REGIONALISATION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REGIONALISATION AT

THE BORDERS OF THE EU

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Abstract

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

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List of Abbreviations

AC	Arctic Council
ACC	Arab Co-operation Council
BA	Baltic Assembly
BEAR	Barents Euro-Arctic Region
BLACKSEAFOR	Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group
BSR	Black Sea Region
BSS	Black Sea Synergy Paper
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
EEA	European Economic Area
EC	European Community
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
Euromed	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
GAFTA	Greater Arab Free Trade Area
GCC	Gulf Co-operation Council
GUAM	Organization for Democracy and Economic Development
IR	International Relations
NATO	Nord Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NC	Nordic Council
NDI	Northern Dimension Initiative

NEI	Northern European Initiative
RSPCSEE	Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South-East Europe
SECI	Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
UfM	Union for Mediterranean
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
US	United States of America

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Introduction

The Black Sea lies at the crossroads between Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East but part of any of these regions.[1] Yet, all the countries surrounding the area came together in 1992 under the Black Sea Economic Organization (BSEC) umbrella, the institution with largest membership in the area. The BSEC ensured a medium for cooperation and diplomatic settlement of inter-states divergence. This helped the region to create the image of coherence and unity even though its geographical position made it sensitive to the evolutions outside of it. That is way the Black Sea Region is approached in a wider geographic understanding of the area, by encompassing all 11 countries[2] members of the BSEC and not only the six littoral countries. The main aim of the BSEC was to anchor the region to the Euro-Atlantic community and thus became part of a larger community which will strengthen it and ensure its sustainability.

Nevertheless, regionalization in the Black Sea region is highly debated. On the one hand there are the optimists who praise the role of the BSEC in forging regionalism, and the pessimists who underline the lack of coherence of the region and the impossibility of becoming regionalised due to the lack of pre-conditions needed to regionalise and to the negative influence of the external forces. Part of the optimist group Mustafa Aydin[3] sees the Black Sea region as a proof of cooperation potential among countries with no previous history in cooperation. Sergiu

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[1] Ronald D. Asmus and Bruce P. Jackson, "The Black Sea and the frontiers of Freedom", *Policy review* no. 125, (2004), p. 18.
[2] BSEC Members: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, BSEC website: http://www.bsec-organization.org/Pages/homepage.aspx, accessed on 7th of May, 2010
[3] Mustafa Aydin, "Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the role of Institutions" *Perceptions* vol.10, (2005), p. 57-83.

Celac and Panagiota Manoli[4] agree with Aydin stressing that the BSEC is seen as a credible actor representing the region, thus enjoying internal and external recognition. This standpoint is counteracted by the pessimist camp which chooses to check the results rather than the intentions and political declarations. Tedo Japaridze argues that the BSEC is 'not reformed, recalibrated and adjusted to new strategic realities" and its potential as a player linking the region with the world is just "wishful thinking".[5] Felix Ciutã also criticises the "institutional reflex" and "prescriptive nature of regional initiatives" as a measurement of regionalism.[6] He contests also the stabilizer role attached by the neoliberal camp to the US and the EU.[7] James Sherr[8] agrees with Ciutã with regard to the great power competition in the Black Sea region, and underlines furthermore, the impact of this structural factor on stability in the area.

Therefore, the discussion about BSR revolves around the driving forces and existence of the pre-conditions of regionalisation. Geopolitics, institutionalisation, internal dynamics and external forces are all taken into consideration in order to make sense of the process which is unfolding in the area. Yet, a consensus exists concerning the important role played by the EU as a model of regionalism and also as an actor on the European stage in forging regionalisation outside of its borders. Thus, based on the Mediterranean and Nordic cooperation and regionalisation processes induced through a strong commitment from the EU's part, new assumptions could be drawn regarding the possibilities of BSR evolution toward regionalisation with the help of the EU.

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[4] Sergiu Celac and Panagiota Manoli, "Toward a new model of comprehensive regionalism in the Black Sea area", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* vol. 5, no. 2, (2006), p. 193-205.

[5] Tedo Japaridze, "The Black Sea Region: Meaning and Significance" *American Foreign Policy Interests* vol. 29, no 2, (2007), p. 113.

[6] Felix Ciutã, "Partying the Black Sea (Region): Geopolitics, Institutionalisation and the reconfiguration of the European Security", *European Security* vol. 16, no.1, (2007), p.54-55.

[7] *Ibid.,* pp. 60-61.

[8] James Sherr, "Security in the Black Sea region: back to *Realpolitik*?", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* vol. 8, no. 2, (2008), p. 141–153.

Several short referential comparisons are made between the new Black Sea Region and the regional cooperation around the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and political-geographical axes[9] are suggested by different actors. Aydin compares the BSR with the Baltic States and the Mediterranean region which benefit from EU's involvement in the creation of the institutional framework of cooperation while the Black Sea Economic Organization is an endogenous organization.[10] Yet, he also advocate for the EU's support of regionalisation in the Black Sea area similar to the Baltic Sea initiative.[11] In a similar vein, Roberto Aliboni argues in favour of a contractual relation between the Black Sea countries and the EU similar with the Northern Dimension.[12] Nevertheless, the focus on instability problems and its geopolitical and geo-economic importance triggered by its position as a link between Europe and Caspian Sea basin rich in fossil fuels underlined by Svante Cornell, Anna Jonsson, Niklas Nilsson and Per Häggström in their study[13] brings it more closer to the Mediterranean type of region.   Yet, the literature lacks a comprehensive comparison of these three cases of regionalisation at the borders of the EU, while playing with short references to support one opinion or another. A multi-dimension comparison is important for a clear understanding upon the regionalisation process unfolding at the borders of the EU, the different roles played by the EU in each case and the regional potential for a deeper integration.

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

[10] Aydin, "Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and the role of Institutions", p. 60.

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

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

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

The Nordic regional dimension is usually approached as a model of cooperation and integration while the Mediterranean region falls short on these integrative and cooperation dimensions.[14] Moreover, while the Black Sea and Mediterranean are both part of the European Neighbourhood Policy the Northern dimension is excluded. Does this clustering make them similar or do similarities and differences overcome EU's political labels? Is the Black Sea prone to follow the Mediterranean model or has it the potential to evolve toward the Nordic model? All these questions can be answered through a comparative analysis of the typologies of regionalism unfolding at the borders of the EU. Plus, a close look into the relation established between each particular region and the EU can shed light upon the EU's effect on the regionalization process.

Thus, my researching goal is to define the process of regionalisation in the Black Sea region by comparing it with the Nordic and Southern Europe regionalisation processes. I will pinpoint the model of regionalisation for each case and the similarities and differences between them. The Nordic and Mediterranean dimensions of regionalism are used as referent points for making sense of the third dimension, the Black Sea Region. The EU is approached as a soft power with a normative speech on international stage. The degree of its involvement varies across the Northern, the Southern and Eastern dimension; nevertheless the EU plays a major role by anchoring or isolating the regions from itself. The EU's attitude towards the regions along its borders influences the type of regionalisation and the possibility to forge the coherence and unity of the region. Hence, the EU is the main external force shaping the regionalisation process at its borders and this makes for the common point across the regions beyond any other common feature that they might share regarding internal dynamics.

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[14] Marius Vahl and Sergiu Celac, "Ready for a Breakthrough: Elements for a European Union Strategy towards the Black Sea Region", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* vol. 6, no. 2, (2006), p. 186-187.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The first chapter illustrates the theoretical framework for analysing the process of regionalisation and the methodology derived from the theory. The second chapter includes the three study cases. The third chapter is the comparative approach of the three cases of regionalisation at the borders of the EU. I will compare the three cases illustrating the similarities and differences which will be helpful in tracing patterns of regionalisation along the borders of the EU. Based on the conclusions of the comparison I can derive the answer to my initial research question about the type of regionalism existent in the Black Sea Region and moreover, what role the EU plays in this area. I will conclude with general assumptions on future developments and possible outcomes based on the revealed emergent patterns similar to the other two regionalism cases.

Chapter 1

1.1 Theoretical framework

The first chapter is assigned to the setting of the analytical framework used to approach the political phenomenon of regionalisation.

Regions, as political units defined by an increased interaction between political actors in a certain geographical setting[15], have been present in world politics from ancient times as empires and then more close to the contemporary world as economic and commercial areas. They only started to be investigated more in-depth in the XX century once the European stage became the birth place of a deep, integrated and institutionalized regionalization process which started as a peace enforcing enterprise aimed to put an end to old rivalries and connected old enemies through socio-economic bonds. The specificity of the Western European case of regionalisation drew the attention of IR scholars as the new subject brought about "integration theory". Moreover, beyond the Western Europe model of integration the phenomenon of regionalization incited discussion across and within main IR theories in their attempt to provide a comprehensive account for the complex dynamics of this process through their different theoretical lenses. Thus, competing explanations emerged built on rational[16] and reflectivist[17]

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[15] Michelle Pace, *The Politics of Regional Identity. Meddling with the Mediterranean*, (New York: Routledge: 2006), pp. 1.
[16] Neorealism, Neoliberalism
[17] Constructivism

theoretical IR traditions which purport divergent perspectives on the regionalization phenomenon.[18] Each theory attempts to frame the ongoing regionalization process in order to understand its internal mechanism and to make some assumptions about its end-goal.

While rationalist approaches take the phenomenon as an example of purposeful cooperation between actors on the international stage, the reflectivist approach sees regionalisation as an ongoing process constructed and deconstructed at the junction of material elements and ideational worldviews. Thus, on the one hand we find pragmatic state centric and interest-based and functional explanations which provide us with a clear-cut account of the causal mechanism behind this phenomenon, and on the other hand we have a general and rather open-ended explanation which sees regionalisation as a process, an ever changing frame of social international interaction where the world is not given but constructed by the actors interacting at different levels.[19] The lines of differences cut across the way of conceptualizing the surrounding reality from a given and observable reality to a flexible and constructed reality through ideas, perceptions and language by adopting different levels of analysis and paying attention to different actors which make the internal and external dynamics of interactions.

Starting from this, a new literature emerged having as study case the European Community. While it was a path-breaking initiative, it lacked a general view on regionalization beyond the case of the EC.[20] This delineates two paths taken by scholars in the study of regionalization. On the one hand were those focused on the EU which was perceived as the model of integration and therefore the standards referent for comparing the level of

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[18] Alex Warleigh-Lack, "Studying regionalisation comparatively. A conceptual framework." in *Regionalisation and global governance. The taming of globalisation?* eds. Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W. Hughes, and Philippe de Lombaerde, (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 47.

[19] Pace, *The Politics of Regional Identity. Meddling with the Mediterranean ,* p. 28-38.

[20] Rick Fawn, "Regions and their study: wherefrom, what for and whereto?", *Review of International Studies* no. 35, (2009), p. 7.

regionalization in other places in the world, and on the other hand, were those that argued that the regionalization process is not a mark of the EU and several other models might appear that do not copy the EU model. The first approach is usually addressed as "old regionalism". The second camp is labelled as the "new regionalism" and characterized by the reconnection of integration theories to the main IR debates in its attempt to issue a general assumption on regionalization going beyond the case study of the EU. They advocate the need to disconnect the regionalization approach from the limited one-case study and to make it attuned to diverse forms of regionalization developing across the globe.

