion of socialist integration and solidarity, particularly because, within the planned economy system, trade was not led by private initiative but was a state monopoly (Brada 1988, 654-5). Not least, the common political and ideology beliefs, as well as similar development strategies drew the Central and East European states to each other. Isolated from the other markets, the economic relations within the framework of the Soviet-led organization developed rapidly. By 1953, intra-Comecon trade accounted for almost 80% of the foreign trade of the member states. Only fifteen years earlier, in 1938, the trade with each other was less than 13% (Robson 1987, 224-6). This system of economic and trade relations protected against risk and competition. In a first phase, this stabilized economically the communist countries and gave legitimacy to the Soviet Union (Turnock 2006, 296). However, without fearing risk and competition, the quality of the Central and Eastern products steadily decreased and the

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Initially, this led to high economic growth, which further strengthened the faith in this type of approach (Turnock 2006, 296). At the same time, the communist states continued to collaborate outside the Comecon framework until late 1950s, which diminished the role of the organization. Not least, planning was still national and therefore the USSR leverage in this respect was not significant at that time (Spulber 1957, 431).

Soviet market was invaded by larger than normal supplies of low quality goods produced in Central and Eastern Europe.

Confronted with such problems, the Comecon required better tools for organizing the economies of the participant countries and the trade relations among them. Partially with this purpose, the member states adopted in 1959 a Charter modelled after the Treaty of Rome, which established more clear institutions. The Session of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the Executive Committee of the Council, the Secretariat of the Council, four council committees, twenty-four standing commissions and several associated bodies constituted the main institutional framework of the organization. Officially, the highest Comecon organ was the Session of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, a meeting of delegations from each member country, usually headed by prime ministers. This examined the problems of socialist economic integration and set the strategies for the Secretariat and other subordinate bodies. Nevertheless, in practice, the most important organ of the Comecon was the Conference of First Secretaries of Communist and Workers' Parties and of the Heads of Government. This was a regular meeting of party and government leaders, which was not formally included in the Comecon institutional hierarchy. Among the other institutions, the Executive Committee and the Council Committee for Cooperation in Planning were also central to the system of power relations and decision-making. The Executive Committee was a regular meeting of representatives from each member country, usually the deputy chairmen of the Councils of Ministers and was commonly held in Moscow. Its main purpose was to elaborate policy recommendations and supervise their implementation. The Council Committee for Cooperation in Planning coordinated the national economic plans of the Comecon members. Gathering the heads of the national planning offices, the main purpose of this body was to draft agreements for joint projects and adopt them.

To this institutional framework, several principles added as a guideline for the relations among the Comecon partners. In the first two decades of the organization, one of the most important was the so-called Sofia principle, adopted in the same year in which the Comecon was founded. According to it, member countries were required to transfer technology to the other Comecon states at a charge that usually covered only the costs of providing technical documentation. The reason for this type of cooperation was that after the war, particularly the USSR needed a new infusion of technology (Kaser 1967, 78-81). The more developed Czechoslovakia and East Germany were not eagerly willing to do so but the practice lasted until the end of the 1960s when the USSR started to develop more expensive technologies in several key fields that was no longer disposed to share (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 542-3). Another principle was that of *sovereign equality*. Under the provisions of the 1959 Charter, this meant that each country had the right to equal representation and one vote in all organs of the organization, regardless of its economic size or its contribution to Comecon's budget (Kaser 1967, 109-12). In 1967, this was supplemented with the *interested party principle*, according to which member states were able to opt-out from the projects they did not like and even veto those that seemed to be against their national interest. In practice, if states did not wish to participate in a Comecon project, they could only abstain. Even so, the principle was frequently invoked by the Central and East European states for fear that economic interdependence would further reduce their political sovereignty (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 546). The consequence of this mechanism was that neither the Soviet Union nor the Comecon had supranational authority. This ensured some degree of freedom but rendered the organization inefficient in economic terms.

An important attempt at creating an efficient economic area had been initiated in the early 1960s with the approval of the Basic Principles of the International Socialist Division of Labour (1961). The objective of this program was to stimulate the specialization of each of

the member countries in certain fields. In other words, each Comecon member should have produced only certain categories of goods. Consequently, some states were required to concentrate on industry, while others on agriculture. This strategy would have made the communist countries highly dependent on each other but mostly on the Soviet Union. In practical terms, it would have meant the beginning of supranationalism under Soviet authority (Kaser 1967, 113-27). Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania opposed the plan. Especially the latter, which according to the Basic Principles should have become an agricultural country, did so in a very vocal way, an action that was considered a declaration of independence (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 560).<sup>59</sup> With the Soviet-Chinese controversies sharpening in the background, the result of this discontent within Comecon was that eventually the Basic Principles were abandoned.

Under such circumstances, the expansion of the West-East trade was a natural option. In need for Western products, technology, financial support, and newer systems of management and marketing, the Comecon area opened to the world. The move was possible due to some internal reform within the communist countries prompted by the process of de-Stalinization that had started in the Soviet Union and later spread throughout much of the Central and Eastern Europe in the 1960s, as well as by the political détente in the early 1970s (Wallace and Clarke 1986). However, the inflow of Western technology and capital was frequently wasted. Money was badly spent, frequently on luxuries for the party elites (Turnock 2006, 315). In addition, many of the contracts were not necessarily beneficial for the communist states (Wallace and Clarke 1986, 147-9, Lavigne 1991, 243-5). As more debt accumulated, exports also became increasingly difficult. Furthermore, the international economic environment hampered the recovery. For instance, the economic recession that the Western

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<sup>59</sup> More specifically, the Romanian government condemned in April 1964 the so-called “Valev plan”, a proposal for establishing a Danubian region from about 40% of Romania, 30% of Bulgaria and large parts of Ukraine. In Europe, this would have been one of the main agricultural areas of the Comecon space (Berend 1996, 130).

countries experienced at that time made significantly reduced exports to Western Europe.<sup>60</sup> Stagnation within USSR also limited the economic help that the Soviet Union could offer to the Central and East European satellites (Lavigne 1991, 244). As a result, between 1979 and 1983 most of these countries experienced acute economic recessions. Particularly Poland and Romania faced severe economic contractions and drastic reductions in living standards (Berend 1996, 222-54, Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 563-9).

For this reason, in mid-1980s there have been several attempts to design a better planning system within Comecon. Yet, with the Soviet Union increasingly open to the Western world and the other communist states even more eager to look westwards, these did not have significant results. By the end of the decade, the organization had become obsolete. In 1990, Czechoslovakia threatened to secede if the others did not put an end to it. Feeble efforts to reform the Comecon followed in the next months but in 1991, at Budapest, the Comecon Council decided to liquidate the organization (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 582).<sup>61</sup> At that time, the trade among the Comecon partners had fell to less than 7%, while trade with the Common Market rose from 25% in 1989 to 50% in 1992 (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1994).<sup>62</sup>

#### 4.4.2 The Warsaw Pact

In 1955, the communist bloc established a military security complement to the Comecon. The founding agreement was signed in Warsaw and brought together the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania. Its establishment was prompted by the transformations of the European security environment. Most notably,

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<sup>60</sup> Traditionally, within the communist bloc, exports were also outfavoured by domestic supply (Csikós-Nagy 1986).

<sup>61</sup> Since the organization never had legal personality, the liquidation was mainly a political act.

<sup>62</sup> The figures include data referring also to Mongolia, Cuba and Vietnam, which had become members in 1962, 1972 and 1978 respectively. They do not include, however, data on Yugoslavia, which was an associate partner since 1964, neither on Albania, which stopped participated to Comecon after the 1961 Sino-Soviet split though it officially withdrew from organization only in the late 1980s. Despite such distortion, the figures reflect the degree to which the former communist partners maintained economic relations among them.



several Western European countries and the United States regrouped for military security purposes creating in 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in 1955 the Western European Union (WEU). In early May 1955, Germany became a member of NATO.<sup>63</sup> Several days later, the members of the communist bloc explicitly expressed these concerns in a treaty they signed in Warsaw at the initiative of the Soviet Union (Warsaw Pact 1955). This Warsaw Pact was therefore intended to be a counterpart to the Western security organization. It remained so until its dissolution in the early 1990s (Fodor 1990).

Even more than the Comecon, the Warsaw Pact was dominated by the Soviets. This was visible, not only in the relations between the members of the organization, but was also embedded in the power-sharing and institutional mechanisms. Its headquarters was in Moscow. The Supreme Commander of the Warsaw troops was the first Deputy Minister of Defence of the USSR. The head of military staff was also a member of the Soviet Minister of Defence. The strategies and all documentation were developed within the Soviet Union and military equipment was mainly provided by the Soviet Union. All non-military activities were coordinated by a Political Consultative Committee, highly obedient to the government in Kremlin, especially in the organization's first decades of existence (Fodor 1999, 32-77, Held 1994, 371-2). The power of the Soviet control became clear shortly after the creation of the Pact. In 1956, the Soviet troops invaded Hungary and violently crashed the revolutionary movements that for a short time had managed to overthrow the communist regime. They stayed there until 1991. In the process, none of the member countries of the Warsaw Pact contributed with troops. However, the highly Stalinized Romanian government allowed in November 1956 the free passage of the Soviet armed forces. Surrounded exclusively by communist countries and sharing with the Soviet Union almost a third of its borders, as well as highly sensitive to its own Hungarian question, the Romanian part was cooperative on the

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<sup>63</sup> Although Germany was not a founding member of the NATO, the German question had been a key issue for the Alliance since the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty (Kaplan 2001, 196-7).

matter (Berend 1996, 127). In return, the Soviet troops stationed in the country since the end of the Second World War were withdrawn (Held 1994, 435).<sup>64</sup>

However, the most impressive manifestation of the Soviet military force in Central and Eastern Europe would take place several years later, in Czechoslovakia. In 1968, the Czechoslovak government had introduced a reform program that would have liberalized some of the social and political life of the country. The Warsaw Pact partners, with the exception of Romania, accused the reformers of endangering communism in Czechoslovakia by allowing the penetration of “imperialist” elements. After a series of negotiations, the head of the Czechoslovak government, Alexander Dubcek, and the Soviet leaders agreed that the reform be toned down but the country would be allowed to pursue its own way to socialism. Yet, allowing a deviation from the path set by the Soviet Union might have meant for the USSR the beginning of its control’s decline in Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, the Soviet Politburo decided the invasion of Czechoslovakia. This time the Warsaw Pact members, except Romania, contributed with troops but the Soviet Union maintained its leader position.<sup>65</sup> The reform movement was easily crashed (Skilling 1976, Mastny 2005, 34-9). The consequences of this force action were long lasting and settled much of the security relations within the communist bloc in the remainder of the Cold war period. Albania, who had left the Pact over ideological differences with the Soviet Union following the Sino-Soviet split in 1961, withdrew officially from the organization and never returned after the Prague Spring (Mastny 2005, 37). Under the new leadership of Nicolae Ceaușescu, Romania seized the opportunity and embarked in a quasi-independent foreign policy.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Partially, this was the result of previous negotiations with the Soviet leaders, as well as an effect of the dispute between the USSR and China. In 1958, after Chinese troops withdrew from North Korea, the Soviets were more inclined towards such actions, in order to demonstrate that they were as good as the Chinese (Held 1994, 435-6)

<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, Romania had not been invited to join and, like NATO, was caught by surprise (Mastny 2005, 37).

<sup>66</sup> At that time, there were rumours that Romania might have been next on the invasion list of the Soviet Union. However, given the high political costs of such an action after the Czechoslovak invasion, this was rather

Ceaușescu denounced the invasion of Czechoslovakia as a violation of the Warsaw Pact's principle of mutual non-interference in internal affairs, as well as of the international law.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the Romanian government remained cautious not to offend the Soviet Union (Berend 1996, 133-7, Mastny 2005, 38).<sup>68</sup>

The most important consequence was nevertheless the fact that the Czechoslovak experience prompted the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev to proclaim the right of the Soviet Union to intervene whenever socialism and the path to communism had been threatened (Held 1994, 157). The Brezhnev doctrine defined socialism and communism following the Soviet model. Consequently, any attempt of the pursuing a different development path could have been severely sanctioned by the USSR, as long as the Warsaw Pact was still in force and the Soviet Union still held significant military power (Held 1994, 372). Yet, the political détente of the early 1970s, as well as the re-establishment of the West-East trade relations and economic partnerships made this sword of Damocles seem less burdensome. A decade and a half later, following the uprising of the reformist Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the Brezhnev doctrine was replaced by a more relaxed approach. Its first signs were present as early as 1980, when the crisis in Poland had not generated an invasion by the Warsaw Pact troops. Most probably, this rather surprising lack of intervention was strongly related to the fact that the USSR was at that time involved in a conflict in Afghanistan that had already produced serious international criticism against the Soviets. It is also probable that the Polish government convinced Moscow that it was able to handle the situation, partly using the fact

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unlikely. Ceaușescu and his entourage were most probably aware of these chances when they directed Romania towards a less Moscow-dependent policy (Mastny 2005, 38).

<sup>67</sup> The counter-argument brought by the Soviet leaders to these accusations was that, like in the case of the invasion in Hungary, the Czechoslovak government had been allegedly required for the military intervention (Berend 1996, 116-26, 132-52).

<sup>68</sup> Neither the Soviet Union was eager to confront Romania. Instead, it preferred to isolate it at the meetings of the Warsaw Pact. More specifically, the institutional mechanisms of the organization allowed Moscow to decide which decisions were submitted to a unanimity vote. In addition, allies more loyal to Moscow had a greater saying in the discussions, through ultimately the decision-making was controlled by the Soviet Union. (Mastny 2005, 38)

that there had not been a strong movement against the stationed Soviet troops in the country. Not least, unlike in the previous cases and period, the Soviet control on the Polish leaders had become very weak, a reality that announced the USSR fall (Mastny 2005, 50-7). Although not openly stated, this new approach meant in practice that the Central and East European states could choose their own paths towards communism.<sup>69</sup> Most of them chose to strengthen their links with the Western world. After the collapse of the communist regimes throughout the region, the willingness to support the Soviet-led organization was at an all-time low (Warsaw Pact 1989). In early January 1991, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland announced their withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact by the mid of the year. Several weeks later, Bulgaria followed (Mastny 2005, 70-2). At the end of February, all the member states of the Pact announce in a joint communiqué the dissolution of the alliance, which would finally be dismantled on 1 July 1991 (Warsaw Pact 1991).

#### ***4.5 Hopeful alternatives at the periphery of Soviet power***

Since the 1950s onwards, with Soviet influence over security and economic relations, the Central and East European states could meet among themselves only at sectoral level, usually to discuss cultural and technical matters. After the conclusion of the Helsinki Final Act at the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (1975), however, the Cold War tensions and the strict Soviet control over its satellite countries slightly appeased. Consequently, several projects emerged. Most of them were developed at local level and focused on cross-border cooperation in politically less sensitive fields like culture, environment, tourism and transport (Cviic 1999, 113-4). Such is the case of the Alps-Adriatic Working Community, a framework for collaboration of sub-national or sub-federal administrative territories from Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia and later Hungary, established in

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<sup>69</sup> In February 1986 at the Party congress, Gorbachev had called for unity within the alliance but he also claimed that his call had nothing to do with conformity and that it was not necessary that all initiatives generate within the Soviet Union. He thus implicitly acknowledged the right of each country to shape its future (Mastny 2005, 60).

1978 (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 1978, 2004).<sup>70</sup> At intergovernmental level, cooperation maintained strictly on technical matters until the late 1980s. From a political viewpoint, the most important such arrangement was the Conference of Governmental Experts for Economic and Technical Cooperation (1976), an initiative of Greece that brought together Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia. The Conference put forward a list of possible fields of further cooperation. These included agriculture, trade, energy, transport and environment. Between 1979 and 1987, several irregular meetings took place within this framework (Lopandić 2001, 54). During all this time, Albania remained outside the arrangement, true to its isolationist policy. However, in 1987, it participated for the first time to the Conference, which helped bring these multilateral expert meetings at a high political level (Kofos 1990).

In 1988, the reunion was transformed into a Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Balkan Countries. The participants stressed the desire to cooperate in more fields, including fight against drugs and trafficking. Furthermore, they proposed periodic meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs, as well as ministerial meetings in various fields. Interestingly, the Conference addressed the issue of minorities in the Balkans as a factor for further cooperation and object of further projects. Not least, the participant countries agreed on fostering cooperation among them also in other forms, ranging from parliamentary reunions to academic and civil society activities (Lopandić 2001, 55, Kofos 1990, 211-7). A Second Conference took place in October 1990 in Tirana. It supported the strengthening of ministerial cooperation through the adoption of a clear periodicity and an increase of ministerial level meetings. On that occasion, there were several important proposals for the

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<sup>70</sup> Initially, Germany also participated, while Hungary was not included until the mid 1980s. For this reason, the Alps-Adriatic Working Community may be seen as a project of regional cooperation external to the communist bloc but which managed to attract two of the communist countries. This collaboration helped SFRY and Hungary maintain and develop lasting relations with their Western neighbours, which in the post-Cold War period generated new regional intergovernmental initiatives. These issues are discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

development of the institutional framework of the Balkan cooperation. Most notably, a Balkan Development Bank, Institute for Studying Balkan Economic Cooperation (in Athens), and a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Balkans should have been established in the following years (Lopandić 2006, 56). In May 1991 in Bucharest, the Conference established the scope of the parliamentary cooperation among the participant countries. At that time, as former Romanian Prime Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs Petre Roman and Adrian Năstase recall, it seemed that this was the beginning of a truly positive regional intergovernmental cooperation. For the first time in the area, the fear of threat was no longer the dominant rationale for the countries in Central and Eastern Europe to participate in a regional arrangement. However, as former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Adrian Năstase acknowledged in an interview with the author, shortly after, the crisis in Yugoslavia halted the entire project of a Balkan framework of enhanced cooperation (Năstase 2005). This marked the end of the last regional intergovernmental initiative established before the end of the Cold War.

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To sum up, international regionalism is certainly not only a post communist phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, five waves of regional arrangements may be identified in the area before the end of the Cold War. First, there were security and economic protectionist agreements concluded during the Interwar period as a means to guard against the threat of revisionism and the increasing aggressiveness of the major European actors, as well as to offer certain guarantees to the signatories in the eventuality of a new war. Second, there were ephemeral projects of regional cooperation generated exclusively by the logic of the Second World War. Like their Interwar precursors, most of these initiatives had been supported indirectly by various Western powers, usually France, Great Britain and Germany, but none survived the peace arrangements that followed. In their aftermath and mainly in

South Eastern Europe a third type of regional initiatives developed. They were the result of Yugoslav, Greek and Turkish attempts to play a more important role in the region within the uncertain circumstances of post war Europe and enjoyed some support especially from Great Britain. However, by the end of the 1950s, these few early Cold War projects vanished with the consolidation of the Soviet power in the area. With this, the Western influence in the establishment and development of regional schemes of cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe ended. The USSR control of the area led to the creation of the best-known regional initiatives of the Cold War period in the communist camp: the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon). For more than four decades, these shaped most of the security and economic cooperation in which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe could embark. When, in the late 1980s, the Soviet pressure decreased within the bloc, a fifth type of regional intergovernmental schemes appeared, once again in South Eastern Europe. The new initiatives, established first as at technical and sectoral level, attempted to develop a more consolidated structure of cooperation as a means to help the Balkan countries distance from the Soviet sphere. For both ideological and political reasons, the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon did not survive much the collapse of the communist regimes. Within the context of the Yugoslav disintegration and the crisis that it generated throughout the area, the last wave of regional cooperation could not outlive them either.

Although more isolated internationally than most of their European counterparts, especially during the Cold War, Central and East European states generated regional intergovernmental arrangements similar to the ones created elsewhere in the world at the same time. The Interwar agreements were regional alliances very similar to the multilateral alliances concluded in the rest of Europe during the period, as they attempted to avoid a new military confrontation and to protect the signatories in the increasingly tensed political context of that time. The Cold War generation of arrangements, which shows a greater diversity than

usually acknowledged in the discipline, is also largely synchronic with the rest of the first wave of regionalism, with cooperation in hard security issues dominating the agenda. Not least, the latest projects of regional intergovernmental cooperation – the Balkan Conferences, with their penchant towards technical and softer security cooperation, have the main incipient features of the second wave of international regionalism. From this perspective, Central and East European international regionalism developed before the end of the Cold War indicates a better synchronization with the overall dynamic of international relations than the one suggested by many historical accounts of the region's socio-political development. In other words, although much influenced or constrained by the USSR especially in the first two decades of the Cold War, the foreign policy of Central and East European states seems to be slightly more independent than previously thought, particularly in areas further from the Soviet influence. To understand the evolution of this foreign policy in relation with regional cooperation, equally if not sometimes more important than the Russian or Soviet factor seem to be the problems that have characterized the creation of nation-states in the region. These problems are often transferred to interaction within regional intergovernmental arrangements. The best illustration for this is the Balkan (con)federation project but even the technical meetings of the Balkan conferences still suggest such problems. One can also notice that, in time, many of the tensions that accompanied the creation of nation-states and are present in Central and East European international regionalism have shifted from the realm of direct confrontations and political claims to a symbolic-representational interaction, often not less peaceful than the other. This issue of representations in regional terms is developed in further detail in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 5

### REGIONAL IDENTITY PALIMPSESTS

In the previous chapter, I investigated the institutional background of contemporary Central and East European regionalism. For this purpose, I identified the various forms of regional intergovernmental cooperation that were established in Central and Eastern Europe before the collapse of the communist regimes. In this chapter, I briefly examine the discursive background of this case of international regionalism, reviewing the major legacies with respect to regional identity, viz. the major regional identity traditions developed outside the framework of regional intergovernmental cooperation before the fall of the communist regimes. Since the topic of regional identity is very large, I chose to address only those regional identity legacies that are suggested by the geographical locus related to the seven cases of international regionalism that I analyze in the next part of the dissertation. These are often overlapping and mutually hybridizing, similarly to the way in which palimpsests are generated through consecutive imprints of different texts on the same texture. At the same time, something seems to be common to all imprints. To a large extent, the space of Central and Eastern Europe encapsulates the memory about the frustration of being (perceived as) the other, the neglected, the marginal, while sharing most features and cultural legacies of the rest of Europe. The various regional traditions present simultaneously in this space often reinforce this memory of marginality. This fascinating topic is too large to be treated comprehensively in the chapter of a dissertation. Furthermore, given their palimpsest nature, any attempt to present such traditions in a linear structure is reductionist. Aware of these shortcomings, I propose to look at these traditions following the way in which “otherness” is constructed through consecutive distinctions. Four degrees of marginality may be thus identified and each can be illustrated with a specific regional identity legacy. First, there is

the creation of a bipolar regional distinction through an invention of the “Other.” In this way, a border is first instituted and the one beyond the border becomes the marginal. The distinction between East and West is the case in point. Then, there is a narrative about this border. Here, I focus mostly on the “Central Europe” legacy. Third, among different narratives of marginality normative competition develops. The “Balkans” is used as an illustration of this case. Finally, there are regional identity narratives that have developed and remained in the mental collective as essentially marginal. “Baltic” and “Black Sea” are such examples. This is the regional identity background on which international regionalism develops in the region. Whether this background is used or reflected in the current regional cooperation initiatives is an issue explored in chapter 9. This chapter briefly presents each of the four categories of constructing “otherness,” looking at the way regional identities have emerged, then given various features and finally used as legitimization tools for political purposes.

### ***5.1. Eastern Europe: The invention of the “Other”***

If there is something that most people remember from their geography lessons about Europe, the formula “from the Atlantic to the Urals” is probably the first that comes to mind. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some Dutch geographers arbitrarily chose the Urals as eastern frontier of Europe and this error was perpetuated until it became a scientific fact (Le Quintrec 1992). On a closer examination, none of the other limits of Europe is any less clear. In the West, the British and Irish islands seem to belong to the continent from a geomorphic point of view. Yet, Iceland raised many questions among geographers because the geographic features of this land place it only in the Atlantic Ocean and not in Europe. Greenland, the Azores, and Madeira are rather parts of America and Africa respectively. Geographically, Cyprus is also closer to the Middle East. Not least, northern Europe’s islands are frequently caught in the

ice fields so that, in order to solve the problem of delimitation, scholars tend to treat the continuously reshaping ice field in the Arctic Ocean as part of Europe, but until what latitude it is still a debatable issue, probably one of the few to which global warming can contribute positively.

Despite such difficulties, those who are closer to the Urals, probably more than those on the shores of the Atlantic, seem to be frequently questioned about their Europeanness. Two reasons seem to account for this. First, for various reasons extensively debated in the literature, in the last two hundreds years or so the area closer to Urals has had a slower economic and technological development compared to the Western part. The discourse on modernization often identified the more developed West with a more “civilized” culture, which was then identified with Europe (Duțu 1999). In this way, the distinction between East and West has been framed in strong normative terms (Wolff L. 1994). The second reason for which, the European character of those closer to the Urals is sometimes questioned is the fact that, due to political factors, Urals did not transform the geographical limit into a political border as well. Urals have belonged to the Russian Empire and then to its successor states. Most of Russia’s territory is nowadays situated beyond the Urals but one can hardly deny the European character of Russian (high) culture and the impact of Russia’s history on the development of other European countries. There are, however, authors especially after World War II, who do consider or want to push Russia out of Europe, geographically, culturally, and politically. This problem, just like that of defining Eastern Europe, seems to have been formulated by the Enlightenment philosophers. At that time, Russia was not definitely excluded from Europe but it was not unconditionally included in it either (Wolff L. 1994). This dilemma reached its climax during the Cold War, when, in their attempt at dissociating their countries from the Soviet influence, dissidents from the communist block made fashionable again the idea of Central Europe, of which I talk in the

next section. For some, Russia, identified with the USSR, excluded itself from Europe after the Bolshevik Revolution because from that time on it no longer followed the dominant European current (Schöpflin 1989, 7). This current, Schöpflin claims, is characterized by the Judeo-Christian and Greek heritage, Medieval Christian universalism, Renaissance skepticism and rationalism, the Reformation and Counterreformation movements, the Enlightenment, Romanticism and Nationalism, and finally, the separation and secularization of power (ibid. 10-1). Except the Reform and its aftermath, these had been the features of most European elites, including the Russian. Therefore the only relevant difference in Schöpflin's terms would be the religious one, with Christian Orthodoxy portrayed as generating an essentially different social development compared to Western Europe. From this perspective, many other cultures, like the Greek one for instance, should be excluded from "Europe." However, Schöpflin, like many other authors, seems to be unaware of this corollary, being more concerned with demonstrating Russia's non Europeanness and less with the consequences of the meaning he gave to "being European," even though this might make his argumentation inconsistent.<sup>71</sup> Even in the context of the Cold War logic, others were more moderate, suggesting that it might have been more useful to emphasize the European characteristics of Russia than to isolate it. The main arguments were that one should avoid confounding Russia with the USSR, and that Russians should not to be blamed for what the Lenin and Stalin regimes had committed (Šimečka 1989). Despite such arguments, the distinction between a "good West" and the "evil East", with Russia as the traditional epitome of the latter, has remained an important imprint for Central and Eastern Europe even after the Cold War (Duțu 1999).

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<sup>71</sup> After asserting that after 1917, Russia is no longer European (which implies that before the October Revolution it had been European), he insisted that Russia is completely different from Europe, geographically (climate, settlements etc.), culturally and historically (which also implies that it had never been European). See Schöpflin (1989), 7-9.

## 5.2 In search of the Middle Ground

The bipolar division of Europe was not the only that operated a marginality. Between the “East” and the “West,” there has been always another uncertainty. During the Cold War this border was frequently represented as a very clear, rigid and very thin demarcation line. The “Iron Curtain” between the two camps was just separating not covering territories. Yet, there are also more fluid representations of the border, suggesting a “buffer zone” image instead of a rigid line. Several narratives are competing in this sense but the most developed one, particularly in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been that of a Central/Middle Europe.

In the last two decades, most authors that attempted to establish the origins of the idea of Central Europe have started their account invoking a book, *Mitteleuropa* (literally Mid-Europe), written in 1915 by a German Lutheran pastor converted to politics named Friedrich Naumann. However, according to several scholars, most notably Meyer (1955), the beginning of Central Europe’s career might be placed at least one hundred years earlier, when, at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the Austrian foreign minister Metternich claimed that the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire had made necessary the creation of another European “super-state” (Meyer 1955, Droz 1960, Judt 1991). Since the Austrians and the Germans were the only ones that had established supranational empires, it became natural to think that such a “super-state” could have appeared only under their rule.<sup>72</sup> Not least, the beginning of the concept’s history is also sometimes placed after the revolutions of 1848, when the ethnic groups of the Habsburg Empire initiated a number of projects about their future within or in opposition to the imperial rule (le Rider 1994).

Despite the debatable origins of Central Europe as political notion, there are several points on which there is widespread agreement. First, the early development of the idea of Central

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<sup>72</sup> The “super-state” imagined by Metternich existed also in reality. The German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*), which functioned between 1855 and 1866, could be seen as an historical embodiment of this idea. This was, however, a very loose structure with no common government or head of state (Geiss 1997, 36-7).

Europe is confined to the German speaking space. Second, during much the 19<sup>th</sup> century the notion of Central Europe had two major interrelated meanings. One is regularly used in or about Austria-Hungary and indicates the ethnical, geographical or cultural existence of a space called the *Danubian region*. The other meaning is associated to pan-Germanism and is the real predecessor of Naumann's idea of Mid-Europe (Le Rider 1994, 48-52, Foucher 1991, 513-7). In both cases, the idea of a Central Europe was expressed in projects of federations and confederations built around one of the two German power poles (Prussia and Austria-Hungary) either as a means to solve certain problems of the national minorities or as a way to justify the political interests of the moment.

Imagined mainly by intellectuals belonging to the minorities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, some of these projects gained at a certain moment some political influence. For instance, the Czech historian František Palacký proposed in 1866 a division of the Habsburg Empire in eight political national entities, an idea that resonated within its minority communities (Bérenger 1990, Rumpler 1997). Nevertheless, one year later, the social and political unrest in the Hungarian territories led eventually to the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After half a century, such projects were still fashionable. In 1906, for example, a Romanian publicist from Transylvania, Aurel Popovici, put forward ideas of the same kind as Palacký. In his *The United States of Greater Austria*, Popovici particularly militated for the unification of the small nations along the Danube against the German and Russian expansionist ambitions. Similarly, shortly before the beginning of the First World War, the Hungarian Oszkár Jászi proposed that Hungary be transformed into an Eastern Switzerland, as a means for solving the problems of the monarchy.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> For the impact of these projects and their authors' role and activity in Austria-Hungary, see for instance Rumpler (1997), Kann (1974), and Bérenger (1990).

Retrospectively, one of the best-known projects was, however, imagined within the Prussian space and not within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is Friderich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*. The book was hardly original.<sup>74</sup> Its major contribution was a synthesis of the pan-Germanist debates within the more abstract expression of "German space of manoeuvre." In that historical context, the international reactions to the volume and its immediate translations into English and French should be rather explained by the fact that it appeared during World War I and was written by a quite well known Prussian politician. Therefore, when Naumann stated that Central Europe was the equivalent of the Central Powers whose military force should be reorganized under the rule of Germany in order to protect the German civilization against those who would threaten it (Neumann 1915, 30-1) he could not encounter but strong criticism from Prussia's enemies. It is also interesting to notice that his *Mitteleuropa* does not cover a fixed space. For instance, according to Naumann, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century "there are two principal advances in the Napoleonic War: one from Paris to Moscow, and one from Moscow to Paris. In both cases Central Europe was pushed, first eastwards by Napoleon, and then westwards by Tsar Alexander" (Naumann 1915, 44).

A similar pro-active perspective on Central Europe and an important contribution to the history of the concept (since his distinctions had been extensively employed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), belongs to the German writer and politician Ernst Jäckh. In a rejoinder to Naumann (*The Largest Central Europe*), he introduced the idea that Central Europe could be understood either in a narrow sense - only Germany and Austria-Hungary),

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<sup>74</sup> Before the publication of *Mitteleuropa*, two other booklets concerning Central Europe examined from a German perspective had a certain impact on the international audience. One, entitled *A Union of the Central Europe's States* (1915) was authored by a renowned German economist of those times, Franz von Liszt. A famous Austrian professor from the Vienna University, Eugen von Phillipovich, wrote the other - *An Economic and Custom Union between Germany and Austria-Hungary* (1915). Although von Phillipovich paid attention mainly to economic issues, and von Liszt was more interested in a general political program oriented clearly against England, both emphasized the need of a strongly organized Central Europe. For them, like for Naumann, the model suitable for the organization of the Central European nations was the German *Zollverein* path of unification. (Grumbach 1916, viii)

or in a larger one - the two German powers to which he adds the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Switzerland (Grumbach 1916, x-xi). However, he reckoned that an effective Central Europe should be “a political organism stretching from the Northern Sea to the Mediterranean,” a functioning pragmatic political and military alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, to which Greece and Romania should be convinced to adhere. Less subtle and in a certain extent similar to von Liszt, a certain Emil Zimmermann replied in the same year to Jäckh’s book with an article (*The Largest Germany*), where he stated that Central Europe was not a useful concept unless it was built against British interests (Grumbach 1916, xi). Nevertheless, the most extreme simplification and probably the most extravagant belonged to Karl Kautsky who, in a 1916 booklet (*The United States of Central Europe*), had argued that the proletariat should be against the idea of Central Europe, whatever it meant, if the imperialists defend it (ibid.).

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the destiny of Central Europe (*Mittleuropa*) as a political notion continued to be closely linked to the evolution of the German state. After World War I, it was used by Hitler to legitimize its actions and thus it acquired more negative connotations than before. Therefore, after the defeat of the Third Reich, any perspective on Central Europe focused on Germany was no longer been credible and the German term of *Mittleuropa* has been avoided.<sup>75</sup> During the Cold War, in order to take distance from this *Mittleuropa*, the Austrians even invented another word for this part of Europe - *Zentraleuropa*, but this did not eliminate all the undesirable meanings.

The concern for neutrality of the notion of Central Europe is interestingly reflected also in the region’s geographical definitions that appeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, the French geographer Auguste Himly simply stated that the

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<sup>75</sup> Particularly Hanák (1989, 68) and Judt (1991, 29) support this view. However, in an article analyzing the uses of the term in the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1980s, Garton Ash (1990) convincingly demonstrates that the German *Mittleuropa* has not been totally discredited and has been recently reconsidered historically, culturally and geopolitically.



Rhine and the Alps are the major determinants of Central Europe, while Danube and the Carpathian Mountains are the second most important physical units that characterize the region (Himly 1876).<sup>76</sup> Half a century later, less concerned with the physical features of the region but equally preoccupied by the political importance of Prussia, Aulneau (1926) defined the area in a more flexible manner though equally arbitrary.<sup>77</sup> Although the international context brought forward the pan-Germanist understanding of Central Europe, in the Interwar period some geographers were still aware of the distinction between the Austrian and German traditions. For instance, three years after Hitler took power, Jacques Ancel employed the expressions *Europe Danubienne* (Danubian Europe) and *Habsbourg* (the Habsburg lands) for designating the new nation-states that emerged in the aftermath of the First World War, in contrast to *Mitteleuropa* (Ancel 1936). Since these countries were perceived as victims of pan-Germanism during World War I, the French geographer had certain sympathy towards the region, which made him combine political with physical geography criteria for legitimizing his distinctions. Yet, he is not the only one. In 1926, Emmanuel de Martonne, expert geographer in the International Commission responsible for the technical details (including borders) of the World War I peace treaties, used an equally doubtful criterion when he considered that Central Europe is that space of transition between Western Europe and the continental Eastern Europe (De Martone 1930).

The limits of Central Europe have been also defined in cultural terms. For the few who did so until the World War II, the German culture was often seen as the main if not the only denominator of the region, whose peoples and countries would otherwise not have had anything else in common (Magris 1997). Immediately after the war and with the Nazi

<sup>76</sup> In order to illustrate his point, Himly focused on the geography and the most significant events of some states he considered, without providing any sound argument, as parts of Central Europe - Prussia, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

<sup>77</sup> Interested more in the populations who live in the middle of the continent and less in the formal frontiers, he described the relief and some major events in the history of Prussia (and then of Germany), Austria, of the Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians from Transylvania, Yugoslavs, and even Gypsies (an ethnic group rarely included in a such overview).

Germany's vision on the matter still fresh in the collective memory, the idea of a Central Europe, be it *Mitteleuropa* or *Danubian region*, seemed to be definitively forgotten, at least in the Western world. Initially, the polarity between a democratic West and the Soviet East, simplistically expressed as a conflict between the Russians and the Americans, hardly allowed for differentiations within the camps. Yet, with the development of intellectual dissidence and opposition in the satellite countries, the quest for a Central Europe was revitalised. This time, it was not a mix of geography and politics but a cultural warfare for political purposes.

This trend is accompanied by nostalgia for the previous regime and more precisely for a certain period of political, economic and cultural prosperity that in the Central European countries usually occurred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it became à la mode among historians to write about Vienna fin-de-siècle, then on Prague and Budapest. That particular context and, more precisely Austria-Hungary's moments of glory (and, through temporal extension, the history of the Habsburg Empire) was then identified with a Central Europe closer to the West.

The success of this restrictive perspective on Central Europe could be explained if one takes into account several factors. First, from the two precedents of the notion - the Danubian (or Carpathian) meaning built around the Austrian rule and the pan-Germanist *Mitteleuropa*, the latter reminded Central Europeans of another domination (the German one), less recent than the Soviet one but equally painful. The Danubian concept reminded equally of an imperial rule but also of the struggles against it. Second, the debates were mainly initiated by intellectuals from former territories of the Habsburg Empire, namely from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. These intellectuals, often comparable with any other Western counterpart, had also stronger links with scholars and publishing houses from Occident. This allowed their voices to be more easily heard within the Western world (Falk 2000). Not

least, the fact that this discourse on Central Europe radically articulated arguments against the Russian spirit (and through reductionism, against the Soviet rule) fitted well the political expectations of the Western world after the Détente.<sup>78</sup>

A more pragmatic perspective appeared in the mid 1970s when both politicians and intellectuals started to employ the expression *East Central Europe* to differentiate between the countries of the communist bloc, which since the end of the Second World War had been usually referred to as Eastern Europe.<sup>79</sup> Like in the case of all the discussions concerning this region, the concept was in its early career very generous and designated the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, the Democratic Republic of Germany, Albania, and Yugoslavia. In other words, it referred to almost all the communist but non-Soviet states. This meant that these states were considered a part of a larger Central Europe whose rest was Western. From here to establishing the Western (or at least non-Russian) character of the communist satellite countries there was only a short distance, which many dissidents, as well as Western scholars and politicians easily crossed. However, the notion has been haunted by the negative connotations of “Eastern Europe,” as well as by the potential confusions that it may generate.<sup>80</sup> These shortcomings make it less clear in on the collective map of Europe, although it has been increasingly used as the more politically correct for referring to the part of Eastern Europe recently outside of Russian influence.

