

Chapter 2

Regionalisation as Europe-Making: The Case of Europe's North

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Introduction¹

Despite of being often considered as marginal and taken for an object of international and European politics rather than being seen as a subject with its own constitutive voice, the North has been rather influential since the years of the Cold War. It has clearly punched beyond its own weight, so to say.

Europe's North has not only been caught up by a considerable process of reform and transition but has also been able to impact developments. Not least, this is because out of all the regions of Europe it is arguably in the North where the most progress has been made in pushing politics beyond statist security concerns to embrace the ideas of de-bordering, multiplicity and regionality. Very much in contrast to the Balkans, the North has demonstrated that unleashing local and regional forces can bring about a rather positive outcome. In the post-Cold War period if any region has moved beyond concerns of sovereignty to embrace ideas of a kind of 'fuzzy' neo-medievalism, it is Northern Europe, where a multitude of overlapping spaces of governance and of trans-

¹ This effort of summarising key trends and developments in the case of Europe's North is based on work carried out jointly with Christopher S. Browning, University of Birmingham.

national identities have been forged. As various prominent scholars have noted, Northern Europe has been something of a post-modern playground, where scholars well versed in critical understanding of international politics have played a hands-on role in how the region has developed (Neumann 1994; Wæver 1997).

This, then, raises questions of how Northern Europe will develop in the future. With the EU's dual enlargement and the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), Russia's increased aversion of regionalism, the War on Terrorism and the US efforts of distinguishing between 'old' and 'new' Europeans as well as the return to the fore of questions of security and borders, will the region continue to develop in the rather innovative ways in which it has to date? Or are regional cooperation and the construction of a regional subjectivity actually in danger of being undermined with the new challenges impacting the political agendas and the consequent unfolding of political space?

One of the central concerns, in this regard, relates to the attitudes of the different states of the region towards continuing to develop regional cooperation as well as the EU having itself changed footing in the sense of now having a neighbourhood policy of its own with clear-cut ambitions of generalisation. Instead of passively allowing regionality to gain importance (with members, associated states and non-members part of the same regional constellation organised basically on equal and non-centric terms) and in striving to impose a rather centralised pattern of constructing Europe both in time and space, will the EU step in more forcefully also in the North in order to compel it to become part of an increasingly concentric overall configuration, one based on a quite distinct and hierarchic separation between the core and the periphery? The nucleus would, in the latter case, consist of the 'old' European states with the rest encircling the core premised on their spatial as well as temporal distance to the nucleus. They would come in circles pending on whether they are categorised as newcomers, applicants, associate members, privileged partners or simply outsiders. Is the North to be 'normalised' in this context or will the features of alternative non-centred space prevail with the North being considered as a 'centre' in its own right among other potentially similar formations?

1. The Dual Enlargement and the North

For a start, it is worth reflecting on northern Europe during the 1990s. In general, the 1990s was a period of innovation and rather rapid regionalisation in northern Europe. With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union the confines and divides of the Cold War period that had largely constrained interactions within the region (especially between the Baltic Sea's north-western and south-eastern shores) were replaced by a sense of openness and adventure. Amongst the political community, and not least amongst academics, there was a certain amount of idealism present that the old divides and suspicions could be replaced by building a new sense of regional community in northern Europe (see Möller 2005; Browning 2005a). In particular, foreign policy intellectuals inspired by the Constructivist/Reflectivist turn in the social sciences, played a notable role in providing the knowledge that was used to support various region building projects, with such intellectuals drawing on historical examples (Hansa region, Pomor trade) in order to naturalise common regional identities in the present (also see Browning 2003c: 6–7, 52–5; Neumann 1994: 67).

However, such idealism was not confined to the intellectual and political elite (cf. Stålvant 2005; Joenniemi 2005). Civil society in the form of NGOs, local municipalities and cities also became engaged in a multitude of transnational linkages, particularly between the Nordic and Baltic States, and with a particular focus on cultural exchanges, but also on charity and self-sacrifice on the part of the Nordic partners. Thus, twinning arrangements also became a channel for humanitarian aid and technical development assistance, and not just for (re)-establishing cultural linkages (also see Bergman 2004).