"Old regionalism" developed in the '50s-'80s triggered by the integration process unfolding between the members of the European Community. Overall, the old regionalism was concerned with the peace project aspect of the regional cooperation and regional integration.[21] As Mark Pollack underlines, the early years of the European Community, ('50s-'60s) the integration across sectors favoured the functionalists explanation of the phenomenon whereas when then integration was not going smoothly the inter-governmentalists "took the floor".[22] The EC regional cooperation and integration can be seen as a stop-and-go project and these two approaches are revitalized each time their asserted positions are reinforced by reality. Even though they started what is today known as the field of European Studies, the debate can be perceived as a middle level variation of the general IR neorealist-neoliberalist debate on the cooperation issue.

The functionalists (David Mitrany, Ernst Haas, Lindberg) adopted a socio-economic approach to the regionalization process and emphasized the step-by-step interconnectedness

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[21] Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum , "The future of regionalism. Old divides, new frontiers" in *Regionalisation and global governance. The taming of globalisation?* eds. Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W. Hughes, and Philippe de Lombaerde, (New York: Routledge, 2008), p 63.
[22] Mark A. Pollack, "Theorizing EU Policy-Making" in *Policy-Making in the European Union,* 5th edition, eds. Helen Wallace and William Wallace, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.15.

between states built through sectoral cooperation in economic fields which will start a "spill over"[23] process leading automatically to an even closer relation between the states by enhancing their interdependence. In a long-term perspective, the integration process in low level politics will lead to legitimizing the institutionalized supranational structures which will limit states' sovereignty.[24] The inter-governmentalists (Stanley Hoffman, Paul Taylor, and William Wallace) contested the functionalist reliance on automacity of the spillover process and their ignorance of states' interests.[25] From the intergovernmental perspective, the EC was similar to other international organizations, whereby the members follow their national interests and the choice of collaboration is taken following a rational calculus of potential gains and losses.

The post-Cold War period marked the spread of regionalisation across the globe. A need for an appropriate theory for a comparative analysis of the regionalisation process triggered the theoretical reassessment of the old integration theories and the opening of a new debate across IR theories between rationalists and constructivists on the topic of regionalisation. New regionalisation processes emerged in different manner or even if developed with the aim of sectoral-functional integration did not evolve as the EU. This opened the debate upon the pre-conditions to be fulfilled by a specific region to achieve regionalisation. Hence, it became important to distinguish between regions, regionalism and regionalisation and set the territorial, institutional and identity aspects of regionalization.

While region is rather used for describing a geographical reality defining a cluster of states in a close proximity to one another, regionalism implies purposeful state-led political

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[23] "Spillover refers to the process whereby members of an integration scheme (…) attempt to resolve their dissatisfaction either by resorting to collaboration in another, related sector or by intensifying their commitment to the original sector or both" in Philippe Schmitter, "Three Neo-functional hypotheses about international integration", *International Organization* vol. 23, no 1, (1969), p. 161-166.
[24] Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration,* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 58-59.
[25] *Ibid.,* p. 74-81.

cooperation and coordination between the actors from a particular region envisaging a new regional order having as an end-goal integration in a supranational political arrangement, while regionalisation focuses rather on the process of growing economic interdependence as a result of a strong cooperation between sub-national, private actors without aiming for a particular result.[26] Michael Smith defines regionalism along three pre-conditions: the existence of a common historical experience, intense interactions between the members of that region which are more intense than with the outsiders setting the borders of the region, and the existence of a legal and institutional setting of the region.[27] Thus, regionalism implies a complex interconnection across social, economic and finally political areas in a geographically defined space according to several formal rules of the game.

Regional dimensions and features are redefined connecting the material aspects with their inter-subjective meaning for the actors. The first aspect would be the geography's role in contemporary regionalism. Katzenstein claims that regions have a material and symbolic dimension expressed in the features of modern regions which are geographically given and politically constructed.[28] Rick Fawn argues also for a middle ground approach underlining the need for geographic proximity in forging a close regional cooperation but we should not ignore the non-territorial regionalisation process based on cultural or linguistic ties.[29] Thus, geography maintains its importance through the issue of proximity which enhances the frequency and density of relations across borders but at the same time geography is reinterpreted along the new

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[26] Fawn, "Regions and their study: wherefrom, what for and whereto?", p. 12-13.
[27] Michael Smith, "Regions and Regionalism", in *Issues in World Politics,* 2ed edition, eds. Brian White, Richard Little and Michael Smith (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 57.
[28] Peter J. Katzenstein, *A world of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American imperium,* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 36.
[29] Fawn, p. 16-17

IR lines of the constructivist approach. Hence, territory and material features receive a role through ideational and normative components of the social world.

The second question one might ask is concerned with the role of regional institutions. Björn Hettne addresses the regions as "territorially based subsystems of the international system" with "different degrees of regionness" where regionness represents "the degree to which a particular region constitutes a coherent unit" meaning that the region acts as a unit through the means available, such as regional institutions.[30] Rick Fawn argues that institutionalization is not determinant for deeper cooperation because there can be cooperation without institutionalization (Visegrad group) and there can also be cases where institutions are shallow and have no explicit implications over the construction of a region.[31] Even so, Ramesh Thakur and Luk Van Langenhove generalize on the role of organizations in creating "webs of functional links"[32] which can be used for different political purposes, from economic cooperation to peace-keeping and other security related issues. Thus a certain level of institutionalization is addressed as a mark of coherence and unity of the region.

Another important aspect of contemporary regionalism's coherence is the issue of identity of the region which can also be seen as a factor influencing its role on the world stage. Identity construction represents a continuous process based on interaction: one's identity is constructed through association or disassociation with others in a fluid process with no clear end point.[33] The role of region is influenced also by its coherent identity[34] which strengthens its voice on world stage. In this respect the EU enjoys a large degree of actorness based on its soft power

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[30] Björn Hettne, "The new regionalism: A prologue", in *Comparing Regionalisms: implications for global development* eds. Björn Hettne, Andras Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. xii, xxviii.
[31] *Ibid.,* p. 20.
[32] Ramesh Thakur and Luk Van Langenhove, "Enhancing global governance through regional integration" in *Regionalisation and global governance. The taming of globalisation?* ed. Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W. Hughes, and Philippe de Lombaerde, (New York: Routledge, 2008) p.25.
[33] Pace, p. 3.
[34] Fawn, p.20.

capacities and its role as a model of regionalisation. Identity is connected with region's goals, their policy orientations: security, trade, conflict prevention, and development.[35] The majority of regions are rather inside looking and not outward as the EU is addressed by the scholars that underline its soft power capabilities. This raises the question: How come some regions are outward looking and others more inward-looking? Hettne concludes that core regions are more outward looking influencing the regionalisation process in other regions, setting the path to be followed by others, while the intermediate and peripheral regions are more inward looking concerned with their security and developmental problems.[36]

The "new regionalism" movement emerged a result of the ongoing changes in the world order: multipolarity, assertiveness of transnational actors, new stability concerns and new definition of security issues.[37] Plus, the focus has been redirected from EU studies to a more general IR debate on the regionalization process.[38] Andrew Hurell traces competing IR theory explanations for regionalisation across neorealist, neoliberalist and constructivist approaches. The main lines of neorealist explanations underline the systemic factors, and regional dynamics stressing the role of the hegemon in the creation of a region. The hegemon can be the actor starting a regional cooperative endeavour or the subject of institutional entrapment or isolation representing by the weaker states surrounding it.[39]A second account of regionalisation is based on interdependence theory and globalisation forces where regional functional (network type of interaction, sub-national level) and institutional (state level cooperation) cooperation arouse as proper actions to cope with regional problems due to a growing interdependence among the

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[35] *Ibid.,* p. 20-22.
[36] Hettne, "The new regionalism: A prologue", p. xiv-xv.
[37] Thakur and Van Langenhove, "Enhancing global governance through regional integration"*,* p. 30.
[38] Hettne and Söderbaum , "The future of regionalism. Old divides, new frontiers", p. 69.
[39] Andrew Hurell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics" *Review of International Studies* vol. 21, no. 4, (1995), p. 341-343.

members.[40] The third account deals more with the ideational factors of regionalisation in terms of cultural affinities and shared values, inter-state sympathy, and the pre-existent idea of a common identity.[41]

Their explanatory power varies across regions and across stages of evolution of the regionalisation process, applying neorealist explanations for the geopolitical context which favourised the creation of regional cooperation agreements but keeping in mind the basis of certain affinities among the members and the role of functional and institutional cooperation that might change states preferences in time.[42] Further more, Louise Fawcet argues that the multidimensional feature of regionalism places it as a phenomenon in an eclectic position on theoretical grounds[43] as several types of regionalism coexist and have different internal and external logics and dynamics. It is at the junction of neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivist theoretical perspectives, whereby the constructivist meta-theoretical approach provides us with the possibility of merging material and ideational factors in a common endeavour of purposeful cooperation under the framework of regional interaction of systemic and local factors.

Thus, new studies were concerned about the interplay between local, regional and global contexts and their regional result trying to settle the regional studies within the international debate. Hurell argues that no IR theory can totally explain the emergence and functionality of regionalism, therefore a interconnection among different levels of explanations for different stages (systemic, state, domestic, regional) is a proper one.[44] Thus, Barry Buzan and Ole Waver came with a convincing argument settling regions at a meso-level analysis in between state level

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 347-352.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 352-354.
[42] *Ibid.,* p. 358.
[43] Louise Fawcett, "Exploring regional domains: a comparative history of regionalism", *International Affairs* vol. 80, no. 3, (2004), p.442.
[44] Hurell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics", p. 357.

and global level.[45] Thus, regionalisation is understood as an instrumentalization of material factors toward achieving a certain end goal by the actors involved in the process.[46] Applying this IR theoretical perspective on the regional integration process implies placing my approach in the middle ground between new and old regionalism. In fact the difference between these two camps is not that clear-cut and inseparable. The "old" and "new" regionalism can be conceived of as stages of the same process[47], unfolding in a different international context. Thus, Michelle Pace's argument that "regions are not natural entities but rather social constructs"[48] and "function as a way of organizing the international system"[49] is a proper starting point in reinterpreting the old approaches to regionalisation and integration. The old concepts and approaches are reconceptualised across current theoretical strands.[50] I subscribe to the idea of seeing regionalism as a process and not as a desired end-result, a process which is subjected to the influence of multiple factors (global, national, regional, individual, and societal).[51] Thus, the theories which emerged based on the study of the EU's case might be adapted to new forms of regionalism by reconnection with IR main streams of theoretical debate in an eclectic approach.

Summing up, regionalism is a new phenomenon on international arena with lots of forms and purposes that challenge the rationalist accounts of state cooperation instances. This make the analytical process more complicated as regionalism represents a combination of material, ideational and discursive elements within a "political engineering"[52] process. Through this process of social construction a new "politically, economically and socially desirable area is

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[45] Barry Buzan and Ole Waver, *Regions and Powers. The structure of International Security,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 4.