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<sup>78</sup> Throughout the entire Cold War period there had been numerous cultural, political and economic arguments against the Soviet domination and for the uniqueness of the satellite countries or for their cultural and historical closeness to the West. Many of them came from renowned intellectual figures that had fled Central and Eastern Europe and had established on the other side of the Iron Curtain (Judt 1991). Yet, none had the impact that Milan Kundera’s 1984 article on the “Tragedy of Central Europe” reached. Without the political momentum, the support of voices that were well known and respected in the West, as well as without the reach that publications such as *The New York Review of Books* could offer, it is probable that the restrictive concept of Central Europe would not have permeated the Western collective imaginary to the extent it did.

<sup>79</sup> According to Keith Crawford, the term would have been coined by Joseph Rotschild (Crawford K 1996, X).

<sup>80</sup> Journalists, for instance, find it difficult to remember the order of the words in the expression and frequently replace it with Central East(ern) Europe. This version, however, would imply that, as long as there is a central area of Eastern Europe, there might be also a western and an eastern one. Yet, Western East(ern) Europe or Western East(ern) Europe seem almost impossible categories for the normal collective imaginary.

### 5.3 Competing marginalities

Apart from “Eastern Europe” and “Central Europe” a third important imprint and division is that operated with respect to the Balkans. In the first chapter of her lucid and often ironical analysis of the Balkans’ image, Maria Todorova, while introducing the most important events in the history of the Balkans and South Eastern Europe as concepts, suggested an explanation for the “persistence of such a frozen image [of the Balkans]”:

It is the story of (1) innocent inaccuracies stemming from imperfect geographical knowledge transmitted through tradition; (2) the later saturation of the geographical appellation with political, social, cultural, and ideological overtones, and the beginning of the pejorative use of ‘Balkan’ around World War I; and (3) the complete dissociation of the designation from its object, and the subsequent reverse and retroactive ascription of the ideologically loaded designation to the region, particularly after 1989 (Todorova 1997, 7).<sup>81</sup>

The modern inaccuracies would have started in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when, in analogy with the other two South Europeans peninsulas, the German geographer August Zeune called “Balkan peninsula” the land limited in the north by the mountains that, apparently from the fifteenth century, were designated as the Balkans.<sup>82</sup> However, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this area under the Turkish occupation or administration continued to be designated with names referring either to the Turkish rule or to the ethnic origins of the autochthon populations.<sup>83</sup>

At the same time, an increasing number of Western travellers discovered the region and became fascinated by the Oriental flavour of the places or/and concerned about the

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<sup>81</sup> In an earlier version, the main ideas of this chapter are outlined in Todorova (1994).

<sup>82</sup> Within current scholarship on South Eastern European historical narratives, Todorova (1994, 1997) are the most detailed in emphasizing Zeune’s contribution to the emergence of Balkans as a geographical and later political notion. The term Balkan is most probably of Ottoman origin, as in Ottoman Balkan would mean “mountain” and would be the ending part of the translation of the ancient toponym “Haemus mountains” (Inalçik 1960).

<sup>83</sup> That is the reason why most scholars consider as Balkan states those who experienced the Ottoman domination, although sometimes the Byzantine legacy is also added. This attitude might be considered a species of “Orientalism,” term coined by Edward Said to denote “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient;... a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 1978, 3). For instance, Milica Bakić-Hayden argues that in the case of former Yugoslavia one could talk about “nesting orientalisms” because, despite a particular discourse about the Balkans, “it would be difficult to understand it outside the overall orientalist context [because] it shares an underlying logic and rhetoric with orientalism.” (Bakić-Hayden 1995, 920). Maria Todorova, however, argues that the attitude towards the Balkans forms a different category because the “Balkans,” unlike the “Orient,” are historically and geographically clearly defined (Todorova 1994, 1997).

differences between the indigenes' and their own culture, which, since they knew it better, they usually valorise more positively. Moreover, after the Balkan Wars which brought into Western public attention violent ethnic conflicts following the slow dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the potential negative image the area had in the eyes of Westerners became predominant (Inalçik and Quataert 1994). During the Cold War and more intensely after the fall of communism, the name and its semantic family have been increasingly employed as political terms almost completely dissociated from the original content and thus any process of intensifying ethnic conflict has become susceptible to be called "balkanization." The latent ethnic clashes in former Yugoslavia which exploded in the 1990s into civil wars reinforced this negative image, accentuated also by the contrast with the so-called Central Europe, an area which designated itself as more Westerner (and thus more European) than the Balkans. Consequently, despite their heterogeneity and the radical transformations they faced in the last two centuries, the Balkans, as cultural, political and social space, acquired such powerful connotations that nowadays it seems to be impossible to "de-freeze" their image. Within the area, the perspectives look much better because in some of the languages spoken in the Balkans, their image is rather positive. Especially in Bulgarian, belonging to the Balkans might mean having "independence, pride, courage, honor," (Todorova 1997, 32). Similarly, in Romanian "Balkan" could describe a subtle kind of humour or irony, a "carpe diem" way of life or a strange mixture of moody optimism, exuberance and noisy taste for polemics. Yet, even within these particular cultural contexts, the negative weight that the Balkans has in the rest of the world seems to insidiously challenge the local connotations.

#### 5.4 Marginality without competition

The fourth imprint that can be identified is that of extreme marginality. I mention here just two cases, the Baltic and the Black Sea ones. The history of the Baltic regional identity is very short. A certain regional delimitation appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Swedes, who dominated the area, designated the Eastern Baltic coast provinces as “österjöprovinser.” These included the entire coast region between the south of Finland and the north of Latvia, namely Ingria,<sup>84</sup> Estonia and Livonia. However, they did not include either the south of Latvia (Courland) or Lithuania, which for a long time were under Polish sovereignty (Rebas 1988, 103). The notion of Baltic appears only later, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in the communities of Germans living in Estonia and Livonia. At that time, these provinces were parts of the Russian Empire, but the German inhabitants were dominating the area politically, economically and culturally. They also largely formed the upper class of the region (Thaden 1981). Within the context of national awareness and increasing Russian nationalism, many of them began to call themselves *Balten* in order to distinguish themselves from the Russian-speaking and politically oriented world (Rebas 1988, Thaden 1981). Initially, the term was rather a class than a spatial differentiation (Rebas 1988, von Pistohlkors 1987). Yet, with the increasing pressure of the Russification policies, the notion of *Balten* quickly became a “means of ideological warfare”(von Pistohlkors 1987, Thaden 1981). During the Interwar period, after gaining independence from the Russian Empire, the states on the southern shore of the Baltic have become more concerned with creating their own national history narrative. This sometimes brought them in conflict with each other, a fact that hindered the development of a Baltic regional identity. Partially, this process continued also during the Soviet period, therefore, one could not talk about a genuine Baltic regional identity legacy (Pistohlkors 1987).

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<sup>84</sup> An area between Finland, Estonia, the Gulf of Finland and the Ladoga lake, now belonging to the Russian Federation.

The Black Sea region is an even more recent invention. Until the creation of a Black Sea Economic Cooperation in early 1990s, the area around the Black Sea was hardly studied and even less conceptualized as a distinct geographical, political or cultural space. During the Interwar and the Cold War periods, there were only few attempts to research the history of this space as a unit. Such attempts were generated mainly within the larger framework of South East European studies and around the agenda of the Institute for South-East European Studies in Bucharest. A notable case in point is the extensive work of historian Gheorghe Brătianu, who focused for the first time on the Black Sea as a unit for historical investigation. Contrary to many mainstream interpretations, Brătianu suggested that the Mongolian invasions in Europe during the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> century had also a positive aspect because they created in the Black Sea area certain stability. This allowed local, Italian and Byzantine merchants to use the ancient Silk Road and develop commercial centres on the shores of the Black Sea, which would have accelerated the process of administrative centralization of the small fiefdoms in the area. However, when the Ottomans conquered the region, transforming the sea into an interior lake, the Silk Road became inaccessible and the local and Byzantine trade centres were destroyed. The Italian colonies (especially the rival Venice and Genoa) tried to find new routes to the Indies and China through the West, which led to the discovery of the Americas and further decreased Western interest in the region. The lands around the Black Sea, inhabited by many different populations, no longer had immediate trade importance, therefore the commercial and political relations, as well as the small states existing during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century had soon vanished. Moreover, when Russia conquered some of the Ottoman Empire's territories during the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rivalry between the two powers in the Black Sea made it the scene of more tensions than of a peaceful relation that could have allowed the emergence of a political or economical integrated area (Brătianu 1969). Such research on the region should be read

mostly as individual intellectual exercises. Without major visibility within the European intellectual community and unsupported by any highly visible political or economic projects around the region, these regional identity imprints did not marked significantly the collective mental maps.

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The brief review of the various regional identity legacies present in the area suggests several political uses that the reference to or the creation of regional identities might have. First, they can legitimate political relations or justify political projects. This situation usually implies a normative separation of space, in which the “other” is considered essentially inferior or evil. Sometimes, such a perspective may trigger political actions to contain or subdue the allegedly inferior or evil area. This is, for instance, the case of the Cold War Western vision on Eastern Europe, as well as the case of the Interwar German concept of *Mitteleuropa*. Other times, a regional distinction may transform into a general category encapsulating many of the fears or nostalgias of the modern world when encountering a relatively different space. This attitude characteristic of the Enlightenment can be easily found in many versions of Eastern Europe as perceived by the Westerners.<sup>85</sup> Yet, this attitude is even more present in the case of the “Balkans,” which acquired a resonance that transcends the its geographical locus, unlike any other regional identity legacy in the area. At the same time, the political project may come from within and the separation is operated in order to confer a political identity and consequently at least some independence of action to a space that is part of a larger territory, such as an empire. This is mostly the case of nation-building processes in which the regional discourse is used for contextualizing in a favorable manner the national

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<sup>85</sup> In fact, as Larry Wolff fascinatingly demonstrates, Eastern Europe is an invention of the Enlightenment period (Wolff L. 1994).



narratives.<sup>86</sup> The debates on the national issue within the Austria-Hungarian empire illustrate well this situation but the way the notion of “Baltic” was coined may be also a case in point. Such attempts may produce projects of grouping at regional level, like the federalist projects around the Danubian version of Central Europe. The success of these proposals has been limited by the often-divergent national interest of the potential participants, as well as by the shared fear that a regional grouping may threaten the identity and political foundations of the nation. In this respect, the regional dimension introduces a significant tension within the national identity narrative. Whether these features and the regional identity legacies reviewed above are present also in the case of contemporary regional intergovernmental initiatives in the area is a topic explored in more detail in chapter 9.

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<sup>86</sup> Janowski, Iordachi and Trencsenyi (2005) provide an extensive treatment of this topic as reflected in national historiographies. Using the cases of Hungarian, Polish and Romanian historical discourse on nation and the way it accommodates regional perspectives, they convincingly demonstrate that regional discourse can be used for contextualizing, as well as for relativizing national narratives.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **A TRIPLE TRANSITION, MULTIPLE TRANSFORMATIONS: CONTEXT AND FACTORS OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE**

The previous two chapters examined the historical context of regional cohesiveness in Central and Eastern Europe at institutional and discursive levels respectively. In this chapter, I examine the political context in which post Cold War regionalism emerged in the area. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents the main regional situations that changed the nature and dynamics of international relations in the region. The second section looks at the internal transformations that the Central and East European states experienced after the collapse of communism. Finally, once these two backgrounds are set, the third section examines the foreign policy choices of the former communist countries after the divorce from the previous political regime, as well as the institutional and conceptual shifting international environment in which they were generated.

#### **6.1 *The break ups***

Two major events significantly reshuffled the political configurations of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s. These are the fall of communism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Most of the regional intergovernmental initiatives that have developed in Central and Eastern Europe emerged in the aftermath of these two regional situations. This section briefly reviews the context and the dynamics of these two moments of caesura.

##### **6.1.1 The end of communism**

The motives for which the communist regimes fell one after another in late 1980s and early 1990s have been widely debated and, though a dominant narrative on the issue has not been

yet imposed in the collective memory, several factors are widely accepted as crucial for the process. These factors were both internal and external to the Central and East European countries and were usually linked to certain specific socio-political actions. However, since the end of the Cold War some *longue durée* explanations have been also offered to the disappearance of the authoritarian and post-totalitarian systems from the region.

From the point of view of the domestic sphere, numerous and various events that had taken place in each of these states contributed to the gradual erosion of the totalitarian systems. Most importantly, since the installation of the communist rule there have been continuous social and political protests against the regime. Some, like the 1956 Hungarian revolution, the 1968 Prague Spring or the 1980s Polish Solidarity actions, succeeded to mobilize a large part of the population of the respective countries. Though most of them had been brutally rebuked, their memory favoured the continuation of the protests at an increasingly organized level (Tismăneanu 1992). This reproduction of protest was, however, less present in the countries in which the demonstrations could not mobilize most strata of the society. This happened particularly in the regimes that had developed strong secret police systems, such as the German Democratic Republic and Romania. These brutally reprimanded all the voices that spoke against the communist rule and created a climate of deep mistrust, in which any information could have been regarded as potentially false (Dobrincu and Vasile 2007). This is how, for instance, in Romania, the protests of the miners from the Jiu Valley in the 1970s and the mass demonstrations that took place in Braşov in 1987, which were similar in many respects to the Solidarnosc protests, had been largely unknown to the population (Dobrincu and Vasile 2007). Yet, even in such cases, the protests were present and continuously put under the question the legitimacy of the regime.

Significant to the process was also the presence of an active and organized civil society whose elites could express a political message against the regime. Frequently, this message

took the form of samizdat publications, although other kinds of political protest were also present. In many cases, these elites and their activity were externally supported, both in material terms and at spiritual level. Mostly at the beginning of the communist rule, assistance came from certain Marxist parties and groups from the Western world. This happened mainly because initially much of the Central and East European dissidence developed within the Marxist framework.<sup>87</sup> Diasporas, including prominent Central and East European intellectuals living in the West, also provided an important support to the opposition. This took different forms, ranging from publicizing the internal situation of these countries to lobby at different international institutions and governments (Tismăneanu 1992). Different Western organizations and programs also provided the means for developing the civil society actions against the communist regime and for fighting the official censorship. One of these means was Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which in many parts of the region was the only alternative to official channels for uncensored information (REF). In Poland and Czechoslovakia also functioned underground university systems that offered lectures and seminars held by dissidents and well-known Western scholars.<sup>88</sup> Not least, the election of the Polish cardinal Karol Wojtyła as Pope in 1978 and his subsequent visit to

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<sup>87</sup> In an interview with the author, historian Sorin Antohi interestingly suggests that the existence of a strong Marxist debate within a communist regime was the key factor to the initial development of a strong dissidence and later of a strong opposition. In order to support his hypothesis, he compares Hungary and Romania. In both countries, the most articulated branch of the opposition developed originally as dissidence from Marxist circles. Often, these dissidents were children of state officials, a fact that may explain why they were not reprimanded to the scale other opposition movements had been. In Hungary the Marxist debate had deep roots going back two generations to György Luckács. In time, these had spurred the creation of networks of Marxist intellectuals, which often had ramifications in Western intellectual circles. In contrast, Romanian Marxist thinking never developed to a significant degree in any other way than as propaganda and therefore was not able to benefit much from the support of more liberal Marxist groups in the Western world (Antohi 2004). A similar view, though referring only to the Hungarian case, was put forward by philosopher and dissident János Kis in an interview with the author (Kis 2004).

<sup>88</sup> In Poland, the seminars developed in the 1970s around certain dissident circles and were opened to anyone, without offering courses or recognised qualifications. In Czechoslovakia, however, through the effort of dissident philosopher Julius Tomin, Oxford University became involved in the project of seminars and a educational foundation was established. This provided material assistance to the otherwise non-institutionalized system of alternative and opposition education and, most importantly, facilitated the lectures in Prague of some of the most renowned minds of Western intellectuality, such as Jacques Derrida, Paul Ricoeur and Richard Rorty. Some of the students that participated to courses in Prague, partially through concerted smuggling of their academic papers out of the country, managed even to acquire full diplomas from the University of Cambridge (Falk B. 2003, 42-3, 92-4).

Poland had a catalyst effect on (re)organizing civil society, first in Poland and later in other countries of the communist bloc (Tismăneanu 1992).

To these factors, one may add the fact that since the 1980s the Soviet Union had a less powerful grip of the satellite countries and even encouraged them to mirror its example and adopt policies that were more liberal. The decline of the Soviet influence in the area was already suggested by the non-intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Poland. But the wind of change really started to blow only after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the USSR, following the death of Leonid Brezhnev in 1982 and the short terms of Yuri Andropov (1982-84) and Konstantin Chernenko (1984-85). The new leader in Kremlin, still preaching the unity within the bloc, recommended that *perestroika* and *glasnost* should not be limited to the USSR and that the Central and East European countries adopt a more open approach both to the economic and the political spheres. For most governments in the region, this was understood as an opportunity to embark onto separate paths.<sup>89</sup>

Before these, the Helsinki accords already signalled the fact that the Soviet Union was slowly abandoning its more oppressive measures within the Eastern camp. Signed in 1975 by the US, the USSR and the majority of the other European countries, the Helsinki Final Act recognised the post-Second World War territorial status quo in Europe. The document did so in exchange for the acceptance of the common human rights principles by the communist regimes, as well as for the acceptance of the principle of non-interference of any state or organization in the internal affairs of another state. Thus, the Helsinki Final Act provided a legal basis for the satellite countries to denounce any Soviet interference. Yet, the

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<sup>89</sup> There were, however, notable exceptions to this trend. Once considered the more liberal mind of the communist bloc, at least in terms of foreign policy, Romania's Nicolae Ceaușescu opposed fiercely the suggestions coming from Moscow to implement policies that were more open from both economic and political viewpoints. Therefore, unlike most of his neighbours, Romania was embarking on a rather neo-Stalinist project, based on a highly nationalist program and increasingly autarkic policies. Similar autistic tendencies were manifested also within the German Democratic Republic. Interestingly, within the communist camp, both regimes ended most violently (Tismăneanu 1992, 2003).

human rights dimension yielded most results. This generated the emergence of human rights groups throughout the Eastern bloc (Helsinki committees) and later of influential transnational networks of human rights activists. For them too the Act provided a legal basis, this time for supporting the civil society actions within the communist regimes (Thomas 1999).

Not least, it can be argued that communism was a self-destroying regime. This was visible particularly on economic grounds. On the long run, the planned economies and the system of Soviet-led trade relations had not been able to support real economic growth but created highly distorted mechanisms of economic, political and social interaction. Already in the 1970s, not even the widely falsified reports could hide the disastrous economic situation and the decaying living standard in many of the communist countries. To survive, they had to borrow extensively and import technology from the West. Yet, as the approach to economic development was not much different after such measures, they only delayed the collapse that would soon follow all over the region in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

### **6.1.2 The disintegration of Yugoslavia**

It is widely accepted that the long-term ethnic and religious divisions played a major role in the Yugoslav state failure and in the development of violence, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina and later in Kosovo. Yet, these manifested at a significant level only after the Yugoslav federation had already began to fall apart. The institutional design of the federation and the concept of Yugoslavism could not accommodate easily a multi-ethnic state that had not successfully blended the different historical legacies or solved the economic disparities between its different ethnic groups (Jović 2003). Consequently, separatist voices had been present in the Yugoslav public space and, after the death of Tito, they became increasingly heard (Pavković 1997, 61-96). After the election of nationalist parties all across Yugoslavia in 1990, independence on ethnic grounds was the target for many of the new political elites,

which weakened even more the political unity of the federation.<sup>90</sup> Not least, the rapidly decreasing economic situation, only briefly improved by a shock therapy strategy, as well as the weak central management of local incidents allowed the radicalization of many social strata. This is how, instead of facilitating the peaceful dialogue of interests within the multiethnic Yugoslav society, the sudden regime change favoured the rapid escalation of the latent tensions accumulated since the Southern Slavs joined into a single political entity in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Within the context of an increasingly divided political community, the federal republic was caught between the desire to democratize its institutions, which ultimately meant a weaker central government, and the need to protect its own survival, which required a more centralized approach. The complexity of these issues, as well as of the political and identity relations among the different communities living in Yugoslavia led to a long dismantling process characterized mainly through a series of violent conflicts and civil wars. These generated a number of deaths estimated between 300.000 and 500.000, as well as several millions of displaced or injured persons, among whom almost one third were children (Ullman 1996, 1-3, World Bank 1996).

The first of the wars that violently dismantled the Yugoslav state was a short one and involved mostly Slovenia, the Yugoslav federal government, and to a lesser extent Croatia. After the free elections, the more economically advanced federate republics of Slovenia and Croatia repeatedly asked for greater autonomy within Yugoslavia, which in their view should have become a confederation (Pavković 1997, 123).<sup>91</sup> Yet, the conservative federal

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<sup>90</sup> For instance, the most prominent new Slovenian and Croatian leaders came from the ranks of those that had been convicted by the communist government in last decade of Tito's dictatorship, for the mass demonstrations or other actions organized in these republics against the regime, or for ethnic nationalism (Panković 1997, 106-12). Consequently, in the 1990 elections the values of dissidence and nationalism were frequently mixed and the choice for non-communists often implied a choice for nationalism.

<sup>91</sup> The Slovenian parliament went so far as to adopt a declaration on the sovereignty of Slovenia, while Croatia held a referendum that yielded an overwhelming majority for independence. Later, Serbia and Montenegro proposed a federation on democratic basis as an alternative to the confederation but the leaders of the Croatian and Slovenian republics were not satisfied with this solution and often stepped out from the federal meetings (Marković 1996, 11-20). These two different visions on Yugoslavia as federation or confederation were not,

government, which was dominated by Serbs with a highly centralized and nationalist vision on the Yugoslav state, was not eager to negotiate such issues. Partially encouraged by Germany, Croatia and Slovenia initiated a process of secession during the summer of 1991 (Caplan 2005, 41-8). This was not a surprising action for any of the parties involved in the conflict. Declarations of independence and sovereignty had been openly proclaimed within Slovenia and Croatia since the late 1980s. Yet, this time the pro- independence voices had a better public support, while the new political leaders were less willing to maintain the status quo (Pavković 1997, 133-54).<sup>92</sup> The political tensions between the two republics and the federal government culminated with the institution of border checks between Slovenia and Croatia and with the control of the Slovenian borders with Austria, Italy and Hungary by the Slovenian police, which had organized itself in a quasi-national police an year earlier (Marković 1996, 20). The federal army intervened to re-establish the control over the entire territory. After a week of armed yet relatively limited clashes the conflict ended with the withdrawal of the federal army from Slovenia.

Although initially against any unilateral act of secession, the European Community invited all federate republic of Yugoslavia to apply for the recognition of their independence on the basis of the its Declaration on the Guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe. By the deadline of 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1991, only Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia did so.<sup>93</sup> However, one week earlier, Germany had already unilaterally recognised the independence of Croatia and Slovenia. The reasons for which Germany encouraged the two republics to secede and for which later it recognised their

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however, new. In an incipient form they were present in the debates within Yugoslavia since the last decade of Tito's rule (Cohen 1993, 45-73, Pavković 1997, 92)

<sup>92</sup> The disputes over the fate of Yugoslavia were also acutely felt at the level of the federal presidency. This was facing a severe crisis after the election of nationalist Croat Stipe Mesić as president of the federation had been bloced on grounds that he had allegedly perceived his mandate as one for dissolving Yugoslavia (Cohen 1993, 212-3).

<sup>93</sup> Serbia and Montenegro did not apply on grounds that they had been recognised as independent states through the Treaty of Berlin (1878) since the adoption of which they had maintained full legal continuity at international level (Marković 1996, 30).



independence have been long debated and are still unclear. Among the most often invoked factors are the fact that Germany had been already invested significantly in the region, that it feared an afflux of immigrants and refugees (Krieger 1994) and that most of its political parties supported the principle of self-determination, which had been particularly important in the recent German reunification (Crawford B. 1996, 493-5, Pavković 1997, 149-50, Caplan 2005, 44-7). Whatever the circumstances, the German decision created a precedent that forced the European Community to recognise the independence of Croatia and Slovenia, contrary to the opinion of the international conference that was convened to settle the issue.<sup>94</sup>

The following two wars, which were generated by the separation of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina from Yugoslavia, were much more intense and violent. Although the major hostilities followed the Slovenian war, the first incidents date back from early 1990. Partly, they were the effect of an increased nationalist rhetoric within the context of an unstable state. More specifically, the Serbian population leaving in the Croatian lands started feel increasingly insecure when the discourse on the national independence of Croatia became heavily imbued with pro-fascist elements, reminding of the World War II ethnic cleansing.<sup>95</sup> Several violent clashes took place between Croats and Serbs and a Serbian autonomous territory within Croatia was proclaimed in August 1990. The conflict escalated during the next year following new local incidents and bellicose declarations of both Croatian and

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<sup>94</sup> There is an extensive literature on this topic. Most recently, Caplan (2005) elegantly discusses the role of the European Community in the process, as well as the regional and international consequences of EC's recognition of independence for the Yugoslav republics. Cohen (1993) and Pavković (1997) also usefully remind the fact that issue-linkages generated by the Maastricht treaty negotiations played a significant important part in shaping the European Community position on Yugoslavia.

<sup>95</sup> The Serbs had been one of the targets of Croatian Ustasha genocide during the Second World War. From the viewpoint of Croatian nationalists, Serbs were given a privileged status within Croatia during communism as a means to compensate for this treatment but this should not have happened because the Ustasha war atrocities would not have been much different from the actions of their adversaries, among whom there were also Serbs. This argument was used by Croatian nationalists to refute the right of the Serbian population to self-determination within Croatia or outside the borders of historical Serbia. At the same time, the period of Ustasha was reinterpreted in such a way so that it support the historical myth that the Croatian statehood was uninterrupted since the tenth century. Consequently, many of the atrocities committed by the Ustasha were portrayed as heroic gestures and their victims, including Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as enemies of the Croatian nation. (Pavković 1997, 5-11, 92-4, Cohen 1993, 127-9).

Serbian leaders (Marković 1996, 20-9). By the end of 1991, the Yugoslav federal army and the Croatian military and paramilitary groups had reached a stalemate. Partially for this reason, the two sides agreed to cease-fire, under international supervision. Since the European Community had been already failed several times in the peaceful management of the crisis, the terms of the arrangement were negotiated by the United Nations, through the special envoy and former US State Secretary Cyrus Vance (Pavković 1997, 143).<sup>96</sup> Soon after, the UN sent officers to monitor the cease-fire and then deployed several thousands of “blue helmets” in order to maintain peace. Initially, the involvement of the UN Security Council had been successful. The Serbs perceived the UN mission as more neutral than the Germany-pressured European Community. In addition, the UN was more experienced in terms of military arrangements. These were also more detailed and much more numerous in the Vance agreement than in the EC brokered deals. However, the cease-fire offered just a moment of respite for both parties as in 1993 the armed conflict started again. Finally, the Croatian army took over the UN protected areas with Serbian majority, which generated a mass exodus of Serbian refugees and finally put an end to the UN mission (Weiss 1996, Grubisa 1998).

By that time, the war had spread also to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Though it shared much of the characteristics of the previous two cases, the new conflict was more complex. The Slovenian and Croatian wars had been partially attempts to impose a separate nationhood. In Slovenia, the distinctiveness was conceptualized mainly in relation with the entire Yugoslav project.<sup>97</sup> In Croatia, the Serbs had been portrayed as a threat to the purity of the Croatian nation and territory and consequently as the main threat to the process of nationhood building.

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<sup>96</sup> Previously, over a dozen of cease-fire agreements had been brokered by the European Community but they were not respected by the signing parties, which were mainly politicians frequently seeking the attention of the media (Pavković 1997, 152-3).

<sup>97</sup> Partially, this may have been the result of the fact that within the South Slavonic *oikumene*, Slovenes had perceived themselves since the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards as distinct, both on linguistic and historical grounds (Trgovčević 2003, 224-9).

Therefore, during the war, Serbs were the main targets of Croatian hostilities (Cohen 1993, 223-35, Pavković 1997, 133-52). Bosnia-Herzegovina was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious republic, whose distinctiveness could not have been built upon the classic notion of nation as one cultural-linguistic entity. None of the ethnic or religious groups was truly dominant, although some had the majority in different parts of the republic.<sup>98</sup> The first major incidents, of a highly emotional nature, took place both between the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, and between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs in early 1992.<sup>99</sup> At political level, the situation had become increasingly tensed already in 1991 when the Muslim and Croat leaders of Bosnia-Herzegovina had adopted documents that opened the way to the republic's independence (Cohen 1993, 236). This happened despite the opposition of the Serbian part, who had already declared that it supported either the remaining of the republic in Yugoslavia or the separation of the Serbian territories within Bosnia as a new independent republic (Cousens and Cater 2001, 19). The fighting broke almost throughout the entire republic in April 1992 after the European Community and the US recognised the independence of Bosnia and following the proclamation of an independent Serbian Republic by the Bosnian Serbs. One month later, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), composed of Serbia and Montenegro, was proclaimed and all its citizens not native to Bosnia were recalled from the federal army. Yet, this left almost 80 per cent of the former federal army in Bosnia, which continued the fight together or against several criminal gangs and ethnic militias. Furthermore, each of the main military forces –Serbian and Croatian, continued to be

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<sup>98</sup> In 1991, Slovenians formed almost 90 per cent of Slovenia and Croats 75 per cent of Croatia. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, 44 per cent were Muslim, 31 per cent Serbs, 17 per cent Croats and 8 per cent declared themselves Yugoslav or of other identity. Muslims were concentrated mostly in the centre part of the republic and formed the majority in Sarajevo, Serbs were in majority in the north west of Bosnia and in eastern Herzegovina, while Croats were more numerous in Western Herzegovina (Cohen 1993, 235, Silber and Little 1995, 209, Pavković 1997, 48-9).

<sup>99</sup> Among the most important episodes whose emotional charge was very high was the killing of a Serb at his son's wedding in front of a church in Sarajevo by unidentified gunmen. This incident, which took place during the day of the referendum for the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina, generated brutal clashes between Serbs and Muslims and it is considered the starting point of interethnic violence in the Bosnian war (Cohen 1993, 237, Pavković 1997, 156).

supported by FRY and Croatia respectively (Pavković 1997, 157-69). Unlike the previous two wars, the scale to which civilian population had been affected was unprecedented. More than half of the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina, that is almost 2 million people, have been displaced during the war, mainly through forced migration or mass deportation. During the armed conflict, all sides created detention camps in which murder, torture and sexual abuse were rather common. Similar actions, as well as mass killings and ethnic cleansing often took place also outside the camps (Cohen 1993, 238-41). Furthermore, like in the Croatian war, media was used as a means of propaganda and images or news were frequently forged to incriminate the opposite side. Not least, major transport and habitation infrastructures were destroyed. Such actions not only dramatically changed the demography of the area but also left the country in hard emotional dismay, as well as without much of the basis for a healthy economic and political development (Cousens and Cater 2001, 25).

International intervention to Bosnia was relatively quick, but it failed to prevent much of the war atrocities. Partially, this happened because the international community was divided with respect to the causes of war and consequently with respect to the means to end it. This led to several failed peace plans (Owen 1995, Holbrooke 1998). At the same time, the UN peacekeepers sent on the ground proved to be vulnerable to the attacks of the belligerents, which undermined the credibility of the United Nations as peace broker, as well as the fragile negotiations that were taking place in parallel with the fighting (Cousens and Cater 2001, 21-3).<sup>100</sup> Yet, the international community helped broker the peace arrangement that led to the end of war. This was first outlined in September 1995 in Geneva, where the parties involved in the conflict adopted a document that allowed the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina into two entities, 51 per cent controlled by Bosnian Croats and Muslims, and

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<sup>100</sup> For instance, after the NATO air strikes over Bosnia in May 1995, Bosnian Serbs took hostage several hundreds of UN peacekeepers and other international personnel (Cousens and Cater 2001, 23). To a certain extent, the capture had been the result of involving in the war without both the appropriate mandate and equipment (Nation 1998, Andreopoulos 1998).

49 per cent under Bosnian Serb Control (Cousens and Cater 2001, 25). In November, at military base in Dayton (Ohio), another document, more comprehensive, was signed. This signalled the end of the war but it was only three weeks later that the warring parties adopted a final arrangement with detailed military provisions included. These Dayton-Paris agreements mark the official end of the Yugoslav wars. However, violence sprang again in 1998 in the Serbian province of Kosovo, whose majority Albanian population claims independence from the Serbian state, and later in 2001 in the already independent F.Y.R. Macedonia. Although these crises were managed partly with international intervention, partly locally, the area has remained unstable.

## **6.2 The triple transition**

The collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe was one of those events that many people hoped for but almost nobody expected to happen, at least not at the time it did. Throughout the entire decade preceding the revolutionary times that led to the end of the Cold War, it was not uncommon that well-respected voices in the field explicitly considered the region prone to totalitarian or post-totalitarian rule for a long time.<sup>101</sup> Many of those that paid more attention to the changes occurring in the area usually hoped at most for a gradual separation of some of the satellite states from the Soviet sphere of interest, without a fundamental change of the international system (Garton Ash 1991, Schöpflin 1993, 224-6). The process surprised most scholars and decision-makers alike, despite the fact that by the end of the 1980s, particularly due to the South European and Latin American experiences, the democratization studies were well advanced. Interestingly, in many respects, the regime

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<sup>101</sup> Among the most often quoted examples is Huntington (1984), whose otherwise pertinent article on the prospects of democratization throughout the world at that time clearly concluded that the democratization chances of Central and Eastern European countries were “virtually nil.”

change and transformations were also similar to those of the previous two sets of cases.<sup>102</sup> However, unlike in the case of the Latin American and South European predecessors together with which the Central and East European democratizations form the so called-third wave,<sup>103</sup> the changes that occurred in the communist countries triggered a radical transformation of the entire international dynamics. Most importantly, they brought the collapse of the bipolar system. Rejected by most of its members, now openly looking westwards, the security and economic institutions of the communist bloc were quickly disbanded in the early 1990s, thus formally ending the half a century long Cold War. Subsequently, without a strong ideological and politically coagulated rival, democracy seemed to be finally the leading idea of world development.<sup>104</sup>

The transition processes of Central and East European states have been unique in many ways. Most notably, unlike their predecessors within the third wave, the political democratization has been accompanied by economic reforms aiming at liberalizing the

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<sup>102</sup> Methodologically, the problem of comparing transitions to democracy is, however, a difficult one, which may lead to significantly different results when criteria for choosing cases are slightly modified, as Whitehead (2002, esp. 186-212) elegantly demonstrates with extensive references to the democratization processes of Latin America, South Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and East Asia. Nevertheless, the comparisons among the three groups of countries that embarked upon transitions towards democracy between 1970 and 1990s is very frequent in the literature partly due to the fact that the democratization processes were relatively clustered around the same time (Linz and Stepan 1996).

<sup>103</sup> A wave of democratization is a period in which the number of countries embarked onto democratization processes is significantly higher than the number of countries becoming authoritarian regimes or dictatorships. Huntington (1991a, 1991b) put forward the idea that in the last two centuries there were three such waves. First, between the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and until the First World War, democracies sprang out of absolutist monarchies, feudal aristocracies and successor states to continental empires. A second wave of democratization swept the globe between the Second World War and the 1960s, on the ruins of fascist states, colonies and some military dictatorships. Finally, a third wave of democratization developed from mid 1970s until the early 1990s, after the overthrow of military regimes, personal dictatorships and/or one-party systems. Sometimes, including in Huntington (1991a, 1991b), the notion is used to refer exclusively at the post-communist transformations, which followed the two smaller waves of democratization in South Europe and Latin America. Though contested and thoroughly debated, Huntington's typology became a common place in democratization and transition scholarship.

<sup>104</sup> The democratic euphoria of those times was so powerful that prompted some, most notably Fukuyama (1992), to put forward the idea that humanity may have achieved its finality and therefore, in a Hegelian sense, it arrived at the end of its history.

market.<sup>105</sup> In this sense, the former communist countries embarked on a simultaneous and double transition – one at transforming post-totalitarian structures into democratic institutions and one aiming at “marketising” planned economies.<sup>106</sup> Yet, throughout much of the area, the governments had to face also a third challenge, namely to handle deep-rooted nationalist problems, remnants of an incomplete nation-building process that had been partly frozen during the communist regime (Offe 1991). Apart from these, one may notice other similarities with respect to the modes of regime change in Central and Eastern Europe. For instance, unlike the previous waves of democratization, the countries of the Eastern bloc abandoned communism through contagion (Pridham 1994, Whitehead 1996). The political reforms introduced in Poland in the first half of 1989 were soon replicated in Hungary. The decision of the Hungarian government to let the frontier open for the East German citizens flooding through Austria into the German Federal Republic precipitated the regime change in the GDR (Tismăneanu 1992). All these extraordinary events fuelled the confidence of reformers in other parts of the Eastern bloc both at governmental and civil society level. Soon after, all the other communist governments fell. As showed in the previous section, external factors played a significant role in the collapse of the communist regimes. However, similar to many Latin American and Southern Europe democratization experiences, external actors tended to play an indirect and marginal role.<sup>107</sup> Exceptions were the Yugoslav republics, most notably Croatia and Slovenia, in which the change of regime (and of sovereignty status) was actively encouraged by Germany and later by the European

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<sup>105</sup> By way of comparison, in South Europe, political democratization followed almost a decade later economic liberalization, while in Latin America the market economy had already a well-established tradition (O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986).

<sup>106</sup> This is a very common conclusion in the democratization and transition scholarship referring to Central and Eastern Europe since Dahrendorf (1990) first noticed this challenge. More in-depth analyses of the issue can be found in Karl and Schmitter (1991), Marks and Diamond (1992), and Linz and Stepan (1996).