Alongside such idealism, underlying much of this idealism there was also a more security-oriented concern with creating stability within northern Europe (Archer 2005). This became of enhanced concern in the early-1990s following the break-up of Yugoslavia and concerns that the Baltic Sea Region should not turn into a northern Balkans. In this respect, questions of security became rather conducive to promoting cooperation and regionalisation in the north. This is interesting in that, for the most part, during the Cold War questions of 'security' were a reason to avoid too much interaction. During the Cold War security was generally

understood in the statist and zero-sum terms of Realism that places primary emphasis on self-sufficiency as the best security strategy (Waltz 1979: 118). Whilst cooperation was obviously limited across the East-West divide, this also tended to hinder cooperation more generally. Thus, intra-Nordic cooperation never extended to the realms of security and defence, primarily in deference to Soviet warnings that moves in such a direction would be viewed as aggressive and threatening.

In the post-Cold War period, however, security has become a reason precisely to cooperate. In the northern context there have been two elements to this.² First, for the Baltic States and Poland, traditional Realist concerns of alliance building against a possible resurgent Russian threat have been evident. In this respect, linking in with regional cooperation projects promoted by the Nordic countries and Germany was seen as one way of escaping the Russian sphere of influence, whilst at the same time making them eligible for future EU and NATO membership. Thus, the 1990s discourse of 'returning to Europe' was always understood as leaving something threatening and 'non/less-European' (Russia) behind (see Jæger 1997).

Second, however, throughout the 1990s there has also been a strong emphasis on more Liberal Institutional approaches to security. Instead of an emphasis on zero-sum gains, security has been reconfigured and represented in terms of ideas of cooperative, collective and comprehensive security (Archer 2005). This has reflected a dual realisation: first, that state security is best achieved through building trust with each other and; second, that with the end of the Cold War a range of new and pressing 'soft security' issues which appeared on the regional agenda (e.g. economic, environmental, social and public health issues) simply could only be effectively tackled through cooperative action. Indeed, throughout the 1990s the Nordic States and Germany (and later the EU) promoted a certain strategic blurring between these Realist and Liberalist dimensions of security, with the (liberalist) belief being that by promoting cooperation over common 'soft security' issues, qualitative gains might also be made in the 'hard security' realm by fostering trust and cooperative relationships between Russia and the Baltic States, and between Russia and its Western neighbours more generally. The institutionalist element to

² For a more developed version of the following argument see Browning and Joenniemi (2004b).

this approach became clearest in the creation of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) (1992), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (1993) and the Arctic Council (1996), as fora for dialogue between the states and various other entities within the region, but also as (potential) symbols of shared interests and identities.

A final thing to note in this context of the focus on regionalisation, idealism and stabilisation during the 1990s is that for much of the period the EU's approach to the region remained rather limited. That is to say that whilst the EU's presence in northern Europe did increase markedly with Finland's and Sweden's membership in 1995, the EU was slow in developing a distinct approach and set of policies towards the region. The furthest the EU went in this regard was the 1996 Baltic Sea Region Initiative (Commission of the European Communities 1996), which was rather limited in essence. As such, the EU's northern members (and northern actors more generally) were provided with considerable space and opportunity to shape the EU's northern agenda, a task most notably taken on by Finland with its 1997 proposals for the Northern Dimension (ND) initiative. Similarly, it should also be noted that the United States was also supportive of Nordic-inspired regional cooperation initiatives in northern Europe. Indeed, the United States was perhaps surprisingly supportive of some of the 'myth-making' dimensions of regional cooperation that were designed to build a sense of common purpose and identity in the region.³ The American strategy, which was originally laid out in 1996 by Asmus and Nurick (1996), and which was officially launched under the title of the Northern European Initiative (NEI) in 1997, was designed to maintain a low American profile in northern Europe whilst promoting the security of the Baltic States in view of the first round of NATO enlargement to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Whereas highly visible American actions in the region, and in particular towards parts of the former Soviet space (i.e. the Baltic States), were seen as only likely to provoke Russia, promoting regional cooperation at the soft security level and encouraging the Nordic countries to take the lead in this regard was seen as much more profitable. Indeed, at its most ambitious American policy-makers even talked of northern Europe as a laboratory for experimenting with developing a new West-Russia

³ For an excellent example see the speech by Derek Shearer (1997), the then American Ambassador to Finland.

relationship more generally.⁴ The overall point being, however, that in quite different ways the EU and the United States created space for northern actors to take the lead and set the agenda of regional cooperation in the north.