[46] Raimo, Väyrynen, "Regionalism: Old and New", *International Studies Review* vol. 5, no. 1, (2003), p. 27.

[47] Warleigh-Lack, "Studying regionalisation comparatively. A conceptual framework." p. 49.

[48] Pace, p. 41.

[49] *Ibid*

[50] Väyrynen, "Regionalism: Old and New", p.25-51.

[51] Warleigh-Lack, p 51.

[52] Pace, p. 38.

constituted".[53] The actors are in a continuous interaction and region-building process and one regionalisation process might be totally different from the other on behalf of the driven factors, goal, aims and functionality. Thus, there is no clear endpoint as the process of regionalization evolves at the same pace with the actors' goals and the international contexts which facilitates or hampers new initiatives.

1.2 Methodology

For defining the regionalisation processes occurring at the borders of the EU I will be focusing on their genesis as a region, and its functionality based on Warleigh-Lack's[54] study agenda for regions.. Thus, I will begin by inquiring the rationale behind the starting of the regionalisation process (leading actors, aims, context, and mechanisms) testing in each case the role of systemic factors and local dynamics. Second, I will move toward the functionality aspects of the region pinpointing the linearity or the regionalization, the effects of regionalisation upon the participants, the level of cooperation and changes within the process across time. Based on this I will delineate the main factors driving the regionalisation process.

I derive the assumptions guiding my study from the theoretical framework regarding the genesis and functionality of regionalisation process which will guide my research for each of the three study cases:

1. Regionalisation can emerge as :

    a. A project developed by a hegemon

    b. An initiative of local states to counterbalance a regional hegemon

    c. A means to empower weak states in a global world

    d. A solution to common problems caused by high interdependence

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[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Warleigh-Lack, p. 53

2. Functional cooperation develops in peripheral regions whereas sustainable and institutionalized high political cooperation in the core regions.[55]

3. The cohesiveness of a region is given by

    a. Its level of institutionalization

    b. A sense of a common identity shared among the participants (norms, values).

4. Regional sustainability depends on:

    a. States' willingness to cooperate and their potential to do it

    b. Geographical proximity

    c. History of cooperation

    d. Amity and enmity patterns of interactions among regional states

    e. Homogeneity of the region (economic, social, cultural)

    f. Existence of political entrepreneurs

Thus, on methodological grounds I will approach my research from a constructivist perspective using the process tracing method. I will approach the history of region-building through the theoretical lenses exposed within the four assumptions enlisted before. My comparative study is limited to a general view upon the regionalisation process in the three cases with the accent on their emergence pattern and how the EU did influenced the local regionalisation process. All three cases will be then compared for a comprehensive image on their similarities and differences which will reveal the process behind the type of regionalisation and its effects on current stage of regionalisation. In the end, define the model of regionalisation encountered in the BSR and its possible future developments..

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[55] Fawcett, "Exploring regional domains: a comparative history of regionalism", p. 446.

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Overall, this study contributes to the filling up the gap within the literature regarding the limited uni-dimensional comparative studies of these three regions surrounding the EU. Moreover, this comparison brings together all three cases and not a two by two comparative.

I propose a comparative multi-dimensional (economic, social, institutional, political, external influences) study of regionalisation at the junction of local and external forces portrayed through a process tracing method.

Chapter 2: Study cases

This chapter encompasses the three cases of regionalisation at the borders of the EU around the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. I start with the Nordic regionalisation, the Mediterranean Region and then I end this chapter with Black Sea Region.

2.1 The Nordic Region

The regionalism emerged in the Northern part of Europe is often mentioned as a model of regional cooperation and an inspiration for the European Neighbourhood Policy.[56] The Northern Dimension Initiative, a foreign policy initiative launched in 1999 by the EU asserts its role in the region and works as a framework for coordination the existent regional institutions and as a channel of cooperation between the EU and Russia in the post-Cold war period. The new NDI launched in 2006 emphasizes the co-ownership of the ND by the members and the EU-Russian strategic relationship.[57] Thus, the NDI is becoming more similar to a "common policy" forged among equal partners than a strictly EU-led initiative.[58] How did this region get to this stage? Why was it possible and what made it happen? These are the questions which I will address in a short but concise study of regionalization in the Northern part of Europe. I will start with the historical background; enlist the main home-grown regional institutions and the major external forces with their regionalization initiatives (EU, US) and provide a concise socio-economic landscape of the region assessing their role in forging the current regionalisation process.

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

[57] European Commission -DG External Relations: Northern Dimension webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/index_en.htm, (accessed on 12 of May 2010)

[58] Anne Haglund-Morrissey, "Conceptualizing the <New> Northern Dimension: A Common Policy Based on Sectoral Partnerships", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* vol. 16, no. 2, (2008), p. 203-204.

The history of cooperation in the Baltic region can be traced back to the Hanseatic League, a medieval network of cities united by common commercial interests.[59] Coming closer to the modern period, Iver B. Naumann matches the "inside-out" and "outside-in" region-building political dynamics and advocated for a political will as the essential element of a region-building project. Within the regional dynamics the author illustrates the history of cooperation based on common culture and language in the Scandinavian region with a core formed by Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Matching the regional dynamics with the political developments during the Cold War, Neumann argues that in spite of any allegiance to a certain Cold War (Norway and Denmark as founding members of NATO) camp or the choice of non-aligned status (Sweden, Finland even though it signed an agreement of cooperation with the Soviet Union which was never reinforced), the Scandinavian countries remained connected in through low politics even if the high politics goal of keeping the great powers out failed for the moment. [60] Thus, the region enjoys a history of cooperation in low politics and peaceful conflicts resolutions with a neutrality reputation in war affairs.[61] This can be seen also after the Cold War when their foreign policy agendas were remarkably similar. New regional initiatives emerged but these ones starched the borderlines of the region.

The post Cold War period alleviated the East-West demarcation line; the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) gained their independence once the Soviet Union collapsed and the European Union emerged as a new regional actor on European continent. With Denmark a member of the EC/EU from 1973 and Finland and Sweden as freshly accepted in 1995, the EU

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[59] Christopher S. Browning "Complementarities and Differences in EU and US Policies in Northern Europe", *Journal of International Relations and Development* vol. 6, no1, (2003), p. 26-27.
[60] Iver B. Neumann, "A region-building approach to Northern Europe", *Review of International Studies* no. 20, (1994), p. 53-74.
[61] Håkan Wiberg , Ole Waever, " Norden in the Cold War Reality", in *Nordic Security in the 1990s. Options in the changing Europe,* ed. Jan Øberg, (London: Printer Publishers Limited, 1992), p. 18-19.

acquired a Nordic dimension.[62] The US remained involved the Northern Europe through a new

Northern European Initiative (NEI) which developed in parallel with the European project, the

Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI).[63] Locally, new regional institutions emerged

complementing the existing Nordic Council (NC): the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS),

the Arctic Council, the Baltic Assembly (BS), and the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR)

accompanied in time by several private and NGOs covering sectoral policies in Baltic Sea

region.[64] The cooperation is favourised by the lack of 'security dilemma' as no country

constitutes a threat for the other.[65] All this institutions were embraced by the externally driven

regionalization initiatives which refrain from constructing new institutional frameworks and built

on the existent ones. All these new cooperation frameworks redefined the geographical extension

of the European North, its end-goal and shaped a multi-level regionalism involving

intergovernmental and transnational organizations and networks.

The oldest institution is the Nordic Council, one of the "oldest and most extensive

regional co-operation in the world" started as a trans-governmental forum in 1952 between

Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden with Finland joining them in 1955.[66] The cooperation is

based on common vales and it aims to ensure the overall development and competitiveness of the

region. In the aftermath of the Cold War the Nordic Council engaged in cooperation with the

Baltic Assembly, the inter-parliamentary organization reuniting the new states: Latvia, Estonia

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[62]European Union website: The history of the European Union
http://europa.eu/abc/history/animated_map/index_en.htm, (accessed on 13 of May, 2010)
[63] Browning, "Complementarities and Differences in EU and US Policies in Northern Europe", p. 23.
[64] More information on the particular private and non-profit, non-governmental organizations can be found on the
Baltic Sea Portal: http://www.balticsea.net/, (accessed on 13 of May, 2010)
[65] Pertti Joennimi, "Norden as a Mystery. The Search for New Roads into the Future", in *Nordic Security in the
1990s. Options in the changing Europe* , ed. Jan Øberg, (London: Printer Publishers Limited, 1992),
p. 50.
[66]Nordic Council website: http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council/the-nordic-council/the-history-of-the-nordic-council, (accessed on 14 of May, 2010)

and Lithuania.[67] This marked a new policy domain in within the Nordic Council, one concerned with close neighbours. Within the Nordic Council the members had different agendas regarding the inclusion of new members: Finland supported the link between the NC and BA; Sweden counters by asserting the existent members as the "core" and all the other countries form the Baltic region as the "outer circle"; Norway preserved the importance of the Nordic dimension through the Barents Region proclamation in 1993.[68] Thus, a geographical extension of the focus area contributes to a redefinition of the cooperation's physical confines.

The Baltic Assembly was set up in 1991 by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a consultation forum useful for addressing common economic and political problems faced by the new independent countries. These three countries teamed up due to their similar Soviet past and shared foreign policy aspirations of joining the Western institutions (EU, NATO). Their basic security is linked to their relation with Russia (Russian speaking minority issues, energy dependency on Russia, and Kaliningrad). [69] Russia's response to the Western direction of Baltic States was a strong opposition concerning their accession to NATO and a rather low profile concerning the EU accession.[70] Despite the common road in foreign policy, these three countries had a divergent agenda concerning their attachment to particular European sub-region: Latvia was the only one enforcing the idea of a Baltic region, Estonia tied itself to Finland opting for a Nordic identity, while Lithuania built relations with Poland favoring a Central-European

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[67] Nordic Council website: http://www.norden.org/en/areas-of-co-operation/estonia-latvia-and-lithuania, (accessed on 14 of May, 2010)
[68] Neumann, "A region-building approach to Northern Europe", p. 70-71.
[69] Eiki Berg, "Where East meets the West? Baltic States in Search of a New Identity" in *Regions in Central and Eastern Europe: Past and Present* eds. Tadayuki Hayashi and Fukuda Hiroshi, (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2007), available from http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no15_ses/03_berg.pdf, accessed on 14 of May, 2010), p. 49.
[70] Ramunas Vilpisauskas, "Baltic States Membership in the WEU and NATO: Links, Problems and Perspectives" "NATO-EAPC Research Fellowship" Final Report, (2000), p.9.

position.[71] Despite their different political regional affinities the three countries were usually referred as "The Baltic States" in the international media based on their similar successful economic and political transformation and with a developing connection with the Nordic European countries.[72] Thus, the geographical borders of cooperation have been extended due to a re-conceptualization of the region in light of the new historical and systemic developments.