<sup>107</sup> For detailed comparisons between the democratization experiences equally from the viewpoint of the role of external actors see, particularly the classic analysis of O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (1986), as well as the more recent Pridham (1994), Linz and Stepan (1996), and Whitehead (1996).

Community (Crawford B. 1996, Caplan 2005).<sup>108</sup> This case seems to confirm a finding that the Southern European democratization had already suggested, namely that the more contested the end of a regime is, the more likely the international intervention is, when the prolongation of uncertainty has a high potential of regional instability (Pridham 1994).

Although each country split from dictatorship or authoritarian rule in a unique way, some may be grouped according to several common features. In Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, for instance, the regime changed in a relatively peaceful manner, through negotiations and partial liberalization of the electoral scene (Tismăneanu 1992). At the other end of the spectrum, the divorce from dictatorship of Romania and the GDR were violent. At the same time, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Romania are considered to have changed their regimes through revolution, even if in the case of Czechoslovakia the violent elements commonly met in revolutions were not so significant. Poland and Hungary also had their revolutionary moments in the process of abandoning communism but both countries departed from authoritarian rule equally through reforms, a combination that in political science scholarship is henceforth known as *refolution* (Garton Ash 1991). Not least, Albania, Bulgaria and Hungary could be grouped together on grounds that in their cases there have been a combination of roundtable negotiations and popular movements. Only Yugoslavia seems to stand apart because it separated from the previous regime mainly through state disintegration.

Such groupings can be operated also with respect to the modes of transition to democracy. If one looks closer at the exact nature of the previous regime, one may observe that at the end of the 1980s there were many differences among the Central and East European countries. Some, like Hungary, which had introduced several political and economic liberalizing policies already in the early 1980s, had more the features of an authoritarian regime (Kornai

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<sup>108</sup> This issue is discussed in more detail in section 3.2.2.1 of the present chapter.



1989). In contrast, in the last decade before the end of the Cold War, countries like Albania and Romania were moving increasingly back towards totalitarianism, but with more nationalist tendencies than the 1950s predecessors and with a particular mix of certain freedoms and censorship (Linz and Stepan 1996). Because of such differences, much of the democratisation scholarship suggested that the transition to democracy of the authoritarian states be relatively easier and quicker compared to the post-totalitarian counterparts. In practice, this was partially confirmed but several other factors played a role in the process, most notably the existence of a stronger culture of opposition and civil society, as well as the experience of the first elections. These different factors led to different paths and rhythms of transition. For instance, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, which had been already during the communism regime more advanced than many of their neighbours, had a better start particularly at political level. Doubled by a strong group rhetoric that had been developed initially as a foreign policy instrument,<sup>109</sup> they came to be regarded as leaders of the region. Soon after, this was increasingly perceived as an organic development that could be traced back centuries behind. In this way, the different waves of transitions started to be conceptualised in a deterministic manner. The consequence of this type of argumentation, which is very frequent and still present in transition scholarship, was to claim that some states of the region were doomed to remain politically and socially backward, a stigma that these governments had to counter both at domestic and external levels.<sup>110</sup>

Parallel to the democratization of political institutions, the Central and East European countries also experienced a radical transformation of their planned economies, through reforms aiming at liberalizing the market and attract foreign investors. Mainly in the early 1990s, for many of the political leaders of the moment, as well as for most of the population,

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<sup>109</sup> For more details on this issue, see chapter 7, esp. the circumstances of the Visegrád Group creation.

<sup>110</sup> Among the many such examples, one may see, for instance, the otherwise pertinent analyses of Lewis (1997) and Vachudova (2005).

this seemed to be equivalent with democracy (Crawford K. 1996, 99). One of the major reasons for such confusion was the fact that in the collective imaginary democracy had been frequently represented as equivalent with the Western living standards so much dreamed of during communism (Mason 1995). Furthermore, the experience of the other democratization processes that took place in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had shown that, indeed, democracies were more stable and had a longer lifespan if developed alongside healthy economic systems.<sup>111</sup> Handling the communist economic legacies has not been an easy task for any of these countries. A major obstacle was the fact that the command economy of socialist states created and subsidised industrial giants, particularly in heavy industry, while frequently neglecting the development of infrastructure. This economic strategy based on the Soviet-type of development had become clearly obsolete already in the 1980s (Ágh 1998, 25).<sup>112</sup> The decrease of the Soviet influence and Comecon role in the area prompted some of the communist countries, such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia, to move towards a more service-oriented approach (Fitzmaurice 1998, 35-9, Kabele 1995, 71). However, until the collapse of the communist regimes, this incipient re-adaptation to world free markets mechanisms was slow, while the infrastructure shortcomings continued to be largely neglected. Another problem that the former communist states had to face was the collapse of the traditional markets for their goods. After decades of autarkic economic behaviour and without free competition, the goods they produced were frequently of mediocre or poor quality. Within the Comecon system, the huge Soviet market absorbed their products. Due to the different type of economic development strategies, much of what these countries could

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<sup>111</sup> The exact nature of the correlation between economic liberalization or reforms towards a free market and the political democratization of institutions in the process of regime change is still subject of debate in political science scholarship since the debate emerged in the 1960s. Yet, following the conclusions of the influential analyses of O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Przeworski (1991) and Przeworski et al. (2000), most authors currently accept that the cases of political democratization from 1970s onwards involve at least a minimum of economic liberalization, either during the authoritarian regime or after the collapse of a dictatorship.

<sup>112</sup> Allen (2001) provides an interesting analysis of the Soviet type of economic development and the factors that led to its decline, which, retrospectively, he argues, seems to have started already in the 1960s.

offer, such as chemical or metallurgical products, could not have been sold onto the Western markets anyway even if they had been of better quality. To these one may also add the deep risk aversion developed within the paternalistic framework of communist socio-economic relations, as well as the lack of financial resources within the population, which inhibited for a long time the emergence of a larger class of local free-market actors.

Once the communist system of regional economic cooperation broke down, the effects of the planning and focus on heavy industry were painfully felt throughout the area. The main macro-economic indicators of the first half of the 1990s reflect the difficulty of transition towards competitive economies most strikingly. For instance, in the first five years of the transition, the GDP of the Central and East European countries had been drastically reduced by 20 to almost 50%, with both the agricultural and industrial sectors visibly reflecting such changes (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1994). Inflation also rose from tens to hundreds per cent throughout the region (Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies 1996), with the 550% annual rate of inflation in 1990 Poland as the most striking case of the early transition.<sup>113</sup> Not least, unemployment, particularly in some industrial areas of East Germany and Romania, was not uncommonly over 20% (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1994).<sup>114</sup>

The first policy choice that all countries adopted in the region was to privatize some of the former state companies, while maintaining political control over most of the economy (Ágh 1995, 54). This was, however, just a splash into the ocean of complex problems that the

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<sup>113</sup> This figure was surpassed only once, in 1997, when Bulgaria's annual inflation rate arrived at 1,082% (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007).

<sup>114</sup> Many of the macro-economic statistics of the early 1990s are partially distorted because the reporting systems changed but also due to the incomplete coverage of the incipient yet extremely volatile private sector, as well as to the widespread tax evasion. For instance, in many places unemployment might have been slightly smaller than the reported figures because some of the recently unemployed persons who used to work for state companies were able to earn a revenue from the private sector, an income which was rarely declared. Despite such distortions, it is undeniable that the living standards dramatically deteriorated during the early 1990s throughout the entire region (Havlik 1995).

transition economies had to face. In order to manage them, the Central and East European governments had two basic strategies, either implement gradual reforms or introduce drastic measures from the very beginning of the transition period. For instance, confronted with galloping hyperinflation, Poland and Yugoslavia adopted the shock therapy. Countries less affected by inflation, such as Romania, preferred a gradual approach. In socio-economic terms, both strategies had significant advantages and disadvantages, therefore, the choice between them was mostly political. For this reason, beyond the economic arguments, the new political leadership frequently used several rhetorical means to legitimize publicly the preference for one or the other. For instance, the shock therapy was presented as a definitive abandon of the past and a quick adoption of a Western-modelled free market. In reality, the cold shower strategy was limited to certain macro-economic measures and many of the economic structures of the previous regime could not be changed but gradually. To a lesser extent, the argument of Western expertise was also employed. In public discourses, the Western world continued to be represented as keeper of the key to well-being and success, a vision coagulated mostly during communism in opposition and as a escapist solution to the oppressive regime, which still had mobilizing potential. At the same time, given the shortage of professional expertise concerning the mechanisms of free market in their own ranks, the governments of the Central and East European states also actively sought for advice in the Western world.<sup>115</sup> However, concerned with the disenchantment effect that the chosen strategies would have generated when their negative consequences were associated to the West, this argument was quickly shelved (Geremek 2006). These reforms affected differently the economic transformation of the region. From a political economy standpoint, the differentiation is attributed mostly to the policy choice. Retrospectively, the cold shower strategy applied in the early 1990s is often considered to have yielded a slightly more stable

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<sup>115</sup> For instance, after failing to cut hyperinflation, the Yugoslav government applied a “shock therapy” partially modelled by Jeffrey Sachs, a Harvard economist (Pavković 1997, 99).

basis for the transition economies. The evidence brought forward to support this view is that after such therapies the respective economies performed on average much better on medium term compared to those in which the gradual reforms were introduced (Fitzmaurice 1998, 40). Yet, this might be a spurious correlation. The countries that applied a shock therapy were those that had performed better already during the communism regime and which were mostly and relatively quickly hit by the regime change.<sup>116</sup> In addition, in most of these countries, the first elections had been won by an elite whose legitimacy was strongly related to the anti-communist discourse and which was consequently more inclined towards radical transformation of the socio-economic and political environment. Therefore, much of the economic performance depended not only of the economic policy choices but also of the previous economic background, as well as of the political commitment to reform.

Finally, beyond such political and economic transformations, the regime change had a notable impact on the foundations of the polity throughout the region. Soon after the divorce from the communist rule, many of the new governments faced ethnic tensions and had to handle deep-rooted nationalist problems. These were challenging the sense of community that had been imposed by the previous regime and reflected the fact that these states, partially due to communism, had not completed their nation-building processes (Offe 1991). Especially in the early 1990s, claims of separatism and higher autonomy were frequent throughout the area. Since such demands contested the existing institutional framework, they were undermining the state foundations, both at domestic and at regional level. The most affected cases were the multi-ethnic states that had a federal structure: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.<sup>117</sup> None of these federations survived the end of the Cold

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<sup>116</sup> Their better performance during the communist regime was partly due to some liberalizing reforms and to a more service-oriented economy. A notable case in point is Hungary, which had started to liberalize its market since the early 1980s (Kornai 1989).

<sup>117</sup> However, they were not the only ones that experienced such challenges. For instance, in the early 1990s there have been violent ethnic clashes between the Hungarians and the Romanians inhabitants of the multi-ethnic Transylvanian city of Târgu Mureş. Currently, it is widely accepted that these were not spontaneous

War. Czechoslovakia separated into two new entities – the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. The process was a relatively peaceful and followed the pre-existent territorial divisions. As shown in the previous section, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke through a series of violent conflicts that started in 1991 and continued with different intensity during the entire decade. Though the split was often along the pre-existent boundaries between the federate states, territorial claims and acquisitions have been made during the process. The Soviet Union disintegration was partially similar to that of Yugoslavia. New countries appeared along former federate lines but territorial and ethnic conflicts have been frequent, a process that is still underway. In many of the states that resulted from such splits, both national imaginary and state institutions had to be created or consolidated. Many of them did not have a long history of independence before the communism regime, much of the historical national narrative had to be (re)written and the basic state framework had to be developed. This happened, for instance, in the Baltic Republics, Slovakia, and Montenegro. In a very short time, the newly created states needed to build a critical mass of state administration professional staff. Such actions required extra efforts in the transition process.

### ***6.3 Rethinking foreign policy in a changing environment***

It is under these domestic circumstances that the foreign policy strategies of the Central and East European states dramatically changed.<sup>118</sup> With the quick dissolution of the institutional structures that held them together under the reign of the decaying Soviet Union, most of

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actions reflecting deep-rooted ethnic hatred. Rather a deep mistrust between the two communities had been developed and exploited during the communist regime and, after its collapse, it was used by a part of the former secret police to gain political advantages (Dobrincu and Vasile 2007). This example shows particularly the way in which the weakness of state institutions within the early periods of regime change can be further affected by the existence of unfinished nation-building processes.

<sup>118</sup> Most often, a change of foreign policy strategy is defined as a “dramatic, wholesale alteration of a nation’s pattern of external relations” (Holsti 1982, ix). Although in institutional terms this can take relatively short time after the disappearance of a regime, a complete transformation occurs only when there is also a change in the beliefs of the elites in charge with foreign policy, which is a much longer process (Gustavsson 1999).

them opted for joining the Western European structures of security. Yet, the collapse of the communist regimes modified the very essence of international and European security. This fact challenged the traditional goals of these Western European structures and made very necessary their institutional reform. For these reasons, in the early 1990s it was highly unclear whether the West was capable and willing to enlarge to the East, despite the high rhetorical enthusiasm for the democratisation processes that had started beyond the former Iron Curtain.

Less constrained by a legal or institutional reform, the CSCE was the first to answer positively the rapprochement attempts coming from the former communist bloc (Galbreath 2007, 24-38). Many of the Central and East European countries were already members of the process since the debates that led to the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. Others joined soon after the collapse of the bipolar system.<sup>119</sup> This allowed the Central and East European states to take active part in the reform of an important part of the European security architecture that had been designed mostly in the West. Some, like Czechoslovakia and Poland, even proposed that the CSCE becomes the main security organization of Europe (Vachudova 1993, Kohl 2001, Piotrowski and Rachwald 2001). However, under both European and American pressure, such projects were quickly shelved.<sup>120</sup> This forced the Central and East European governments to search for better security alternatives (Tókéš 1991). After the failure of the CSCE in addressing the former Yugoslavia conflicts, the disappointment with this organization grew further, which led to an even stronger orientation of the Central and East European foreign policies towards achieving the goal of acquiring the

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<sup>119</sup> After 1990, the CSCE was joined mainly by those entities that during the Cold War had been incorporated into a larger state, such as the Yugoslav and Soviet republics. For a list of the CSCE (and later OSCE) membership, see Appendix 3.

<sup>120</sup> The issue has been fragmentarily discussed in several places. For a useful overview of the topics, see Smith M. and Timmins (2000), esp. 86-121.

membership of more solid Western security structures (Smith M. and Timmins 2000, Schimmelfennig 2003).

In early 1990s, the most viable option was the Council of Europe. With its focus on the respect of democratic values and human rights, it fitted well the governments of the transition states, much eager to prove their democratic credentials to the Western partners (Hyde-Price 1994, 243). The first to acquire the membership of this organization was Hungary, which took this step as early as 1990. It was soon followed by Poland (1991) and Bulgaria (1992). In 1993, a series of other Central and East European countries also became members. These were the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The lot was enlarged in 1995, with the admission of Albania, F.Y.R. Macedonia, Latvia, Moldova and Ukraine. The subsequent accessions were also grouped but to a much smaller scale. Croatia and the Russian Federation joined in 1996, Georgia in 1999, Armenia and Azerbaidjan in 2001. Finally, by 2006, the rest of the Yugoslav republics were also accepted in the organization: Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2002, Serbia in 2003 and Montenegro in 2006.<sup>121</sup>

Despite their accession to the Council of Europe and the CSCE membership, the most important target of the Central and European states remained the integration into the main security and economic organizations of the Western world, namely within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Economic Community.<sup>122</sup> Even those that could not or were not willing to do so, such the Russian Federation or Belarus, had to realign

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<sup>121</sup> In 2003, the Union of Serbia and Montenegro became member of the organization. However, since only Serbia remained the legal successor of that state after the split of the two republics, it is commonly considered that Serbia's membership started in 2003 and not in 2006 when it acquired this name.

<sup>122</sup> In the early 1990s, the efforts to redesign the structures of European and international security after the Cold War put NATO, the European Community and sometimes several other organizations such as the Council of Europe and the CSCE into a common basket that was labelled frequently the Euro-Atlantic system. Becoming a member of this system was bureaucratically dubbed as Euro-Atlantic integration (Smith M. and Timmins 2000). In some of the countries of the region such, this label was still employed in the late 1990s, a fact that reflected a widespread confusion between the NATO and the European Union among the political and technocratic leadership of these states.



their foreign policy goals according to these tendencies. This choice was not always clear, at least in the early 1990s. Hungary, for instance, initially would have liked to opt for neutrality. However, after the proposal was received without any enthusiasm in the Western chancelleries, it chose the NATO alternative and suggested some of his neighbours to take a similar path (Vachudova 1993, Reisch 1993). The first post-communist Romanian government, an unstable mix of neo-communists and reformers without much governing experience, had also initial hesitations towards the NATO and even signed a treaty with the USSR.<sup>123</sup> After the dissolution of the Soviet Union several months later, this treaty was abandoned but it had a distressing diplomatic impact on the relations with many Western governments, signalling the fact that, despite the violent break-up with the past, Romania's path towards democratisation was not straightforward. By 1991, most democratising countries were, however, decided to get closer relations with the North Atlantic Alliance. They expressed this wish on several occasions, hoping for an invitation to join the ranks of NATO. At that time, unable to handle a group of unstable states from within, the Western side offered first only the assistance of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC).<sup>124</sup> This was intended as a means to help the former Warsaw Pact members and later the former Soviet republics to stabilise politically and to become socialized into the practices of the

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<sup>123</sup> This was one of the main disagreements between Prime Minister Petre Roman and President Ion Iliescu, which finally led to the fall of Roman through a violent upsurge of miners from the Jiu Valley called by Iliescu in Bucharest (Dobrincu and Vasile 2007). Following a long tradition of cooperation with the European Community dating from the 1960s, Roman sought first to strengthen the collaboration with this institution and waited for a Western feed-back with respect to the possible security strategies. As he acknowledged in an interview with the author, Roman strongly believed that under those unclear circumstances economic stabilization was the first attainable goal. In foreign policy terms, he also assumed that the collaboration with the increasingly active European Community would also strengthen the chances for a clear rapprochement towards the Western security institutions, most notably NATO and WEU (Roman 2005). On the other hand, Iliescu was more inclined to consider that the key issue of Romania's stability was a privileged relationship with the USSR. However, the terms of the treaty signed in 1991 with the USSR were less than favourable to Romania.

<sup>124</sup> Kaplan (2001) interestingly reminds that, through the previous enlargements, the Alliance did not incorporate fully democratic states. Granting accession to Germany (1955) and Spain (1981), but mostly to Greece and Turkey (1952) was a means not only to achieve certain defence goals but also to help these states democratize. In the early 1990s, however, Kaplan suggests, the number of countries willing to join was too big to apply the same strategy. This may have probably led to a more unstable security configuration within Europe and possibly to the collapse of the Alliance.

Alliance.<sup>125</sup> However, the NACC, currently known as the European Atlantic Partnership Council, proved insufficient to address the complex security issues that were (re)emerging in Central and Eastern Europe and especially within the former Soviet space (Kaplan 2001, 200).

As in the process of state building generated by the disintegration of larger political entities violence was spreading quickly over the Balkans and many parts of the former USSR, instability within Europe was growing higher. Consequently, a better security arrangement was needed for the area. This came in 1994, with the design of the Partnerships for Peace (PfP). The program allowed the partner states to participate to both political and military bodies of NATO and to have consultations with the Alliance in the eventuality of security threats for any of the PfP states or NATO members. From a military point of view, this meant mostly interoperability between the NATO countries and their partners, without offering membership but going beyond the seminar and conference approach of the NACC (Smith M. and Timmins 2000, 35). However, from a political point of view, the PfP was soon to be interpreted by the partner states as an invitation to join the Alliance in a not so distant future.<sup>126</sup> In the second half of the 1990s, under the concerted pressures of the Central and Eastern European governments, most notably of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the member states of NATO had finally agreed to consider enlargement as a viable option.<sup>127</sup> Within this context, the PfP have increasingly transformed into a preparatory class for the accession to the organization. The enlargement was equally convoluted, reflecting both the reluctance to accept new members and the difficulty to design the space of Euro-

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<sup>125</sup> At the same time, the NACC, which initiated in a proposal of the U.S. administration, was part of the larger reform of the NATO within the new security environment (Mattox 2001, 17-8).

<sup>126</sup> The Central and East European governments could easily base their interpretation on the official text of the PfP invitation. Most importantly from this point of view, the document stated, “we expect and would welcome NATO expansion that would reach to democratic states to our East, as part of an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe” (NATO 1994).

<sup>127</sup> Other factors may have played a significant role in the decision to enlarge. Among these, the most important may have been the fact that the European Union was making a similar move and the fact that the issue of NATO’s future was a key topic in the U.S. foreign politics (Smith M. and Timmins 2000, 35-41).

Atlantic security within the new international context. The process took place in two stages. The first one, in 1999, saw only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland become members, although in the year preceding their accession several NATO states pressured for the inclusion of other countries as well.<sup>128</sup> Partially due to such insistence, the Alliance committed for further extension of the organization and five years later Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined NATO.

In the early 1990s, the European Community was similarly hesitant with respect to its enlargement. Confronted with a deep reform process and manifesting higher political ambitions within the context of the overall reform of the European security system, it first offered the Central and East European states the possibility to become its associates. Accordingly, in the first half of the 1990s, a series of arrangements, known as the Europe Agreements, have been concluded with most of the former communist countries. Another important institutional link between the EU and the former communist states designed at that time was the aid for economic reconstruction and development of the civil society, under the Phare program. This, initiative often compared with the Marshall Plan that aimed the reconstruction of Western Europe in aftermath of the Second World War,<sup>129</sup> was crafted already in 1989. At the Paris summit of the Group of Seven (G7) that took place in July that year, the participant heads of state and government had decided that all countries of the communist bloc that were embarking onto a reform process towards democracy and free market should receive Western aid and that the European Commission would coordinate it (Hyde-Price 1994, 229). With their 1989 elections and roundtable negotiations, the first Central and East European states to do so were Poland and Hungary. Consequently, the first

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<sup>128</sup> France, for instance, lobbied for Romania, Italy for Slovenia, while Denmark actively supported the idea that at least one Baltic state should be also admitted (Smith M. and Timmins 2000, 47-8). For a good overview of the reasons for which only three states were admitted in 1999, see Gheciu (2005, esp. 70-6).

<sup>129</sup> For a brief overview of the pros and cons of such comparison see, for instance, Smith M. and Timmins (2000, 125-7).

aid program was addressed to them,<sup>130</sup> but when other communist countries soon followed their example, it was extended both in goals and scope. Although not designed to be a framework for preparing the accession to the European Union, Europe Agreements and to a lesser extent the Phare program quickly became so, similarly to the way in which the PfP has been an antechamber to the NATO membership (Smith M. and Timmins 2000, Schimmelfennig 2003).<sup>131</sup> This had become clear already in 1993, with the European Council in Copenhagen that established the criteria for EU membership. Four years later, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia were invited to join and started negotiations for this purpose. In 1999, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia followed. Consequently, like in the case of NATO, the enlargement of the European Union towards the former communist space also took place in two waves. Yet, unlike in the case of NATO, the final composition of the two enlargement sessions was not identical to the two groups that were initially formed. In 2004, when the first accession took place, the group of 1997 was extended with Slovakia and the rest of the Baltic countries acquired membership in 2004, while Bulgaria and Romania acceded to the organization in 2007. With this, the transition towards democracy is usually considered to have reached a formal end.<sup>132</sup>

All these changes in the foreign policy of the Central and East European states were taking place in an international environment that was itself caught into a complex process of transformation, partially generated by the collapse of the bipolar system. The end of the Cold

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<sup>130</sup> The fact is reflected by the program's acronym – Phare (Poland Hungary Aid for Economic Recovery).

<sup>131</sup> Under the influence of EU law scholarship on the issue, the association agreements that the European Community designed for the Central and East European states have been widely perceived as a waiting room for membership. This interpretation was based partially on the view that association to an organization is usually considered a first step towards full membership (Schimmelfennig 2003, 75). Recently, Sedelmeier and Wallace (2000) argued that, while acknowledging these countries' aim for membership, the Community did not endorse such goal as its own within the context of the Europe agreements.

<sup>132</sup> The democracy and economic freedom indexes, such as those produced by the Freedom House, do not register a significant change for the first year of EU or NATO membership of these states. Yet, the Central and East European countries are largely regarded as having passed into the consolidation phase of democracy once they acquired the NATO and EU membership, mainly because the accession to these organizations requires the fulfilment of criteria that formally define stable democracies and functional free markets.

War not only allowed the reorientation of the former communist states' foreign policy strategies but also triggered or stimulated significant institutional changes within many of the most important international organizations. The need to adapt to the new international environment was mostly felt within those organizations that had played leading roles during the ideological confrontation in which the world was engulfed for almost half a century.

The rationale of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was affected to the largest degree by the disappearance of the Cold War logic and its subsequent system of international relations. Without its main ideological enemy, NATO's survival did not seem very probable. In the early 1990s, it was not uncommon to hear voices arguing for its disappearance either in the policy-making area or within more scholarly environments (Kaplan 2001, 1999). However, as Gheciu (2005) elegantly points out, NATO has had ever since its creation both an *outside* and an *inside* dimension. NATO was not only a "conventional alliance against the Soviet military threat, but also [an] institution aimed at countering the *inside* risk of potential loss of Western liberal democratic values and norms within the Euro-Atlantic area" (Gheciu 2005, 34, author's emphasis). Although the *inside* aspects were less visible during the Cold War, they never ceased to exist. In the aftermath of the bipolar system's collapse, it was this *inside* dimension that could be resurrected. Together with the political commitment of its members, most notably the US, France and Germany, the existence of this dimension allowed not only the survival of NATO but also its transformation into the leading regional security organization of the current international system.<sup>133</sup> Accordingly, NATO redefined its mission mainly around the concepts of democracy, freedom and security. Its traditional mission was to provide the means to react against the aggression of a member state (NATO 1949, art.5). As early as 1991, the Alliance acknowledged that it was no longer a mere defence partnership but aimed at providing the security basis for a "whole and free" Europe

<sup>133</sup> The role of the member states in redefining the role of the organization has been widely discussed. For a useful overview of the main arguments on the topic, see Smith M. and Timmins (2000).

(NATO 1991).<sup>134</sup> The new strategic concept emphasized the fact that, within the new international context, overt aggression was less likely, while nonconventional risks had become the main source of insecurity for the members of the Alliance.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, the organization could brand itself as a conflict management arrangement, a shift of paradigm that allowed NATO to act outside the territory of the member states, for instance in the Western Balkans and Afghanistan.<sup>136</sup> In the late 1990s, the nonconventional risks were reconfirmed as main security threat for the Alliance and its members (NATO 1999). In addition, the organization acquired a new mission, namely to contribute to “effective conflict prevention [and] crisis management, including crisis response operations” (ibid.). The 1999 strategic concept, which is the last major modification of the NATO principles, acknowledged the primacy of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security but emphasized the fact that NATO was willing and capable to help the UN in this respect.<sup>137</sup> In fact, by the time when this objective became a legal provision, the Alliance had already collaborated with the UN on these grounds in the Yugoslav wars (Granatstein 2001, Gardner 2001). Therefore, far from being an exception, the trend of the out-of-area missions is not likely to diminish. However, even if the legal justification of such missions is increasingly robust, the exact nature and legitimacy of NATO within the new international

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<sup>134</sup> This partially reflected the US vision on the issue, whose administration had already started promoting the idea of democratization as its main rhetorical concept in the post-Cold War environment (Bozo 2001, Brenner 2001).

<sup>135</sup> Interestingly, at that time, conflicts were identified spatially rather precisely. NATO was interested in maintaining stability in Europe by countering the instability that was growing in Central and Eastern Europe: “Risks to Allied security are less likely to result from calculated aggression against the territory of the allies but rather from the adverse consequences of instabilities that may arise from serious economic, social and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes, which are faced by many countries in central and eastern Europe” (NATO 1991).

<sup>136</sup> In legal terms, this was justified mainly through art.4 of the NATO treaty, which states, “the parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened.”

<sup>137</sup> The link is explicit through reference to art.7 of the NATO treaty, which acknowledges the role of the UN. This may suggest that for future out-of-area missions, NATO would specifically wait for a UN mandate before taking action. For Smith M. and Timmins (2000, 116) this reference is, however, not very binding as the Alliance can legally by-pass the UN through the provisions of the art. 4 of the NATO treaty, like it did in the case of Bosnia and Kosovo missions.

environment are still unclear (Stuart 2001). For this reason, the conceptual and institutional reform of the Alliance is a process that is still underway.

The Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe was also caught into a significant reform process in the aftermath of the Cold War. Like NATO, it was facing major challenges. Among these, the collapse of states, difficult processes of transition towards democracy and free market, and transnational crises were the most critical from the viewpoint of the CSCE concerns (Galbreath 2007, 42). Above all, the worries came particularly from the fact that, although it had a relatively quick response to these issues, CSCE did not manage to prevent the escalation of the crises (Caplan 2005, 18-20, Sabahi and Warner 2004). For these reasons, after a period of reflection upon its future, it became more institutionalised and transformed into a fully-fledged organization – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) whose main goals are the promotion of confidence and security building measures and the support of democracy and human rights in the transition states of the Euro-Atlantic area (CSCE 1990, 1992a, 1992b, 1994). Since the mid-1990s, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) managed to build for itself a leading role in the international management of many of the conflict areas of the former communist space. It has been usually the first to establish monitoring missions and provide support for enforcing democratic institutions in the regions affected by conflicts or stalled transitions. Given the inter-ethnic character of most of the crises and conflicts in which it involved, its High Commissioner on National Minorities became a key player both within the organization and on the ground. However, the institutional design of OSCE, with its focus on decentralization and relatively frequent replacement of staff, has often impaired the coherence and continuity of its actions (Galbreath 2007, 44).

The institutional and legal design affected in a similar way the efficiency of the United Nations. In the early 1990s, after a long time of marginalisation, the UN seemed finally to be

able to play fully its role in maintaining international peace and security. Within the context of high uncertainty concerning the future of the security institutions that had been generated by the bipolar system, the international community regarded the United Nations as the more stable and major actor within the international arena. However, the convoluted decision-making process within the organization, particularly the difficulty of reaching a decision within the Security Council, frequently hindered the conflict prevention efforts and delayed the intervention in the cases in which crises escalated. Furthermore, when the UN intervened on the ground, the mandate of its peacekeepers was often inappropriate for managing the new type of conflicts that were spreading in the aftermath of the Cold War.<sup>138</sup> This is partially why in the early 1990s, the UN failed to prevent several humanitarian catastrophes throughout the world. Consequently, the confidence in the capacities of the UN to act for ensuring peace and security drastically diminished, while the member states increasingly preferred to act through regional organizations and alliances, such as the NATO.<sup>139</sup>

After the dissolution of the East-West ideological divide, the international community also experienced the emergence of a new leader in European and international foreign policy making, namely the European Union. Although initially mainly a project of strengthening Western security through the harmonization of economies within the context of the emerging Cold War, the European Community had been acquiring an increasingly important role in European and world affairs already before the collapse of the bipolar system. First, unlike any previous cooperative arrangement in modern times, the European Community succeeded

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<sup>138</sup> Many of the new conflicts are low-intensity and frequently correlate with ethnic tensions that had been latent for long periods (Holsti 1996, Kaldor 1999). For this reason, at the beginning of the 1990s, the idea that the majority of contemporary conflicts would be ethnic conflicts was widely spread (Coackley 1993, Wolff 2006). Currently, however, conflicts are considered the result of several concurrent factors, among which the most important are (in)security perceptions, inequality, and private interests (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). From this viewpoint, the ethnic element should be understood rather as a form through which these factors are expressed.

<sup>139</sup> In the mid 1990s, the confidence in the United Nations' capacities had reached such a low point that many even preached the replacement of the UN peacekeeping actions (except in their limited and classic form) with regional and "great power" conflict management (Hansen, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse 2004).



in having a common commercial policy. This meant that in terms of trade, the member states were no longer having national competences but delegated their rights to a supranational institution. Coupled with the strong economies of most member states, this transformed the European Community into a leading actor in international trade. In parallel to this process, since the mid 1980s the organization embarked upon an extensive institutional reform, which, among others, would lead to the transformation of the European Community into the European Union in 1993. This reform, as well as the changing international context, allowed Western European leaders to push their cooperation at a further level. Most importantly, they created a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), partially as an answer to the shortcomings of their rather deceiving teamwork during the first stages of the Yugoslav break-up. Although the foreign policy creation has remained largely of national competence and many issues are still divisive among the EU leadership, the CFSP mechanism gave a common voice to the European Union states in matters related to external relations and, together with an increased presence of EU in major international events and processes, allowed the Union to increase its international visibility and leverage.

Not least, these transformations within the international arena were not taking place only at institutional level but also at conceptual one. Most importantly, the traditional concept of security was replaced by a more flexible and comprehensive approach.<sup>140</sup> Until the end of the Cold War, security referred mainly to the protection of national interest through the presence of military forces and deterrent aggression (Waltz 1979, Walt 1991, Krause and Williams 1997). This vision had been challenged already in the 1980s due to the need to explain and address better the complexity of modern conflicts. Following the influential work of Barry Buzan and his colleague in the so-called School of Copenhagen, security

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<sup>140</sup> Irrespective of the historical period, security may be defined as an absence of threats to certain values and as an absence of the fear that such values may be attacked (Wolfers 1962, 150). When it comes to the object of threats and the values concerned, there are, however, historical differences.

came to be described along five distinct but interdependent sectors - military, politics, economics, society and environment (Buzan 1983, 1991, Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). However, even refined, this new perspective still placed national interest in the centre of the international security system, mainly because states continued to be perceived as the main object of security threats. After the collapse of the bipolar system, discussions on economic, societal and environmental security contributed to an even greater paradigm shift. A first step was to imagine societal security as opposed to national security, by advancing the idea that state security is defined mainly in sovereignty terms, while societal security in identity terms (Wæver et al. 1993). Yet, the most important challenge to the traditional view on security was the emergence and promotion of the concept of Human Security, mostly within the framework of the United Nations Development Program. This new concept expressed the idea that, for the majority of people, insecurity is not necessarily triggered by the fear of cataclysmic events such as war. Hunger, epidemics, criminality and repression, for instance, are more common causes of insecurity and these affect humans on a daily basis (United Nations Development Program 1994). The normative transformation brought by the Human Security approach was not only at conceptual level but also yielded significant changes in the practice of security. Most importantly, a greater interest for the problems of civilians has permeated much of current security practices. Among others, this led to the acceptance of new actors in the security sector, while states and military forces had to renounce at the monopoly they once had in this field. Indirectly, some of the regime changes of Central and Eastern Europe challenged the existing international system of security at an even deeper level. Particularly, the Balkan crises that followed the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation raised significant questions related to statehood and legitimacy, mostly frozen during the Cold War. Beyond the question of regional instability, this case of complex ethnic conflicts has generated high pressure for significant transformation within

one of the underlying principles of world order in the modern times, viz. the concept of sovereignty. More specifically, the tensions between the fundamental rights doctrine and the state sovereignty doctrine, which have been furthered with the development of the Human Security concept, became increasingly sensitive for the international community with the war in Kosovo (1999) and the subsequent issues of secession. This is a yet uncut Gordian knot.

**PART III**  
**DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS**  
**IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **FROM UNCERTAINTY TO NORMALITY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF POST COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL REGIONALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

The previous chapter outlined the political context in which most former communist countries chose a Western oriented foreign policy strategy whose intended finality was the integration in Western institutions, such as the NATO, the Council of Europe and the European Union. As shown in chapter 4, this came after a history of deep political tensions within the area, which did not generate much positive cooperation. In chapter 5, I also argued that regional identity projections developed before the Cold War were rarely aimed at producing also viable political projects of cooperation at regional level. To a certain extent, regional identity was a form of competition in the process of consolidating at symbolic level the nation-states of the area. Under such circumstances, significant collaboration between the Central and Eastern European countries seemed unlikely. Yet, since the fall of the communist regimes, these states have established and involved in a noticeable number of regional arrangements. The factual details of this puzzling process of regional cooperation are presented in this chapter, which demonstrates that post-communist regionalism is a new type of political phenomenon in the area whose links with previous forms of collaboration are rather incidental. The examination of the regional intergovernmental initiatives is mostly chronological, taking into account their creation date. However, one may identify three major logics and waves of international regionalism after the end of the Cold War. Three sections correspond to each one.

## **7.1 *The quest for security***

A first bulk of regional initiatives emerged in the first half of the 1990s. Beyond this temporal relation, what all have in common is the reference in their founding documents to the need to ensure the security of the participants in the context of the changes brought by the collapse of the communist regimes and the end of the Cold War. Since it is the product of security reconfigurations, I call this first wave “reshuffle regionalism.” This section presents the circumstances in which these first post Cold War arrangements emerged, as well as the major stages in their evolution.

### **7.1.1 The Central European Initiative**

At the end of the Cold War, the multilateral interaction at regional level among the Central and Eastern European states that had developed in the previous five decades within the communist bloc seemed a closed chapter. As already shown in the previous part of the dissertation, regional intergovernmental initiatives built in the area to support or avoid the constraints of communism did not survive the regimes that created them. The few early Cold War projects, such as the Second Balkan Pact and the Balkan federation, vanished with the consolidation of the Soviet power in the area, in the second half of the 1950s. When, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Soviet influence decreased to the extent that the former satellites had become able to embark upon a process of internal democratization, the dissolution of the USSR-led Warsaw Pact and the Comecon was the natural choice for expressing the external liberation of these countries. With the outbreak of the crisis in the Yugoslav republics, not even the promising Balkan cooperation of the late 1980s could resist the “wind of change” that swept the region at that time.

However, not all forms or configurations of cooperation in which the former communist countries had been involved disappeared with the dismantling of the Iron curtain. Particularly technical, bilateral or small-scale arrangements that involved partners from

Western Europe continued to exist also in the new international and regional context. A notable case in point is the Alps-Adriatic Working Community (AAWC). Initially, this was a framework for collaboration of sub-national or sub-federal administrative territories from Austria, Italy and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia created with the purpose of developing trans-Alpine infrastructure, preserving and protecting natural resources, promoting cultural heritage, cultural relations and tourism, and favour contacts between scientific facilities in the area (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 1978, art.3).<sup>141</sup> In the mid 1980s, several Hungarian counties became interested in the projects put forward by AAWC, first as observers and later as full members (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 2004). The German land of Bavaria also participated to the initiative as full member since late 1980s and, in the 1990s, the Swiss canton of Ticino joined the AAWC for a short period (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 2005, 2006a, Appendix 1b.2).<sup>142</sup> Despite such extensions towards the West, in terms of active participation, the core group remained the same since the late 1980s, respectively administrative units from Austria, Italy and Hungary, as well as Croatia and Slovenia (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 2004, 2005, 2006b). The review of the AAWC initiatives and programs since 1978 to present indicates the representatives of these five countries as being the most active in terms of initiating and coordinating projects. Among them, the administrative units of Austria and Hungary frequently singled themselves out, particularly during the 1990s (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 2004, 2005,

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<sup>141</sup> The founding members were the lands of Carinthia, Upper Austria, Salzburg and Styria (Austria), the land of Bavaria (F.R. Germany), the regions Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto (Italy), as well as Croatia and Slovenia (S.F.R. Yugoslavia). The lands of Bavaria and Salzburg were not full members and participated only as active observers (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 1978, 2004).

<sup>142</sup> The current members of the AAWC (2007) are four lands from Austria (Burgenland, Carinthia, Upper Austria and Styria), four counties from Hungary (Baranya, Somogy, Vas and Zala), three Italian regions (Friuli Julia Venetia, Lombardy, Veneto), as well as Croatia and Slovenia. Previously, five other administrative units had been members: Bavaria (1988-2005, Germany), Trentino-South Tyrol (1981-2005, Italy), Győr-Sopron/Győr-Moson-Sopron (1988-2006, Hungary), Emilia-Romagna (1994-2005, Italy) and Ticino (1997-2005, Switzerland) (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 2004, 2005, 2006a, Appendix 1b.2, 2006b).

2006b).<sup>143</sup> In 1989, possibly on the background of this local cooperation scheme, as well as within the context of the rapidly changing regional and international environment, Austria, Hungary, Italy and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia decided to upgrade their links at a more politically weighted level. For this reason, in November 1989, the representatives of these four countries established in Budapest a political, economic, scientific and cultural cooperation framework, called the *Initiative of Four Integration* but known better as the *Quadrilateral* (CEI 1989a, 1989b).<sup>144</sup>

The exact link between the AAWC and the Quadrilateral is still a subject of debate. On the one hand, scholarly studies, such as Reisch (1993), Bunce (1997) and Cviic (1999), usually consider that the Alps-Adriatic Working Community was the starting point of the Quadrilateral Cooperation. On the other hand, for officials involved in the process the AAWC seem to have not been more than a factor favouring the creation of a genuinely new political project, the Quadrilateral. In an interview with the author, former Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Géza Jeszenszky even reckoned that although he was aware at that time about the activities of the AAWC, only later and mostly from academic literature on the topic he had found out about the possibility that the small administrative initiative could have inspired the Quadrilateral (Jeszenszky 2006). The founding declaration of the initiative supports the second view. The text specifically mentions that the cooperation among the four countries relays “on the already established high level of good-neighbourly and friendly relations, including the bridge-building role of the national minorities” (CEI 1989a). However, nowhere in the document is there any reference to the relevance of the local level cooperation for the Quadrilateral. The only time the Alpine-Adriatic scheme is

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<sup>143</sup> To acknowledge the Austrian contribution to the development of the AAWC, the General Secretariat of the organization was officially established in Klagenfurt, Austria (Alps-Adriatic Working Community 2006a).

<sup>144</sup> Referencing German, Hungarian and Italian newspapers of the period, Reisch (1993) also indicates the Danube-Adria Group as an alternative label but this name did not survive and it was almost never used in official documents.



mentioned is in the context of the role the Quadrilateral was assigned in the development of other types of existing or future cooperation among the founding countries.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, since the AAWC continues to exist as an independent organization that was not institutionally affected through the creation of the Quadrilateral, it could indeed be considered more as a catalyst than its predecessor. In a larger regional perspective, AAWC is in fact only slightly related to the post-Cold War discourse that generated the Quadrilateral. Rather, the AAWC was part of a trend of administrative sub-regional cooperation that developed since the 1970s among autonomous provinces from Austria, Germany and Italy (Fitzmaurice 1993, 395).

Another debatable issue related to the creation of the Quadrilateral is whether this initiative was the first regional intergovernmental cooperation scheme of the post-communist period to be developed in Central and Eastern Europe. Although from a chronological point of view it is certain that the Quadrilateral preceded any other form of post-communist regional cooperation, this question of primacy is not straightforward. It may be argued that the Quadrilateral was not a clearly post-communist product but a hybrid arrangement. In November 1989, Austria and Italy were two Western democracies; Hungary was in the middle of its regime transformation, while S.F.R. Yugoslavia was still a communist country. Furthermore, at the time the Quadrilateral was created, the collapse of bipolarity and the disappearance of the Cold War logic were not yet certitudes but rather overwhelming experiences for most chancelleries (Reisch 1993). The official documents refer only to the need to “deepen the Helsinki process and to develop its results already achieved” (CEI 1989a). Yet, according to a part of the scholarship, the political declarations of the time seem to indicate the fact that the initiative explicitly intended to help Hungary and Yugoslavia

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<sup>145</sup> “By strengthening relations among themselves the four countries wish to contribute to the success of various forms of regional co-operation such as the Alps-Adria Working Community and others” (CEI 1989a). The importance of the subregional cooperation is also emphasized several times in the document, yet its role in the creation of the Quadrilateral is never even suggested in any of the official texts.

integrate into the Western world in the context of the radical changes that were taking place in the region and in Europe (Rupnik A. 2002, Bunce 1997). Even if this was the intention of some of the political leaders involved in the negotiations, the terms in which the founding declarations are written suggest a precautionary approach, without putting forward a significant political statement concerning the change of the Cold War order. In short, although from a chronological viewpoint it may be considered the first in the post-communist period, the logic of the Quadrilateral initiative did not diverge much from the post-Helsinki logic of cooperation between the Western and the satellite communist countries. The goals and scope of the cooperative scheme further support this view. According to the founding documents, the Quadrilateral aimed to play a significant role in the new Europe and to help the participant countries integrate into the European political and economic structures (CEI 1989a). Its first and most important goal was to “contribute in a new way to further improving the atmosphere in Europe and strengthening the process of CSCE.” In addition, “by widening co-operation among themselves and making constructive initiatives [the member countries wished] to promote the process of greater unity of Europe, and to strengthen joint responsibility for the future of Europe” (ibid.). Such declarations cannot be interpreted in any way as a clear departure from the gradualist and cautionary approach to political change in Central and Eastern Europe so widespread in the 1980s in the Western world. Furthermore, when these goals are made more explicit, they openly reflect a rather non-politically oriented scheme of cooperation.<sup>146</sup> In fact, the fields of proposed collaboration are mostly low-key ones, such as culture and transport, which do not raise serious challenges to the political and security establishment on the short and medium run (CEI 1989a). The Quadrilateral did not have much time to fulfil its goals as it was soon

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<sup>146</sup> However, in the early 1990s, the project was regarded as a security buffer zone between the Western and the Eastern blocs. Its novelty stayed in its approach, as it was expected that security be achieved through economic cooperation and not through military actions (Cima 1992, 182). This reflects the shift of paradigm with respect to security, briefly presented in the previous chapter.

replaced by other projects. In 1990, Czechoslovakia was granted membership and the name changed to *Pentagonal* (CEI 1990a, 1990b, 1991a). A year later, this was renamed *Hexagonal*, after Poland joined the organization (CEI 1991b). This label lasted no longer than the previous. In 1992, when the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia disappeared as an international entity and only three of its former republics confirmed their membership to the arrangement,<sup>147</sup> the Hexagonal became the *Central European Initiative* (CEI 1992a, 1992b).

Like its predecessors, the Central European Initiative (CEI) remained mainly a policy-oriented arrangement, with economy, culture and education as major fields of collaboration. Since its creation, the Central European Initiative has also expanded several times its membership. In fact, among the post-communist arrangements it did so at the largest scale, tripling the number of members in its almost one and a half decade of existence. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, both the Czech Republic and Slovakia chose to remain in the organization (CEI 1993a, 1993b). The same year the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia joined the initiative (CEI 1993b). Three years later, in 1996, Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine acquired full membership after they had been observers for a short period (CEI 1992b, 1994a, 1994b, 1996a, 1996b). In 2000, Yugoslavia was admitted to the CEI after having been purposefully delayed due to the armed conflicts and ethnic crises in which it had been involved (CEI 1992c, 1998, 1999, 2000). The last membership extension of the CEI took place in 2006, when the number of participant countries arrived at eighteen with the admission of the Republic of Montenegro.<sup>148</sup> Currently, the CEI is the largest regional intergovernmental initiative that has developed in the former communist space.

<sup>147</sup> These were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia (CEI 1992a, 1992b).

<sup>148</sup> On February 4<sup>th</sup> 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia became the loose Union of Serbia and Montenegro after the Yugoslav parliament has adopted the Constitutional Charter of the State Union of Serbia

### 7.1.2 The Visegrád Group

The Visegrád Group is a regional initiative that has brought together Czechoslovakia (later the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary and Poland since 1991. The idea of a stronger cooperation between these countries seems to have appeared before 1989, in the discourse of the Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who, at his turn, was influenced by the Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovak dissidents' 1970s and 1980s debates on Central Europe. In 1990, the Czechoslovak President Václav Havel adopted Mazowiecki's arguments in favour of a stronger cooperation between the three countries, and proposed a reunion in Bratislava. This was nevertheless a failure because of the many disagreements on the scope and purposes of such collaboration (Bunce 1997, 248, Cottey 1999b, 70-1). After other meetings, the heads of state and government of the three countries finally agreed in Hungarian city of Visegrád to intensify cooperation in "matters of their security" (i.e. political and military security), as well as in softer areas, such as economy, civil society, ecology, culture, and communications. The immediate goal of the arrangement was pragmatic. One month before the signature of the Visegrád Declaration, in early January 1991, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland had announced their withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact to be effective by the middle of that year. At the same time, the three countries were pushing for concrete answers from the Western countries with respect to the possibility of admission within their major security and welfare institutions, most notably the European Community and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As reckoned by former

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and Montenegro and voted itself out of existence. This meant the dissolution of the 74 years old Yugoslav federation but the international status of the newly renamed country remained unchanged. Accordingly, the Union of Serbia and Montenegro was the legal successor of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in all regional organizations, including the Central European Initiative. However, after Montenegro and Serbia definitively split in 2006, only Serbia remained the legal successor of the former state entity and therefore continued to be member of all initiatives in which the Union of Serbia and Montenegro participated. Instead, as a newly independent state, the Republic of Montenegro needs to apply for admittance. Nevertheless, following a previous agreement, the Central European Initiative granted Montenegro membership immediately after the dissolution of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro, without following the normal application procedure.

Hungarian and Polish foreign ministers in interviews with the author, the declaration was an instrument to reinforce this common position (Jesenzky 2006, Geremek 2006).

In less than two years from the adoption of this landmark document, Czechoslovakia split into two independent countries. Subsequently, the group became the “Four Visegrád countries” or V4. The first reunion of this new structure took place in 1993 in Krakow where the participants discussed the European integration efforts undertaken by each of the four countries, however, without noticeable results. These issues had been previously addressed in two similar conferences in Krakow (1991) and Prague (1992), where the necessity of mutual dialog in political, military and security problems was emphasized (Visegrád Group 1991b, 1992a). On these occasions, a mechanism of regular consultations between the representatives of the Ministries of Defence was also established. However, the purpose of these consultations was not the creation of a common security structure, despite some previous talks about this possibility (Tórkés 1991). The avoidance of a stronger military cooperation was generated mostly by the fact that the national security strategies of these states had already defined NATO membership as the main security target for them. Once this target was set and particularly after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR, as well as after the signature of the NATO Partnership for Peace programs, a closer cooperation on military security issues became unnecessary as the region seemed to be no longer vulnerable from this viewpoint (Cottey 1991b, 80, Bunce, 1997, 262).

The disappearance of this ersatz rationale could have led to the development of a more solid cooperation in other areas, especially in the economic field (Fitzmaurice 1993). Indeed, in 1992 the three countries established an economic cooperation framework of bilateral arrangements among them - the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) (Visegrád Group 1992b). However, unlike the Visegrád Group, CEFTA was open to further access. The first to join was Slovenia, which became member in 1996. The next year it was

followed by Romania and three years later by Bulgaria. In 2003, one year before the founding countries became members of the European Union and thus legally bounded to leave CEFTA,<sup>149</sup> Croatia also signed the agreement. CEFTA was then extended to accommodate in 2006 the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in 2007 Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia.

Despite its Visegrád connection, CEFTA was also much related to other projects from the region. To a certain extent, its creation reflected the intense debates concerning the fate of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon). Initially, after the collapse of the Central European communist regimes, this organization had only a light institutional makeup and much of the discussion within the Comecon focused on finding a suitable name to match the rebranding initiative. Three variants were proposed. These were the Council for Economic Cooperation, the Organization for Economic Cooperation, and the Council for Mutual Economic Interactions (van Brabant 1991, 59). After closed doors discussions, the member countries of the Comecon reached a compromise and opted for the Organisation for International Economic Cooperation (OIEC).<sup>150</sup> Nevertheless, the life of this label and the planned arrangement was short as the Comecon was dissolved several months later. After the disappearance of the Comecon, the idea that an economic cooperation within the area was still needed remained widely spread, particularly among the more conservative technocratic elites of the former communist governments, as well as among the representatives of many international organizations. Interviewed by the author, both Romanian Prime Minister Petre Roman and Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Géza Jeszenszky at that time recall that there had been intense talks on this issue among the

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<sup>149</sup> For a discussion of the implications that the EU enlargement had for CEFTA, see Dangerfield (2006).

<sup>150</sup> The USSR negotiators would have liked an acronym which would have preserved the Russian acronym for the Comecon (SVE), a choice which met with open opposition from most of the East European countries. The final choice was first announced in a Polish journal in November 1990 but until January 1991 official representatives held that OIEC was just an “internal working title” (Van Brabant 1991, 59).

governments of the region, although there was no common position on the matter (Roman 2005, Jeszenszky 2006). In fact, during that period, the priorities of the Central and East European governments changed very frequently as result of the efforts to readapt the foreign policy strategy to an uncertain and extremely fluid environment of international politics (Roman 2005). Due to the existence of this view on the necessity of further regional economic cooperation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) proposed the former communist countries to form a Central European Economic Union as an instrument for sustaining intra-regional trade. Not surprisingly, the idea was politically dismissed by the governments of the region, which were not eager to embark in any form of collaboration that would have taken them away from the integration into the Western European structures (Dangerfield 2000, 20-2). The European Community (EC) supported a third, less ambitious project of trade facilitation and cooperation among the most advanced economies of the region and this transformed into CEFTA (Jeszenszky 2006, Dangerfield 2000, 30). It is not clear whether the idea for such collaboration sprang from Brussels or the Central European chancelleries.<sup>151</sup> Yet, in the particular context of the early 1990s, it seemed to suit well both parts. For the EC, it was a solution for buying more time in the relation with the former communist countries, which openly stated their intention to join the Community as soon as possible. For the Central European states, it was a means to differentiate from the platoon and get closer to the Community (Vachudova 1993, 45).

However, once Brussels signalled that these states could at some point become members of the European Community, the economic cooperation through CEFTA was no longer a

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<sup>151</sup> Some of the interviewees suggest that it may have been an idea coming from Brussels but none of them could indicate a more precise source for this, while other interviewees strongly emphasized the local origin of the arrangement. It is very plausible that the idea was formulated through interaction among different chancelleries, including the Brussels official channels. The CEFTA documents and the Europe Agreements provide further evidence in this respect. As Martin Dangerfield already pointed out, the trade chapters of the Europe Agreements that the European Union concluded with each of the Visegrád countries heavily influenced the content of the CEFTA treaty, though several WTO and EFTA provisions also served as sources of inspiration (Dangerfield 2000, 42).

priority for the V4 as a group (Geremek 2006, Jeszenszky 2006). From this moment onwards, the evolution of the Visegrád club has been rather unpredictable. The representatives of the four countries continued to meet regularly each year. Furthermore, since 1997 these states loosely institutionalised their relations through the establishment of a financing instrument. Yet, as Géza Jeszenszky, one of the initiators and supporters of the Visegrád Group, reckons, no program had the impact that the early cooperation of the three (later four) countries achieved (Jeszenszky 2006). In fact, a series of bilateral disputes were frequently echoed within the group. Particularly, the Hungarian-Slovak conflicts over the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydroelectric plant intensified after the split of Czechoslovakia (Cottey 1999b, 78-80). The worst of these crises occurred in 2002, when the Visegrád cooperation was even threatened with dissolution. This happened when a Hungarian political electoral theme irritated the Czech and Slovak governments to the extent that not even the Polish reconciliatory position had a significant impact on the dispute. Finally, this was shelved after the elections but also after the European Union signalled that such tensions were not fostering the enlargement process.<sup>152</sup> For these reasons, the Visegrád cooperation may be perceived as having continuously declined despite various moments of resurrection.<sup>153</sup>

### 7.1.3 The Baltic Cooperation

Cooperation at governmental level between the three Baltic republics had existed before the end of the Cold War. As shown in chapter 4, during the Interwar period, after a period of various political and diplomatic tensions generated mostly by border disputes that had remained unsolved from the peace treaties following the First World War in which they gained their independence from the Russian Empire, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

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<sup>152</sup> These issues are treated in more detail in chapter 9.

<sup>153</sup> Cottey (1999b) even put forward the idea that the Visegrád Group had arrived to an end after its short revitalisation that preceded the admission to NATO.



established a Baltic Entente in 1934. This was a defence alliance against the potential German aggression but, in the particular political context of pre-Second World War Europe and lacking proper mechanisms of collective defence, it did not have much weight in the regional dynamics of international relations. Realizing the weakness of their systems of alliances, the Baltic governments declared their countries neutral but this strategy did not succeed and they were finally incorporated in the Soviet Union in 1940. During the communist regimes, the cooperation at governmental level between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was not greater than the cooperation between other neighbouring Soviet republics. However, they remained largely recalcitrant, continued to militate for their independence<sup>154</sup> and differentiated from the rest of the USSR from the viewpoint of economic performance, especially in the 1980s. After the coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev and the reforms process he initiated, the protests within these three republics increased but were manifested mostly at civil society level, with ecology and culture as main issues of concern (Fitzmaurice 1992, O'Connor 2003).

Nonetheless, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, in May 1990 in Tallinn, the Chairmen of the Supreme Councils of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed a Declaration of unity and cooperation. This was in fact a declaration of independence from the USSR and an open request for restoration of the signatories' full sovereignty. In this respect, the document clearly states, "the three countries, which are former members of the League of Nations [are] ready to take their rightful and legal place in the United Nations as equals among the nations of the world" (BC 1990). The references to the pre Soviet period do not stop here. In fact, through this declaration the three Baltic republics were explicitly renewing the Baltic Entente of 1934 and aimed at "[improving] the mechanisms of mutual relations, as stated in Article Two (2) of the 1934 Treaty, according to current circumstances" (ibid.). The joint

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<sup>154</sup> For instance, in 1972 various Estonian civic organisations sent a memorandum to the United Nations requesting the recognition of Estonia's independence and the UN membership (Fitzmaurice 1992, 118).

actions of the three Baltic states contributed to the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Fitzmaurice 1992, 123-37) but also established the first regional arrangement in which these countries have participated since the end of the Cold War. This arrangement is the Council of Baltic States, created “to assist in the full restoration of state independence of the three Republics” (BC 1990).

Despite having been designed for the very precise purpose of gaining independence from the Soviet Union, the Council of the Baltic States has not disappeared after this goal was achieved. In the first half of the 1990s, the three republics continued to cooperate mostly in matters related to their political and military security with the withdrawal of the Russian troops from their territory as the main priority on their common agenda (Ozaliņa 2008, 116). After this goal was also achieved in 1994, the arrangement became a structure of trilateral cooperation in various fields and at different levels, including governmental and parliamentary (BC 1994a, 1994b, 2003a, 2003d). Though the Baltic Council of Ministers (BCM) is the leading political forum (BC 1994a, 2003a), the entire cooperative structure is commonly known as the Baltic Cooperation (BC). The membership of the BC never extended and the cooperation has never had much depth, as the three Baltic states have different foreign policy concerns. Estonia, partially on economic grounds, partially due to cultural and geographic closeness, has strong relations with Finland (Schürman 2001, Männik 2008). Latvia, which unlike the other two Baltic neighbours does not have a significant Russian-speaking minority, preferred to develop its relations with Germany, Sweden and Denmark (Ozaliņa 2008). Instead, Lithuania has also a Central European horizon and has developed a special relation with Poland, as well as with Russia (Miniotaite 2008). Furthermore, after independence, the Baltic countries oriented their foreign policy mostly towards the Nordic space and involved in a number of regional arrangements with the Scandinavian countries, most notably in the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea

States and the Nordic Baltic Council (NB8).<sup>155</sup> Under these circumstances, the Baltic Cooperation received less attention from the governments of the three countries although occasionally, it was resuscitated.<sup>156</sup>

#### **7.1.4 The Black Sea Economic Cooperation**

As shown in chapter 4, the concerted political actions of the Central and East European states, particularly of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland contributed to the dissolution of the regional Soviet-led system of security that was the Warsaw Pact Organization. Soon after, following the concerted separatist actions of the three Baltic States, briefly reminded in the previous section, as well as the internal struggles for power within the state administration, the Soviet Union collapsed. The breakdown of the USSR meant the disappearance of a particular international relations dynamics and created a large amount of regional instability. This changing security context allowed for new configurations and reshuffling, especially at the borders of the newly born Russian Federation. Most of these initiatives appeared in 1992, at a short time after the regime changed in the USSR. Several arrangements developed on the shores of the Baltic Sea, within the particular context of the Nordic-Baltic complex of security. The other area close to the Russian borders where regionalism sprang was the Black Sea, where new initiatives emerged among former Soviet republics, either as a means to distance these countries from Moscow or to bring them closer to it. This trend of “hard” security regionalism in the former Soviet space has manifested mostly in the second half of the 1990s. For instance, in 1996, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova

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<sup>155</sup> The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) is a forum of political dialogue developed by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission (CBSS 1992a, 1992b). The CBSS is also the most notable security organization of the Baltic region in terms of importance granted by the member states (Cottey 1999a). The Nordic Baltic Council is an extension of the Nordic Council, a regional political dialogue arrangement of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Apart from these two initiatives and the Baltic Cooperation, in the Baltic area there are a series of other arrangements covering a wide range of sectors of collaboration. Yet, since these are concerned particularly with the Nordic and not with the former communist space, they do not make the object of this dissertation.

<sup>156</sup> This issue is discussed in more detail in chapter 9.

and Ukraine established an informal regional group that aimed to address their common security concerns (i.e. mostly the Russian influence in their internal affairs) in agreement with the OSCE principles (GUAM 1996). The following year, the group was officially recognised as a regional arrangement (Group of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and R. of Moldova – GUAM) after it issued a joint communiqué in which the signatories militated “for the sake of a stable and secure Europe guided by the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of state frontiers, mutual respect, cooperation, democracy, supremacy of law, and respect for human rights” (GUAM 1997). In 1999, Uzbekistan joined the GUAM, which was known as GUUAM until this country left the initiative in 2005. By 2000, GUUAM had become the most visible regional arrangement in the former Soviet space that aimed to distance the members from Moscow. However, despite having issued several important documents for the institutionalisation of the cooperation between the members, including a charter (GUAM 2001), it has continuously declined since 2003.<sup>157</sup>

Currently, only one organization around the Russian South East European border is mostly concerned with the former communist but not exclusively Soviet space. This is the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The BSEC was formally created at Istanbul in June 1992, when the representatives of eleven participant states signed a declaration according to which they agreed “to develop economic cooperation as a contribution to the CSCE process, to the establishment of an Europe-wide economic area, as well as to the achievement of a higher degree of integration of the Participant States to the world economy” (BSEC 1992a, para. 5). These states were Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece,

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<sup>157</sup> Valuable insights into the evolution of GUAM provided the discussions with Constantin Degeratu, national security advisor for the Romanian Presidency, as well as with Viorica Antonov, Marshall Fund in Moldova, and Aurelian Munteanu from the Molodva State University (Antonov 2006, Munteanu 2006, Degeratu 2007).

Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, and Ukraine. So far, this membership remained the same with the addition only of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2004.<sup>158</sup>

Until the collapse of the USSR, the project was intended to be an economic arrangement, which would enhance the advantage of geographical proximity and address several common subregional domestic problems, particularly of socio-economic and environmental nature. In this respect, it tried to fill the gap left by the dissolution of the Comecon and the trade system within the communist bloc. Through the emphasis on low politics fields and the importance granted to environmental issues in the initial design of the scheme, it also followed closely the pattern of cooperation around a sea with heavy industry close to its shore that had been already developed in the Baltic region. However, after 1991, when more states showed their interest in the initiative, this became much broader. Therefore, although the Istanbul declaration still emphasized the need of cooperation in socio-economic and environmental issues, in 1992 the signatories had already different objectives. The former Soviet republics Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova regarded BSEC as an instrument for integrating into the world economy, and enhance stability and security in the region. For the Russian Federation and Turkey, the organization was a mechanism for limiting each other's influence in the area (Pavliuk 1999, 128-9). Instead, as former foreign policy advisor of the Romanian Presidency Mrs Zoe Petre reckoned in a discussion with the author, for Romania and Bulgaria this was a tangible chance "not to remain in a no man's land between the former Soviet space and the more organized Central Europe" from which they were still partially isolated (Petre Z. 2004).

The change of agenda was not surprising given the context in which the initiative appeared. The idea of a Black Sea region was put forward first by the Turkish President, Turgut Ozal. For Turkey, after being refused EU membership in 1989, after the fall of communism and

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<sup>158</sup> After the separation of the two republics, only Serbia remained member of the organization.

especially after the dissolution of the USSR, the scheme could have been a long-awaited opportunity to become a political and economic regional leader, and thus to play a more important role on the international scene (Petre Z. 2004). However, neither the USSR successor, the Russian Federation, nor Greece were eager to allow Turkey to become a regional hegemon (Fitzmaurice 1993).<sup>159</sup> At the same time, the dissolution of the Soviet empire and the (re)formation of nation-states generated significant instability in the area, with the Caucasian region and Transdnistria as the most heated points. Such issues permeated the founding texts of the organization. In fact, they were openly stated within the political declaration at the end of the Istanbul summit, which emphasized the fact that the tensions between the member states were threatening the region's stability and that there was the danger of new conflicts arising (BSEC 1992b). For this reason, like in the main documents of most post-communist regional organizations, the founding acts included references to the Helsinki Final Act and to the CSCE/OSCE principles. The most significant progress accomplished at the BSEC summits was the adoption of a BSEC Charter, which was ratified in less than a year since its adoption. The document transformed the Black Sea Economic Cooperation into a regional economic organization with international juridical personality (BSEC 1998b). In 1998, the organization also produced a premiere in the area when it established a Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) with the purpose to provide the organization with the financial resources for funding regional projects.<sup>160</sup> However, since the second half of the 1990s, no other reunion produced major advancements.

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<sup>159</sup> Initially, Greece was not even invited to adhere and the Turkish government encouraged several preliminary negotiations only with Bulgaria, Romania and the then Soviet Union. However, as revealed by former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Adrian Năstase in an interview with the author, when Greece manifested its wish to participate in the scheme, it could not be refused (Năstase 2005).

<sup>160</sup> The initial agreement was signed in and the bank, which is financed through contributions from the member states, should have operated since 1996. However, due to financial difficulties of the most member countries this was not possible until 1998 (Pavliuk 1999, 136-7).

## **7.2 Post-conflict regionalism: From international to regional ownership**

After the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the bipolar system, a second major event that changed the shape and the dynamic of the relations within the post-communist Central and Eastern Europe was the break up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). As shown the previous chapter, this process was mainly a violent one and started shortly after the Yugoslav state had taken its first steps towards democratization by dissolving the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and organizing free elections in each of the constitutive republics. The international community intervened initially only to prevent the escalation of violence and later to broker peace arrangements. Yet, its role in the process had been much larger. After widespread violence was ended, the UN missions terminated, though the UN continued to monitor the situation in the area. Given its association with conflict management and peace enforcement, the UN presence could not have provided the environment for creating structures of dialogue for post-war reconstruction. Instead, other international agents were willing to do so. The most important proved to be the European Union, the United States and the neighbouring countries. Each of these proposed different sets of instruments and generated different regional approaches to post-war reconstruction. This section presents the milestones in the history of this second bulk of international regionalism in the post Cold War Central and Eastern Europe.

### **7.2.1 From the Royaumont Initiative to the Pact for Stability and South Eastern Europe**

The first to design a regional approach to the Balkans after the Yugoslav wars ended was the European Union. Immediately after the signing of the Dayton-Paris Agreements, EU proposed the creation of a Process of stability and good-neighbourly relations in South-Eastern Europe. Better known as the Royaumont Initiative,<sup>161</sup> this was an arrangement whose major goal was to build and strengthen the civic structures and dialog spaces across

<sup>161</sup> Due to the place where the proposal was made on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1995, viz. the French abbey of Royaumont.

national borders, on multilateral and bilateral levels. In December 1995, when it was created, it aimed to “guide the implementation of the Paris/Dayton Peace Plan, at the same time incorporating it into a wider perspective covering the whole region” (European Stability Initiative 1999, Annex A). A couple of months after, the mission of the organization was already much larger and equally difficult to achieve:

The process inaugurated at Royaumont calls for a joint and continuing effort to strengthen stability and good-neighbourliness in South-East Europe. More specifically, it should try to contribute to reducing the tensions arising from the conflict and preventing a resumption of hostilities, promote a better understanding that it is in the interest of each party to cooperate rather than to try systematically to put obstacles in the way of any undertaking by a neighbour, contribute to restoring confidence and dialogue, and overcome ethnic divisions and hatreds (EU General Affairs Council 1996, annex III).

The few meetings at high level that followed did not see much action with respect to these goals but, by 1998, the objectives have yet again changed. This time, the Process intended to be a facilitator of cooperation among NGOs from the region, with the purpose of strengthening democratic institutions and civil society (European Stability Initiative 1999, Annex A). In fact, it soon transformed into a reunion at parliamentary level supplemented by various conferences and seminars on topics related to democracy building and human rights protection.

In terms of affiliation, the countries of the region that were part of the Process were all the former Yugoslav republics, as well as Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. In addition to these, all EU states, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the United States have been granted full membership status, while the European Commission, the European Parliament, the OSCE and the Council of Europe enjoyed an associate status. The way in which the European Union relates to the process is the most interesting of all. As former SECI Deputy Coordinator Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu acknowledged in a discussion with the author, the proposal for the arrangement belonged to France and it was presented as a European Union



project at the Peace Conference on Bosnia that led to the signature of the final Dayton/Paris arrangements (Ungureanu 2003). Although portrayed as an initiative of the European Union, in the early phases of its history, the process was intended to become an OSCE program.<sup>162</sup> Yet, under Greek pressure, it finally became part of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy in 1998 (European Stability Initiative 1999). Greece continued to be the key actor for its later development, particularly through lobbying for the creation of the position of a EU Coordinator for the Process. It succeeded to do so, as well as to have the former Greek minister Panagiotis Roumeliotis appointed for the job (Council of the European Union 1999). In 1999, within the context of a new crisis in the former Yugoslav space the function was upgraded to EU Special Representative of the Royaumont Initiative (EU 1999, 2.7.1). However, soon after, the entire initiative was incorporated into the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Like the Royaumont Initiative, the Stability Pact was a EU-led regional arrangement that was generated by a crisis within the former Yugoslav space. After the increase of violence in Kosovo in 1999 prompted international intervention, the representatives of more than forty states and international organizations signed in June 1999 a Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe at the initiative of the European Union.<sup>163</sup> The purpose of this new international framework of cooperation for the region was to mobilize the signatories to secure a “lasting peace, prosperity and stability for South Eastern Europe” (Stability Pact 1999a). According to its founding document, the Stability Pact “aims at strengthening countries in South Eastern Europe in their efforts to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights, and

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<sup>162</sup> Two days after the creation of the initiative, the Presidency conclusions of the Madrid European Council, while acknowledging the fact that the scheme was adopted at the suggestion of the European Union, placed the only reference to it in the section treating the EU relations with the OSCE (European Council 1995, part B). This is due to the fact that the Royaumont declaration envisaged that the process be incorporated into the OSCE (EU General Affairs Council, annex III).

<sup>163</sup> Former Stability Pact Regional Envoy, Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu reckons that the idea of a Stability Pact appeared before the Kosovo war, at the end of 1998, but NATO's intervention accelerated the process (Ungureanu 2003).

economic prosperity, in order to achieve stability in the whole region” (ibid.). To achieve these goals, the arrangement set a South Eastern Europe Regional Table chaired by a Special Coordinator, as well as three Working Tables (WTs). The first one was dedicated to democratization and human rights, the second to economic restructuring, development and cooperation, while the third WT dealt with security issues. The role of these structures was to “provide effective coordination between the participating and facilitating States, international and regional Organisations and Institutions” (ibid.). In more practical terms, the WTs were required to discuss major issues problematic in the region, as well as identify and promote projects that could answer these issues. In short, like the Royaumont Initiative, the Stability Pact’s approach consisted mainly in international reunions and conferences. Apart from the increasingly complex and rigid bureaucracy, this was an often criticism for the lack of the Pact’s significant results (Muço 2000). However, the Pact reports list many notable achievements. For example, during the Kosovo crisis the Pact sustained the opposition and the independent press from the former Yugoslavia. From this experience was issued a Charter for media freedom whose methods were later employed in Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania (Stability Pact 2002). Another important project was the Memorandum of Understanding on trade liberalisation and facilitation (Stability Pact 2001), which produced a network of free trade agreements mostly in the former Yugoslav space.<sup>164</sup>

In theory, many more examples of different agreements and political declarations could be added to these two. In practice, very often it is impossible to distinguish whether these were achievements of the Stability Pact or of the other regional initiatives with which the Pact closely cooperated, most notably the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP).

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<sup>164</sup> For different reasons, this was not ready by the time initially prescribed (2002) but in 2007 there were almost thirty such agreements concluded across the region.

### 7.2.2 Southeast European Cooperative Initiative

The Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) is a regional framework of cooperation that the United States proposed in July 1996 as a mechanism to help the reconstruction of the Balkans after the Dayton/Paris agreements. The idea for this arrangement seems to have appeared at least a year before but, since it largely overlapped with the EU initiatives for the area, required some political agreement between the US and the European Union (Lopandić 2001, 125-32). After this agreement was reached in a document known as Common Points of EU-US understanding, American ambassador Richard Schifter forwarded to the states in the region the invitation to participate in the arrangement. In December 1996, Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and Turkey, as well the former Yugoslav countries, signed the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative Statement of Purpose in Geneva (SECI 1996b). The F.R. Yugoslavia was, however, excluded initially from the arrangement in an attempt to politically sanction Milosevic's regime and only after three years this state acquired the SECI membership (SECI 2001). The main principle of the Common Points was that the SECI should not impede the European Union's regional approach to South Eastern Europe but rather promote the process of political and economic integration to the European Union, particularly for the states that had already signed pre accession treaties with EU (SECI 1996a). In practice, there has been much overlapping between the activities of the SECI and the activities of the EU-led arrangements, the Royaumont Initiative and later the Stability Pact. For this reason, although the approach of the SECI has been more project-oriented, there seems to be a widespread feeling among the officials and staff involved in the process that the organization has not produced many results.

### 7.2.3 The South East European Cooperation Process

The third major regional arrangement that developed in the immediate aftermath of the Dayton/Paris agreements is the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). This emerged as an initiative for regional cooperation at a meeting that the foreign ministers of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, F.Y.R Macedonia, Romania, Turkey and F.R. Yugoslavia held at the invitation of the Bulgarian government in July 1996. Initially, this was a Conference on Good Neighbourliness, Stability, Security and Cooperation of the Balkan Countries. At the initiative of the Romanian government, the name was later changed into the South East European Cooperation Process.<sup>165</sup> The primary goal of the arrangement is to “strengthen the good-neighborly relations among all states in this region, for transforming this region into an area of peace, security, stability and cooperation” (SEECP 200a). Yet, the long-term objectives were more ambitious:

We aim to create a South-Eastern Europe whose future lies in peace, democracy, economic prosperity and full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures and, to this end, we commit ourselves to continued democratic and economic reform in our countries. (ibid.)

The founding documents state that the organization is open to membership to any South East European country. On these grounds, several states acquired observer status and then joined the organization as full members: Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2001, Croatia in 2004 and Moldova in 2006 (SEECP 2001, 2004, 2006). After the dissolution of Serbia and Montenegro in 2006, Montenegro was not granted automatic membership and it needed to formally apply for it but since there was no objection, this was acquired relatively quickly in 2007 (SEECP 2007a).

On one occasion, membership was also suspended. This happened during the Kosovo crisis, when, for more than one year, the seat of the F.R. Yugoslavia remained vacant. This was

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<sup>165</sup> On this issue, see section 9.1.6 of chapter 9.

signalled at an extraordinary reunion of the SEECP Heads of State and Government that aimed to analyze the situation in Kosovo. To that meeting, held in Bucharest, only the representatives of Bulgaria, Greece, F.Y.R. Macedonia, Romania and Turkey participated, while Yugoslavia was not invited. This was a means to sanction diplomatically the actions of the Yugoslav government in Kosovo but it was not an easy decision, particularly for the hosting country, Romania, which traditionally has had good relations with Yugoslavia.<sup>166</sup> During the presidency of F.Y.R. Macedonia in 2001, Yugoslavia was readmitted after its representatives signed the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe, which had been adopted the previous year in Bucharest as the key document for the institutional and normative foundations of the SEECP.<sup>167</sup>

After this regional crisis was more or less diffused, the member states also attempted to define better the priorities of their cooperation within SEECP. Already in the Charter, they had identified three domains of interest for collaboration. These were the spheres of politics and security, economy, as well as the “fields of human dimension, democracy, justice and combating illegal activities” (SEECP 2000a). With respect to the first and third domains, no specific measures have been drafted so far and the SEECP limited itself to welcoming the existing or new initiatives related to these issues. As for the economic dimension, in 2001, the heads of state and government identified energy, transport and infrastructure as the major priorities for the SEECP countries but, despite a long Action Plan for Regional Economic

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<sup>166</sup> In an interview with the author, the former Romanian foreign minister of that time, Petre Roman, recalled that it had been a difficult task for his ministry to administer the relation with the F.R. Yugoslavia. However, since his country aimed for “Euro-Atlantic integration,” the Romanian government needed to show his commitment for this goal also in terms of having a position on Kosovo consistent with that of the international community, at least on the general terms. Sanctioning diplomatically the Yugoslav government through the suspension of his seat within the “SEECP club” was a solution for continuing to maintain relatively good bilateral relations with Yugoslavia, while making the Yugoslav leaders seriously paying attention to the regional consequences of their management of the Kosovo issue (Roman 2005).