The Southern limit of the Nordic region was pushed even further in 1992 through the set up of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, a German and Danish common initiative, joined by Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the representative of the European Commission.[73] In the North, the Barents Euro-Arctic Region set up in 1993 with an intergovernmental (Barents Euro-Arctic Council) and an interregional dimension (Barents Regional Council) was focused on cooperation in the extreme Nord between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, and the European Commission.[74] The Nordic dimension acknowledged another borders stretching through the Arctic Council established in 1996 among Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America.[75]

The main areas of interest across all the above mentioned organizations are: economy and business development, social welfare and environment protection which include energy issues. Another common feature is the decentralized working procedure, with many one-issue working groups and self-funding of each initiative. Moreover, all projects converge along the lines social

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[71] Berg, "Where East meets the West? Baltic States in Search of a New Identity", p. 52.

[72] Miglė Mockutė "The images of the Baltic States in the International media upon accession to NATO and the EU", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* no. 21, (2008), p. 33-34.

[73] CBSS website: http://www.cbss.org/CBSS-The-Council/the-council, (accessed on 14 of May, 2010)

[74] Barents Euro-Arctic Council website: http://www.beac.st/in_English/Barents_Euro-Arctic_Council/Introduction_and_organisation.iw3, (accessed on 14 of May, 2010)

[75] AC Declaration of Establishment: http://arctic-council.org/filearchive/Declaration%20on%20the%20Establishment%20of%20the%20Arctic%20Council-1..pdf,(accessed on 14 of May, 2010)

and economic wellbeing, a transfer of the Scandinavian model to the neighbours (Russia, Baltic States, Belarus) aiming to reduce the disparities in the region.[76]This tutoring approach is derived from the general image of the Nordic region, a peaceful, tolerant, and reformist zone including the most modern countries in the world.[77] Another important characteristic is the existence of numerous networks of non-state actors, NGOs and private companies involved in projects across the region enhancing the transnationalisation.

Above all these two new external initiatives came to see light in the second part of the '90s: US led Nordic European Initiative (1997) and the EU's Nordic Dimension initiative (1999). Christopher Browning compares the new initiatives and concludes on their similarities sand differences. Thus, in both policies represent new forward-looking initiatives through their focus on social security and the enhancement of a new type of multilevel regional governance in the area. The main difference between them is in the existent linkage between NEI and NATO's enlargement policy and the lack of a similar connection between NDI and The EU's enlargement.[78] Overall, the author sees the two initiatives rather competing than complementing each other as the EU and US have different agendas and ways of approaching the post-Cold war Russia and the post-soviet countries.[79] Moreover, what is their status today after the NATO and EU's enlargement which transformed the political landscape of the region?

The US launched the Northern European Initiative in 1997, a "multi-dimensional approach to regional cooperation"[80], built on the existent societal connections in the region which will ensure the viability on a strong and peaceful cooperation between the Scandinavian,

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[76] Information compiled from each Nordic organization's website
[77] Joennimi, "Norden as a Mystery. The Search for New Roads into the Future", p. 44-46.
[78] Browning, "Complementarities and Differences in EU and US Policies in Northern Europe", p. 23-24.
[79] Christopher S. Browning, "A Multi-dimensional approach to regional Cooperation: The United States and the Northern Initiative", in *European Security* vol. 10, no. 4, (2001), p. 101-105.
[80] *Ibid.,* p. 101.

Baltic States, Northwest Russia, Poland, Germany and European Union.[81] The NEI tighten the security motivations to forms of regional governance which transforms the zero-sum game of security in a positive sum game.[82] Once the Baltic States became members of NATO (2004) and the 9/11 events redirected the US focus from Europe to Middle East terrorist issue NEI was pushed aside from the list of priorities. It was replaced by a new and looser policy, the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe aimed at strengthening the established relationships between the US and Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden leaving aside this time Russia, Germany and Poland.[83] Contrarily, the NDI, the European policy rival gained support among the targeted countries. Its renewal in 2006 is a clear sign of a political will of continuing down on the path.

The NDI was launched in 1997 as a Finnish enterprise to put the Nordic periphery on the EU's foreign policy agenda in response to the local institutions set up by Norway (Barents Euro-Arctic Regional Council), Germany and Denmark (Council of Baltic Sea States).[84] In 1999 the NDI was adopted as an official EU policy to cover all the Nordic European countries and to work in close cooperation with the existent institutions in the area.[85]While Norway initiated the Barents Euro-Arctic Regional Council and Denmark joined forces with Germany for the Council of Baltic Sea States initiative, Finland took the advantage of being and EU member and pushed for binding the North to the EU.[86] The main reason behind the Finnish initiative, the need to forge a peaceful and trustworthy relation with Russia by promoting its development and

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[81] Tatiana C. Gfoeller "Diplomatic Initiatives: An Overview of the Northern Europe Initiative", *European Security* vol. 9, no.1, (2000), p. 101.

[82] Browning, "A Multi-dimensional approach to regional Cooperation ", p. 28-29.

[83] US Department of State: http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rt/epine/c10621.htm, (accessed on 14 of May, 2010)

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

[85] European Commission: DG External Affairs website: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/index_en.htm, accessed on 14 of May 2010)

[86] Arter, "Small States Influence within the EU: the Case of Finland's <Northern Dimension", p. 681.

integration in general institutional and political frameworks of cooperation was triggered by its common border with Russia and the acknowledge high socio-economic disparities among the Baltic coastal states.[87] Among the regional counterparts, Denmark and Sweden had a "lukewarm" response to the initiative whereas Norway was a strong supporter.[88] Nevertheless, the initiative succeeded to make its way into the EU's agenda as a complementary instrument of regionalization around the Baltic Sea, stressing the important relationship between the EU and Russia.

All in all, the NDI merged with the existent cross-border co-operation arrangements in the process of redefining the Nordic region and a new approach in EU-Russia interactions.[89] Geographically the NDI covers following countries: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Iceland, northern Poland, and northern Germany.[90] The targeted areas for cooperation were: nuclear safety, environmental protection, combating illegal immigration and organized crime, building infrastructure and facilitating economic ties among the participants aiming to raise the social wellbeing of the local population.[91] It addressed the interstate and sub-state cooperation bringing together states, private and NGOs as actors. The main outcomes of the initiative are the emergence of a regional governance multilevel system within highly institutionalized cross-border cooperation and the insurance a forum for solving the security problems of the area which facilitated Poland and Baltic States' accession to the EU.[92] Yet, the

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[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.,* p. 687.

[89] Lassi Heininen, Heather Nicol, "The importance of Northern Dimension Foreign Policies in the Geopolitics of the Circumpolar North", *Geopolitics* no. 12, (2007), p. 143-146.

[90] Dan Steinbock, "NATO and Northern Europe: From Nordic Balance to Northern Balance", *American Foreign Policy Interests,* vol 30, no. 4, (2008), (196-210), p. 207.

[91] Haglund-Morrissey, "Conceptualizing the <New> Northern Dimension: A Common Policy Based on Sectoral Partnerships", p. 205.

[92] Duna, "Approaching the Northern and Southern Neighbours of the European Union" , p. 5-6.

cooperation spans in low politics like public health, environment, and economics and does not touch high politics which is relegate to other forums.

This is reflected also in the second NDI launched in 2007. The policy changed its status from an EU's regional foreign policy to a regional common policy where all the participants become "partners".[93] The reassessment of the ND was pushed by the recent developments: Poland and Baltic States' accession to EU in 2004 which modified the membership landscape and the new Common Spaces established between the EU and Russia within the strategic partnership. The *NDI Policy Framework* acknowledges the changes and restates the initial goals of the NDI, the geographical limits and the focus on West Russia and Kaliningrad region but the membership is changed including Russia, The EU, Iceland[94] and Norway. There is still no special assigned EU fund only for NDI; activities are co-financed by the partners through public and private finance and by the EU through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.[95] Projects are open to public or private, state or non-state actors all of them joining the network and cooperate on a particular issue thus enforcing local ownership.

At political level, the new NDI document underlines the synergy between the NDI and regional institutions and formal ties between the EU and the other members (EEA-Norway and Iceland, The Four Common Spaces with Russia). Moreover, the NDI is set up with a double aim: "a regional expression of the four EU – Russia common spaces"[96] and a "frame of reference for intensified transatlantic cooperation of the Northern Dimension partners in matters

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[93]Haglund-Morrissey, p. 206.

[94] Iceland applied for EU membership in 2009 and now is one of the potential candidates, according to European Commission :DG Enlargement website: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/opinion-iceland_2010_en.htm, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

[95] Haglund-Morrissey, p. 208.

[96] Political Declaration on Northern Dimension, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/docs/pol_dec_1106_en.pdf, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

concerning the northern regions of the world"[97] by accepting Canada and the US as observers. On the other part of the fence, Russia's attitude toward the NDI ranged from equating it with "another TACIS" and mocking the environmental topics dominating the agenda, to other more optimistic views which underlined the beginning of a partnership relationship between the EU and Russia.[98] While the first NDI initiative sparked several debates in Russia, the new NDI passed without any important discussion. The overall attitude can be labeled as neutral.[99] Thus, bringing Russia on board is an essential step in building a Nordic region beyond the Scandinavian and Baltic countries.

Another challenge comes with the Northern extension toward the Arctic region by opening the NDI to Canada and the US as observers and by adding the Arctic and Sub-arctic regions as important geographical points.[100] Thus, the Nordic part of Europe is stretched beyond the previous boundaries and heads for new challenges of the extreme North where the debate between environmental protection and resource extraction pitched the local states in different camps. The lack of an Energy Partnership within the NDI is a real handicap in coping with the future challenges. The successful Partnerships on health (Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being) and environment (Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership) might provide the administrative pattern but the real issue remains the political will to engage in a cooperative energy policy.

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[97] Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/docs/frame_pol_1106_en.pdf, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

[98] Dmitri A. Lanko "Russian Debate on the Northern Dimension Concept", 6th Pan-European International Relations Conference "Making Sense of a Pluralist World" (Torino, Italy, September 12 – 15, 2007), p. 4-6.

[99] *Ibid.,* p. 7-12.

[100] Progress Report for the First Ministerial meeting of the Revised Northern Dimension Policy, (2008), available on the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/docs/progress_report_revisednd_281008_en.pdf, accessed on 14 of May, 2010.

Another issue in this area is the EU's leverage among the other players (Norway, Canada, US, Russia) which are all oil and gas producers. Will it manage to transform its dependency on energy imports in a bargaining tool? Energy dependency rate in 2006 was 83.6% for oil and 60.8 for natural gas, having Russia as the main supplier followed by Norway, Algeria and Libya.[101] It is rather doubtful that it will exert a real leverage until it does not achieve a unified market bringing all the EU members on the same side of the negotiations table, eliminating thus the potential for a *divide et impera[102]* option on the supplier's part.[103] Yet, Russia remains at the centre of the Nordic dimension and an overall good relationship between the EU and Russia is essential for enhancing the regional arrangements developed at the borders of the EU and Russia.