<sup>167</sup> The adhesion of this document became a formal criterion for SEECP membership, with the admission of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2001 (SEECP 2001).

Cooperation, no significant steps have been undertaken. Nonetheless, the SEECP has recently started a reform process aiming to address better the cooperation priorities in the area. Like in the case of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), this is part of the larger reform efforts in which all regional initiatives in South Eastern Europe have embarked after several years of collaboration and frequent overlapping with each other and most notably with the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

### ***7.3 The regionalism of democratic consolidation***

By 2000, the majority of the former communist countries were close to the end of the transition. Though still weak, their political institutions suggested that the new democracies were embarking into a phase of consolidation, while their markets were becoming increasingly free. For most of the Central and East European states, the state-building chapter was also closed. Not least, the historical tensions between some neighbours had also diminished with the signature of bilateral treaties and other agreements. The normalization of the domestic and regional dynamics in Central and Eastern Europe led also to a third wave of regional intergovernmental arrangements in the area.

For instance, in 2000, a trilateral arrangement between Hungary, Italy and Slovenia that had been proposed by the latter in 1996 became a regional cooperation agreement, with the admission of Croatia. Like the SEECP, this scheme, known as the Quadrilateral Cooperation or Q4, is mostly a diplomatic forum. On the short run, it intends to foster the efforts of Croatia to become member of the European Union. At the same time, it aims to propose guidelines and promote programs in several fields that were identified as key for the area. Among these, some programs have higher political weight as they imply cooperation in the fields of defence, internal affairs, labour and employment. Yet, there are also some lower profile domains proposed for collaboration, such as culture, environment and regional

development. Another arrangement is the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, established in 2000 at the proposal of Italy (AII 2000a). Its members are Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia, as well as the European Commission. Like the Quadrilateral Cooperation, it also does not intend to become a fully-fledged organization but rather a consultative framework for addressing issues of regional interest such as fighting illegal activities, economic cooperation, transport, environment protection, culture and education (AII 2000a, 2000b). These are similar to those identified by the Quadrilateral and most of the other regional organizations in Central and Eastern Europe. However, unlike the other initiatives in the region, these two new arrangements have the Mediterranean space as their major cooperation horizon and do not address problems specific to the former communist space.

Only one new initiative still looks towards this space. This is the Danube Cooperation Process (DCP), an arrangement created in 2002 at the initiative of Austria and Romania and with the support of the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Initially, the participant states were Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe also enjoy full membership status, a feature that is not shared by any other regional initiative in Central and Eastern Europe. After the disintegration of the Yugoslav federation, Serbia continued to participate, while Montenegro is remained outside the organization but enjoys an observer status, alongside France, F.Y.R. Macedonia, the Russian Federation, the US and several other arrangements active in the area, such as the Danube Commission, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River and the SEECP.

Each of the initiators of the DCP had different reasons for encouraging such cooperation. The Austrian part had already manifested its interest in coagulating a more consistent collaboration around the Danube through a series of conferences its government organized in Vienna in 1998, 1999 and 2001. Putting together decision-makers from both the political and business environment, as well as academics, the Austrian government aimed at collecting ideas about the possibility of a better coordination of the different regional and subregional arrangements existing around the Danube, as well as about the priority areas for governmental coordination among the riparian countries (DCP 2001). In some circles throughout the region, these actions were interpreted as “an opportunity for the Austrian old lady, still dreaming of her glorious past, to brand herself as the vigorous and more experimented leader of the allegedly feeble former communist states” as one of my interlocutors, a member of the staff of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, metaphorically put it (J.S 2006).<sup>168</sup> For the Romanian government, the DCP was also a long waited opportunity. In an interview with the author, former Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, one of the initiators and supporters of the Danube Cooperation Process, expressed the view that the Romanian government found in this initiative the chance to enforce the Central European dimension of its foreign policy (Năstase 2005). Since the early 1990s, the Romanian foreign policy strategy has developed around the idea that “Romania is a Central European country with interests and responsibilities in the Balkans”, as former Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Meleşcanu summarized it (Meleşcanu 2005). However, since it was denied the membership to the Visegrád Group and the Central European Initiative was perceived as “a much too diluted” organization,<sup>169</sup> Romania did not have many

<sup>168</sup> Other interviewees from Croatia (I.F.2007), Hungary (Gorka 2004) and Romania (Deac 2005) held a similar view but in less direct terms.

<sup>169</sup> Apart from the former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Meleşcanu, this evaluation of the Central European Initiative as a much too wide organization was present in several other interviews, most notably with former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary Geza Jeszensky and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Bronislaw Geremek (Meleşcanu 2005, Jeszensky 2006, Geremek 2006).



occasions to manifest the Central European dimension of its foreign policy until the creation of the DCP. As for the interest of the European Commission, it seems to have been much correlated to its new European Neighbourhood Policy, a strategy addressing the issue of the EU external borders after enlargement (DCP 2004). Finally, for the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, a EU-driven regional framework of cooperation, the establishment of the DCP was congruent with its major goals, as well as with the political aim of creating ownership of regional initiatives in the area (SP 1999, Geoană 2006).

The DCP aims to foster cooperation among the Danubian countries, viz. the states “from the hydrological basin of Danube” (DCP 2002a). This is not the first time that the countries through which Danube flows join into an international arrangement. Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, two Danube commissions had been established partially with the purpose of guaranteeing free navigation on the river. These merged in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in one Danube Commission, whose founding document, the Belgrade Convention on the navigation regime on Danube, is still into force. The Danube Cooperation Process intends to contribute to the updating of the Belgrade Convention (DCP 2002c, 2004). In this sense, it is part of the region-wide efforts to reform the universe of Central and East European regional arrangements in order to eliminate the frequent overlapping, as well as to adapt the existing initiatives to the new European context. This goal is explicitly formulated twice in the founding document:

[The participant countries agree to give the initiative] clear political and economic dimensions, *without creating new institutions*, but taking stock of and using the existing structures and, where necessary, harmonising their objectives and efforts, providing a focus, where appropriate, for their efforts within the Danube region ...the Process *should not lead to duplication with other existing forms of co-operation in the region* and its initiatives where relevant should be devised and implemented within the framework of priorities that have already been developed for the South-East European region, notably by the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. The Process should add value to these existing efforts by providing a new channel for regional ideas and initiatives, thus focusing greater energies and resources at the Danube basin (DCP 2002a, emphasis mine)

However, the DCP has wider ambitions than the development of the international legal instruments that define and organize the regime of navigation on the Danube. More specifically, it aims to foster cooperation among the Danubian countries with a view to contribute to the European security, as well as to the creation of a common European identity (DCP 2002a). In this endeavour, the economic, cultural, environmental and sub-regional (i.e. trans-border) cooperation are among the top priorities. From this perspective, it greatly overlaps with the already long established Central European Initiative. According to its institutional provisions, the DCP is mainly a political forum whose reunions should be held every other year (DCP 2002a). At governmental level, so far, there has not been much activity and only three major meetings at the level of heads of state and government took place. The first one was the inaugural reunion held in Vienna in 2002. This was followed by a high level summit in Bucharest in 2004. Although this summit generated a list of proposals for further cooperation, none of them was put in practice, even if some did not require much effort from the participant states.<sup>170</sup> A third ministerial conference should have taken place during the autumn of 2006 but it was convened only in April 2007 in Belgrade. Apparently, this delay was generated by the lack of interest of several countries, as well as by the difficulty of matching the agendas of so many ministries in the region. Within the DCP framework, like in the case of most of the regional initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe, there is also a business forum but like the ministerial reunions, the business conferences have been rare and have not produced any significant result.

Such developments suggest that across the region in various political, diplomatic and business circles there seems to be a widespread feeling that regionalism in Central and Eastern Europe may have reached a limit and, rather than creating new arrangements, there

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<sup>170</sup> For instance, the DCP should have had a web portal for the development of trade and tourism among the Danubian countries ([www.danubecooperation.org](http://www.danubecooperation.org)). However, three years since the proposal, the portal is still not functional.

is a strong need to make the existing ones more efficient in addressing the major problems of the area. As shown in the previous section, particularly the initiatives that emerged in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars are characterised by frequent overlapping and excessive bureaucratisation. For this reason, in the last years there has been an intensive debate about the possibility to reform this complex web of regional arrangements. The first step was the establishment in 2007 of a Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) that aims at coordinating all the existing initiatives that I referred to as “post-conflict regionalism”, viz. the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative, the South East European Cooperation Process and their various sectoral programs (SEECp 2007a, 2007e). Although the RCC does not replace these arrangements, the SEECp becomes the main political voice of the new framework of cooperation, taking the lead from the EU-led Stability Pact. Thus, South East European transforms into a more regionally owned process. Whether this will generate more efficiency in intergovernmental cooperation or whether this reform will reflect upon other initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe remains an open question.

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Looking back to the whole post Cold War period, several propositions can be uttered about the creation and evolution of international regionalism in the area. First, like in most other cases of international arrangements, leadership commitment had an important role in the initial phases of an agreement. Throughout their development, however, technical/bureaucratic processes rather than political impetus have dominated the activity of the regional arrangements. Although this feature seems to characterize all regional schemes reviewed in this chapter, there are some significant variations. For instance, the CEI, the SECI, and the BSEC seem to illustrate this point best, while the Visegrád Group, the SEECp

and the BC are more sensitive to political input. This difference is explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Second, when it comes to the actors involved in the regional processes, regional ownership or partnership seem to be the rule. International actors external to the region are frequently present but this is not equivalent with an openly and widely expressed external push for creating and developing regional intergovernmental cooperation. The majority of regional arrangements under scrutiny have been created at the initiative of Central and East European states. Exceptional situations are the South East European schemes developed in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars and Dayton/Paris peace settlement, where international presence is more visible and even dominant in the initial phases. As I showed in the last two sections, even in this case there is a clear movement towards regional ownership, with the locally built cooperation scheme – the SEECP – as political coordinator of the umbrella of initiatives recently rebranded as Regional Cooperation Council.

The external actors most often present have been the European Union, the NATO and the United States, although other states and international organization have been also active in the region. In fact, one can observe an increasing tendency to associate prestigious or sector-relevant international organizations to all regional cooperation arrangements in the area, by granting them associate, guest or observer status. The most desirable associate seems to be the European Union but its importance seems to be largely symbolic. In many of the speeches related to the participation of the European Union to these arrangements, there is a recurrent reference to the “reintegration” of the participant states into the democratic community, which the European Union would be the most complex representative of.

Beyond this specific identity dimension, which is investigated more thoroughly in chapter 9, the Central and East European governments seem to have framed regionalism as part of a larger strategy to achieve this reintegration goal. This strategy has included acquiring

membership to major Western institutions, among which the European Union and NATO have been considered as the most important. Especially in the early 1990s, when these states were not offered a clear answer whether the EU or NATO membership was possible, regionalism was a means to show Western partners the democratic credentials of the Central and East European states through cooperation. At the same time, the declared aim of regional intergovernmental collaboration was even more pragmatic, namely to address issues relevant for the democratic transition and consolidation of the participant countries. In this sense, regionalism may be regarded as a residual product of the democratization process in the sphere of international relations. For these reason, rather a democratic than a EU conditionality seems to have been at play in the case of Central and East European regionalism. Not least, international regionalism in the area has been a means to cope with the political security uncertainties generated first by the collapse of the bipolar system, later by the disintegration of Yugoslavia and more recently by softer security issues present in the region. The way these security concerns of the Central and East European countries have been addressed through the institutional design and practices of these regional arrangements is the topic of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 8

### INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS

The previous chapter presented the circumstances under which the post-Cold War regional intergovernmental cooperation emerged in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the way in which it evolved in terms of goals and membership. This chapter examines the institutional dimension of regional cohesiveness through a comparative analysis of the most notable cases of post-Cold War international regionalism in the area: the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Visegrád Group (V4), the Baltic Cooperation, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Danube Cooperation Process (DCP). In the first section, the *institutional design* of each organization is analysed along the lines proposed in the third chapter. The second section examines the *institutional practices* of these seven regional arrangements but instead of a case-by-case approach, this is done through a cross-sector comparison, which facilitates the identification of the recurrences and elements of caesura.

#### **8.1 Institutional design**

In this first section, using the grill of institutional analysis developed in chapter 3, I identify the institutional features of each of the seven regional intergovernmental initiatives under scrutiny. These characteristics are the scope, the division of power within the group and sustainability. With respect to the scope, the analysis of documents aimed to identify the specific areas of cooperation and from this to classify each arrangement into one of the three possible forms of cooperation as they were defined in chapter three (one-dimensional,

intensive and extensive). The identification of these areas is also essential for identifying the different sectors of national security that the respective regional cooperation addresses, an issue that is further analysed in the next section. With respect to the division of power, the analysis is done on two dimensions. First, mostly based on official documents of the organizations and, where it was possible, on interviews with officials directly involved in these processes, I identify the number of dominant actors in the evolution of the organization with the aim of classifying each of the cases under one of the three categories designed in chapter 3 (hegemonic, clustered and plural regionalism). Then, I assess the degree to which the regional initiative is dependent of the member states, an indicator that further distinguishes among three different types of regionalism (operational, consultative and executive). This is also an indicator administrative sustainability. Finally, the sustainability of the organization is also assessed in financial terms. For an easier reading of this largely technical part, the initiatives are presented in alphabetic order and at the end of each subsection there is a summary table of the findings.

### **8.1.1. The Baltic Cooperation**

In the text of the founding document of the Baltic Cooperation, the Declaration of unity and cooperation, the scope of this regional arrangement is defined only as “political and economic cooperation” (BC 1990). The documents setting the institutional functioning of the organization, Terms of reference for the Baltic Council of Ministers, which was adopted in 1994 and amended in 2003, does not refer to any specific field of cooperation but mentions that they are priority areas for the three republics (BC 1994, 2003a). The Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Baltic States, issued in Kalvi in 2003, which is the major political text that establishes the continuation of the cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after their accession to NATO and the European Union, is also vague with respect to the specific domains of common interest. It only states, “the main areas of cooperation

should be reviewed periodically” (BC 2003b). However, the joint communiqués of the Prime Ministers sometimes mention several concrete projects. For instance, in 2003, “the Heads of Government discussed such issues as Via Baltica, Rail Baltica, the facilitation of border crossing procedures (ID cards, joint border control posts), energy and joint crisis management” (BC 2003c). At technical level, the reports on the activities of the BC are more explicit with respect to the scope of organization. For example, the 2004 report lists as many as eighteen different areas of cooperation. In alphabetical order, these were agriculture, border guarding, constructions, culture, customs, defence and peacekeeping, energy, environment, foreign and EU affairs, geodesy, cartography and land reform, information technology, justice and home affairs, migration, science and education, social affairs, trade and economy, transport and communications, and tourism (BC 2004). In 2005, these fields were grouped under five headings of which are responsible different committees of senior officials. These five domains are energy, transport and communications, defence, environment, and home affairs (BC 2005b) and so far they did not change. In short, the BC deals with almost all areas that are of common interest for governments. For these reasons, it may be classified as an *extensive* form of cooperation. Furthermore, the fields cover all the national security sectors.

With respect to the divisions of power, within the BC no country seems to have dominated the development of the organization and from this point of view it may be classified as *plural*. The major documents were not signed or proposed by only one or two of the three partners. Having a rotating presidency and a small membership has meant that each government had the opportunity to promote its priorities. In terms of division of power between the member states and the organization, it is a *consultative* form of regionalism. The three governments meet periodically only to consult on issues of common interest and have not established any structure of collaboration that executes the implementation of specific



projects in the areas of cooperation (BC 1994a, 2003a). However, like any international reunion at ministerial level, the organization has a technical structure that prepares the agenda for the BC meetings, proposes issues for discussions and drafts the reports. This is a network of senior official committees and tasks forces, whose attribution are similar to those of a typical agenda committee (BC 2005b). The Baltic Cooperation does not have a permanent secretariat and this type of structure has been for a long time loose even within each of the three Foreign Affairs Ministries (BC 2003a, 2003b). Most of the decision-making process remains the attribute of the ministerial meetings. Though many various issues are discussed within these meetings, the activities of the BC are limited to political declarations (BC 2003a, 2004). For these reasons, with respect to the degree of institutionalisation, the BC is an *ad hoc political dialogue*. As for the financial sources and resources, the Baltic Cooperation is *fully supported* by the member states. In this respect, the Terms of reference explicitly states, “each country shall defray the costs of its participation in the Baltic Council of Ministers” (BC 2003). The official reports of the organization do not indicate any supplementary source of financing. The following table summarizes these characteristics.

**Table 8.1 Institutional design of the Baltic Cooperation**

Dimension of analysis	Type	Observations
<b>Scope</b>	Extensive	According to the institutional design, it may include any area of common interest. In practice, the discussions within the BC indeed covered various domains, ranging from agriculture, trade and defence to culture, border control and tourism.
<b>Number of dominant actors within the arrangement</b>	Plural	No country manifested a leading role within the initiative.
<b>Division of powers between the initiative and the member states</b>	Consultative	The governments meet periodically to consult with each other on issues of common interest but this structure of cooperation does not have executive or operational functions.

<b>Degree of institutionalization</b>	Ad hoc political dialogue	The activities of the organization consist in political declarations. Furthermore, the BC does not have a more institutionalised structure, including a permanent secretariat in one of the member countries.
<b>Financial sources and resources</b>	Fully supported	Each country defrays its cost for participation

### 8.1.2 The Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Throughout its history, the goals of BSEC changed several times. In the founding documents, they were defined as “political consultation” and “economic cooperation” (BSEC 1992a, 1992b). Three years after the emergence of the initiative, the scope of cooperation was still very vague and remained unsupported by a detailed action plan. The member countries merely declared their interest in

investigating the possibilities of concluding an agreement or agreements facilitating the trade and business cooperation; [...] improv[ing] the effectiveness and safety of the transportation and communication in the Black Sea Region; [and] initiating a long-term program of cooperation in the field of producing and distributing energy resources(BSEC 1995).

In 1996, at a conference in Moscow, the programs of action were more precise and identified the fields of communication, energy, and transport as priorities. At the same time, the BSEC became more ambitious, aiming at playing a major role not only regionally but also internationally:

[The member states expressed] their intention to develop further cooperation in fields of common interest with such institutions such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Economic Cooperation Organization and ... the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Central European Initiative and Euro-Mediterranean Initiative (BSEC 1996).

The BSEC members also showed their interest in the Balkan and Trans-Caucasian conflicts, called for a strengthening of the economic relations within the regions, as well as with “extraregional states,” and agreed to “examine the possibility of creating a Black Sea

Economic free trade area” (ibid.). Yet, most of these remained only on paper. For instance, despite a certain progress in the negotiations, especially in 1997 and 1999 when several declarations of intent concerning a free trade area were made public (BSEC 1997), this never materialized. At Yalta (1998) and Istanbul (1999), the summits’ declarations indicate the need for a new economic agenda, and a diversification of the organization’s scope of activity. Sustainable development, medicine and pharmacy, science and technology, justice, tourism and home affairs were added to already major areas of interest, viz. transport, energy, telecommunication networks, trade, and ecology (BSEC 1998a, 1999). Since then, there have not been any significant changes in this respect. Given the wide range of cooperation areas, the BSEC qualifies as an *extensive* form of regionalism covering all national security sectors.

From the viewpoint of the degree of institutionalization, the BSEC is a fully-fledged *regional organization*. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, it acquired international legal personality in 1998. It also has a permanent secretariat (PERMIS) hosted by the Turkish government in Istanbul. According to its institutional design, most notably the BSEC Charter (BSEC 1998a), it should be an executive organization. However, in practice, it remained mostly a *consultative* forum. This seems to happen mainly because of the various divergent regional interests of the member states. For instance, Turkey and Russia have different economic views with respect to the oil and gas pipeline routes from the Caspian Sea.<sup>171</sup> This is an important resource of the area, as well as a potential source of oil and gas whose transport that bypass Russia and arrive to Western Europe through the Black Sea making Europe less dependent of the Russian energy. Romania and Bulgaria initially thought that the debates on the future of the oil routes from the Caspian Sea includes them and strongly promoted debates within the BSEC on the topic, hoping that the pipelines

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<sup>171</sup> While Russia prefers the Baku-Grozny-Novorossiysk route, Turkey favours the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline (Pavliuk, 132-3).

would transit their territory, which would have meant a third version, different from the Russian and Turkish ones. Furthermore, as Mrs. Zoe Petre, former senior foreign policy advisor for the Romanian Presidency reckons in an interview with the author, both governments hoped that this might be an asset for their EU candidatures (Petre Z. 2004). However, instead of a third common version, Bulgaria and Romania had their own variants, with the Greek government supporting the Bulgarian route, as it would bring more advantages to Greece. The issue is not completely settled. In the aftermath of the 2007 EU enlargement, Romania took the lead on the issue of the Black Sea security within the European Neighbourhood Policy and proposed a EU approach to the area – the Black Sea synergy. The incumbent Romanian President Traian Băsescu made this a priority for his foreign policy, aiming that Romania become a regional leader at the Black Sea. Turkey perceived this with much circumspection and the relations between the two countries have cooled in the last years despite the fact that they share membership in other regional organizations, as well as in the NATO. In fact, the Romanian strategy in NATO with respect to the Black Sea, which supports a greater naval presence in the area, also contributed to tensions with the Turkish government, which fears that this would lead to more instability in a region already very tensioned, in the proximity of both frozen conflicts (i.e. among the Caucasian states) and very warm wars (i.e. Iraq). For this reason, the United States has manifested recently an increased interest in the area, sending various officials in the capitals around the Black Sea. As I was tipped in a recent discussion with Matthew Bryza, assistant to the US State subsecretary, the U.S. presence might intensify even more due to the increased economic tensions related to the construction of various pipeline routes (Bryza 2007). Yet, for the moment, the BSEC remains a *cluster* arrangement, in which the voice of the small Caucasian states is rarely heard but where Turkey, Russia, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria negotiate divergent interests.

Finally, in terms of financial resources, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, the BSEC has been the first and for the moment the only Central and East European regional initiative that established a bank for financing its projects, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB). The initial agreement was signed in 1994 and the BSTDB should have operated since 1996 but due to the financial difficulties of the most member countries, which contribute in various degrees to its capital, this was not possible until 1998 (Pavliuk, 136-7). Off the record, an official of the BSTDB revealed in an interview with the author the fact that the difficulties have continued and that, despite the positive annual reports issued by the bank, the few projects funded through this instrument were often politically imposed but not economically viable, which put often the BSTDB in difficulty.

**Table 8.2 Institutional design of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation**

<b>Dimension of analysis</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Observations</b>
<b>Scope</b>	Extensive	It covers all sectors of national security
<b>Number of dominant actors within the arrangement</b>	Clustered	Turkey was the initiator and hosts the permanent secretariat and together with Romania and partially Greece, it have been a constantly active member, while Russia aims to express more its power in the region
<b>Division of powers between the initiative and the member states</b>	Consultative	Although the institutional design suggests an executive arrangement, in practice it remained a consultative forum
<b>Degree of institutionalization</b>	Regional organization	It acquired international legal personality in 1998 and has a permanent secretariat in Istanbul.
<b>Financial sources and resources</b>	Partially supported	It is the only regional organization in the former communist space that established a bank (Black Sea Trade and Development Bank) but this is still largely dependent on the fluctuant contributions of the member states

### 8.1.3 The Central European Initiative

As shown in the previous chapter, the Central European Initiative developed through several enlargements from a Quadrilateral cooperation established in late 1989 by Austria, Hungary,

Italy and S.F.R. Yugoslavia. At that time, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of these countries defined the scope of their cooperation as follows

The four Governments attach great importance to the economic and scientific-technical relations as well as co-operation in the fields of energy, industry, environmental protection, transport, tourism, culture, education, information and other fields of common interest. They also emphasized the significance of co-operation between their respective frontier regions. (CEI 1989a)

In a document adopted the following day by the deputy Prime Ministers, these fields were detailed under eight different headings: economic cooperation, transports, scientific and technical cooperation, cooperation in case of disasters, environmental cooperation, exhibitions, tourism, and information (CEI 1989b). The largest area was that of economic cooperation, with four major subheadings: economic policy issues, industrial and agricultural cooperation, trade, and energy. Though many of the detailed guidelines required specific sectoral cooperation, the Quadrilateral aimed at creating “a good political atmosphere and solid frameworks for wide-ranging co-operation” (CEI 1989a). In short, the Quadrilateral was a political regional initiative with a strong economic focus.

In 1990, this initiative was transformed into a Pentagonal cooperation through the admission of Czechoslovakia. Compared to the documents of the Quadrilateral, within the new structure one may observe a stronger emphasis on security. For instance, after noting that Central and Eastern Europe was experiencing “revolutionary changes” and that “major changes ... occurred in east-west relations and ... with respect to all factors in Europe”, the heads of governments of the five countries stated that the Pentagonal “is a contribution towards creating security and stability for the change-over from the old to the new order” (CEI 1990c). Despite the new context, the scope of collaboration remained almost the same as in the case of the Quadrilateral, only the order changed:

The Pentagonal Initiative concentrates on the implementation of concrete, action-oriented projects of common interest to the five participant countries, especially in

the field of transport, environmental protection, energy issues, co-operation between small and medium-sized enterprises, scientific and technological co-operation, information and telecommunications, as well as education, culture and tourism. (CEI 1990c)

The Pentagonal was further enlarged with Poland and subsequently transformed into a Hexagonal initiative. In the political declaration that establishes this new cooperative structure, the Prime Ministers of the six participant states emphasize “the Pentagone made a specific contribution to the promotion of security, stability and cooperation in Europe, this confirming the far-reaching significance of its basic principles and objectives” (CEI 1991b). As former Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Géza Jeszenszky and former Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Bronislaw Geremek acknowledged in interviews with the author, neither the Quadrilateral nor the Pentagonal succeeded in transforming the proposed goals and objectives into concrete programs. Rather, the “promotion of security, stability and cooperation” was achieved through political dialogue and collaboration at the level of heads of state and governments (Jeszenszky 2006, Geremek 2006). Therefore, although they were arrangements that according to the goals could have been placed mostly in the economic and partially the societal security sectors, the Quadrilateral and the Pentagonal had been used for political security purposes. This embedded goal is even more visible in the case of the Hexagonal cooperation, whose official documents no longer put an emphasis on the fields of cooperation but on the role that the initiative can have in the new European security environment, especially through the cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the European Community:

Prime Ministers agreed... on the growing importance of exchanges of views on the security issues in Europe and decided that those exchanges will be an essential part of the future Hexagonale political consultation. ... Furthermore, the Hexagonale can play a special role in helping to overcome any tendencies weakening stability such as resurgence of dangerous forms of nationalism and ethnic strife (CEI 1991b)

The Hexagonale did not have a longer life than its predecessors as the Central European Initiative, replaced it after the dissolution of the S.F.R. Yugoslavia and the admission of only three former Yugoslav republics – Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. Within the new arrangement, the political declarations remained similar to those within the Hexagonal but one may observe a rapid decline of the emphasis on security issues and a return to the approach that highlighted the fields of specific cooperation in economic, environmental and societal matters:

The co-operation within the framework of the CEI shall include, inter alia, the following areas: consultations on political matters of mutual interest; economic and technical co-operation; development of infrastructure in transport, energy, telecommunication, agriculture; strengthening the democratic institutions and observance of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as well as humanitarian matters; protection of human environment; co-operation in the field of science and technology, media, culture, education, youth exchange, tourism; cross-border and interregional co-operation. (CEI 1995)

From this definition of scope, one may observe that the fields of cooperation remained mostly the same compared to the Quadrilateral. However, there are several significant additions. First, unlike any of its predecessors, the CEI explicitly acknowledges the political security dimension of the collaboration (“consultations on political matters of mutual interest”). Second, the CEI grants much importance to the human rights dimension. This is not only mentioned in the political declarations but a specific framework of collaboration has been established in this respect – the CEI instrument for the protection of minority rights (CEI 1994c). Furthermore, unlike the Quadrilateral, which emphasized mainly the economic cooperation, the CEI highlights more the societal aspects of security, which range from human rights protection to promotion of media and youth exchanges. Instead, the environmental issues are less addressed than in the original initiative and they are subsumed rather to the economic sustainability goals (CEI 2003). In fact, since 2005, environment has been included in Cluster 1 (Economic development) of cooperation within the CEI,



alongside agriculture, energy, SMEs, tourism and transport (CEI 2005a).<sup>172</sup> More recently, the CEI has also started promote cooperation within the fields of civil protection and the combating of organised crime (2005c). To sum up, the scope of CEI qualifies the arrangement as an *extensive* form of cooperation, with focus on political, economic and societal security.

The technical coordination of all these various activities is provided by a permanent secretariat with the headquarters in Italy at Trieste. From this viewpoint, the Central European Initiative is a fully-fledged *regional organization*. Within this regional organization, there are various structures, ranging from high-level meetings (i.e. Prime Ministers) to specialised working groups (WGs). The analysis of the institutional structure and the national affiliation does not indicate any national dominance within the CEI, even in the most institutionalized structures such as the WGs. The interviews with different decision-makers that had direct contact with the organization also confirmed this observation. In fact, some of the interlocutors even expressed the view that the CEI is “too diluted” (Geremek 2006, Meleşcanu 2005) and lacks the political leadership of one or more countries (Năstase 2005, Jeszenszky 2006). This situation has been favoured by the institutional design, according to which “each member state shall assume at least one chairmanship or co-chairmanship of a working body” (CEI 1995). In this respect, the CEI is a *plural* initiative.

Despite the loose control of the member states, the CEI is not an operational organisation but an *executive* one. Beyond the political consultations that take place within its framework, the CEI has the task to design and coordinate the execution of various projects (CEI 1995). In matters of design, the organization relies mostly on WGs but for the coordination of

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<sup>172</sup> The other clusters are Human Development and Institutional Development. The Human Development cluster includes working groups on culture, education, human resources development and training, science and technology, and youth affairs (CEI 2005b). The Institutional Development cluster includes working groups on civil protection, combating organised crime, information and media, migration, minorities, and interregional and cross-border cooperation (CEI 2005c).

execution it relies much on the executive secretariat in Trieste, as well as on the Secretariat for CEI Projects. This Secretariat for CEI Projects coordinates the funding available through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), with whom the CEI has special agreements. Most notably, the CEI has since 1991 a Trust Fund at the EBRD endowed by Italy through which it finances most of the technical projects, particularly technical cooperation and know-how exchange programs (CEI 1995). Apart from this, the CEI has a Cooperation Fund, which is contributed to by the member states for co-financing projects to up to 50 per cent of their value (CEI 2001). In 1998, a Solidarity Fund was also established to finance the travel and accommodation expenses of the representatives of the member countries that could not afford to do it, viz. “non-EU CEI member states” (CEI 1998a). In this respect, the CEI is a *partially supported* initiative.

**Table 8.3 Institutional design of the Central European Initiative**

Dimension of analysis	Type	Observations
<b>Scope</b>	Extensive	Cooperation takes places on matters related to political, economic and societal security
<b>Number of dominant actors within the arrangement</b>	Plural	Although Italy hosts the permanent secretariat and has provided major financing for the CEI activities, there is no dominant nationality within the WGs and no country or group of countries manifested a significant leading role within the initiative
<b>Division of powers between the initiative and the member states</b>	Executive	The WGs are required to generate and coordinate projects in line with the political guidelines
<b>Degree of institutionalization</b>	Regional organization	It has a permanent secretariat in Trieste
<b>Financial sources and resources</b>	Partially supported	It cooperates closely with the EBRD and developed its own financially instruments but it still relies on some contribution from the member states for the implementation of its projects

#### 8.1.4 The Danube Cooperation Process

In its founding document (DCP 2002a), the Danube Cooperation Process initiative proposes that the participants collaborate in five major areas. The main field is the economic one, within which transport issues, and particularly navigation, are the top priority. In this respect, the DCP aims mostly at fostering the work of the Corridor VII Steering Committee. This Committee is a coordinating structure created by the Ministries of Transport of the countries through which Danube flows with the purpose of fostering the modernization and facilitation of transport for trade on the river. Apart from transport and trade, the DCP collaboration has also environmental, tourism, cultural and sub-regional (i.e. cross-border) dimensions. So far, these objectives did not change and no other areas of collaboration have been added. From the viewpoint of the national security paradigm, at a first glance, these could be classified as economic, societal and environmental security. However, as shown in the previous chapter, so far, these objectives have not transformed into many concrete programs of cooperation in these specific areas. Rather, cooperation remained at the level of political dialogue. For this reason, one may add to the three identified sectors of security, the political one. This view converge with the vision embedded in the founding declaration of the DCP, which defines it as an organization with

multi-dimensional character, whose *main feature shall be its political dimension* which will establish priorities for action within the Process, in accordance with the specific objectives and concerns of the Danubian countries and which will provide the necessary impetus to effective implementation of various concrete forms of co-operation, as well as to improving the security of the region (DCP 2002a, emphasis mine)<sup>173</sup>

Despite covering four different sectors of security being thus an *extensive* type of cooperation, it aims to answer one major rationale, viz. sustainable regional economic

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<sup>173</sup> An almost identical statement was included also in the Final document of the Second Ministerial Conference of the DCP (DCP 2004).

development. As expressed in its founding document, as well as in the final declarations of the second and third ministerial meetings, the DCP rationale is the economic development of the Danubian countries through political coordination (DCP 2002a, 2004, 2007a). Transport, trade and partially tourism are traditional economic areas. Environment may be considered a separate area of concern but, at the same time, it is a major component for sustainable economic development. Sub-regional cooperation, viz. cross-border cooperation, refers mostly to enhancing the economic relations of the border areas of the participant countries (DCP 2002a). In this respect, Irina Zidaru, an official in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers that the inclusion of sub-regional cooperation in the spheres of the DCP cooperation allows the achievement of two goals. First, the economic relations of the border areas are enhanced through such projects and from this the entire Danubian region would benefit because usually the border areas are the most sensitive in terms of cooperation. Second, the DCP intends to be just a forum of consultation and guideline provider. It does not want to interfere within the work of the already existing sub-regional initiatives but to foster their development and offer a framework for better coordination among such initiatives. From this perspective, the DCP should be regarded as a facilitator of smaller-scale economic projects (Zidaru 2007). Finally, although included in all the official documents, the cultural dimension is not particularly important for the initiative. As former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mircea Geoană acknowledged in an interview with the author, this was added rather as an attempt to give the initiative an identity and emphasize the fact that economic cooperation has also a cultural dimension (Geoană 2006). This issue is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the Danube Cooperation Process (DCP) was initiated by Austria and Romania and was largely supported by the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The two countries remained the major

engines of the initiative. First, they organized the first two (our of three) ministerial meetings of the DCP countries. Furthermore, they prepared and distributed the concept papers for the DCP cooperation and have continued to do so (DCP 2001, 2007a). Recently, Serbia joined the duo and organized the third ministerial meeting (DCP 2007a). However, the other member states did not manifest much interest in the collaboration. In fact, after initially expressing its interest in the arrangement, the Slovenian part objected that there was already much overlapping of regional cooperation in the area and signalled that the particularly the Slovenian business community was not eager to participate to another scheme. In the end, apparently through Romanian and Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe diplomatic channels, Slovenia joined the DCP.<sup>174</sup> Due to these facts, the Danube Cooperation Process may qualify as a *clustered* one.

From the viewpoint of the divisions of power between the member states and the initiative, it can be considered a *consultative* forum. The member states do not give it a mandate to execute any task but state that the mission of the DCP is to provide “a new channel for regional ideas and initiatives” (DCP 2002a). Furthermore, in all official documents the political dimension of cooperation is frequently emphasized, together with the fact that the initiative is “a non-institutionalised structure” (DCP 2002c). In other words, the DCP was designed and continue to function as a structure of consultation among the member countries in the fields identified in the previous section. The consultative character of the arrangement can be further noticed in the use of language in the official documents. For instance, in the Final document of the Second Ministerial meeting, the participants most frequently “support the revision”, “support the effort”, “welcome”, “welcome and support”, “take note”,

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<sup>174</sup> This information was revealed first in an interview with Liliana Deac, Director of the External Affairs Department in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania (Deac 2005) and was later confirmed by a staff member of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (J.S. 2006).

“emphasize the importance”, “encourage” but do not give the DCP any task to fulfil and do not assess any specific activity of the initiative (DCP 2004).

Addressing the high level conference launching the Danube Cooperation Process in Vienna in 2002, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mircea Geoană briefly presented the rationale of the arrangement, as well as the main principles for its functioning. In his words, the DCP is a non-institutionalized structure aiming at providing “flexibility as to participation of interested states, as well as to actions and projects initiated under its aegis” (DCP 2002c). The DCP does not have a permanent secretariat but the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has coordinated much of its work. However, it did not remain at the stage of ad hoc political dialogue. As already shown in the previous section, the DCP established a framework of cooperation within specific policy areas, most notably within the field of transport and environment. For these reasons, although these structures of cooperation are not much developed, it may be regarded as a *cooperative framework*. Finally, with respect to its financial sources and resources, the initiative is *fully supported* by the member states, which finance their participation to reunions and common projects. Table 8.4 below summarizes these institutional characteristics.