Beside all these institutional region-building initiatives the socio-economic major indicators show a different picture from the political one. As it can be seen in Table 2 bellow, the Nordic region is still formed by the Nordic-Scandinavian countries and the Baltic States as another group. Clear discrepancy exist between the level of GDP per capita, level of competitiveness on economic grounds and by the rate of employment and social spending. Whereas the Nordic countries score high on each of these followed closely by Germany, the Baltic States score lower and still have a long way to go until they can compare with the Nordic developed countries. Moreover, the trade pattern (imports[104], exports[105]) of each of these countries shows a clear economic connection between Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden with Germany, UK and Netherlands, while Latvia and Lithuania have closer economic relation

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[101] *Europe in Figures. Eurostat Yearbook 2009,* European Commission, p.456-457.

[102] Dan Steinbock, "NATO and Northern Europe: From Nordic Balance to Northern Balance", p. 207.

[103] Nöel, Pierre "Beyond dependence: how to deal with Russian gas", Policy Brief, European Council for Foreign Affairs, , (2008), p. 1-2.

[104] CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2061.html?countryName=Norway&countryCode=no&regionCode=eu&#no, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

[105] CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2050.html?countryName=Norway&countryCode=no&regionCode=eu&#no, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

among themselves and also with Poland and Russia. Estonia is placed in between the Nordic group of countries and Baltic States' patterns for international trade playing thus the linkage role in between the two groups. I omitted Russia from the study because even though the NDI aims for an equal EU-Russian partnership its main role is to forge a homogenous region in the Nordic part of the EU among the countries with a strong commitment to the EU (members, potential members and EEA members). The NDI folds over the existent local patterns of interaction and anchor the Nordic region to the EU region.

Thus the Nordic region is built on a strong core, the Scandinavian countries, which share a long history of cooperation, similar socio-economic features and a willingness and potential to extend their cooperation to the new neighbours. The geographic extension of the region was determined by the systemic changes of the post-Cold War period and by the need to cope with common problems affecting all the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. The overall impact of the external forces, the US and the EU, did not modify the local dynamics of regionalization. They chose only to reinforce it through their own initiatives assuring the technical and financial assistance to support the regionalisation process. The cooperation is built around functional areas keeping the institutionalization of the region within a rather simplistic and decentralized form. The unity of the region is ensured by the lack of enmity, western values and consistent economic transaction facilitated by a common infrastructure. Moreover its aim of achieving socio-economic homogeneity among its members engaging all of them in project thus enforcing common ownership of the regionalization process.

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

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

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

Notes: *The lowest proportion of GDP allocated for social spending among all the EU states, pp. 256

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2.2 The Mediterranean Region

As I mentioned in the introduction, the Mediterranean case is usually addressed as opposite to the Nordic model. It portrays a stagnant process of regionalization and high levels of external influences. Why is this? To answer this question I will deconstruct the process of region-building in the Mediterranean region with the help of the process tracing method. Different external and local institutional political cooperation initiatives make up for different images of the region's borders and regionalisation's incentives and means. The difference lays in the initiators, the number of countries perceived as part of the region, the degree of integration promoted and the issues touched by each of the projects. The historical process tracing pinpoints the casual mechanisms behind the current stage of regionalisation by matching the relation between international context and regional dynamics in building the Mediterranean region.

The first regional cooperation initiative was a local one, namely the *Arab League* founded in 1945.[106] Another local regional initiative was the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union in 1989.[107] The external driven initiatives bring the EC/EU, the US, and the OSCE as layers in the Mediterranean regionalization process. The EC/EU started with bilateral trade agreements, the Global Mediterranean Policy (1972), the first EC/EU regional approach of the Mediterranean, and then initiated the Euro-Arab dialogue (1973).[108] These Cold War period initiatives were rather limited in their aims and the member countries. The situation changes in the post Cold-war period when the EU restates its regional approach through the Renovated Mediterranean Policy (1992) followed by the Barcelona Process – The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (1995) and by

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[106] The Arab League webpage, http://www.arabji.com/ArabGovt/ArabLeague.htm , (accessed on 10 of May, 2010)
[107] Maghreb Union website, http://www.maghrebarabe.org/en/uma.cfm , (accessed on10 of May, 2010)
[108] Federica Bicchi, *European Foreign Policy Making toward the Mediterranean,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 1.

devising the Common Strategy for Mediterranean.[109] Other political initiatives like "Five plus Five" and The Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) emerged in 1990s but fall short on results.[110] Coming more close to nowadays, the EU included the Mediterranean region in its European Neighbourhood Policy (2004) and the latest initiative the Union for Mediterranean (2008) redefines the EU-Mediterranean relation.[111] The US played and still plays an important role in the area and marks its presence through the Mediterranean Dialogue (1995) and bilateral free trade agreement but its main attention goes to the Middle East region.[112] Further on I will present the main characteristics of each of the above mentioned initiative in order to map out the institutional arrangement existent in the area and its implications on regionalization and integration dynamics.

The locally emerged regional initiatives are the Arab League, Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Arab Co-operation Council (ACC) and Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). The Arab League was initiated by Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan (Jordan from 1950) and received new members across time: Algeria (1962), Bahrain (1971), Comoros (1993), Djibouti (1977), Kuwait (1961), Libya (1953), Mauritania (1973), Morocco (1958), Oman (1971), Qatar (1971), Somalia (1974), Southern Yemen (1967), Sudan (1956), Tunisia (1958) and Palestine Liberation Organization (1976). The Gulf Co-operation Council was setup in 1981 aiming to achieve integration and unity between members who share the same culture, religion, language and political interests.[113] In response to this political initiative the "outsiders", Egypt,

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[109] *Ibid.*, p. 1, 170.
[110] J. Stephen Larrabee, Jerrold Green, Ian O. Lesser, and Michele Zanini "The Barcelona Process And other Mediterranean Initiatives " in *NATO's Mediterranean Initiative: Policy Issues and Dilemmas*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 1998), p. 34.
[111] European Commission: DG External Relations website: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/index_en.htm, (accessed on 10 of May, 2010)
[112] Bicchi, *European Foreign Policy Making toward the Mediterranean*, p. 142.
[113] The Gulf Cooperation Council website: http://www.gccsg.org/eng/index.php?action=Sec-Show&ID=3, (accessed on 12 of May 2010)

Iraq, Northern Yemen and Jordan, came together and formed the Arab Co-operation Council.[114] The UMA was setup in 1989 between Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania, more precisely the Western Mediterranean region.

The Arab League is a "regional organization of sovereign states" that is "neither a union nor a federation" with pan-Arabic mission of building a framework for dialogue between Arabic-speaking countries which can be used for their own interests especially for the resolution of conflicts between them.[115] Its coherence was disrupted by the Cold War with its two camps which split the member states. In the post-Cold War period divergences between the monarchies, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco and the new republics, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Libya stumble the cooperation.[116] In fact, the institution is regarded as successful on low politics on issue such as education and culture but inefficient on high politics due to its unbinding agreements.[117] Moreover, it also promoted the free trade area between its member states. In 1997 fourteen states, members of the Arab League initiated the discussion on the creation of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA)[118] aiming to eliminate or at least reduce the tariffs and non-tariffs that impede the intra-region trade. Although the trade increased based on new regulations promoted by the GAFTA the sub-regional trade is more prominent.[119] Several motives are mentioned in the literature and supported by statistics that explain the slow progress: the similarity of economies

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[114] Khaled A.M. Bayomi, "Nahdah visions and political realities in the Arab East - the inevitable war!" 3rd Nordic conference on Middle Eastern Studies: Ethnic encounter and culture change (Joensuu, Finland, 19-22 June 1995), http://www.smi.uib.no/paj/Bayomi.html, (accessed on 12 of May 2010)

[115] Arab League website: http://www.arabji.com/ArabGovt/ArabLeague.htm , (accessed on 10 of May, 2010)

[116] "Profile: Arab League" (31 March 2009) BBC website, available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/1550797.stm, (accessed on 10 of May 2010)

[117] *Ibid.*

[118] Members: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen; potential future Member: Algeria, available from the Jordan's Ministry of Industry and Trade webpage http://www.mit.gov.jo/Default.aspx?tabid=732 , (accessed on 12 of May, 2010)

[119] " Rutgers Model United Nations", The Institute for Domestic and International Affairs, (2007) http://www.idia.net/Files/ConferenceCommitteeTopicFiles/149/PDFFile/U07-LAS-GreaterArabFreeTradeAgreement.pdf, (accessed on 12 of May, 2010),p. 7.

dominated by extractive branches and services not adapted to become complementary[120], high differences in per capita GDP and lack of transport infrastructure, and they have stronger commercial ties with the developed world.[121] Plus the participants are also members of different political intergovernmental organizations (UMA, Gulf Co-operation Council, and Arab Co-operation Council) with different agenda within the Arab world.

Thus, the scholars split the Mediterranean Southern costal states in: *Maghreb* states (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia), *Mashreq* states (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria) the Gulf States (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), and the "other" states (Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen) and all together are referred as Middle East and North Africa (MENA).[122] Among the regional initiative the most successful in achieving its goal is the Gulf Co-operation Council. Recently, also the Maghreb Union made new important steps toward deeper inter-connection while the Arab Co-operation Council disintegrated due to political tensions in the early '90s (Gulf War, Kuwait invasion).

The UMA was setup as a regional confederation with double goals, a diplomatic means of dialogue and a step toward a common market and become an economic union.[123] In geographical confines are the five members: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. All of them share a preferential relation with the EU as the EU is their primordial foreign policy concern.[124] The cooperation was stumbled in the '90s by the political tensions between Algeria

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[120] Bessma Momani "The EU, the Middle East, and Regional Integration", *World Economics* vol. 8 , no 1, (2007) p. 2.
[121] "Rutgers Model United Nations" , The Institute for Domestic and International Affairs, (2007) http://www.idia.net/Files/ConferenceCommitteeTopicFiles/149/PDFFile/U07-LAS-GreaterArabFreeTradeAgreement.pdf, accessed on 12 of May, 2010, p.8-9.
[122] *Ibid.*, pp. 7
[123] George Joffe, "The European Union and the Maghreb", in *Mediterranean Politics*, 1st volume, ed. Richard Gillespie, (London: University Press, 1994), p. 26. (22-45)
[124] *Ibid.,* p. 22

and Morocco over the West Sahara, and Libya's international isolation.[125] Nevertheless, economic cooperation seems to be fruitful currently through the coordination of custom unions which decided in 2010.[126] This new development might be seen as a test for the integration through economic and low politics cooperation. These countries share a common religion and language and common history of colonialism. Apart from this societal background they have strong economic ties with European countries (petroleum products, agriculture and touristic services) and theirs economies complement each other.[127] Overall, the UMA detach its members from the Middle East and this might facilitate the inside cooperation. The UMA plays an important role as place of dialogue and cooperation and the possibility for further integration through its envisaged projects of custom union and common market but fails to have a voice within the high politics of the extended Mediterranean area. Thus, the region is influenced by the policies lead by the external players. The main external player is the EU and while the US is more involved in the Middle East.