**Table 8.4 Institutional design of the Danube Cooperation Process**

Dimension of analysis	Type	Observations
Scope	Extensive	It covers a range of areas many unrelated to each other
Number of dominant actors within the arrangement	Clustered	Austria and Romania, alongside the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe initiated the arrangement and, together with Serbia, continue to give its major impetuses.
Division of powers between the initiative and the member states	Consultative	Non-institutionalised structure that aims at fostering through political consultation the cooperation among the countries in the hydrologic basin of Danube
Degree of institutionalization	Cooperative framework	Establishes the framework for further cooperation in fields related to the economic, environmental and societal sectors of security

<b>Financial sources and resources</b>	Fully supported	Member states finance their participation
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### 8.1.5 The Southeast European Cooperative Initiative

Through political coordination, the SECI has aimed at facilitating collaboration in the economic field, particularly in trade, transport, energy and infrastructure, as well as in the field of combating illicit activities. Due to this large variety of cooperation areas, it qualifies as an *extensive* form of regionalism that addresses issues from the political, economic and societal sectors of security. As shown later in this chapter, it has also a minor military dimension. Yet, the main focus has been on trade and combating transborder crime. With respect to the trade issues, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) has technically supported the SECI. With UN funding, the UN/ECE has prepared the reunions of the working groups, workshops and conferences initiated for a specific project, as well as the regular contacts with the SECI coordinator. The UN/ECE also inspired a series of national PRO committees, which are “structures of trade facilitation” whose major focus is the improvement of transport of goods (SECI 2006). These committees form the SECI PRO network, coordinated by a centre in Thessaloniki, Greece, which also supports financially its administration. In matters related to combating illicit activities, since 1999, a SECI Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime has functioned in Bucharest. This Center is financed by all member states. In the first year of activity, however, the U.S. and the Romanian government contributed mostly to the utilities expenses (SECI 2004). These institutional arrangements indicate a regional *cooperative framework*, which is partially supported financially. Since there is a group of actors that have promoted more the initiative, namely the U.S., the European Union, Greece and Romania, the organization qualifies as a clustered one.

**Table 8.5 Institutional design of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative**

Dimension of analysis	Type	Observations
<b>Scope</b>	Extensive	It covers a various range of areas from all security sectors but due to institutional design focuses mostly on trade and economic cooperation, as well as on home affairs issues, most notably combating trafficking.
<b>Number of dominant actors within the arrangement</b>	Clustered	US initiated the arrangement, the European Union through the Stability Pact supported many of its activities, Greece and Romania host two of its main bodies
<b>Division of powers between the initiative and the member states</b>	Executive	Through various bodies, it has to design and implement projects whose principles are decided jointly by the member states
<b>Degree of institutionalization</b>	Cooperative framework	It has various institutional bodies that are coordinated politically
<b>Financial sources and resources</b>	Partially supported	The member countries and the UN/ECE are the main contributors to its institutional sustainability, while many of the projects are supported through international donors such as the World Bank

### 8.1.6 The South East European Cooperation Process

The South East European Cooperation Process is an *extensive* form of regional cooperation. Its areas address a large range of issues that cover all the national security sectors. The SEECP was created at the initiative of the Bulgarian government in 1996 (SEECP 1996). The Greek government welcomed the arrangement and hosted the first reunion after its establishment. During its presidency, the SEECP adopted a declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the participant states, which would set in more detail the guidelines for their cooperation (SEECP 2007). Together with the Sofia Declaration, this document has been the basis for all the subsequent development of the organization. Romania brought another important contribution to the Process, as under its presidency the definitive name of the organization was adopted (SEECP 1999), together with the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe (SEECP 2002a). Ever since, this Charter has been the main text to which states have to adhere in



order to become members of the SEECP (SEECP 2001, 2007c). More recently, Croatia has also provided a major impetus to the development of the initiative when, under its 2007 presidency, the plans for the reform of the entire system of regional intergovernmental cooperation in South Eastern Europe reached a finality with the adoption of several landmark documents (SEECP 2007a, 2007c). Apart from these legal contributions that bring into the light a group of countries, all the participant states seem to have manifested relatively similar interest in the initiative. Despite the Bulgarian, Greek and Romanian attempts to brand themselves as regional leaders, no state or group of states seems to be leading the initiative. Furthermore, like many other organizations created in the 1990s, the SEECP has a system of the troika for the chairmanship, as a means to create institutional continuity and promote good relations among the participant states. Although, it was adopted four years after the creation of the Process and activated only in 2003, this system forces the participants to coordinate their positions and agendas and is less likely to allow the development of a hegemon within the group. For these reasons, the SEECP may be perceived as a *plural* initiative.

The SEECP is not an institutionalized organization. Its activity has developed so far exclusively at political and diplomatic level. Like in most processes of this type, this takes place mainly through summits of heads of state and government, as well as of the foreign ministers. Each year, under the presidency of the host country, the heads of state and government of the member countries meet to “review the overall process of cooperation and give guidelines and recommendations for future activities” (SEECP 2000b). At the initiative of the state that holds the presidency, informal meetings at this level can be organized but they are not very frequent. The main forum for consultation is the summit of foreign ministers of the participant states. This is usually held once a year and has the role “to conduct political consultations and to promote cooperation on issues of regional stability,

security and political and economic cooperation” (ibid.). The foreign minister of the host country presides the reunions as Chairman-in-Office. At technical level, all meetings are coordinated within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs by the Political Directors, which form the Committee of Directors of the SEECP (ibid.). Reunions at other levels can be also organized but these are of minor importance and regarded as exceptional even within the provisions of the annex to the SEECP Charter, which is the main document for defining the institutional mechanisms of the initiative (ibid.).<sup>175</sup> As former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Meleşcanu reckons in an interview with the author, they are usually held on issues that are important for the agenda of the presidency (Meleşcanu 2005).<sup>176</sup> For these reasons, the SEECP may qualify as an *ad hoc political dialogue* initiative.

In the recent years, there is a move towards the institutionalisation of the Process. Dimitar Bechev provides the interesting information that Greece and F.R. Yugoslavia supported the institutionalised of the process but Bulgaria and Romania opposed it (Bechev 2005, 287). The fieldwork for this dissertation supports this information. In an interview I conducted with former foreign policy advisor Zoe Petre, she mentions that the Romanian government has indeed preferred for a long time political dialogue to any other form of cooperation that would have involved more than rhetoric commitment (Petre Z. 2004). Former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Meleşcanu shares a similar view when he admitted that facing trade cooperation in a competitive environment was much more difficult than the usual political dialogue in which the Romanian government had entered since the fall of

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<sup>175</sup> The annex, entitled *Procedural aspects and follow-up mechanisms of the South-East European Cooperation Process*, was recently amended to reflect the institutional transformations that the creation of the Regional Cooperation Council and its relation with the SEECP have generated. However, the main provisions related to the institutional framework of the organization remain similar to those of the 2000 version (SEECP 2007b, 2007c).

<sup>176</sup> For instance, in 2007, under the Croatian chairmanship, such a meeting was organized at the level of ministers of justice and interior of the participant countries on the topic of “Standards of the European Union and the Rule of Law in South Eastern Europe” (SEECP 2007d). As an official of the Croatian Ministry of European Integration acknowledged in a discussion with the author, the reform of justice is among the top priorities for the Croatian EU enlargement (I.F. 2007).

communism (Meleşcanu 2005). The fear of increasing the degree of institutionalization was double for the Romanian part. First, it might have meant an effort that would not have paid off and that would have required a significant change in the usual attitude of the Romanian MFA towards the region, which is traditionally “commitment as long as it does not require much more than rhetoric” (Roman 2005). Second and most importantly, increasing the degree of institutionalization of regional cooperation might have sent the wrong signal to Western chancelleries that were courted for membership in the NATO and the EU. It is very possible that Bulgaria shared this second fear, as it was also an aspiring candidate to such membership. It is also highly plausible that F.R. Yugoslavia (and later Serbia and Montenegro) favoured a more consistent framework of cooperation led by the countries of the area. Isolated from the international environment due to the crises related to the violent disintegration of the Yugoslav project, Belgrade may have preferred a stronger SEECP in which Yugoslavia could have had an important voice and equal status compared to the participation in the EU-led Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in which the Yugoslav government was much more negatively perceived (Minić 2002). During the Greek presidency in 2006, several fields were identified as priorities for cooperation among the SEECP countries, most of them in economic, as well as in home affairs and justice areas. This suggests an increased focus of the initiative and a possible future institutionalisation. In this respect, the final declaration of the SEECP high-level summit in 2006 states “it is imperative that the SEECP prepares itself to take the necessary institutional and operational steps and play an active role in order to shoulder some of the tasks and responsibilities of the Stability Pact” (SEECP 2006). For this purpose, the Greek government prepared an Action Plan for the institutional enhancement of the SEECP. Within the larger reform efforts in the area, the next presidency held by Croatia proposed that the SEECP remains a political forum, the main political body of the larger Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). Since this

proposal was adopted, the SEECP remained an ad hoc political dialogue form of cooperation but it will also coordinate the work of RCC, which is a more institutionalised structure, gathering the remnants of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative and the Central European Free Trade Agreement (SEECP 2007a, 2007e).<sup>177</sup> Whether the SEECP will evolve towards a regional cooperative framework remains to be seen. For the moment, it is largely a reunion for political consultation that did not receive any task to execute from the member states and that is not able to act of its own will. Therefore, the arrangement is a *consultative* one. Finally, due to this ad hoc political dialogue/consultative character, in terms of financial sources and resources, the SEECP relies completely on the contribution of the member states for financing the reunions. From this perspective, it is a fully supported initiative. The table below summarizes these characteristics.

**Table 8.6 Institutional design of the South East European Cooperation Process**

<b>Dimension of analysis</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Observations</b>
<b>Scope</b>	Extensive	It covers a large range of areas from all sectors of security
<b>Number of dominant actors within the arrangement</b>	Plural	On several occasions, it was rather clustered, with Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania as major actors
<b>Division of powers between the initiative and the member states</b>	Consultative	It is a forum of political consultation mainly on issues related to political security, although lately there has been an increased interest in matters related to economic and societal security
<b>Degree of institutionalization</b>	Ad hoc political dialogue	It may evolve towards a regional framework due to its association with the more project-oriented Regional Cooperation Council
<b>Financial sources and resources</b>	Fully supported	All activities of the SEECP, mainly high-level reunions, are financed by the member states

<sup>177</sup> The circumstances in which the Regional Cooperation Council was established are presented in more detail in the previous chapter.

### 8.1.7 The Visegrád Group

From the view of the scope of cooperation, the evolution of the Visegrád Group can be divided into three periods. The first one stretches roughly since its creation in 1991 until 1993. During this period, political and economic coordination were its main priorities. The principles for this collaboration had been laid down in the Visegrád declaration. According to this document, the members intended to hold “regular consultations on the matters of their security ... in accordance with the interests of the particular countries” and to create an economic cooperation “based on the principles of the free market, and mutually beneficial trade in goods and services” with the purpose of improving the effectiveness of their economies (Visegrád Group 1991a). Between 1993 and 1994, this economic rapprochement dominated the agenda but, as discussed in more detail in the next chapter, cooperation on this matter was impeded by the competition among the member states and the EU enlargement process. From 1994 onwards one may perceive an increased shift towards softer areas of cooperation, most notably in the societal security sector with a particular focus on culture and education, though provisions and activities related to cooperation other fields such as environment, infrastructure and defence and arms industries have also existed (Visegrád Group 1999a, 2004). For this reason, the V4 qualifies as an *extensive* form of regionalism.

Throughout its history, the organization remained mainly a *consultative* political forum that has not established institutions of cooperation that are more policy oriented. However, in 1999, it established the International Visegrád Fund (IVF), an instrument for financing common projects in the fields of culture and education, (Visegrád Group 1999b). In the first two years, the contributions of the member states did not come in time and were small. Yet, in 2006 the IVF had already a budget of over three million Euros (Visegrád Group 2006) and in 2007 the contribution of each member state has risen to Euro 1.250.000, making a five

million Euro total budget (Visegrád Group 2007). This money is used mostly for financing NGO projects and scholarships (Visegrád Group 2005, 2006). Within this *ad hoc political dialogue* form of international regionalism, there are no dominant actors and for this reason, V4 is a *plural* initiative. However, occasionally one may observe a lower interest of Poland in the arrangement. The analysis of Poland's foreign policy programs suggests that the governments of this country have increasingly preferred a European wide focus of foreign policy to a more regional approach. In fact, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs lists under the heading "regional cooperation" mostly pan European organizations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE. At the same time, the sometimes marginalized Slovakia is a strong supporter of the V4 cooperation, hosting the IVF, but like the other partners, does not promote the idea of further institutionalisation.

**Table 8.7 Institutional design of the Visegrád Group**

Dimension of analysis	Type	Observations
Scope	Extensive	Initially focused on political and economic coordination but currently there is more emphasis on areas from the other sectors of security, most notable from the societal one.
Number of dominant actors within the arrangement	Plural	No member dominated the agenda.
Division of powers between the initiative and the member states	Consultative	Although it has increasingly promoted policy-oriented cooperation, it has remained mainly a forum for political consultation.
Degree of institutionalization	Ad hoc political dialogue	Despite discussions on the matter, the initiative has not been institutionalised in any way.
Financial sources and resources	Partially supported	It has a common fund to which states contribute for funding cooperation projects, which can be co-financed.

## **8.2 Institutional practices**

In the previous section, I analyzed the institutional design of the seven most relevant cases of international regionalism in Central and Eastern Europe, showing which are the institutional characteristics of these initiatives and the way they evolved in relation with the national

interests of the member states. In this section, I examine the way in which the institutional design has been transformed into concrete cooperation. For this purpose, I make a cross-sector analysis of the activities and programs of the same seven cases of international regionalism in the five sectors of national security introduced in chapter 3, viz. political, military, economic, societal and environmental.

### **8.2.1 Regional cooperation in political security areas**

As can be inferred from the above analysis of institutional design, though all Central and East European initiatives address issues related to political security, the main organization in the region with an explicit focus on political security is the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). The organization has remained mainly a channel for political and diplomatic dialogue. In this respect, the SEECP achieved several important results. For instance, at the 2002 SEECP Annual Conference, which took place in Tirana, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Albania and F.R. Yugoslavia signed a bilateral cooperation agreement. This is considered a landmark document for the bilateral links between Albania and F.R. Yugoslavia, as well as for the South East European region, because it was the first treaty after the crisis of Kosovo during which the diplomatic relations between the two countries had been suspended (SEECP 2002). Furthermore, as national and regional media did not fail to observe at that time, the participation of Dragisa Pesic at the SEECP reunion in Tirana was the first official visit of a Yugoslav Prime Minister in Albania in the last ten years. Another significant tension to the diffusion of which the SEECP contributed was the dispute between the F.Y.R. Macedonia and Greece on the official name of the former Yugoslav republic. On this issue, one of my interlocutors, Mrs. Elisabeth Teplevac, former staff member of the UN General Assembly Presidency, reckons that there has been some competition among regional and international organizations as to which of them this success should be attributed. Most part of the negotiation and an agreement between the two

countries took place within the UN framework. However, within the Greek and Macedonian chancelleries there seems to have been a widespread feeling that the participation to the SEECP, as well as to the SECI and the Stability Pact of both Greece and Macedonia helped normalize the relations between them (Teplevac 2006). The SEECP also produced a major political document, the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe. This text, which follows many of the principles inscribed in OSCE documents, establishes the principles of cooperation within the SEECP framework and is a binding agreement for all members. In this respect, the SEECP proved to be for the region a complementary diplomatic instrument to the usual bilateral or trilateral arrangements, as well as to other forms of international arrangements.

The Visegrád Group and the Baltic Cooperation had also strong political security components from the very beginning. In both cases, they achieved significant results in this field in their first years of existence. However, as discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the competition that has developed among the partner countries in the race for the NATO and EU enlargement, as well as the different foreign and domestic policy agendas of the members has led to a diminishing number of common actions, as well as of important outcomes from the viewpoint of political security. Currently, cooperation in this area is limited to periodic consultation for reviewing and updating the guidelines of cooperation in other spheres of security. Political consultation without noteworthy impact has been also the norm in the other cases of Central and East European regionalism, including the most recent of these initiatives, the Danube Cooperation Process.

### **8.2.2 Regional cooperation in military security areas**

The first regional initiative in Central and Eastern Europe to have a military dimension was the Visegrád Group. Since its creation until late 1992, collective defence had been the focus of discussions within the Visegrád framework, the three members even creating a forum of



consultation for their Ministries of Defence (Visegrád Group 1991b, 1992a). This happened because at the time of its creation, the major concern of the Group was to achieve political and military security, safely distancing from the grasp of the Soviet Union. The situation was particularly pressing in the early 1990s also because at the fall of the communist regimes all three countries had on their territory Soviet troops. From Czechoslovakia and Hungary, these withdrew in 1991. However, in Poland, a direct neighbour of the newly created Russian Federation, the process took much longer and only after intensive political and diplomatic negotiations culminating with Russian President Boris Yeltsin's declaration of "respect for Poland pursuit of NATO membership," Russian troops withdrew completely from the Polish territory in 1994 (Piotrowski and Rachwald 2001, Simon 2004). Despite such common concerns, as argued in the previous chapter, the collaboration on military issues has never been strengthened for fear that it might have hindered the chances of the partner countries to accede to the membership of the North Atlantic Alliance. In 1991, the Visegrád countries had become members of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a structure of dialogue between the NATO and the newly democratizing Central and East European states. At the same time, they had openly and repeatedly asked for NATO membership and, though initially met an explicit refusal, by 1992 political declarations of the Western leaders were much more nuanced and suggested that the possibility of the NATO enlargement was no longer excluded. Not least, in 1994, all the Visegrád states became members of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP), which strengthened the ties with the Alliance and made less necessary the cooperation within the regional framework that could not offer them any serious hard security guarantees.

A similar situation happened in the case of the Baltic Cooperation. Like the Visegrád countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regarded the strengthening of their military links as a possible threat to their major goal in terms of military security, namely NATO accession.

Together with the Visegrád countries, Bulgaria, Romania and the USSR, they became members of the NACC in 1991. In 1994, all three countries became members of the PfP, similarly to the V4. Nonetheless, unlike the Visegrád Group, discussions on military security issues related to the Baltic region took place in the region also outside the framework of the BC, mostly within the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Nordic Baltic Council (NB8).<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, strengthening military cooperation was much more sensitive in the close proximity of Russia, as it was the case of the Baltic republics, than it was in the case of the Visegrád Cooperation. For this reason, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had been externally encouraged to pursue rather economic and societal goals with respect to their trilateral cooperation.<sup>179</sup>

The other organizations in Central and Eastern Europe that have addressed issues related to military security are the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The SECI and SEECP are associated to the South Eastern European Defense Ministerial (SEDM) and its subsidiary initiatives - South Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), Engineering Task Force, Crisis Information Network and the South Eastern Europe Civil-Military Emergency Planning Council. In October 2000, during the SEDM reunion of the Defense Ministers of ten countries, the participants decided the creation of the South Eastern Europe Simulation Network (SEESIM) whose purpose is to integrate the different initiatives and information networks in the region, created or coordinated by SEDM. Nonetheless, as Constantin Degeratu, senior national security advisor for the Romanian Presidency, and Jovan Ananiev, Director for Crisis Management in the Macedonian Ministry of Defense, reckoned in discussions with the author, this coordination of the Ministries of Defence is

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<sup>178</sup> On the CBSS and NB8 membership and relevance for the foreign policy strategies of the three Baltic republics, see the section on the Baltic Cooperation in the previous chapter.

<sup>179</sup> This issue of is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

rather a subsidiary of the coordination within the framework of NATO or NATO partnerships than a genuinely regional military cooperation (Degeratu 2007, Ananiev 2006). As for the BSEC, the analysis of its official documents between 1992 and 2007 indicates that military security has never been the major focus of the organization and appeared on the agenda only in relation to political security issues, most notably with respect to the frozen Caucasian conflicts.

### **8.2.3 Regional cooperation in the economic security areas**

The most developed cooperation in terms of results has been in the field of economic security, particularly with respect to trade and trade facilitation. The most important trade arrangement that emerged in the area has been the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA), an economic offshoot of the Visegrád Group. As the next chapter demonstrates, the Visegrád partners did not cooperate much within the CEFTA, largely for political reasons. Nonetheless, the weak performance of the CEFTA was not motivated only politically. The members, including those that joined CEFTA later, were natural competitors in their economic relations with the European Union and did not have common strategies with respect to third countries. Furthermore, their economies were still influenced by the old structured and their products had relatively high prices and mediocre quality (Kupich 1999, 94-5). At the same time, some of the participant governments, used with the “forms without content” rhetoric on regional cooperation that had developed during the communist period, initially considered that this trade arrangement was not involving anything except some minimal political commitment. The strict terms of the CEFTA forced them to reconsider this position. As former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Meleşcanu put it in an interview with the author, “we thought it was just another political project but we soon realized that free trade is difficult; we really had to make our lessons if we wanted to pass the class” (Meleşcanu 2005). For these reasons, the CEFTA has been increasingly perceived as a

preparatory class in economy for EU enlargement. Yet, this perception has not furthered cooperation within the CEFTA. In fact, after Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union and consequently left the arrangement, only former Yugoslav republics remained members. Although the European Union encouraged them to cooperate within this framework, there has been a widespread political concern in these states that they were encouraged to recreate a Yugoslav project and remain outside the EU. In this respect, one of my interviewees, an official in the Croatian Ministry of European Integration, acknowledged that there have been many diplomatic efforts from the part of the European Union, as well as through the SEECP framework to convince the former Yugoslav states that “regional integration” should be understood rather as a complementary not an alternative to “European integration” (I.F. 2007). Finally, the states accepted to sign more free trade arrangements among themselves but, interestingly, opposed the changing of name from “Central European” to “South East European” Free Trade Area. In this way, through appropriation of a certain regional identity label they were attempting to obtain guarantees that “European integration” would come.

Another major instrument for trade facilitation was the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). In fact, the SECI was established for this purpose. In official documents, the SECI and its trade related programs list various successes most notably the increase of trade among the partner countries. However, the discussions with decision-makers and staff involved in this cooperation reveal a less satisfying picture. The governments in the region often complained they did not have money to implement or develop common infrastructure projects. For this reason, the European Union and the U.S. encouraged international donors to finance such projects. They did so mostly within the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The World Bank also contributed directly to SECI projects. The approach, known as public-private partnership (PPP), was similar in both cases and very

roughly has respected the following scheme. The participant countries propose national or regional projects with impact for the development of the region. Then, the regional organization (i.e. SECI or the Stability Pact) selects the best projects and proposes them to the donor community (international organizations, governments and private institutions), which offers the funding.

In theory, the PPP approach has been capable to produce funding for all the chosen projects. In some cases, like the “Quick Start Package” program of the Stability Pact, the organization was able to collect even significantly more funds than the value of the projects in question<sup>180</sup>

In practice, sometimes the regional organization becomes an unnecessary intermediary who makes the bureaucratic procedures even slower. As discussions with representatives of the business environment, as well as with officials from the donor community revealed, it also happens that companies wanting to get specific contracts, usually paid by the government, propose projects through intermediaries framing them as governmental priorities. Other times, governments offer the contract for the implementation of the projects to a selected number of companies, sometimes on mere political ground and without open competition. This led to the spread of corruption suspicions, which affected the trust of the participants in the regional organizations. The design of the initiatives also favours this situation. For instance, with respect to the participation in these public-private partnerships, the choice is usually a mix of representatives from ministries and professional business associations such as the Associations of the Businessmen and the Chambers of Commerce. However, it was argued that the way these representatives decide and choose projects might not reflect the needs and possibilities of the companies that could implement the contracts. The solution proposed was to invite also the representatives of large companies. However, the

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<sup>180</sup> According to the official website ([www.stabilitypact.org](http://www.stabilitypact.org)), at the first Regional Funding Conference that took place in Brussels in 2000 the value of the over 200 projects chosen was EUR 1.8 billion but at the end of the conference the collected sum was EUR 2.4 billion.

participation to such initiatives may be an unfair advantage for large companies on the domestic and regional markets, because in this way they can get inside information, as well as access to public funding. At the same time, the governmental representatives frequently mimic consulting themselves with the business environment, commonly through seminars and trainings, sometimes funded through programs of regional initiatives. Particularly if they do not have to pay participation fees, many executives are pleased to be at such reunions, hoping for useful information and contacts. As for the organisers, they can report to their donors a significant number of participants and thus prove that the goals of the event have been achieved. Nonetheless, all the participants are “half conscious that they are half cheating,” as Liliana Deac, Director for External Affairs in the Romanian Chamber for Commerce and Industry, nicely put it in an interview with the author. These mechanisms of deception and advantage seeking create further frustration and mistrust in the regional initiatives.

A similar situation can be found in relation with the structures responsible for informing the local business environment about the activity of regional initiatives in South Eastern Europe. For instance, both the Stability Pact for South East Europe and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative had specific institutions that finally merged into a Business Advisory Council (BAC). This is a structure of executives from each participant country that has the to facilitate communication between these regional organizations and the national business environment. The institutional device is again tricky. First, one must find important and prestigious representatives of the business milieu who have time both to participate to these reunions and to inform national structures such as the ministries, the Chambers of Commerce and other professional associations about the discussions they had. Then, these representatives should be enough uninterested of the business opportunities provided by such meetings so that they share the information with others. Third, even if such representatives

exist, they should not be linked to any particular economic interest other than the interest of the national business community. The chances to find these people are very small and what happened in practice in the case of Romania, which I could document in more detail in this respect, is that these representatives either do not go to BAC reunions or when they went, they usually did not inform the rest of the business environment. In the few cases in which they did tell to the national structures what had been discussed within the BAC, the receivers of this information, partially due to their previous interactions, had the impression that their story was complete and this fuelled further suspicions related to particular economic interests. For these reasons, many companies interested in expanding on the regional markets and which could contribute to the development of the regional initiatives are rather solitary and do not use the channels provided by the regional organizations. At the same time, since business information on the region is not easily available, many entrepreneurs rely on normal media that almost never presents news from the neighbouring countries except for the ethnic conflicts or revolutionary changes of government. Particularly the former Yugoslav space is still regarded as too risky for business investment and therefore it is frequently avoided, although exactly this area would need more cooperation between the private and the public sector for economic development.

Apart from the political motivations, the economic competition and the lack of a mature business environment, other factors that impede regional cooperation in the economy security sector are the poor skills and/or motivation of the staff involved. The fieldwork suggested that regional intergovernmental organizations in Central and Eastern have in general a lower prestige status compared to international organizations to which the governments participate but a higher one compared to a position in a ministerial department. This view seems to be favoured mostly by the widespread opinion that Central and East European regionalism is a form without much content. Therefore, from the perspective of the

ministerial clerks who might be delegated to work for one of these regional initiatives, the job might not require much but would be probably better paid and would provide a status similar to the one that the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has, which is in general higher within the state administration. The situation is slightly different for people working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who usually perceive the work for regional intergovernmental initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe as less prestigious. For more experienced personnel in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, detachment to one of these organizations might be perceived even as a downgrading. The recruitment procedures are very different in each country and with respect to each initiative. Therefore, it is difficult to identify common practices in this respect. However, it seems that especially in the initial phases, Central and East European organizations have lacked prepared staff for designing programs. This has reflected most visibly in the difficulty to generate projects. To address this issue, the governments invested in trainings for this staff. The older personnel has been sometimes less receptive to such trainings and has not internalized properly the skills they were supposed to acquire. One of my interlocutors justified his reticence towards training as follows “they came to teach us but what can I be taught at my age and I don’t already know? I have been in this field for thirty years and I have worked with everybody: Russians, Arabs, Americans.” Another one advances the idea that trainings were not very serious either for the trainers or the trainees: “they mimed that they taught us something, we mimed we learned something and everybody was happy.”

The quality of trainers seems to have been decisive for the success of a skill-learning program. The ones taught by Westerners have been the most prestigious, at least in the first years. After a while, however, the staff involved in regional initiatives started to resent the Western experts with whom they collaborated because they had much higher salaries and, in some cases, they were less prepared than their fellows in the area. Especially in post conflict



regional initiatives, “locals” sometimes knew more about the region but their input was frequent ignored by their superiors who urged them to adopt the “Western solutions,” which were considered a priori better than anything the local staff may have produced. The frustration has grown lately, as the professionalism of the “local” staff has been significantly improved as it gained more experience. Also, one may notice an increase in the recruitment of younger local experts with various studies and trainings abroad, which led to another financially-motivated resentment – with similar educational background and within a similar age range, a young “local” wins significantly less than a Westerner sent to the region. One interviewee estimated that for the same job a Western expert can get seven to ten time more than a local one (Ananiev 2006). Not least, in the case of the post conflict regionalism, particularly in the last years, has developed the view that the Western methods brought in the region to appease the conflicts in the Yugoslav wars and then to foster the Balkan reconstruction are no longer appropriate. A young local expert expressed this frustration as follows “they treat us as we were in Somalia or in Sudan; we need an approach specific to the Balkans and for this, Western universal methods are not enough.” As officials from the UNDP and the World Bank acknowledged in discussions with the author, the donors who financed most of the injection of the Western expertise in the area seem to have been usually aware of such issues but they tried to solve the problems on a case by case basis, without much publicity, because this would have affected also the image of the donor and the donor community.

#### **8.2.4 Regional cooperation in the societal security areas**

These issues are not so present in the societal security sector, which, despite covering a wide range of fields, such as culture, education, tourism and migration, is one of the lowest ranking in terms of cooperation. The activities in which the partner countries have involved in this field are more diverse than in other sectors. Festivals, youth exchange programs,

exhibitions and tourism fairs have been organized under the umbrella of some Central and East European regional organization. So far, the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Visegrád Group have been the most active in this respect. Yet, even in the case of the CEI and V4, reunions, conferences and meetings significantly exceed the number of any other type of activity within this sector. Two areas that are much linked also with the political and military security sectors are noteworthy. These are the cooperation on minority issues and the cooperation in matters of migration, trafficking, justice and other home affairs. With respect to minorities, most Central and East European initiatives include in their documents provisions on this topic, either directly or referring to the principles of other organizations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE. One regional initiative, the CEI, even developed a specific Instrument for the protection of minority rights (CEI 1994c). However, these provisions double the European instruments for the protection of minorities and human rights and are not regarded as major advancements for the field. As for the cooperation in the “harder” security matters such as trafficking, cooperation has been limited to exchanges of information, common trainings of officers and various reunions.

### **8.2.5 Regional cooperation in environmental security areas**

Finally, in the environmental security sector, within the framework of the regional intergovernmental initiatives, the governments mainly discussed the principles for agreements that are implemented at the level of the domestic ministries of environment. The analysis of the official documents, political declarations and reports of the Central and East European regional initiatives, indicate that, with the exception of environmental accidents, political leadership does not seem to have shown much interest with respect to the topic at regional level. Rather, especially when there are environmental concerns at their borders, most governments have preferred a bilateral approach. A notable exception is the case of the Baltic Cooperation (BC), where environmental issues have received more attention than in

most other cases. Yet, from the documents of the initiative, it seems that Estonia is more concerned with the topic. Most initiatives in this field are proposed by this state and the Estonian government coordinates many of them within the BC. In fact, as an official in the Estonian MFA reckoned in an interview with the author, the Estonian government uses the BC framework to push for some changes in its own country (K.S. 2008). From this perspective, the issue is a classic example of a two-level game. First, it promotes the topic at intergovernmental level. Since it is an issue that should interest any responsible government it is easily accepted, especially since all three republics have a highly polluting heavy industry heritage from the Soviet times. Then, the Estonian government invokes the international arrangement at national level to continue emphasize at national level the relevance of environmental concerns. In a country that traditionally has been sensitive to such issues (Fitzmaurice 1992, 118-9) it does not seem a difficult to achieve continuous public awareness on environment. Yet, the question goes beyond the mere environmental problems and has a significant political relevance, as environmental movements have been the first institutionalized forms of political opposition against Soviet rule. In this sense, showing increased interest for environmental issues is a form of political legitimization at national level, with the regional framework as a reproduction of national discourse and a tool for supporting such legitimization. However, this legitimization function seems to become increasingly weak both at national and regional level.

### ***8.3 Factors and mechanisms of institutional cohesiveness***

In the previous chapter, I showed that post Cold War regional initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe, might be placed into three categories – reshuffle regionalism, post-conflict regionalism and regionalism of democratic consolidation. The first category includes the CEI, the V4, the BSEC and the BC, the second includes the SECI and the SEECP, while the

DCP is the most important example of the third type. This difference is useful to understand the dynamic and evolution of Central and East European regional initiatives in a larger international context. The analysis of their institutional design and practices in this chapter reveals the fact that the three categories are not also transferred to the institutional features. In fact, the diversity of these regional arrangements makes it difficult to produce a meaningful composite taxonomy. Rather, it is more useful to compare the regional schemes on the dimensions on which they have been analyzed separately.

**Table 8.8 Synopsis of institutional design indicators**

DIMENSION OF ANALYSIS		TYPE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION		
SCOPE	Number of areas	One-dimensional	Intensive	Extensive
		-	-	BC [1] BSEC [1] CEI [1] (←) DCP [3] (←) SECI [2] SEEC [2] V4 [1]
STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING	Number of dominant actors within the arrangement	Hegemonic	Clustered	Plural
		-	BSEC [1] DCP [3] SECI [2]	BC [1] CEI [1] (→) SEEC [2] V4 [3]
	Division of powers between the initiative and the member states	Operational	Consultative	Executive
		-	BC [1] BSEC [1] DCP [3] SEEC [2] V4 [1]	CEI [1] SECI [2]
SUSTAINABILITY	Degree of institutionalization	Ad hoc political dialogue	Cooperative framework	Regional organization
		BC [1] V4 [1] SEEC [2]	DCP [3] SECI [2]	BSEC [1] CEI [1]
	Financial sources and resources	Self-sustained	Partially supported	Fully supported
		-	BSEC [1] CEI [1] SECI [2] V4 [1]	BC [1] DCP [3] SEEC [2]

Table 8.8 on the previous page summarizes the findings of the first section. For showing the lack of correlation with the evolution categories, it indicates for each initiative the wave of regionalism to which it belongs, with [1] referring to reshuffle regionalism, [2] referring to post-conflict regionalism, and [3] referring to the regionalism of democratic consolidation. What can one easily observe from this table is that all cases have an extensive scope of cooperation, that the majority of them fulfil consultative functions, and that none is hegemonic, operational or self-sustaining. Overall, the scope of these initiatives has not changed. Although in the early 1990s, the Central European Initiative and the Visegrád Group were focused more on hard security issues, in less than two years from their creation they acquired the current range of areas of activity, which belong to many different sectors. The rest of arrangements had from the very beginning an extensive scope and this has not been modified so far. The analysis of in the first section of the chapter suggests that two cases might evolve towards intensive cooperation, a fact marked in the table with an arrow. These are the SECI and the DCP. However, in both cases, the low interest of the participant countries in these initiatives also suggests that they will remain mostly politically oriented schemes with extensive agendas of cooperation. This feature of the institutional design is therefore rather an indicator of a loose form of grouping than of an evolution towards increasing cooperation. The lack of any operational arrangement and the degree of institutionalization suggest also that the participant countries are reluctant to grant these initiatives a higher status in the dynamic of regional interaction, preferring to maintain them as for a for multilateral consultation on political and technical issues. Even if some of the regional agreements evolved towards the status of cooperative framework or regional organization, their dependence on the member states is still very high. This is mostly visible with respect to their financial sources and resources dimension, as none of the existing arrangements is self-sustained. Furthermore, even in the cases in which they are only

partially supported, these initiatives largely depend on the international donor community and could not generate significant independent resources. Correlated with the details of the institutional evolution, this combination of institutional features suggests a relatively low commitment of the participant states to increase or develop cooperation among them across the entire region. To put it differently, it indicates a relatively low level institutional cohesiveness throughout the entire space of Central and East European regionalism.

The most difficult to interpret is the relevance of the number of dominant actors within the arrangement. Unlike in the case of the Cold War, where the hegemonic schemes of the Comecon and the Warsaw Pact were the most important initiatives of the period, new regionalism has generated no hegemonic agreement. This suggests the lack of a dominant state within the region. Yet, this does not mean that Central and East European states do not compete for the position of regional leaders. A relatively limited number of states have been the most active in proposing and pushing forward cooperation at regional level. This translates into a clustered type of arrangement. Currently, only three of them may be included in this category – the BSEC, the DCP, and the SECI, all of them focused more on technical than strictly political cooperation. Initially, the SEECP has been also a clustered agreement but, in the last years, it seems to have moved decisively towards the plural type. Interestingly, the group of dominant actors includes states from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as from its neighbourhood. Greece, Turkey, Italy and Austria have been such interested neighbours, while Bulgaria, Romania and R.F.Yugoslavia/Serbia have attempted to play occasionally the regional leader role. Germany is also often present particularly in South Eastern Europe through technical cooperation, a fact institutionalized through acquiring observer status to the post-conflict arrangements. The Russian Federation, once an important actor in the region, has aimed to express more its power and not only through the BSEC but so far its voice was not frequently heard through regional intergovernmental

channels. Instead, one may encounter more often the European Union or the United States viewpoints, usually in quality of donors or partners for regional programs. For this reason, regional cooperation seems to be an accurate reflection of the foreign policy orientation of the countries in the area in the post Cold War period. Equally interesting, is the fact that the Visegrád Cooperation is a plural arrangement, although in matters of foreign policy Poland has been in general more vocal in the last decade than most of its partners. In fact, Poland is the least active in this initiative in which Hungary seems to have a “by default”, yet not particularly significant leading role. This indicates a low Polish interest for Central Europe, a fact supported by this country’s various foreign policy programs. The fact that the Baltic Cooperation is also a plural initiative might suggest that small arrangements of countries with relatively similar foreign policy options and problems tend to be plural. The largest initiative in the region, the Central European Initiative is also a plural one. However, this reflects rather the widely spread low interest of the participant countries in the scheme than an equally spread high interest. In short, the number of dominant actors seems to be a highly sensitive indicator of the dynamic of foreign policy options in a region and thus an indicator of the dynamic dimension of cohesiveness.