In the '60s the EC established bilateral agreements with the countries bordering the Mediterranean but the general approach was country by country and regional. This will change in 1972 when the Mediterranean region was "invented" through the Global Mediterranean Policy[128], a regional approach matching trade interest with aid policy for all the Mediterranean nonmember states.[129] Thus, the EC delineated the region as embracing all coastal countries. This new vision was highly supported inside the EC by France which aimed to achieve a stronger

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[125] Álvaro de Vasconcelos, "Europe's Mediterranean Strategy: An Asymmetric Equation." Conference Paper: The Convergence of Civilizations? Constructing a Mediterranean Region, (Lisbon , June 6- 9 2002), p. 2.

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

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

[128] The agreements were signed at different moments: Greece (1972), Turkey (1972), Malta (1972), Spain (1972), Israel (1975), Algeria (1976) , Morocco (1976), Tunisia (1976), Egypt (1977), Lebanon (1977), Jordan (1977), Syria (1977), data available from The European Institute on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation: http://www.medea.be/index.html?page=2&lang=en&doc=767, (accessed on 11 of May, 2010)

[129] Bicchi, *European Foreign Policy Making toward the Mediterranean,* p. 63.

voice for the EC on international politics especially in the Arab-Israeli conflict were the harness were held by the US.[130] The dialogue was pilled on institutional frames and even if the GMP was seen mainly as a European initiative and not a common policy it signs the beginning of a long-term interaction. In parallel, the Euro-Arab dialogue was also issued in 1973 bringing together the EC and Arab League but each part had different agenda, the EC prioritized economic issues and the Arab countries were more concerned with the political ones.[131] In the end, both initiatives can be perceived as steppingstones in the construction of the Mediterranean region through the interaction with the EC/EU.

The last decade of the Cold War with the EC enlargement (Greece, Spain, and Portugal) and the change of focus towards the Gulf region downsized the importance of the Mediterranean countries on the world stage. Yet, the Mediterranean region was retuned into the EU's focus due to Spain and France's political entrepreneurship within the region which concluded with the Barcelona Process in 1995 establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.[132] This signaled a new benchmark into the new type of relationship envisage by the initiators seeking to transform geographical proximity in actual cooperation beyond the old strategic alliances' borders. The Mediterranean community as it is defined by the Barcelona Process promotes a North-South interconnection, a strategic partnership (Euro-Med Partnership) directed toward a deeper cooperation between the EU member states and the 12 Mediterranean states (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and

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[130] *Ibid.*, p. 86-88.
[131] The European Institute on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation
http://www.medea.be/index.html?page=2&lang=en&doc=55, (accessed on 11 of May 2010)
[132] Bicchi, *European Foreign Policy Making toward the Mediterranean,* p. 164.

Turkey[133]). It was forged on the principle of co-ownership and aiming at transforming the Mediterranean in a stable, secure and prosperous.[134]

But the 'paper project' ignored the fact that the majority of problems (Arab-Israeli conflict, Cyprus question, Yugoslav problem, South-North demarcation line, Israeli-Syrian conflict) were not caused by the Cold War but have more ancient roots.[135] This hijacked the overall process of partnership building as the Mediterranean region was not ready to play as a region, and the EU was not ready to establish an equal partnership but rather an asymmetric one were the EU pulled the strings selectively touching some areas and ignoring others. While the launching of the initiative was enthusiastically received by the Southern neighbours, the 10 years anniversary conference was a political failure.[136] The overall impression is that the EU has not played the cooperative game but rather a hegemonic role toward the neighbours. Moreover, for the EU "regionalism is a policy", a way of promoting its own model across borders.[137] This did not proved to be successful due to several inconsistencies characterizing the EU's behavior.

On the one hand the security discourse of the EU constructed the Mediterranean as a region fraught with "soft security threats", organized crime, immigration, radical Islam and terrorism, weapons of mass destruction which come with a high spillover potential.[138] Even though the Barcelona Declaration sets the legal framework for an equal partnership the therein image of the Mediterranean revolves around the idea of a "troubled space", an under-developed

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[133] The Barcelona Process Declaration, (1995), http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2005/july/tradoc_124236.pdf , (accessed on 12 of May, 2010)
[134] European Commission- DG External Relations webpage, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/barcelona_en.htm, (accessed on 12 of May, 2010)
[135] Evan Anderson and Dominic Fenech, "New Dimensions in Mediterranean Security", in *Mediterranean Politics*, 1st volume, ed. Richard Gillespie, (London: University Press, 1994), p. 11.
[136] Kristina Kausch and Richard Youngs, "The end of the <Euro-Mediterranean vision>", *International Affairs* vol.85, no.5, (2009), p. 964.
[137] Fedeica Bicchi, "Our size fits all: normative power Europe and the Mediterranean", *Journal of European Politics* vol. 13, no. 2, (2006), p. 286-287.
[138] Helle Malmvig, "Caught between cooperation and democratization: the Barcelona process and the EU's double-discursive approach", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 9, no 4 (2006), p. 345.

region with deep social and political problems which are the direct causes for the instability and security challenges spread across the region.[139] Thus, the region-building is unidirectional following EU's political views and not a bidirectional process of common construction between the Southern and Northern coastal countries. The inclusion of the Mediterranean in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004 maintained the EU in the leading position in what is the Mediterranean region-building.[140]

The ENP sidelined the regional approach for more bilateral relations. The revival of the regional approach was brought by the Union for Mediterranean (UfM) advocated by France with the support of Spain and Italy, launched after a series of intra-EU negotiations in 2008.[141] While the previous Euro-Mediterranean Partnership achieved cooperation in low politics issue such as culture, youth exchanges, gender and civil protection, the new UfM was designed to work on the political cooperation and common construction of the region through new co-owned institutions to implement regional and sub-regional projects.[142] Moreover, it adds the EU candidate countries (Turkey, Croatia), potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro) to the region.

The UfM initiative might encounter difficulties due to the lack of strong Southern institutions as dialogue partners and due to large disparities between the EU and Mediterranean states on socio-economic grounds. The lack of political will to surpass the existent tensions affect the possibility of creating a strong intergovernmental institution which could promote intra-regional cooperation and to be a meaningful negotiation partner for the external forces

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[139] *Ibid.*, p. 357-357.
[140] Richard Gillespie, "Union for Mediterranean or for the EU?" in *Mediterranean Politics,* vol. 13, no.2, (2008), p. 279.
[141] *Ibid.*
[142]"Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Taking Stock of the European Neighbourhood Policy" (2010) available from, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/progress2010/com10_207_en.pdf , (accessed on 13 of May, 2010)

involved in the Mediterranean. [143] The Mediterranean is more a "theatre in which interests of great powers come head to head" than a region per se which adds to the geographical confines cultural, political, social and economic common features.[144] Thus we cannot see a cohesive regional unit on behalf of the loose home-grown political intergovernmental institutions.

A quick glance over the societal aspects of the Southern costal states (see Table 2) a well known picture comes ahead especially in GDP per capita and different leading economic areas. Moreover, their main exporting destination is the EU[145] and thus, their GDP depends on a good relation. The similarity comes with the partially and not free political regimes, high rates of fertility, a young population, and also high rates of unemployment. Thus, the region looks more or less the same as at the launching of the Barcelona Initiative, fraught with the same underdevelopment problems, high dependency on one economic sector; unskilled workforce, high poverty rates and high unemployment among the young population (see Table 2). Thus, we can speak of a horizontal demarcation line in the Mediterranean, between North and South overlapping with developmental trends and political liberties.

All in all, the Mediterranean represents can be equated more as a foreign policy initiative of the EU, advocated by France, Spain and Italy, aiming to achieve safe borders and to reduce the levels of threat in its immediate proximity. Thus, the core states are on the Northern coast of Mediterranean. The geographic borders evolved across time (1995-2008) to encompass all the coastal states: EU member states, candidates, potential candidates, and non-members. The main discourse portraying the region is underlining the soft security threats and geo-economic interests regarding oil and gas supplies for the EU's market. Thus the region is constructed by the EU

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[143] Zlatko Š Abič & Ana Bojinovic "Mapping a Regional Institutional Architecture: The Case of the Mediterranean" *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 12, no. 3, (2007), p. 333.
[144] *Ibid.*, p. 318.
[145] CIA World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook, (accessed on 13 of May, 2010)

according to its image of what it is and what it should become. Also the regional institutions are highly dependent on the technical and financial help provided by the EU because the local countries do not have the economic and administrative potential to support them. Yet, the complicated institutional charters do not overcome the lack of political commitment from the participants' side. On the other side of the Mediterranean the included countries do not think of themselves as a community beyond the shared Arab culture, there is no South-South integration.[146] They are engaged in institutional arrangements that divide the Southern coast in two due to different political affinities and priorities. Interconnection between countries advances slowly due to more or less autocratic regimes which do not favourise the free movement of goods and people within their borders. Moreover, the political tensions are vivid and overshadow the attempts for cooperation which made some progress in functional areas. All in all, the Euro-Mediterranean region is a model of low integration whereas the regional dynamics block the process while the external forces play the main role in bringing the parts together.

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[146] EuroMed info: http://www.enpi-info.eu/medportal/news/latest/21762/Major-survey-assesses-successes-and-failures-of-Euro-Med-Partnership, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

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

Indicators / Country	Politics	Economy					Social	
	Civil and political liberties (2003)	GDP per capita (euro) (2006)	FDI inflows % of GDP (2006)	GDP composition per industry% 2009 *			Fertility rate	Unemployment rate 2006
				A.	I.	S.		
Algeria	Partly free	2770	1.54	8.3	**62.5**	29.4	2.32	12.3
Egypt	Not free	1068	8.95	13.1	37.7	49.2	3.10	11.2 (2005)
Israel	Partly free	**15868**	10.39	2.6	32	65.4	2.88	8.4
Jordan	Partly free	1873	23.17	3.7	29.9	66.5	3.20	14.0
Lebanon	Partly free	-	11.75	5.1	18.7	**76.2**	1.90	7.9 (2004)
Morocco	Partly free	1708	3.75	**18.8**	32.6	48.6	2.47	9.7
Palestine Occupied Territory	-	1024**	0.38	5	14	81	4.60	23.6
Syria	Not free	1382	2.01	19	34	47	3.60	8.1
Tunisia	Partly free	2459	10.70	10.9	35	54.1	1.99	14.3
Turkey	Partly free	4400	5.00	9.4	25.9	64.7	2.18	8.4

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

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

2.3 The Black Sea Region

The Black Sea Region is the latest comer as a region on the EU's foreign policy agenda. Its importance grew with the last EU enlargement in 2007 when the first EU initiative was launch covering the Black Sea Region. Until then the major players were Russia and the US competing for their influence over the countries in the area especially over the access to energy resources accessed through the South Caucasian countries.[147] Different opinions have been put forward debating the existence of a real Region around the Black Sea due to its geographical position at the intersection of Europe, Central Asia, and Middle East which splits the local states between different political communities with different agendas. Yet, they all are also members of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which can be seen as the institutional reflection of the whole region. A more comprehensive view inside the dynamics of the region might shed light upon the degree of regionalization. Thus, I will trace the patterns of interaction among the local states and the influence of external forces as factors which contribute or not to the region-building process.