The analysis of institutional practices in the second section of this chapter suggests a series of factors and mechanisms that have contributed to the relatively low level of cohesiveness manifested by the post Cold War Central and East European regional groupings. The most important seems to be the fact that these initiatives have been granted from the very beginning a second rank status. Especially in the case of reshuffle regionalism, they have been auxiliaries and residual products in the NATO and European Union enlargement processes. As long as the possibility of membership in the Western organization was pending, they were a second-best option. Once this possibility became plausible, they became de facto second rank options. After membership was acquired, this second rank

status has become even more visible. Faced with this problem, some organizations attempted to reform. As I show in the next chapter this is the case of the Visegrád Group and to a lesser extent of the Baltic Cooperation. Others, however, have not changed anything significantly although the reform seems to be permanently on the agenda. Post-conflict regionalism is a slightly different story but yielded the same results. The EU-led Stability Pact has always overshadowed the SEECP and the SECI. Furthermore, they acted as complementary tools rather than major forums for dialogue and partnership. At the same time, as several of my interviewees acknowledged, bilateral negotiations rather than regional dialogue and partnership seem to have characterised the dynamic of South East European interactions (Ungureanu 2003, Geoană 2006). This balance of forces is increasingly changing with the reform brought by the creation of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). Granting the SEECP the political coordination role shifts definitely the balance towards proper ownership in the area. However, whether the RCC is able to become a major initiative in the foreign policy programs of countries in South Eastern Europe remains an open question. As for the DCP and the third generation of regionalism, they have not been granted even the political importance the reshuffle regionalism initiatives had in their initial phases.

Not least, there are also factors that seem to favour the institutional cohesiveness of regional groupings in the area. Throughout the period, the most important such factor seems to have been the existence of certain political or military security issues or threats with (potential) impact at regional level. Addressing such issues was first accepted as a common goal and this further generated cooperation. For instance, Soviet military presence on the territory of the Baltic states or the proximity to the Soviet Russia under conditions of high political and military instability stimulated the cooperation between the Baltic states and the Visegrád states respectively. Yet, relatively quickly, political and military security issues have been dealt with in the framework of the NATO and EU enlargement process, with the regional



arrangements as a complementary or secondary room for discussion but no significant cooperation. The design of the arrangements also contributed sometimes at maintaining the links as it instituted periodic meetings among the partners. However, these meetings have not produced significant results without political impetus and political impetus has been most often triggered by a regional conflict or crisis. For this reason, the type of cohesiveness manifested in Central and Eastern Europe may be labelled as *reactive*. Finally, many regional programs, especially in South Eastern Europe, have been generated when there have been economic and/or financial incentives. Yet, in many cases, the divergent political and economic interests of the member states, the lack of properly trained and motivated staff, and the bad design of activities and processes hindered the achievement of the proposed goals. All these factors contributed to increasing the lack of confidence in the efficiency of regional cooperation. Despite such trend, at discursive level, regional arrangements continue to enjoy acceptance among political leadership, a topic addressed also in the next and last chapter.

## CHAPTER 9

### RHETORIC DIMENSION OF REGIONAL COHESIVENESS

In this final chapter, I examine the issue of the rhetoric/discursive dimension of regional cohesiveness. First, using the same seven cases as in the previous chapter, I explore the *internal rhetoric* of regional cohesiveness, assessing the way in which regional identity (as collective identity) has been constructed within these initiatives, as well as the extent to which these collective identities are built along the lines of previous regional identity concepts, as identified in chapter 5. Then, I investigate the *external rhetoric* dimension of regional cohesiveness, aiming to uncover the way in which regional groupings articulate a discourse about themselves for the rest of the world. Because comprehensive research on this last topic is almost impossible, I chose for this purpose to focus on a comparative analysis of two cases – the Visegrád Group and the Baltic Cooperation, in the context of the European Union and NATO enlargement. Not only the context has high political relevance but these two cases are relatively similar with the exception of the use of regional identity legacies. The analysis suggests that, far from being an incidental feature, regional rhetoric action seems to have an enduring presence in the area and will probably continue to characterize much of regional interaction among Central and East European states. However, whether this regional discourse is going to be transformed into closer political links within the European Union and the NATO remains an open question.

## **9.1 Internal rhetoric**

### **9.1.1 Marginal identities**

What one can easily notice as a common feature of all post Cold War regional intergovernmental initiatives is the reference to a certain geographical location reminding of certain regional identity traditions – Central Europe, South Eastern Europe, Danubian Europe, Baltics, the Black Sea. However, as I show in this section, not all regional arrangements in the area truly relate to these traditions. In the case of the Baltic Cooperation (BC), for instance, there are no references to regional identity in any of the major official documents of the organization. Neither political declarations of the BC summits refer to the area covered by the territories of the member states as to a different spatial entity compared to the neighbouring space. The references to a common past are only in relation to the 1934 Treaty that established a Baltic Entente or to the Soviet regime and they are used to justify the security rationale that led to the creation of the BC. There are no references to a common future, other than with respect to the goal of achieving EU and NATO membership. The texts are written mostly in technical terms, as a common international treaty and they do not create any discourse or narrative on a Baltic regional identity. In short, the Baltic Cooperation is a region only for the purposes of this political cooperation, which is not justified in any identity terms. A similar situation occurs in the case of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Compared to the BC, there are more references to a common future, one of “political and economic prosperity in an area of confluences” (BSEC 1992a). However, like in the case of the BC, such references do not aim to justify the existence of the grouping also in regional identity terms.

The case of the Central European Initiative is slightly different. Although, similarly to the BC and the BSEC, the official documents are written in technical terms, they sometimes refer to the European dimension of the initiative, despite its local character. For instance, the

founding declaration of the Quadrilateral cooperation states, “by widening co-operation among themselves and making constructive initiatives [the member countries wished] to promote the process of greater unity of Europe, and to strengthen joint responsibility for the future of Europe” (CEI 1989a). Despite the various enlargements and changes in scope, the CEI has always maintained much of the initial rhetoric related to the unity of Europe, as it fitted well the new rhetorical context dominated by the European integration ideal. According to the most important text in terms of institutional design of the initiative, the members aimed

to work for *cohesion of a united Europe, without dividing lines, a Europe with shared values, embracing all countries, regions, peoples and citizens of the continent* [and] to focus co-operation within the framework of the CEI in particular on assistance to strengthen the capacities of the least advanced member countries and of those having the greatest need for accelerated economic development or recovery. (CEI 1995, emphasis mine)

Apart from this European horizon, there are no other references to regional identity. Interestingly, none of its major documents puts forward the Central European dimension of the initiative, despite the name. As already pointed out in chapter 7, the membership is very diverse, ranging from Italy and Austria to Belarus and Ukraine. In this sense, the name is suitable for the organization not because the CEI would be the successor of a certain intellectual and political tradition of Central Europe but because it is a regional forum whose overall members’ territory lies somewhere in the middle of Europe, not too close to the Urals but not nearer to the Atlantic either.

The Danube Cooperation Process (DCP) is similar to the Central European Initiative in terms of membership. Although it did not experience the series of enlargements that the CEI did, it has a similarly large number of participant countries. In fact, the membership of the two organizations is almost identical. The CEI members that do not participate at the DCP are those countries that are not in the hydrological basin of the Danube, viz. Belarus,

Macedonia and Poland. However, Macedonia has the status of guest country, alongside the Russian Federation and, more recently, Montenegro. Furthermore, unlike in the case of the CEI, the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe enjoy full membership rights to the DCP, like Germany. Slovenia and the Czech Republic are also full members although the Danube does not cross their territory. In short, the DCP is a group of various states with different economic horizons, which do not seem to have much in common, apart from a common river for most of the participant countries and consequently a particular geographic location, as well as current political commitment to democracy.

According to the founding declaration, beyond the specific sectoral cooperation, the initiative aims to “highlight issues related to Europe and the European integration process, which are of great importance to the Danubian countries” (DCP 2002a). This is not a reference to Europe, either as an idea(l) or a whole system of security and welfare, but a specific reference to the European Union and the EU enlargement process. In fact, the document explicitly emphasize the fact that all participant countries are related in a way or another to the European Union:

the Danubian countries, EU member States, candidates for accession to the Union, countries taking part at various stages in the Stabilisation and Association process and countries anchored to the EU through other specific ties, wish to co-operate to help bring stability, prosperity and better economic and social cohesion to the entire region (ibid.)

These two dimensions, the European and the Danubian, are highlighted in most official documents, as well as in the political declarations that accompanied the reunions of the DCP. For instance, in the view of the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, Mircea Geoană, the DCP is composed of “Danubian states, united by ... common aspiration towards the European identity” and the “Danubian cooperation [aims] at European integration” (DCP 2002c). Similarly, for the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vuk Draskovic’s “Europe is uniting and the Danube is uniting it” (DCP 2007b). The imagery related to this cooperation

is not only emphasizing the EU foreign policy targets of most participants but goes further and suggests that Danube (and through extension the Danubian cooperation) is central to all of Europe, particularly in the new (i.e. post Cold War) context:

The River Danube is the natural bridge connecting Europe and all its riverbanks. The Black Sea-Rotterdam axis is the backbone of the new concept of Europe, being at its heart and defining its boundaries and directions of its development in the future. The Danube region constitutes both the meeting and crossing points of all European seas (ibid.).

Interestingly, the relevance of Danube is not imagined only in space but also in time. Draskovic, for example, puts forward the idea that “for centuries, the banks of the Danube have been the oldest human settlements and the scene of all the upheavals and dramatic developments that succeeded each other throughout history, carving out the niche of Europe’s cultural and civilizational (sic) identity” (ibid.). Addressing the launching conference of the DCP, Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, after reminding the role of Danube in the 19<sup>th</sup> century European economic relations, goes the farthest of all when he states, “[Danube] is a symbol of our [i.e. Romanian] existence. The Danube is represented on Trajan’s column, the icon of the Romanian people” (DCP 2002b). Such representations suggest a concern with legitimizing the organization through references to a past, as distant as possible. They also suggest the fact that some of the political leadership involved in the development of the DCP and their advisers are still anchored in a particular imagery on the nation-state. For instance, Năstase’s reference to the Trajan’s column may be regarded as a remnant of the protochronist paradigm (Verdery 1991) in which Romanian national history has been written during the last decades of communism. Despite such connections, there is no particular link to a previous regional identity legacy.

### **9.1.2 Haunting Balkans**

Unlike in the case of the previous four regional arrangements, post conflict regionalism is consciously concerned with the issue of regional identity and the potential negative legacy it

conveys. The debate was present first in the case of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) but the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECPP) is the group more active in promoting a certain image about itself in terms of regional identity.

The official documents of the SECI refer mostly to “Southeast Europe” but these references are rare and unrelated to anything but the name of the organization. “Southeast Europe” is represented just as a mere label for designating the participant countries. Some documents, such as the reports of the organization and the Memorandums of Understanding, do not even use this name or any other group reference except in the title of the document (SECI 1999). Occasionally, the texts of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), which support administratively the SECI, refer to “Balkans”, especially until the late 1990s. In these texts, “Balkans” is either a mere alternative for “Southeast Europe” as employed in the documents of the SECI or a short form for “Western Balkans”, which is a name to designate mostly the former Yugoslav republics that have been affected by civil war during the process of disintegration of the Yugoslav federation. After 2001, the “Balkans” appears less and less even in the UN/ECE documents. In short, no sense of group emerges through regional referencing and in this respect the SECI does not differentiate from most other technical multilateral initiatives at regional level throughout the world.

The only significant debate related to regional identity and the SECI was generated by the inclusion of Hungary within the initiative. Apparently, the Hungarian government was not pleased to be considered a Southeast European country, which by extension might have meant Balkan, with all the negative connotations briefly highlighted in chapter 5. Since the fall of the communist regime, the regional foreign policy concept of this country developed around the notion of a restricted Central Europe whose political embodiment at regional level has been the Visegrád Group.<sup>181</sup> Former Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Géza

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<sup>181</sup> On this issue, see the subsection on the internal rhetoric of the Visegrád group in this chapter.

Jeszenszky reckons in an interview with the author that, at the time of the creation of the SECI, there had been fears within the Hungarian diplomatic and political circles that mentally pushing Hungary into the Southeast European area might have meant a delay within the EU and NATO enlargement process because the country would have been perceived as political and economic backward as the Balkan states would have been (Jeszenszky 2006). However, the US administration, which designed the SECI, pledged for this country's participation using two main arguments. First, the fact that Hungary was more advanced from both an economic and political viewpoint could have contributed to the stability in the area. Second, since the SECI was a framework of collaboration that had a major focus on trade facilitation, Hungary could have benefited from the trade opportunities that such cooperation might have generated. Finally, Hungary accepted and joined the initiative but it may not have done it solely due to these arguments. As an official of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested in a discussion with the author, the fact that the US had an important voice with respect to the NATO enlargement, which at that time was still uncertain, might have also contributed to the decision of Hungary to acquire a more consistent Southeast European dimension for its foreign policy (Nyerki 2004).

Unlike in the case of the SECI, where the debate was mostly about membership, the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) introduced also a discussion about the most appropriate form to refer to the region. The founding document of the SEECP was the Sofia Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in the Balkans, which established a Process of Good Neighbourliness, Stability, Security and Cooperation of the Balkan Countries (SEECP 1996). This document referred to the group of the participant states as the "Balkans." The label was not only in the title but throughout the entire text one may find more references to "Balkans" than to "South Eastern Europe" (ibid.). One year later, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the participant countries signed



another Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in the Balkans, this time in Thessaloniki. In this text, “Balkans” is less frequently used than “South-eastern Europe.” In fact, apart from the title of the document, “Balkans” appears only five times: once to refer to the title of a conference held in Greece in 1996 (i.e. “Democracy and civil society in the Balkans”), once in the name of an organization (i.e. Association of Balkan Chambers of Commerce), twice to express the intention to establish a “Balkan telecommunications pool” and only once in the expression “Balkan countries” in relation with cooperation for environmental protection. Instead, in the same 14-page document, “South-east Europe” appears twice as much. Most often, it is employed to refer to the member states and in the context of a larger European framework within which the European Union is the major focus:

The Ministers recall the message to the European Union by the South-east European countries. ... The Ministers share the view that confidence- and security- building measures are of particular importance for enhancing peace and stability in South-eastern Europe.... The European orientation of the States of the region is an integral part of their political, economic and social development. The countries of South-eastern Europe look forward to taking an active part in shaping future developments, both in the region and in Europe as a whole.... The Ministers invite the European Union to develop further its policy for South-eastern Europe in a way similar to that of other regions in Europe. (SEECP 1997)

“South Eastern Europe” is also preferred for the name of the regional arrangement, which in this document is designated as the “Conference on Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe.” Moreover, all references to further meetings of these states also use this label. Not least, in the same paragraph where the conference organized in Greece on “Democracy and civil society in the Balkans” is mentioned, there is also a reference to another conference organized in the same country a year later, with the title “Culture and reconciliation in South-eastern Europe” (ibid.). Similar uses of the two labels can be found in the documents of the Turkish presidency the following year (SEECP 1998). A definitive option for South Eastern Europe occurred in 1999, during the Romanian presidency, when

the name of the organization was changed to the South East European Cooperation Process and all the references to “Balkans” disappeared (SEECF 1999). Since then, “Balkans” appeared only accidentally in some political declarations but not in the official documents of the SEECF.

This evolution suggests not only initial hesitance and a certain competition of possible terms with respect to the way the area of cooperation should be referred to but also a conscious choice for the South Eastern Europe label. As shown in chapter 5 and briefly reminded in the discussion of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative above, “Balkans” has a strong negative connotation, while “South Eastern Europe”, irrespective of its various spelling versions, is a more neutral descriptor. Inquired on this topic by the author, Mrs. Zoe Petre, former senior foreign policy advisor in the staff of the Romanian presidency during the period in which these changes from the “Balkans” to “South Eastern Europe” occurred, confirmed the hypothesis of conscious choice. She links this option with two foreign policy circumstances, one regional and one specific to Romania.

At regional level, in the context of the Yugoslav crises, many countries in the area did not found themselves at ease with the use of the “Balkans” both in the Western media and in many Western diplomatic circles. The discomfort with the term was related to the fact that it suggested that all countries in the region were highly unstable and with a potential of violence similar to the one manifested during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. Especially for Bulgaria and Romania, which by that time had whole-heartedly opted for EU enlargement, such representations added more negative points to the already rather unfavourable record of their transition to democracy (Petre Z. 2004).<sup>182</sup> However, as American historian of Bulgarian origin Maria Todorova explained in detail on several occasions, “Balkans” has a

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<sup>182</sup> On different paces and problems in the transition process, as well as on the way in which such issues reflected into the representation of the former communist countries, see chapter 6.

positive legacy in the Bulgarian national imaginary (Todorova 1994, 1997). Therefore, initially, the use of this term did not raise any significant problem to the Bulgarian diplomacy. Furthermore, former Bulgarian ambassador Kamen Velichkov suggests in a discussion with the author that the 1996 summit of the Foreign Affairs Ministers was held in Sofia apparently as a way to compensate the fact that the last planned meeting of the Balkan Conferences should have taken place in Bulgaria but due to the Yugoslav crisis it was no longer organized (Velichkov 2006). Employing “Balkans” was thus a way of reminding of an initiative that had emerged from the will of the governments of the area, without foreign intervention and with the purpose of establishing a long lasting cooperation among them.<sup>183</sup> The Greek part has been also rather comfortable with the “Balkans” as long as Greece was perceived as “a model for other Balkan countries,” as former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece openly put it in an address at the Albanian Institute for International Studies (Papandreou 2000).

The Romanian government was the least pleased with the “Balkans.” Like in the case of the other countries in the area, the uneasiness with this term was related to the regional circumstances generated by the Yugoslav crises (Petre Z. 2004). Yet, much of the Romanian discontent was related also to the focus of its particular national foreign policy strategy. As already mentioned in chapter 7, in the section presenting the political context in which the Danube Cooperation Process has developed, Romania’s regional foreign policy has been created around the view that this a “Central European country with interests and responsibilities in the Balkans”(Meleşcanu 2005). However, the concept could not be easily impressed upon many other chancelleries or Western organizations, which have continued to regard Romania as part of the Balkans. Furthermore, as shown further in this section, the

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<sup>183</sup> The Balkan Conferences were an initiative that emerged in the late 1980s as a regional forum of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from South Eastern Europe. This arrangement is presented in more detail in chapter 4.

Visegrád Group had already appropriated the best possible regional identity label in terms of connotations, a restrictive Central Europe that reminded of the fundamental democratic principles, and “this club was an exclusivist one, close to anyone else in the region” (Roman 2005). For these reasons, the Romanian diplomacy also promoted the alternative “South Eastern Europe,” which was more neutral and had more chances to be supported throughout the region given the political circumstances (Petre Z. 2004). As former Romanian Prime Minister Petre Roman put it, “if we were still in the Balkans then at least they should be our Balkans, that is South Eastern Europe for the rest of the world” (Roman 2005). This is why, when it held the presidency of the newly created initiative, Romania took its chance and promoted this vision that implied avoiding references to the “Balkans” in the official documents and the change of name to South East European Cooperation Process. Nonetheless, this seems to have been rather a rebranding for purposes related to the external presentation of the arrangement. Within the group, “Balkans” continued to be employed as a shorter version for “South Eastern Europe” particularly in the political declarations and internal papers.

Beyond such choices for the “appropriate” label, the question of regional identity has not occurred frequently within the SEECP. The cooperation of the participant countries has not been justified with reference to previous forms of collaboration and even less to a historic organic common development in the more or less recent past. Rather, the member states have continuously emphasized their “European orientation” and the fact that their collaboration can contribute to the overall European security and stability (SEECP 1997, 2000, 2007e). This “European orientation” refers most frequently to certain foreign policy targets of the participant states, most notably the European Union membership. In this sense, the SEECP has been a pragmatic initiative aiming not only at addressing various issues of

high political concern across South Eastern Europe but also at promoting to its Western partners a positive message about the area.

### **9.1.3 The pragmatic Central Europe**

The internal rhetoric of the Visegrád Group is by far the most developed within the universe of post Cold War Central and East European regionalism. This rhetoric dimension exists since the founding of the initiative. The Visegrád Declaration, for instance, justifies the cooperation of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland as follows:

A favorable basis for intensive development of cooperation is insured by the similar character of the significant changes occurring in these countries, their traditional, historically shaped system of mutual contacts, cultural and spiritual heritage and common roots of religious traditions. The diverse and rich cultures of these nations also embody the fundamental values of the achievements of European thought. The mutual spiritual, cultural and economic influences exerted over a long period of time, resulting from the fact of proximity, could support cooperation based on natural historical development. (Visegrád Group 1991a)

This organic view of a common past is reinforced through an entire mythology, in which “Visegrád” plays the major role. The 1991 meeting in the Hungarian town of Visegrád on the Danube shores close to the Slovakian border intended to recall another Visegrád reunion between the representatives of the three countries, when, in 1335, John I of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, Casimir III of Poland and Charles Robert of Anjou, King of Hungary met to solve their territorial disputes through peaceful negotiations. This 14<sup>th</sup> century meeting had been rather minor and did not produce lasting effects. However, as shown in chapter 5, the recall of a common political past of the three countries had been common during the last decades of communism in the debates on Central Europe in the intellectual dissidence and opposition circles. In an interview with the author, the former Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Géza Jeszenszky, one of the main promoters of a Visegrád cooperation in early 1990s, admits that he had been much influenced by these discussions at that time. In fact, as historian, he had dedicated much time during the 1980s to research on Central Europe,

therefore he was not only familiarized with the debates but also much embedded in their logic (Jeszenszky 2006). However, Jeszenszky reckons that the idea of a gathering to Visegrád belonged to his brother-in-law, the Hungarian Prime Minister József Antall. Antall, like the Czechoslovak and Polish leaders of the moment, had understood that the joint action of the three governments could have helped them obtain concrete promises with respect to their rapprochement to the Western institutions, especially since the Western world had already started perceive them as a group. For instance, at the G7 summit in July 1989, Poland and Hungary were jointly considered for Western aid, on grounds of democratic reforms that had been undertaken in these countries. Czechoslovakia's record of civil society actions during communism also brought it to the leading group. Partially for pragmatic reasons, partially under the influence of those times' discourse on democracy and democratic values, the three governments convened that they could reinforce the Western image on them adding a heavy rhetoric component (*ibid.*). As shown later in this chapter, this "PR-image" dimension has been maintained as one of the major rationales for the existing of the Visegrád cooperation even after the partner countries achieved the goal for which their group had been created, namely EU and NATO membership. However, since 1991, the Visegrád mythology has been enriched with new elements.

Similarly to the Danube Cooperation Process, one may notice strong efforts to legitimize the group in identity terms through references to prestigious achievements or events connected to the territory of the Visegrád Group or the people that might have inhabited it, often in past as distant as possible. For instance, on the official website of the initiative there is a list of Nobel prize winners connected in a way or another to the Visegrád countries or their predecessors. At the same time, the official pages present a list of "inventions and discoveries [that] can be considered of being of Visegrád origin." This list includes "heliocentrism," "robot," "e-mail," "sugar cube," "Rubik cube" and the "steam engine." At a

quick reading, one may be left with the impression that within the Visegrád area there are significant manifestations of progress (“e-mail”, “robot”) and that scientific preoccupations have been there for centuries (“heliocentrism”). At the same time, the region seems to be characterised by a smart-playful (“Rubik cube”), as well as practical (“sugar cube”) approach to life. However, such quick reading may be misleading. The explanations given to some of these items (only after a click) suggest a different image. For instance, “robot” is just a word invented by a Czech novelist, while “e-mail” is related to the fact that János Kemény (a Hungarian born Jewish mathematician that migrated with his family in the U.S. while still a child in order to escape Nazism) might have been the first person in the world to send an e-mail. Ironically, one explanation in this list summarizes well its PR role: Meeting the Hungarian chemist Albert Szent-György, discoverer of the Vitamin C, the Hungarian Minister of Education of the time reportedly advised him, “I was told that the whole thing was a humbug but please publish it because we can export more paprika!”

## ***9.2 Discursive practices: The Visegrád Group and the Baltic Cooperation facing enlargement***

The previous section examined how different instances of international regionalism internally articulate a view of collective (regional) identity. In this section, I examine the way in which regional groups present themselves to the world, or, as I framed in chapter 2, the *external rhetoric* dimension of regional cohesiveness. For this purpose, I chose two cases – the Baltic Cooperation and the Visegrád Group and focus exclusively on their relation to the European Union and NATO. This choice is motivated by several factors. The initiatives have been highly similar. They are arrangements between a small number of neighbouring countries, created around the same period (early 1990s) initially to answer mainly their common political and military security concerns; have never expanded their membership; and, once the political and military security threats diminished, have transformed into

multisectoral agreements, covering various fields of collaboration, though political dialogue has remained their main focus. The initial political and military concerns slightly varied in the two cases. For the Visegrád countries, security was framed mainly in relation with the participation to and the existence of the Warsaw Pact. Instead, for the Baltic republics, the security rationale was dictated first by the need to gain independence from the Soviet Union. In both cases, achieving this primary security goal meant also the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the territory of the member states.<sup>184</sup> At the same time, it meant a reorientation of the foreign policy principle. As shown in chapter 6, the European Union and NATO have been the major targets in this respect. Therefore, one may expect that discourse on regional cooperation has been informed mostly in relation to these two targets, at least until they were reached. Among all the Central and East European regional initiatives, the Visegrád Group and the Baltic Cooperation are the only arrangements whose all participants are currently full members of both the European Union and the NATO. All Visegrád and Baltic states acquired EU membership in 2004. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are NATO members since 1999, while Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia became NATO members in 2004. As the time frame of this research is 1990-2007, this choice of cases allows for more variation. At the same time, as identified in the previous section of this chapter, the two cases differ significantly with respect to the internal rhetoric related to the group cohesiveness: while the Visegrád members strongly legitimized their cooperation in identity terms, the Baltic Cooperation never intended to develop or produced a sense of collective (regional) identity.

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<sup>184</sup> The Soviet troops left Hungary and Czechoslovakia in mid 1991, while from Poland and the Baltic states they withdrew only in 1994. For an interesting analysis of the way in which this difference affected the military reform in these countries, see Simon (2003, 2004).



### 9.2.1 The Visegrád Group

As one may observe from the analysis of internal rhetoric dimension in the previous section, from the two initiatives the Visegrád group has the most complex discourse with respect to group identity. From the very beginning, this discourse presented the Visegrád partners as the more advanced states in the former communist camp. Beyond the political rhetoric, there was some truth in this. In Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, for various reasons already discussed in chapter 6, civil society had been more active and stronger during the communist rule. Much of the resistance was based on the idea of no compromise with the regime, at least in principle. In the last decade before the end of the Cold War, Hungary had experienced a more liberal regime compared to most of its neighbours. Poland and Hungary were the first to start the democratization process, organizing roundtable negotiations and free elections. Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel and Polish President Lech Walesa also enjoyed much prestige in the Western political, diplomatic and media circles due to their role in throwing the communist rule in their countries. These experiences enhanced the idea that the three countries were genuinely committed to democracy and its values, particularly when compared with the other former communist states. Furthermore, at the time of the break up with dictatorship, the three countries were slightly more advanced economically than their fellows in Comecon.<sup>185</sup>

Nonetheless, the logic of presenting themselves as leaders has been double-edged, mostly with respect to the EU enlargement process. For the three former communist countries, the acknowledgement of the fact that they were more economically advanced was considered a

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<sup>185</sup> Literature on this issue usually presents the Visegrád Group as *significantly* more advanced than all the other communist regimes. However, macroeconomic indicators for the late 1980s do not show a radically different picture when compared to the other communist economies. In fact, in many respects, the S.F.R. Yugoslavia was as much as an economic leader as Czechoslovakia or Hungary. One may indeed notice a more service oriented approach to economic growth, particularly in Czechoslovakia (Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies 1990). This view on the economic development of the Visegrád countries may be rather a “contamination of the past” with the view on these states economic situation in the first half of the 1990s, when on average they performed better than most of the other former communist states (Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies 1996).

promise for enlargement, which caught the EC political leaders into a rhetorical trap (Schimmelfennig 2001). On the other hand, treating the Visegrád states as a group could have meant a serious delay in the accession, which could have been postponed until the weakest of all would have been prepared (Vachudova 1993, 46). For this reason, the Czechoslovak and Hungarian governments strongly opposed Poland's proposal for a minimal institutionalisation of the political arrangement among them, even if modelled after the European Community (Geremek 2006). Particularly the Czechoslovak and later Czech government resisted such developments, claiming in late 1992 and early 1993 even that the EC initiated this proposal in order to stall the access of these countries to the Western institutions. At that time, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Krystof Skubiszewski openly denied the interference of the EC in this plan of institutionalization (Vachudova 1993, 41). However, in an interview with the author, former Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Bronislaw Geremek suggested that the proposal had belonged indeed to the Polish government but it partially aimed to answer an idea allegedly coming from EU circles. This idea was that cooperation at regional level among the former communist countries could prove their commitment to democracy, hence their democratic credentials necessary to be accepted as part of the "democratic club of the Western world" (Geremek 2006). The view that this would have been a suggestion coming from the European Union is held by many of my interlocutors, irrespective of their institutional or national affiliation. In fact, this was the first thing that foreign ministers, officials of the regional organizations, and people coming from the business environment alike told when inquired about Central and East European regionalism. However, none could indicate one or more EU texts that requested the countries in the region to cooperate in the early 1990s. Both Geremek and former Romanian Prime Minister Petre Roman suggest that it may have been an idea that sprang within the diplomatic circles at the end of the Cold War, when many visions about the reorganization of

the European security emerged (Geremek 2006, Roman 2005). One of the potential configurations placed the former communist countries within a third group between the West and the Soviet Union. At that time, for some circles within the European Community (EC), this may have been an easier choice for the EC as it did not require to accommodate new members, particularly in a period in which the Community was in the middle of a deep institutional reform process (Schimmelfennig 2001). The Central and East European governments discussed this potential variant of the post Cold War European security system, including with various representatives of the EC (Roman 2005). However, until the adoption of the Stability and Association Process, no major political EU documents explicitly encourage the Central and East European countries to cooperate regionally.<sup>186</sup> At the same time, the view that cooperation at regional level among the former communist countries could prove their commitment to democracy was a “free-floating idea” within the realm of international politics. In its essence, it belongs to the democratic peace theory sphere, because it is a reversal of the proposition “democratic states are more likely to cooperate,” which is corollary of this theory.<sup>187</sup> Even if they were not aware of all the intricacies of the democratic peace arguments, it is probably safe to presume that many of the political leaders and diplomats of those times were accustomed with lay versions of these arguments through interaction within international institutions founded on principles related to democratic peace, most notably the United Nations.

Whether or not the idea of strengthening regional cooperation among the Visegrád countries initiated within EU, it might have served the EU interest in delaying the accession process until both the new members and the EU itself were prepared. In this sense, the Czechoslovak

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<sup>186</sup> Even in this case, the references are mostly to the existing regional initiatives in South Eastern Europe, such as the Stability Pact and the SEECP, and emphasize the idea that regional dialogue and cooperation may help the partner countries to find easier practical solution to problems common in the region.

<sup>187</sup> For good reviews of the democratic peace theory arguments, see for instance Russett (1993) and Brown, Lynn-Jones and Miller (1996).

position was right. However, by the time the Czechoslovak and later Czech leaders claimed that the European Union was encouraging the Visegrád cooperation in order to delay or even deny the accession of the Central European countries, the EU leaders were already preparing the document through which they acknowledged the possibility of enlargement for the former communist countries as long as they fulfilled several political and economic criteria (European Council 1993). For this reason, as Vachudova pointed out, the Czech position may be read rather as part of a strategy to differentiate the Czech Republic as a leader even within the Visegrád Group (Vachudova 1993, 41). Similarly, Poland aimed to distinguish itself as a “good pupil at the democratization lesson” answering the allegedly EU push for further cooperation within the Visegrád framework (Geremek 2006). This created a rhetoric competition among the Visegrád partners.

This competition grew, when the governments realized that the EU enlargement process was individual and that the European Union did not favour a group approach for the access negotiations (Jeszenszky 2006). Furthermore, the economic cooperation within the Visegrád Group (i.e. CEFTA) frequently hindered the EU accession process. For example, the traditional market of Hungarian pharmaceutical products in Poland was severely hit by the access of German products, which according to the pre-enlargement arrangements were tax-exempted (Fitzmaurice 1993, 393). Similarly, the agriculture sector of the Czech Republic was frequently caught in-between the EU and CEFTA arrangements. The Czech agriculture policy was modelled on the Common Agricultural Policy, which meant, among others, export subsidies and high tariff barriers. Such provisions seriously hindered the liberalization of trade in agricultural products within CEFTA (Vachudova 1993, 44). In other words, strengthening the free trade area established by the CEFTA framework would have meant a serious delay in integrating economically within the European Community. For such reasons and by common consent, the economic cooperation of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland

and Slovakia within the framework of CEFTA remained underdeveloped (Fitzmaurice 1993, 393). This was also the result of the divergent national interests of the member countries. For instance, Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic, less sympathetic towards political cooperation supported the economic collaboration within CEFTA (Dangerfield 2000, 35). At the other end of the spectrum, the Polish government strongly encouraged political cooperation but was afraid that CEFTA could become a new Comecon (Geremek 2006). Slovakia, highly isolated politically and with the most feeble economy of the four, supported both the political and the economic regional cooperation as a means to remain in the leading group (Dangerfield 2000, 36). As for Hungary, whose economy closely followed the Czech one, the strengthening of economic relations among the Visegrád countries through formal institutions was perceived as a delay in the EU accession. Therefore, the Hungarian government insisted that each country be judged according to individual merits and efforts (Jeszenszky 2006, Vachudova 1993, 45).

A relatively similar situation occurred also in the case of the NATO enlargement. In the Visegrád Declaration, the partners emphasized their common security goals (Visegrád Group 1991a). As shown in chapter 6, at that time this meant mostly having at least a privileged relation with the NATO and possibly acquiring the organization's membership. Externally, the Visegrád countries were already perceived as a group. For instance, in 1993 former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski encouraged the four partners to apply jointly for NATO membership (Geremek 2006). Especially in American political and diplomatic circles, apparently also partially due to the strong Polish and Hungarian American lobbies (Mattox 2001), Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and to a lesser extent Slovakia were considered the potential first new members of the Alliance (Smith and Timmins 2000, 45-9). However, far from being coagulator of common action, NATO was the subject of one of the first major disagreements between the four partner countries. In 1994, at a summit organized

by the United States in Prague with the Visegrád states for introducing the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP), the Czechs adopted an individualist attitude justified by the conviction that the Czech republic was more advanced economically and politically than the other three. The Polish delegation accused the Czechs of having “hijacked the summit” but this did not impress the Czechs too much because several months later, Václav Klaus rejected both a closer cooperation within the Visegrád group and a formally common application for EU membership (Cottey 1999b, 78). Although political meetings continued to take place periodically within the V4 framework, between 1994 and 1999, the year of accession to NATO of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the political declarations and other documents that the organization produced express less concern with strengthening the cooperation among the partners and simply acknowledge what had been discussed, usually more technical issues than in the previous period. In fact, the number of reunions was significantly more reduced during 1994-1999 compared to 1990-1993. In addition, the subjects addressed after 1994 in the V4 format were less important for the joint political action of the group. For instance, for the year 1997, the official chronology of the organization lists only one major event, a reunion of V4 Red Cross committees (Visegrád Group 1998). In short, although initially the Visegrád countries opted for presenting themselves as a cohesive group for the purpose of EU and NATO enlargement, their competing interests, as well as the individual access processes to these organizations led to a diminishing cooperation among the four countries, including in rhetoric terms.

This decline has continued after 1999, but that year marked the adoption of a new strategy within the Visegrád Group. With the NATO membership already acquired and the EU membership very close, apart from supporting the efforts of Slovakia to reach the same targets as the other three partners, the V4 needed to redefine its rationale. It did so in a landmark Prime Minister summit in Bratislava in May 1999. On that occasion, the Visegrád

countries adopted the revised Contents of Visegrád cooperation, a document that presents the guidelines for further cooperation after accession to NATO and the European Union. The document openly states in the first paragraph that the main area of substantive cooperation between the partners should be “the maintaining of the Visegrád regional profile (‘image-PR’): consultations and issuing, as and when the need arises, of joint statements on issues of common interest, regular meetings of V4 ambassadors” (Visegrád Group 1999). In other words, the four countries publicly acknowledged that the Visegrád label was an asset useful for foreign policy purposes. In this way, they institutionalized what had been already perceived in the other Central and East European chancelleries as the main purpose of the Visegrád cooperation.<sup>188</sup> This approach became even more visible after the 2004 EU accession, when a new redefinition of the content of the cooperation placed culture and education in the forefront, with the Visegrád “single civilization sharing cultural and intellectual values and common roots in diverse religious traditions” as the key concept (Visegrád Group 2004). Instead, with respect to cooperation within the EU and NATO, the four partners no longer aimed at having joint statements but only “consultations and co-operation on current issues of common interest” (ibid.). In short, within the EU and NATO, the Visegrád mission partially finished with the accession. Indeed, the review of common statements and activities of the V4 after 2004 indicate significantly less joint actions and many more reunions in the newly branded V4+ format (i.e. Visegrád countries plus neighbours, commonly Slovenia). This happens mostly within the framework of the European Union. Joint declarations of the V4 are even more rare within the NATO, where each country seems to have an individual approach, with Poland being the most visible in this respect. An interesting tendency after enlargement is also the increased cooperation with the Benelux countries and to a lesser degree with the Baltic countries, taken as groups within

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<sup>188</sup> For this issue, see the discussion in the section above on the SEECF.

the European Union. In this sense, the Visegrád Group might move from the second wave type of regionalism towards what Langenhove and Costea (2004) labelled as the third generation of international regionalism, viz. cooperation between different regional groupings. Nonetheless, beyond such actions, the Visegrád partners seems to be in competition in foreign policy terms within the European Union, particularly in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, where each state has different national priorities.

### **9.2.2 The Baltic Cooperation**

The way in which the Baltic Cooperation evolved in relation to the EU and NATO enlargement has some similarities with the evolution of the Visegrád group. Mostly, before enlargement, the BC was used for political consultation among the member states in their access process to the two organizations but not for developing strong links among the participants. However, like in the case of the Visegrád cooperation, the EU enlargement led to a competition among the three countries, with the more economically advanced Estonia behaving relatively similar as the Czech Republic. Its strategy succeeded and, unlike the other two Baltic neighbours, it was included in the first wave of candidate countries with which the European Union decided to begin negotiations in 1997, the so-called “Luxembourg group.” Instead, in the NATO enlargement process, Lithuania took the lead. It was the first to apply for a NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) (Mattox and Rachwald 2001, 261) and it pursued an individualistic approach to NATO membership, hoping even to be nominated for that in the 1997 NATO Madrid summit, together with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (Miniotaite 2003). The three states finally joined at the same time the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance in 2004 but the analysis of their common positions within the Baltic Cooperation does not indicate that their consultation within this framework may have had a role in this respect.



What may account primarily for this lack of cohesiveness of the Baltic Cooperation with respect to the EU and NATO enlargement is the different foreign policy focus. As already discussed in chapter 7, Estonia has strong relations with Finland, Latvia has preferred to develop its relations with Germany, Sweden and Denmark, while Lithuania has closer relations with Poland and Russia (Schürman 2001, Männik 2008, Ozaliņa 2008, Miniotaite 2008). Moreover, the Baltic Cooperation has not been the most important regional initiative in which the three republics have involved, the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Nordic Baltic Council (NB8) having been regarded as more significant for all of them (Stalvant 1999). The different foreign policy options with respect to the Russian Federation may have also had played an important factor for the BC cohesiveness. The analysis of the various major treaties and political declarations produced by the BC between 1990 and 2007 indicate that Russia more than the European Union and NATO favoured a common stance of the three Baltic states. In fact, unlike the 1991 Visegrád Declaration which focused mostly on the “return to Europe” and only subsidiary addressed the issue of distancing from Moscow (which had been largely solved by that time), the 1990 Unity Declaration that established the Baltic Cooperation was the main instrument for adopting a common position of the three Baltic republics in relation with the Russian government. It is not only the founding text but also the one in which the cohesiveness of the group is expressed most vigorously. Only one other document is similar in this respect. This is the 1993 Declaration of the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Baltic States. In this act, the three countries have the strongest common position when state,

The Ministers regard the Russian concept of the “Near Abroad” as *absolutely unacceptable*. The Baltic States reaffirmed that any peacekeeping activity must be

consistent with the mechanisms and principles developed by the UN and/or the CSCE. (BC 1993, emphasis mine)<sup>189</sup>

The same document contains also provisions with respect to the relations with the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. However, the common position of the three partners is limited to “welcome” the development of the NATO and the European Union and “express the hope” that they will become members of the two organizations, with NATO as main target. Unlike in the Visegrád documents, neither this nor any other major political text of the BC prescribes any joint actions or positions. After 1994, the relations of each Baltic country with Russia have been different and have not generated similarly strong common positions compared to the 1990 and the 1993 declarations. For instance, from the three countries, only Lithuania managed to sign a border treaty with Russia, mainly due to its special location in relation with the Kaliningrad enclave, as well as due to the fact that Russian oil and gas pipelines transit Lithuania to Western Europe (Miniotaite 2008, 160-1). Latvia also partially normalized its relations with Russia, as it has increasingly perceived Moscow no longer as a security threat but as a large neighbour with deep domestic problems that can indirectly affect Latvian security (Ozaliņa 2008, 123). Estonia shares a similar view with Latvia but adds to it the particular environmental and nuclear security concerns that has manifested in relation with Moscow since the 1970s (Schürmann 2001, 223-4).<sup>190</sup>

Apart from the Russian factor and the occasional common positions related to the EU and NATO accession, there is another element that is present in the external rhetoric dimension of the Baltic Cooperation, namely that the Baltic states have been treated as a group by third parties, particularly by the United States. For instance, at the initiative of the American administration, the three republics signed in Washington a Baltic Charter. At first sight, this

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<sup>189</sup> Moscow proposed the concept of “Near Abroad” as a way to justify that NATO should not extend into the Baltic area that would be rather in the Russian security sphere of influence (Kobrinakaya 2001).

<sup>190</sup> On the 1970s and 1980s Estonian actions with respect to these security issues, see for instance Fitzmaurice (1992), esp. 118-9.

was an open support for NATO accession. By that time, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania realized that, unlike in the case of EU accession, NATO was a process involving less competition among them. On the contrary, in this respect they were encouraged to act as a group (Mattox 2001, Gheciu 2005, 75). However, as Martin Smith and Graham Timmins convincingly argue, the Baltic Charter, which had more economic than political security provisions, expressed rather the US administration's view that "EU enlargement, *coupled with an established and growing US economic and commercial presence in the region*, was the most realistic approach" given the Russian to NATO enlargement in the Baltic area (Smith and Timmins 2000, 60-1, emphasis in original). In this way, the Baltic states were pushed to act as a group not necessarily of their own will. This is a major difference compared to the Visegrád Group, which enjoyed more freedom of action with respect to the use of their cooperation.

After enlargement, the cooperation within the BC has been similar to that within the Visegrád Group. Like the V4 countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania agreed to continue cooperating in the BC format also after acquiring the NATO and EU membership (BC 2003b). Yet, there are not many common positions of the BC within the North Atlantic Alliance. At the same time, within the European Union, competition has developed among the three Baltic States particularly with respect to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Unlike the Visegrád Group, they do not aim to differentiate themselves as a group within the EU. Rather, they are close to the Nordic countries and sometimes to Poland. Finally, as in case of the Visegrád cooperation, there have been increased contacts with the Benelux countries as a group. However, compared to V4, they have been less frequent or developed. In this sense, the Baltic Cooperation has remained mostly within the second wave of international regionalism.

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The examination of the discursive design and practices of Central and East European regionalism reveals several features of the way in which regional discourse is articulated in this case. First, one may observe that all post communist regional intergovernmental arrangements use the reference to a specific geographic space, suggesting a possible affiliation to a specific regional identity tradition. However, the analysis of the official documents of the regional organization suggests that not all produced strong regional identity discourses. In fact, the Baltic Cooperation (BC), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) have almost no references to regional identity. Instead, within the official texts of the Danube Cooperation Process (DCP) and the Visegrád Group such references are common, while in the case of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) there has been a debate about regional identity. On the other hand, the Visegrád Group has built a very complex regional identity framework and an entire regional imagery in relation to its political project.

Interestingly, this distribution partially correlates with the degree of marginality identified in chapter 5. In other words, the less significant the regional identity legacy imprints on the collective mental map, the fewer the attempts to use them for political purposes. This happened in the case of the “Baltic” and the “Black Sea” traditions, which are both marginal on the collective mental map and virtually non-relevant for the regional political projects within the areas they designate. Instead, the more positive the imprint, the more probable its conscious use for political purposes. This happened in the case of the Visegrád Group which has developed a conscious “PR-image” campaign through which the group and subsequently the member countries have been associated with a highly positive and restricted regional identity legacy, that of a civil society Central Europe in which the principles of democracy have been guarded by the intellectual dissidence and opposition to the communist regime. Though not so developed as in the case of the V4, the concept of regional identity put

forward by the Danube Cooperation Process closely follows the Visegrád one. However, since the Visegrád brand already appropriated a specific tradition of “Central Europe,” the DCP identification strategy could not successfully use the same model. Together with the low profile of its activities, this impossibility of appropriating a unique space makes the initiative relatively unnoticeable. In a similar situation is the Central European Initiative, whose identity is further diluted by its large membership. Interestingly, the DCP type of imagery on regional identity has also much in common with the rhetoric devices used in building national narratives. This is most visible in the attempts at legitimization through references to an allegedly centuries-long common past of the partner countries, a feature reminding that the political elites involved in the process have been cognitively socialized in a type of national history narrative in which this rhetoric device has been much used. However, these attempts are related mostly to the fact that the Visegrád Group, which is the first truly post communist initiative, has already appropriated a regional identity label with high positive connotations that has not been open to further inclusions. All the other groupings had to adapt to this first entrant and market leader on the regional brands market. For this reason, there has been a certain rhetoric competition among the initiatives. This can be observed best in the case of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC). The analysis of its documents and the interviews on the topic revealed that this organization consciously replaced “Balkans” with “South Eastern Europe” in its official documents and that some of the member countries militated for such changes in other international situations. This was an attempt to neutralize the negative connotations that “Balkans” had, which were more visible when put side by side with the Visegrád’s concept of Central Europe. Due to the comparison with the Visegrád Group, the Balkan regional arrangements might have meant for many a grouping of less democratic states and therefore of countries that might not have been ready or even capable to “(re)enter” the Western democratic

community. As such representations might have delayed or even endangered the foreign policy goals of the Balkan countries, especially the EU and NATO membership targets, the South Eastern Europe label has been consciously promoted.

From this perspective, post Cold War regionalism has been also a race to appropriate better mental spaces in the attempt to be recognized as part of the democratic community. But the race has not been equally spread throughout the region. As already mentioned, it was mostly present in the case of initiatives that have been associated with long-established, heavy weighted regional identity concepts such as Central Europe and the Balkans. Yet, even regional arrangements associated to marginal regional identity concepts have been affected by the logics of rhetoric action. In the case of the Baltic group, for instance, a stronger Baltic identity brand has been built in the first part of the 1990s, partly supported by the United States. This helped the three republics to distance themselves from the Russian hinterland, not only at political but also at symbolic level. However, once this goal was achieved, the Baltic identity brand was less used because the Baltic countries attempted to define their horizon to a larger context, most often Nordic. Interestingly, as the analysis of the BC and the V4 discursive practices showed, this process of rhetoric action and the competition for a better place on the collective mental map continues even after the political contexts that had generated the regional initiatives significantly transformed. For these reasons, one could understand post Cold War Central and East European regionalism as a product and a channel of the continuous processes of political legitimization at international level and regional identity formation.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation, I investigated how international regionalism has become a widespread phenomenon in post Cold War Central and Eastern Europe. As defined in chapter 2, international regionalism is an elite-driven process that engages mostly the central governments of more neighbouring countries. At institutional level, it may be identified through regional intergovernmental agreements and the structures of collaboration instituted by such agreements. At normative level, international regionalism expresses the view that intergovernmental action at regional level can produce desirable effects within the borders of the participant nation-states and within the area. Regional intergovernmental cooperation produces regional identity but at the same time, as a regionalist project, it may rely on particular traditions of regional identity.

International regionalism is not a new phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, as I demonstrated in chapter 4, five types of regional arrangements may be identified in the area before the end of the Cold War. First, there were security and economic protectionist agreements concluded during the Interwar period as a means to guard against the threat of revisionism and the increasing aggressiveness of the major European actors, as well as to offer certain guarantees to the signatories in the eventuality of a new war. Second, there were ephemeral projects of regional cooperation generated exclusively by the logic of the Second World War. Like their Interwar precursors, most of these initiatives had been supported indirectly by various Western powers, usually France, the Great Britain and Germany, but none survived the peace arrangements that followed. In their aftermath and mainly in South Eastern Europe a third type of regional initiatives developed. They were the result of Yugoslav, Greek and Turkish attempts to play a more important role in the region within the

uncertain circumstances of post war Europe. These enjoyed some external support especially from the Great Britain. However, by the end of the 1950s, these few early Cold War projects vanished with the consolidation of the Soviet power in the area. With this, the Western influence in the establishment and development of regional schemes of cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe ended. The USSR control of the area led to the creation of the best-known regional initiatives of the Cold War period in the communist camp: the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon). For more than four decades, these shaped most of the security and economic cooperation in which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe could embark. When, in the late 1980s, the Soviet pressure decreased within the bloc, a fifth type of regional intergovernmental schemes appeared, once again in South Eastern Europe. The new initiatives, established first at technical and sectoral level, attempted to develop a more consolidated structure of cooperation as a means to help the Balkan countries distance themselves from the Soviet sphere of influence. Such dynamics suggests that the foreign policy of Central and East European states might have been slightly more independent than previously thought, although the influence or pressure of the USSR had been extremely visible during the Cold War. Indeed, by the end of the 1980s, the Soviet Union's main regional tools, the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon were on the verge of extinction. For both ideological and political reasons, they did not survive much the collapse of the communist regimes. Within the context of the Yugoslav disintegration and the crisis that it generated throughout the area, the wave of regional cooperation that had emerged in South Eastern Europe could not outlive them either.

As demonstrated in chapter 7, the post communist initiatives did not continue any of these previous forms of cooperation. However, as I showed in chapter 9 through the analysis of the regional identity discourses of post Cold War regionalism, the existence of these precedents has contributed to legitimize some actions within the new regional groups. In chapter 7, I



also showed that the new regional arrangements emerged in three waves. The first and more numerous initiatives developed in the first half of the 1990s as a means to adapt to the disappearance of the bipolar logic and its institutional constraints. These were created all over Central and Eastern Europe and largely they express a collective quest for security at regional level in the aftermath of the Cold War. A second wave, which I refer to as post conflict regionalism, developed in the second half of the 1990s, mostly among the South East European countries, as a way to manage the instability and the reconstruction of the area following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Finally, a third generation of regional agreements can be identified from 2000 onwards. The first two waves are a reaction to certain regional events, while the third one reflects the normalization of political and diplomatic relations

The circumstances in which Central and East European regionalism emerged, as well as the institutional characteristics and practices identified in chapter 8, indicate that Central and East European regional intergovernmental initiatives have been in general loose forms of cooperation in which cohesiveness has been generated mostly by certain political contexts. Activity within regional cooperative arrangements has been most intensive in the first years of existence, especially at political level. This happened for all instances of regionalism, irrespective of the rationale that led to their establishment or the scope of cooperation. All initiatives have maintained their focus on political security, even in the cases in which they should have promoted more policy-oriented cooperation. With one exception, the Danube Cooperation Process (DCP), all initiatives were created for hard security concerns, which may qualify post Cold War regionalism in the area as a negative one (i.e. created in reaction to a security threat), at least initially. Some, like the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), maintained their focus on harder security matters, but in general, there is an increasing tendency to address issues from the “softer” areas of security, such as culture,

education and environment. This has happened for several reasons. First, the Central and East European states have different priorities and their national interests in harder areas of security such as military and economic cooperation are sometimes conflicting. Second, in many cases, the military and economic security concerns are addressed through other forms of cooperation, most notably within the NATO and the European Union. Developing cooperation in these fields at regional level would be an unnecessary and sometimes conflicting duplication of the more comprehensive international arrangements to which Central and East European governments take part. The only regional organization that maintains a higher profile in harder political security matters is the SEECP. This initiative focuses on regional management of the Balkan instability, which has been increasingly regarded as a better approach or at least a useful complementary tool to the international intervention in the area. Although softer security fields of cooperation have been increasingly preferred, the depth of cooperation in these matters has been very small. In these areas, the activities are limited mostly to discussions concerning the principles of common action. This indicates a low interest from the part of Central and East European governments to transform the negative type of cooperation into a more positive one.

With respect to the scope of cooperation, as shown in chapter 8, all the cases analyzed are extensive forms of regionalism. They cover a wide range of areas from various sectors, which sometimes may dilute their focus and impede their development beyond the political reunion level. In this respect, post Cold War regionalism in Central and Eastern Europe is similar to other cases of regionalism that have developed during the same period throughout the world. Using the terminology presented in chapter 1, these cases are truly part of the second generation of international regionalism. Interestingly, as argued in chapter 9, the Visegrád Group might be the first case of the third generation of regionalism, as it has developed increased interaction with other regional intergovernmental groupings, most

notably the Benelux, for the moment within the European Union. At the same time, two cases might evolve towards intensive forms of cooperation. The Danube Cooperation Process focuses mostly on sustainable economic development in the member countries, with a special emphasis on transport. In this respect, it has been the most concentrated initiative in the universe of Central and East European regionalism. However, the low interest of the participants in the project suggests rather that it will continue to remain mostly a politically oriented arrangement with an extensive agenda. Similarly, the SECI has developed two rather clear directions of cooperation – trade facilitation and combating illicit transborder activities. It might thus evolve towards an intensive form of cooperation in these two areas but for the moment it has to be accommodated in the recently created Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) so that it avoids the overlapping with the other regional initiatives that have merged into the RCC.

In terms of priorities of cooperation, several issues seem to be present in most of these regional schemes. In the political sector, regional stability and the common goal of EU and NATO membership have been most often addressed but they have also generated tensions as the states are competitors in many areas related to these aspects. In the military sector, cooperation has been relatively low, mostly for fear it would impede the goal of achieving NATO membership, which has been perceived as the main guarantor of security and stability for the area. In the economic sector, trade, energy, transport and infrastructure development have been often framed as priorities but cooperation on these matters has been sometimes hindered by divergent economic interests, as well as by poor institutional development. At the same time, as the comparative analysis of the Visegrád Group and the Baltic Cooperation in chapter 9 indicated, the European Union enlargement process also contributed to a poor economic cooperation at regional level, partially because the regional liberalization of trade sometimes conflicted with the EU provisions or created disadvantages

for the domestic markets. In the societal sector, cooperation in matters of trans-border criminality and cultural affairs has been favoured most often. However, the largest majority of the activities in these fields have been conferences, reunions and other type of meetings that have not produced many concrete projects or results. Finally, in the environmental sector, the Central and East European governments have been mostly interested in addressing the environmental consequences of the communist era type of industry. Nonetheless, like in the societal sector, conferences have been preferred to other joint actions.

With respect to the institutional development of Central and East European regional initiatives, one may observe that governments have preferred to maintain loose institutional ties among them at regional level. From the viewpoint of institutional practices, most initiatives are forums of political consultations. This happens even in the cases in which cooperation has been more institutionalized through the transformation of ad hoc political dialogue structures into regional cooperative frameworks or regional organizations. From the viewpoint of institutional design, two arrangements – the Central European Initiative and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative – qualify as executive forms of regionalism. As I defined in chapter 3, this means that the initiatives execute or coordinate the execution of projects decided jointly by the members. In theory, this might have meant a higher degree of institutional cohesiveness and potentially a factor that might have triggered more cooperation. In practice, these arrangements have maintained a low profile and most of their projects are limited to reunions, conferences, seminars and roundtables. At the same time, all forms of Central and East European regionalism are largely supported by the contributions of the member states. Especially in the 1990s, some states could not afford to pay these contributions in time or at all, a fact that significantly slowed down the institutionalization of cooperation. To address this issue, the CEI established a fund that covers the costs of

participation to its reunions for the representatives of the countries that are not able to provide such support. However, this unique case is merely an administrative compensation and does not address the more significant issue of the budgets for large-scale projects involving more than reunions at various levels.

In short, the cohesiveness of regional intergovernmentalism in the area is relatively low on the institutional side. The factors that seems to favour cohesiveness most are the existence of certain political or military security issues or threats with (potential) impact at regional level, the possibility of economic and/or financial advantages, and, to a small extent, treaty provisions to impose regular regional consultations. The existence of one or more actors that actively support the initiative has also a significant role, leadership being essential particularly in the incipient phases of cooperation. When such an actor is external to the region, cooperation may be also favoured by the advantage that the participation in the grouping might have in relation to that external actor. In chapter 9, for instance, I showed how the question of the NATO and EU enlargements promoted and, at the same time, hindered the strengthening of regional intergovernmental cooperation. The case of the SEECP also suggests that the failure of the international community to manage an international conflict might favour a regional approach to regional stability, security and reconstruction. However, for the moment, the factors that threaten regional cohesiveness seem to be more numerous than those that favour it. The divergent political and economic interests of the participant states have often negatively affected their cooperation. Sometimes, these different interests transformed into attempts to manifest a leadership position within the various regional groupings. So far, this has not led to any form of hegemonic regionalism but it generated several cases of clustered regionalism. In general, however, Central and East European regionalism has been plural. This might have happened because regional intergovernmental cooperation has been for most governments in Central

and Eastern Europe of secondary importance in their foreign policies, compared to the participation in Europe wide institutions. In this sense, some regional initiatives have been an ersatz until the governments acquired membership in other larger groupings such as the NATO and the European Union. Yet, they also served as preparatory classes for accession to international institutions that required a genuine commitment to democracy. In this sense, *post Cold War Central and East European regionalism is a subsidiary product of the democratization process*. Not least, as shown mostly in the analysis of the practices of cooperation in the economic sector, these initiatives have been also affected by the difficulties of the democratization process, especially by the immaturity of the emerging markets and the processes of cognitive socialization of elites in the new institutional and political environment.

Several commonalities and variations can be identified also in the case of the discursive dimension of regional cohesiveness. First, one may observe that, despite reference to a regional location in the names of the initiatives (i.e. Black Sea, Central Europe, South Eastern Europe), not all produced strong regional identity discourses. In fact, the Baltic Cooperation (BC), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) have almost no references to regional identity. Instead, within the official texts of the Danube Cooperation Process (DCP) and the Visegrád Group such references are common, while in the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) there has been a debate about regional identity. The case of the Visegrád Group is the most striking in terms of regional identity building and has partially influenced all the other instances of regionalism in this respect. It is the only arrangement that does not include in the title a reference to a certain region but has developed the most complex regional identity narrative. As shown in chapter 9, this has been part of a conscious “PR-image” campaign through which the group and subsequently the member countries have been

associated with a highly positive and restricted regional identity legacy, that of a civil society Central Europe in which the principles of democracy have been guarded by the intellectual dissidence and opposition to the communist regime. Though not so developed as in the case of the V4, the concept of regional identity put forward by the Danube Cooperation Process closely follows the Visegrád one. Interestingly, the DCP type of imagery on regional identity has much in common with the rhetoric devices used in building national narratives. In this respect, one should mention particularly the attempts at legitimization through references to an allegedly common past of the partner countries that stretches on hundreds and thousands of years. A possible explanation for this feature may be the fact that the political elites involved in the process have been cognitively socialized in a type of national history narrative in which this rhetoric device has been much used. As the interviews with high-ranking officials involved in the creation of the DCP suggested, these attempts of legitimization are related to the fact that the Visegrád Group, which is the first truly post communist initiative, has already appropriated a regional identity label with high positive connotations that has not been open to further inclusions. All the other groupings had to adapt to this first entrant and market leader on the brands market. For this reason, there has been a certain rhetoric competition among the initiatives. This can be observed best in the case of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC). The analysis of its documents and the interviews on the topic revealed that this organization consciously replaced “Balkans” with “South Eastern Europe” in its official documents. The member countries also militated for such changes in other international situations. This was an attempt to neutralize the negative connotations that “Balkans” had, which were more visible when put side by side with the Visegrád’s concept of Central Europe. The Visegrád brand had managed to represent itself as the underground guard of democracy in the communist camp and used as a mental shortcut the concept of Central Europe. Although initially an

inclusive concept, Central Europe had become in the late 1980s strongly opposed to the “Balkans” in the mental collective. By contamination, a Balkan regional arrangement might have meant for many a grouping of less democratic states and therefore of countries that might not have been ready or even capable to “(re)enter” the Western democratic community. As such representations might have delayed or even endangered the foreign policy goals of the Balkan countries, especially the EU and NATO membership targets, the South Eastern Europe label has been consciously promoted. From this perspective, *post Cold War regionalism has been also a race to appropriate better mental spaces in the attempt to be recognized as part of the democratic community.*

As already hinted above, one can identify several types of community that are promoted through these institutional and identity practices. First, there are groups open to other members, mostly through institutional design. Some, like the Central European Initiative has been enlarged to the extent that it has not managed to create any regional identity to the organization despite the attempts to frame itself as a regional yet European-wide initiative. This identity problem with which the CEI has been confronted suggests that some of the regional organizations in Central and Eastern Europe are caught in the tension between localism and the European dimension, a factor further hampering the cohesiveness of regionalism in the area. Others arrangements, while open to enlargement, have reached a regional limit and no other new members, except perhaps international organizations, are available. In fact, associating (prestigious) international organizations to the regional initiatives has been a trend increasingly visible in the last years. This is for instance the case of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Danube Cooperation Process and the newly created Regional Cooperation Council, all of them actively seeking prestigious international associates. Finally, there are initiatives that have restricted their membership. The most notable case is the Visegrád group, which justified this restriction in identity terms, framing



the cooperation in organic terms. The “organic” character of the communities has been emphasized mainly in the 1990s. Nonetheless, as argued in chapter 9, recently there has been a new and more complex infusion of identity elements in the discourse on the Visegrád cooperation. Therefore, one may expect that regional identity issues and rhetoric action will continue to have a role in Central and East European international regionalism.

At the same time, hierarchies yielded by rhetoric action seems to be often more important than those produced through political interaction. For example, as I showed in chapter 4, the Balkan countries had a longer history of regional intergovernmental cooperation than any other group of states in Central and Eastern Europe. They also initiated the first arrangement belonging to the second wave of regionalism in the area. Yet, the leader on the regional identity brands market is the Visegrád Group, which was the first to be associated with the most positive regional identity concept existent on the collective mental map in relation with Central Europe. This confirms an old marketing law according to which it is not important to be the first on the market but the first in the mind of the buyer. In this sense, the politics of friendship within international regionalism is not only regulated by security concerns and prompted by international events but it is also a market-oriented political phenomenon.

Apart from demonstrating that democratic conditionality and rhetoric action have informed most the development of international regionalism in post Cold War Central and Eastern Europe, in this dissertation I also make other contributions. With respect to the specific case of Central and East European regionalism, I identified eight different categories of regional intergovernmental cooperation. As already mentioned above, before the end of the Cold War, there were five distinct types of international regionalism in the area: Interwar protectionist arrangements throughout the entire region, Second World War projects for most of the region, early Cold War security alliances in South Eastern Europe, Soviet-led security and economic regionalism in most of the region, and late Cold War technical and

then political dialogue in South Eastern Europe. To these five types, in the post Cold War period three other categories of regionalism may be added: reshuffle regionalism in the first half of the 1990s established in an attempt to answer mostly hard security issues generated by the disappearance of the bipolar system; post conflict regionalism created as a means to manage the stability and reconstruction of South Eastern Europe after the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia; and the regionalism of democratic consolidation, which seems to be the first positive attempt to cooperate regionally in the area. On the basis of first hand sources such as official documents and political declarations of the moment, as well as of interviews conducted for this research, I also argued that, unlike what most scholarship on the topic claimed, the Alps Adriatic Working Community (AAWC) may have been at most a catalyst but not a forerunner of the Central European Initiative (in its Quadrilateral format).

Beyond these empirical findings, I also developed several conceptual categories that could be used for other research. In the first part of the dissertation, I mapped the various meanings existent in the literature for the notion of regionalism and the related concepts, and I showed that there is frequent overlapping. For this reason, I reconstructed the concept of regionalism and its related field starting from the concept of region, which I defined as an area that is represented as different from the rest of the neighbouring space. This reconstruction produced only four categories of regionalism: international regionalism, cross-border regionalism, autonomy regionalism and regional separatism. These four categories cover all the types of regionalism discussed in literature, except regional integration, which, I argued, is not an identifiable regionalist product but only an ideological project. After establishing this conceptual framework, I analysed the nature of international regionalism as defined in practice of international relations and in academic literature on the topic. From the perspective of international public law, I found that regional organizations are not considered essentially different from other types of international organizations. In the academic

literature, I found that the existing categories used to differentiate between different forms of international regionalism are still heavily embedded in the bipolar logic and do not describe properly the universe of contemporary regional intergovernmental cooperation. For the so-called second wave of regionalism (i.e. that has developed since the late 1980s), particularly inappropriate is the distinction economy-politics, which generates an additional dichotomy between policy- and politically-oriented initiatives. For a better description of the cases from the second wave of regionalism, I proposed to represent the security and welfare dimensions, as well as the policy and political rationales as a field of continuums or as the different aspects of the same phenomenon because contemporary regionalism manifests all these four elements. However, for analysis purposes, one may choose to focus only on one of the four dimensions. In this dissertation, I focused on the security dimension, which is also the most conceptually developed in the literature, and I opted for the security paradigm developed by Barry Buzan and his colleagues at the so-called School of Copenhagen. More specifically, I used their distinction between five sectors of security for a cross-sector analysis of the institutional practices of post Cold War Central and East European regionalism. This analysis was preceded by an analysis of the institutional design of these cases of international regionalism that I did following a grill that I designed in chapter 3. This grill includes the institutional characteristics of regional intergovernmental initiatives that are relevant for their cohesiveness. These features are the goals, the scope, the structure of power within the regional arrangement and in relation with the member states, as well as its sustainability. On each of these dimensions, I developed taxonomies that I used for evaluating the institutional strength of the regional groupings I analyzed.

Nonetheless, in terms of conceptual developments, the most important contribution that this dissertation makes is with respect to “regional cohesiveness.” This concept, which I proposed as an alternative to the integration/interdependence paradigm, was defined in

chapter 2 as the degree to which a group of social actors inhabiting a limited contiguous space act and/or represent themselves as a group. In line with social constructivism, regional cohesiveness has both material/institutional and normative-representational dimensions and can be assessed along these lines. From its design, regional cohesiveness is an-output oriented concept, which means that it does not refer to the process but to the products of political interaction. The first level on which these products may be assessed is that of design. Here, one looks at the *institutional design* (the structures instituted by the group for and through the interaction of its members) and *internal rhetoric* (the way the members justify to themselves their grouping). The second level on which the products can be assessed is that of practices, with *institutional practices* representing the way in which the goals, objectives and programs of the regional grouping are implemented, and *discursive practices* (or *external rhetoric*) referring to the way in which the group presents itself to the world. I called these four aspects the *situational layers* of regional cohesiveness because they describe the specifics of a regional group, thus helping situating them in relation with other groups. At the same time, I represent regional cohesiveness as developing in a particular institutional and socio-political context, as well as on a certain institutional and discursive background. I called these four elements the *locational layers* of regional cohesiveness because they help establishing the specific political, socio-historical and identity location of a regional grouping within the ensemble of political and social phenomena. These eight layers correspond to the combination of the institutional and normative-representational dimensions with the four strata of meaning production that I postulated in the introduction (Figure 1). This structure of the regional cohesiveness concept also determined the structure of the argumentation within the entire dissertation. In chapters 4 and 5, I presented the institutional and discursive backgrounds of Central and East European international regionalism, identifying the previous forms of regional

intergovernmental cooperation, as well as the most important regional identity legacies present in relation with Central and Eastern Europe. In chapter 6, I showed which was the socio-political context in which post Cold War regionalism has developed in the area. Finally, after presenting in chapter 7 the circumstances in which this particular case of regionalism emerged and evolved, in the last two chapters I analyzed the situational layers of regional cohesiveness, with the institutional dimension first and the normative-representational second.

There are several advantages of the concept of regional cohesiveness. First, unlike integration or interdependence, it is falsifiable. When a group of actors does not act or represent itself as group, then there is no cohesiveness. For this reason, the concept may be regarded as less ideological than those of interdependence and integration. At the same time, as discussed in chapter 2, regional cohesiveness may be congruent with the integration paradigm and in this respect the notion is useful mostly to (neo)liberalist and institutionalist arguments. Another advantage of the regional cohesiveness is that it accommodates social constructivism to international regionalism, without the critical agenda of the scholarship that has attempted to do so. Finally, regional cohesiveness is a concept that may be applicable not only to international regionalism but to other categories of regionalism, such as the cases of regional separatism and regional autonomy. Since it describes the way in which certain areas develop and remain distinct from others in terms of political action, regional cohesiveness is a general category applicable to all cases in which regions are created. As argued in chapter 2, these include regional separatism and autonomy. For this reason, regional cohesiveness should be understood as a political science concept and not only one limited to the study of international relations. Nonetheless, in this dissertation I only opened this new direction of research, addressing the issue of regional cohesiveness in a particular case of international regionalism.

## APPENDICES




### Appendix 1




#### Instances of Central and East European regionalism (as of 2007)




	AAWC 1978	CEI 1989	BC 1990	V4 1991	CEFTA 1991 1994 (r)	BSEC 1992	CBSS 1992	NB8 1992	Q4 1996	SEECF 1996	GUAM 1996	SECI 1996	SP 1999	All 2000	DCP 2002
R. Poland		1991		F	F-2004	O	F						S		
Czechoslovakia (1919-1993)		1990-1993		F-1993	F-1993										
Czech Republic (since 1993)		1990*		F*	F*-2004	O							S		F
R. Slovakia (since 1993)		1990*		F*	F*-2004	O	O						S		F
R. Hungary	P 1988	F		F	F - 2004				F			F	S		F
Romania		1995			1997-2007	F				F		F	M		F
R. Bulgaria		1995			1999-2007	F				F		F	M		F
S.F.R. Yugoslavia (1963-1992)	PF	F													
F.R. Yugoslavia (1992-2003) / Serbia and Montenegro (2003- 2006)		2000-2006				2004-2006				F		2000-2006		F	F
R. Montenegro (since 2006)		2006			2007					2007			M		
R. Serbia (since 2006)		2000*			2007	2006				F*		2000*	M	F*	F*
Kosovo / UNIMK (since 1999)					2007							O			
Bosnia and Herzegovina (since 1992)		1992			2007					2001		F	M	F	F
F.Y.R.O.M. / R. Macedonia (since 1991)		1993			2006					F		F	M		
R. Croatia (since 1991)	F*	1992			2003	O			2000	2005		F	M	F	F
R. Slovenia (since 1991)	F*	1992			1996-2004				F			F	S	F	F
R. Albania		1994			2007	F				F		F	M	F	
USSR (1922-1991)															
Russian Federation (since 1991)						F	F						S		G
Belarus (since 1991)		1995				O									
R. Moldova (since 1991)		1996			2007	F				2006	F	F	M		F
Ukraine (since 1991)		1995				F					F	O	O		F
R. Armenia (since 1991)						F									
R. Azerbaijan (since 1991)						F					F	O			
Georgia (since 1991)						F					F	O			

Uzbekistan (since 1991)											1999-2005				
R. Estonia (since 1991)			F				F	F					S		
R. Lithuania (since 1991)			F				F	F					S		
R. Latvia (since 1991)			F				F	F					S		
Sweden							F	F					S		
Denmark							F	F					S		
Finland							F	F					S		
Germany	PF 1978-2005					O	F					O	S		F
Austria	PF	F				O						O	S		F
Italy	PF	F				O			F			O	S	F	
Greece						F				F		F	S	F	
Turkey						F				F		F	S		
Switzerland	P1989-1997												S		
Norway							F	F					S		
Iceland							F	F							
European Commission							F						S	F	F
SP															F

## Legend

 New EU members  
 Old EU members  
 EFTA members

 EU candidate countries  
 EU potential candidate countries  
 CIS members

 United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo  
 International organizations or institutions  
 Regional cooperation initiative

F Founding member

P Member through one or several administrative units

\* Member as successor of another state

O Observer

M Member partners

(r) Year of ratification by the founding members (if different from the year of creation)

G Guest

S Supporting partners

AAWC – Alps-Adriatic Working Community; AI – Adriatic Ionian Initiative; BC – Baltic Cooperation; BSEC – Black Sea Economic Cooperation; CBSS – Council of the Baltic Sea States; CEFTA – Central European Free Trade Agreement; CEI – Central European Initiative (previously known as Quadrilateral, Pentagonal and Hexagonal Cooperation, respectively); DCP – Danube Cooperation Process; GUAM – Group of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and R. of Moldova; NB8 – Nordic Baltic Council Q4 – Quadrangle Cooperation (previously known as Trilateral cooperation of Italy, Hungary and Slovenia); SECI – Southeast European Cooperative Initiative; SEECF – South East European Cooperation Process; SP – Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe; UNIMK – United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo; V4 – Visegrád Group

## Appendix 2

### Evolution of membership of Central and East European Initiatives (1989-2007)

Central European Initiative (November 1989)



Albania  
Austria  
Belarus  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Czech Republic  
Macedonia  
Moldova  
Montenegro  
Poland  
Romania  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Ukraine

Baltic Cooperation (May 1990)



Estonia  
Latvia  
Lithuania

Visegrád Group (February 1991)



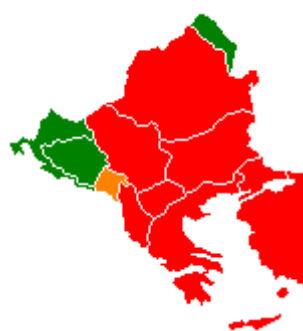
Czech Republic  
Hungary  
Poland  
Slovakia

Black Sea Economic Cooperation (June 1992)



Albania  
Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Bulgaria  
Georgia  
Greece  
Moldova  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Serbia  
Turkey  
Ukraine

South East European Cooperation Process (July 1996)



Albania  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Greece  
Macedonia  
Moldova  
Montenegro  
Romania  
Serbia  
Turkey

Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (December 1996)



Albania  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Greece  
Hungary  
Macedonia  
Moldova  
Romania  
Serbia  
Slovenia  
Turkey

Danube Cooperation Process (May 2002)



Austria  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Czech Republic  
Germany  
Hungary  
Moldova  
Romania  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Ukraine

Founding member	Founding member (as part of another state entity) that continued its membership after independence	Founding member (as part of another state entity) that reacquired its membership after independence	Founding member (as part of another state entity) that discontinued its membership after independence	New member	New member (as part of another state entity) that continued its membership after independence	New member (as part of another state entity) that discontinued its membership after independence



### Appendix 3

#### Membership of Central and East European countries to the main European security and economic organizations (as of 2007)

	CSCE/OSCE	Council of Europe	NATO	European Union
<b>Albania</b>	1991	1995	Partner state	
<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>	1992	2002		
<b>Bulgaria</b>	1973	1992	2004	2007
<b>Croatia</b>	1992	1996	Partner state	Candidate country
<b>Czech Republic</b>	1993 <sup>1</sup>	1993	1999	2004
<b>Estonia</b>	1991	1993	2004	2004
<b>Hungary</b>	1973	1990	1999	2004
<b>Latvia</b>	1991	1995	2004	2004
<b>Lithuania</b>	1991	1993	2004	2004
<b>Macedonia</b>	1995	1995	Partner state	
<b>Montenegro</b>	2006	2006		
<b>Poland</b>	1973	1991	1999	2004
<b>Romania</b>	1973	1993	2004	2007
<b>Serbia</b>	2000	2003		
<b>Slovakia</b>	1993 <sup>1</sup>	1993	2004	2004
<b>Slovenia</b>	1992	1993	2004	2004

<sup>1</sup> Czechoslovakia was member of the CSCE since 1973 until it separated into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993.

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1994 Agreement Establishing the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, Tbilisi.

- 1995 Statement of the High Level Meeting of the BSEC Participating States, Bucharest, 30 June.
- 1996 Moscow Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Moscow, 25 October.
- 1997 Declaration of Intent for the Establishment of the BSEC Trade Area, Istanbul, 7 February.
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