The region is usual assessed as "politically, historically and geographically divided."[148]During the Cold War period the Black Sea was a Soviet sea with the majority of the surrounding countries tied to the Soviet Union as members or satellites.[149] The new order emerged after the Cold War left more leeway to the countries from the region to decide their own foreign policy and redefining their interest and identities. The first locally-driven initiative was

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[147] Anush Begoyan, "United States Policy in the South Caucasus: Securitisation of the Baku: Ceyhan Project" *Iran & the Caucasus* vol. 8, no. 1, (2004), p. 141-155.

[148] Mitat Çelikpala "Security in the Black Sea Region", Policy Report II, The Commission on the Black Sea, (2010), p.5.

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

the emergence of a regional institutional agreement. The BSEC was established in 1992 as a Turkish political initiative to preserve the Westerners interest in the region in light of the new post-Cold War order.[150] There were eleven signatory countries committing to a close economic cooperation: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine joined in 2004 by Serbia and Montenegro.[151] The legal ground were ensured through the adoption of the institutional in 1999 aiming to transform the BSEC in a "regional economic organization" which will ensure the "peace, stability and prosperity" of the region.[152] The BSEC manifested openness toward cooperation with the EU which was granted permanent observer status in 2007, while it was rather reluctant to cooperate with the US which had to deal with an initial refusal of the observer status attained only in 2005 on a renewable basis.[153] The organizational charter issued a rather complex organizational structure covering ministerial, parliamentary, economic, research and educational cooperation through specific institutions and working groups covering a rich agenda. Yet, even so the expected outcomes such as the establishment of a free trade area were blocked by the difficult social, economic and political situation from the area, and especially by the different foreign policy allegiances of local countries.[154] New initiatives emerged at regional and sub-regional level coping with sectoral problems of the area.

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

[151] Celac and Manoli, "Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area" p. 193.

[152] The Charter of the BSEC, available from http://www.bsec-organization.org/documents/LegalDocuments/statutory/charter/Download/CHARTER%20web%20080630.pdf, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

[153] Svetlozar Andreev, "The future of European Neighbourhood Policy and the role of regional cooperation in the Black Sea area", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 8, no.2, (2008), p. 99.

[154] Celac and Manoli, p.196.

In a stop and go mechanism of interaction new regional initiatives emerged: the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group-BLACKSEAFOR (2001)[155] and more recently the Black Sea Border Security (2004), and the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership[156](2006). Moreover, new sub-regional institutions emerged such as: Southeast European Cooperative Initiative[157] (1995) a task force for combating trans-border crime, and the Southeast European Cooperation Process[158] (1996) a forum of political and diplomatic dialogue and Community for Democratic Choice[159] (2005). This division of the Black Sea region in two groups was reinforced by the international actors through their own initiative targeting the region.

The Stability Pact for Southeast Europe[160], an international initiative was launched in 1999 aimed at pacifying the region after the Yugoslavian wars. The post-soviet countries around the Black Sea joined forces an initiated in 1996 the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM)[161] organization which enjoys a strong support from the US as a means to counteract the Russian influence in the new independent countries.[162] Even though the BSEC is mentioned as observer in the majority of them, only a loose cooperation was established, resulting in a "blocking regionalism" and not an "overlapping" one.[163] At the level of

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[155] Turkish regional initiative concerning cooperation on naval issues joined by the coastal states: Romania, Russia Ukraine, Bulgaria and Georgia, official website: http://www.blackseafor.org/english/homepage.php, (accessed on 15 of May, 2010)

[156] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Moldova, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania and Russia, Black Sea Forum website: http://www.blackseaforum.org/index.html, (accessed on 16 of May, 2010)

[157] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey, official website SECI http://www.secicenter.org/index.php, (accessed on 16 of May, 2010)

[158] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia, Montenegro, RSPCSEE official website: http://www.rspcsee.org/, (accessed on 16 of May, 2010)

[159] Ukraine, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Moldova, Slovenia, and Macedonia, Radio Free Europe: http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1063461.html, (accessed on 16 of May, 2010)

[160] Stability Pact for Southeast Europe: http://www.stabilitypact.org/about/default.asp, (accessed on 16 of May, 2010)

[161] Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, GUAM website: http://www.guuam.org/general/browse.html, (accessed on 16 of May, 2010)

[162] Craig Nation, "US interests in the new Eurasia" published by The Strategic Studies Institute of US, (2007), p. 19.

[163] Andreev, "The future of European Neighbourhood Policy and the role of Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea area", p.102.

institutional arrangements we can see a flexible geography of cooperation in the area of Black Sea stretching from the Balkans, to the post-soviet space until the South Caucasus but in a segmented manner of integration. Moreover, all these organization aimed to build states' capacity touching economic and political topics.

The BSEC remains the only organization encompassing all of these countries under the same umbrella. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of membership (EU member states, EU candidate states, post-Soviet republics and Russia) and the large geographical distance among the states is hampering the overall region-building process started by the BSEC due to different political priorities. In fact, the region is divided in several sub-regional organizations which engage in a closer relation with distinct external forces. Moreover, the regional dynamics is portrayed by rivalry among several countries in searching for the leadership position in the area.[164] On the one hand there is Turkey which initiated the BSEC and Russia. On the other hand there are Ukraine and Romania that asserted their position through several regional initiatives.

Conflicts are not scarce in this region, many of them emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War ("frozen conflicts") and other are rooted in history. The region is fraught with "frozen conflicts" which have recently become "hot": Chechnya in Russia, Abkhazia, Adjaria and South Ossetia in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, Transdniester in Republic in Moldova, and Crimea in Ukraine. In each of the cases Russia is common denominator either as a participant or as a mediator, but who uses the conflicts as blackmail tools for limiting the western turn in the foreign policies of the post-soviet republics.[165] Plus the interstate relations are instable especially between Romania-Ukraine, Ukraine-Russia, Armenia-Azerbaijan, and

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[164] Çelikpala, "Security in the Black Sea Region", p.7.
[165] Dmitri Trenin "Russia, the EU and the common neighbourhood" , Essay, UK: Center for European Reform, (2005), p. 5-6.

Turkey-Armenia.[166] These strained relations are not facilitating the process of building trust and deeper cooperation among the local states. In the same vein the rivalry among regional countries starts a competition for the leadership position but no clear winner can be seen.

With the initiating of the BSEC, Turkey wanted for itself the role of "regional stabilizer power" but its strained relations with Bulgaria, Greece and Moldova, its weak economy dependent on Western countries and Russia's reasserted position in the area hampered its final goal.[167] Their rivalry goes way back to eighteen century, it perpetuated during the Cold War when Turkey was the "furthest bulwark of European Security against the Soviet Union".[168] Nevertheless, a rapprochement between Russia and the US in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks opened a possibility for pragmatic partnership between the two regional rivals, Russia and Turkey. [169]This partnership is built on a flourishing bilateral trade and an important energy partnership as a common political assertion of their power in the region in response to the external forces' involvement.[170] Turkish initiative was just one among other regional agreements, among which Russia played also the role of an initiator.

Russia was also active in the early '90s starting several regional cooperation institutional frames. Its initiatives addressed the ex-soviet republics and built the relation based on their economic and security dependence on Russia.[171] The first step was the creation of the

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[166]Sergii Glebov,"<Eastern> Concerns of 'Big Mediterranean': Europeanization, the Black Sea Region and Ukraine" in *Europeanisation and Democratisation. Institutional Adaptation, Conditionality and Democratisation in the EU's Neighbour Countries* ed. Roberto Di Quirico, (Florence: European Press Academic Publishing, 2005), p. 231.
[167] Athanassopoulou "Turkey and the Black Sea Initiative", p. 131-136.
[168] Fiona Hill, "Seismic Shift in Eurasia: The Changing Relationship between Turkey and Russia and its Implication for the South Caucasus" *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies,* vol.3, no3, (2003), p. 56.
[169] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[170] Suat Kiniklioglu & Valeriy Morkva, "An anatomy of Turkish–Russian Relations" in *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* vol. 7, no. 4, (2007), p. 533–553.
[171] Alexander Libman, "Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development" in *Europe-Asia Studies* vol.59, no. 3, (2007), p. 401-430.

Commonwealth of Independent States[172] (CIS) in 1991, and then the Eurasian Economic Community[173] in 2000, both trying to emulate the EU model of economic integration but with few memorable results.[174] On the security area the Collective Security Treaty (CSTO), the "Eurasian NATO" [175], was established in 1992 and redefined in 2003 uniting in a common security vision Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.[176]All these organization promoted top-down integration under the dominance of Russia as the main power among the other participants. Russia pursued also bottom-up integration through economic interconnectedness through investments (mainly in oil and gas industries, power utilities and telecommunications) and trade but neither this was successful.[177]

In the end, the local countries had the chance to engage with the West and especially with the EU in order to reduce the Russian dependency. Armenia and Belarus remained allies of Russia, whereas Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Georgia opened for western influence engaging with the US and the EU.[178] The EU kept a low profile in the area limited to the accession processes of Romania, Bulgaria and negotiations with Turkey and few funds delivered for the post-soviet republics. The multilateral project targeted transport(TRACEEA), energy (INOGATE) and environment(DABLAS) but their outcomes are not satisfying due to a lack of

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[172] Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine,

[173] Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan

[174] Libman, "Regionalisation and Regionalism in the Post-Soviet Space: Current Status and Implications for Institutional Development", p.402-404.

[175] Sergei Markedonov, "Post-Soviet Integration: CST, CSTO, CRRF, etc" in *Open Democracy,* 20 February 2010, available from: http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/sergei-markedonov/post-soviet-integration-cst-csto-crrf-etc-2, (accessed on 17 of May, 2010)

[176] Global Security Organisation: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/csto.htm, (accessed on 17 of May, 2010)

[177] Libman, p. 405-410.

[178] Tanguy de Wilde & Gaëlle Pellon "The implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) on the EU-Russian <Strategic Partnership>" *Helsinki Monitor* vol. 17, no. 2, (2006), p. 128-129.

political support and funds.[179] Nevertheless, in 2003 the Neighbourhood Policy was launch including among the Mediterranean countries also Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. In 2004 the framework was extended to include also the South Caucasus countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The EU's interests in the post-soviet space are security energy and democratization.[180] Yet, its strength to project its power is limited through the ENP due to the lack of membership incentive which worked well with the enlargement policy.[181] Moreover, the ENP continued the bilateral agreements and did not engage with the whole Black Sea region.

The countries around the Black Sea came back on the EU's agenda in 2007 but this time as a region with the launch of the *Black Sea Synergy- A new regional Cooperation Initiative[182]* (BSS). The document is merely a political acknowledgement of the region and its geopolitical and geo-economic importance for the EU as an energy hub. It is used as a framework covering all the existent bilateral agreements between the EU and the states from the area (Romania, Greece and Bulgaria membership, ENP, Accession Treaty with Turkey, and Strategic Partnership with Russia) with no added value. The main topics are energy-transport-environment while conflict resolution is downplayed as a secondary aim. Nevertheless, 2009 is the year of launching the Eastern Partnership (EaP), a new EU's foreign policy instrument targeting only the post-Soviet republics from the Black Sea region: Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. The EaP is portrayed as a "strategic imperative" and a "political investment".[183]It promotes simultaneously bilateral agreements and multilateral policies on four platforms:

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[179] Paul Flenley, "Russia and the EU: The Clash of New Neighbourhoods?" *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* vol. 16, no. 2, (2008), p. 191.
[180] Irina Pop, "Assessment of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the South Caucasus: What the European Union can do?", *Eurolimes* vol. 7, (2009), p. 23.
[181] *Ibid.*, p.24.
[182] EU Commission*:"* Black Sea Synergy- A new regional cooperation Initiative", (2007), available from http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf , (accessed on 30 of March, 2010)
[183] EU Commission: "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Eastern Partnership" (2008), available from http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0823:FIN:EN:PDF, (accessed on 31 of March, 2010)

democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; energy security; and contacts between people. [184] Thus, the initiative marks a closer engagement with these countries, a step toward equalizing the importance assigned to the EU's relations with them with the EU's relation with Russia. Moreover, the EaP's similarity draws it closer to the enlargement policy[185] and this might raise question about the potential membership for these countries.

The energy issue is the common point among the local and external powers. The connection of the Black Sea Region with the Caspian Sea underpins the competition among the big powers for energy resources in which the local states are dragged as transit countries. While the US is merely interested in the South Caucasus countries as direct accession source to energy resources from the Caspian Sea ("Wider Black Sea Region"), the EU addresses also the transit problem through the initiative of integrate all post-Soviet countries into the EU's energy market (EaP). In response, Russia acts toward securing both the source and the transit routs in order to maintain its leverage gained on behalf of its quality as primer supplier of oil and natural gas for the EU. The power game played by the major actors engage the countries from the Black Sea Region in a competition for acquiring the status of transit routes (Nabucco, Blue Stream pipelines).

Thus, the regional dynamics characterized by "frozen conflicts", inter-state conflicts, soft security issues such as organized crime and drug trafficking, weak states, and slow economic development combined with the competition among the big powers for energy resources impede the creation of a unitary and cohesive region around the Black Sea. Moreover, the available data

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[184] "Black Sea Synergy" – Press Release
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/78&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en , (accessed on 2nd of April, 2010)
[185] Michael L. Nash "'The Boldest Outreach': The Eastern Partnership Initiative of the European Union" *Contemporary Review* vol. 293, no 169, (2009), p. 310.

(see Table 3 bellow) show an interconnection on social and economic features among the CIS members from the Black Sea Region. These countries are similar also on the political level with authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes. I omitted Albania, Serbia and Montenegro as they are all included in the Western Balkan group of countries with possibility of EU accession and not part of the ENP. Thus, the EU splits the BSEC local arrangement of the region and concentrates the Black Sea region issues along the line of the post-Soviet republics and their relation with the EU. Thus, even is at political intergovernmental level these countries adopt an anti-Russian stance their economy is tighten to the Russian one and to the other post-Soviet republics.

All in all, the Black Sea Region is in its infancy a best, engaging in a complex relation between local forces' competition and big powers' competition. There are regional and sub-regional organisms but their overall performance is hindered by political allegiances influenced after all by the type of engagement pledged by the big powers. The majority of local organizations are used by the countries as foreign policy tools to declare their political allegiance to one or other big power. Even so, their weakness and low socio-economic development downplays the regional preoccupation for a more individualist approach and self-regard. Nevertheless, the functional cooperation worked even in economic and security matter such as maritime safety and cross-border issues. On institutional level the BSEC enjoys the status of comprehensive organization covering all the states including Russia. The limited conditionality of ENP downplays the role of the EU as the major player, whereas Russia's reasserts its regional position using energy and economy to influence countries' foreign policies. Nevertheless, Poland, Sweden and Baltic States lobby with regard to Ukraine and Moldova's accession to the

EU and to link the Baltic region to the Black Sea Region.[186] This positive lobby might help the

BSR to come closer to the Baltic Sea model of regionalism and distance itself from the

Mediterranean negative image and low level of integration.

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

Table 3: General overview upon the EaP countries

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

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

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

Chapter 3: Comparative analysis

This chapter is assigned to an overall comparative perspective on the three cases of regionalism at the borders of the EU. The comparison highlights similarities and differences of the regional and external dynamics which influence the construction of each region. Having the Nordic and Mediterranean case as referents, the Black Sea case will be analyzed based on its common features shared with each of these two cases. The main points of each case analysis are comprised in Table 4 bellow, and based on this a more detailed analysis follows. The Nordic region covers the NDI countries, the Mediterranean overlaps with the UfM and the Black Sea Region is addressed based on the BSEC members.

Table 4: Comparative Perspective

Region-building aspects	Nordic	Mediterranean	Black Sea
Emergence			
	Common problems	Hegemon	Weak states' strategy
Pre-conditions			
Common history of cooperation	Yes	No	No
Local core states	Finland, Sweden , Norway	Spain, Italy, France, Morocco	Turkey, Russia, Ukraine (rivalry)
Intense socio-economic interregional relations	Transnational, multilateral	Intergovernmental bilateral	Intergovernmental, bilateral and multilateral
Homogeneity (tables)	2 groups	N-S division	2 groups
Functionality			

Institutional arrangement	Not so complicated, merely informal agreements	Externally imposed and supported	Internally developed
Cooperation areas	Environment, nuclear safety, health , business, social welfare, illegal immigration, organized crime	Cultural, education, Economic,	Maritime security, environment, borders security, transport, migration
Trade partners	EU, NDI countries, Russia	EU, US	Russia, EU, CIS
External forces	US , EU	US, EU	US, EU
Role of the EU	Extending the geographical border; Anchoring it into the EU community	Developmental policy, (N-S relations) Extending the geographic limit	Anchoring the space to the EU Deconstruction (Balkans, BSR)
Identity	Transnational, peaceful, economical developed	Fraught with security issue (soft and hard) Instable	Security issues – connected with Russia – EU missions (Georgia, Moldova)
Difficulties	High politics Russia	No relevant institutional partners Lack of consistency on the EU's side	Energy, Power game EU-Russia
Regionalisation direction	Bottom-up & Top-down Internally driven, Externally supported	Top-down Externally driven	Top-down, Internally & Externally driven

As it can be seen from the table the Black Sea Region is positioned in between the two referent cases. On pre-conditions, it sides with the Mediterranean region due to the lack

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of common history of cooperation, and an intergovernmental pattern of interstate relation. Nevertheless, even is the common history of cooperation does not apply to the whole region it does apply to the post-Soviet countries where the Soviet past connects them even today. Moreover, the interstate relations are dominant forms of interaction but at the same time new initiative emerged in different areas which involve multilateral and trans-governmental cooperation (environment, border issues, and maritime safety). At the same time, the BSR shares with the Nordic region the existence of core states and the overall division of the region in two groups (Euro-centric, Russo-centric) due to different economic and political ties. Yet, the core states' rivalry freezes the region-building process in its current stage and contributes to its already existent division in sub-regional institutional arrangements.

On functionality the BSR struggles again in between the two models. It shares with the Mediterranean Region an image of a problematic and instable region which threatens the EU's security: organized crime, illegal immigration, conflicts, and border disputes. Moreover, the external forces exert a major influence on regional dynamics, their involvement or their lack of it triggers the local states in different alliances. Here is notable the EU's inconsistency in the Mediterranean and its lack of commitment in the Eastern border which does not help the countries from the region to rally along the Western community. This aspect is a real troublemaker in assessing the Black Sea region along the Nordic model, where the initial scope was tight to the Baltic States accession into the EU. Even so, the BSR makes some good points in defining itself along the Nordic model.

The BSR presents several home-grown institutional expressions of regionalism as relevant partners for the external forces (mainly BSEC, GUAM). In the same time, The BSR shares with the Nordic region the need to cope with Russia (energy, sphere of influence) and its pretention to reassert it self as a European power. In this regard, both regions depend on the overall EU-Russian partnership. Yet, the Nordic region has managed to build a

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communication line with Russia whereas the BSR struggles caught in between the "gas wars" with no real possibility to exit it on their own. Thus, the EaP is a daring initiative from the EU's side connecting its energy security to the post-Soviet countries' energy security. Nevertheless, the EU's position is not ravishing as its soft power fails to back up the conditionality enforced through bilateral agreements. Coping with this, Romania continues its lobby for the EU's presence in the area and the EaP shows that is not alone in this endeavor.

All in all, the BSR has some assets that can bring it closer to the Nordic model along the Baltic Sea-Black Sea axis of cooperation due to the existence of a genuine regional cooperation on functional levels, internally developed institutions, a growing trade relation with the EU, and EU member states supporting this initiative. While the Arab-Israeli conflict might be too much for the EU to handle the problems in its Eastern neighbourhood might have a common solution within the EU-Russia partnership on European stage. Thus, if the NDI is one dimension of the EU-Russia partnership the BSR might be another one. Thus, the BSR has a genuine potential to grow as region along the Nordic model but not alone. Its anchorage to the EU is essential for building regional trust and stronger states with potential to shape their own region.

Conclusions

The reality of region-building in the Black Sea area is inquired on several dimensions: institutional, social, economic, sense of community and big power competition. Regional initiatives entangle with those of the external actors resulting in a continuous process of defining the region geographically and politically. Its position at the junction of Europe, Middle East and Central Asia contributes to a division of its members in groups more closely interconnected with each of these regions. These social, cultural and economic ties do not overall entirely with the political and institutional image of the area, the BSEC. Moreover, they can be found along the lines of several sub-regional institutional arrangements which divide the BSR in two groups based on their level of interconnection with the EU and Russia. Thus, the BSR represents the common neighbourhood of the two European powers and their overall interaction influences the regionalization patterns.

Nevertheless, the BSR is not the only regionalization process unfolding at the borders of the EU. A short comparative analysis of its case with the other two cases, the Mediterranean region and the Nordic region, can shed some light upon the patterns of regionalisation and potential future outcomes of it. The outcomes of the comparison place the BSR in between the two referent regionalisation models. It shares with the Mediterranean region the negative image of instability and threats which might spillover into the EU, soft and hard security issues and on top of this a tensioned relation among the big power sidelining it. Yet, it bears the seeds of cooperation through common regionally driven institutions, multilateral cooperation in functional areas and new initiatives supporting the economic and social linkage of the region.

Its future evolution toward one or the other models of regionalization depends on the level of commitment coming from the EU's side as a counterbalance of Russia's influence at

the level of external forces. All in all the discussion is whose region is the BSR and who can make use of the local potential of cooperation and support the region building? In this regard the local countries can also drive the process by replacing the rivalry for the ultimate leadership position with a more open stance for mediating a closer relation which can bring more consistency and coherence and thus make the region also a political and economic integrated region. Local political entrepreneurship is essential for binding the BSR to the Nordic or the Mediterranean model and until now the Nordic option stands out. The external forces can support the regional evolutions but is a weak chance of being able to construct it without the basic regional political will. After all, region-building is a process with no clear end point open to new turns and shifts brought up by the interaction of external and local forces.

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