2. The Impact of Enlargement

Bearing these points in mind, what impact are the dual enlargement and the War on Terrorism likely to have on regional cooperation in northern Europe in the future? It seems that with the War on Terrorism, regional security threats are being replaced by a more global agenda, and as NATO members the Baltic States will now be dealing with Russia as a strategic partner in the fight against terrorism and trans-national crime, instead of seeing it simply as a potential territorial threat. Bearing in mind that throughout the 1990s ‘security’ has been something of a driver of regional cooperation, this raises the question of what will happen to regional dynamics as traditional statist security matters become of less concern in the region.

At this level there are reasons to think that future regionalisation may well be in trouble, since with the security-rationale less important the states of the region may become less interested in it. In the last couple of years signs of such an attitude have become evident, not least with a certain running down of the CBSS (which has announced it will reduce the frequency of its summit meetings) (Dauchert 2004), with Sweden’s phasing out of its Baltic Sea Billions funds, and also with the United States revamping its NEI policy into the much less ambitious (and seemingly less well financed)⁵ enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE). It appears, in this regard, that the homogenising myths of region building in the 1990s—that aimed to build a common sense of northern subjectivity around rather one-dimensional historical narratives that undermined the acceptability of differences in regional interpretations of history—have not been as successful at constructing a sense of common identity as initially anticipated. Rather to the contrary, the countries of the region seem to be clearly apart from each other with mainly the Nordic

⁴ For more detailed analyses of American policy towards northern Europe in the 1990s see Browning (2001, 2003a) and Rhodes (2000).

⁵ For example, see Conley (2003), in which no mention of new financing is made.

countries staying with the previous policy with stress on region-building.

Similarly, there is the question of whether the adoption in the 1990s of a Liberal Institutional agenda by the Baltic States represented a genuine acceptance of such ideas, or whether it was done for purely geo-strategic reasons in order to meet the EU's and NATO's membership criteria. The answer to this will become apparent in due course, but there are two elements worth considering in this respect. First, there is the question of the extent to which the Baltic States saw participation in regionalisation projects in the north as a way to gain access to the EU and NATO and whether, now that they have membership, and therefore direct access, they will any longer devote the same attention to regional cooperation as previously. Second, it is also worth taking note of Russian criticisms since the Baltic States' membership of NATO, and their membership (with Poland) of the EU, that these states are trying to influence these organisations into adopting a tougher stance towards Russia, thereby indicating that the Baltic States' acceptance of a Liberal Institutional approach in the 1990s was simply a strategic guise hiding a more Realist agenda.⁶ Whilst there may be some truth in this, it should also be remembered that throughout the 1990s Russia also played up criticisms of the Baltic States and emphasised what they saw as their anti-Russian tendencies in order to push other agendas, not least in order to try and stall the NATO enlargement process, and to try and gain various concessions from the West.

Finally, it is also worth reflecting a little more on what effect the War on Terrorism has had on northern Europe, and how this may potentially undermine regional cooperation in the future. In this respect, the disagreements that emerged in transatlantic relations over the war in Iraq, and more particularly related to the distinction drawn between New and Old Europe by Donald Rumsfeld (*BBC Online* 23 Jan. 2003; Rumsfeld 2003) have been particularly notable, with northern Europe becoming divided along somewhat different axes to what we have become accustomed. On the one hand, there have been the Baltic States, Denmark, Poland, and not least Russia that fell in behind the United States. On the other hand, there have been Germany, Finland, Norway and Sweden who,

⁶ Notably, Sergei Yastrzhembski, a special representative of President Vladimir Putin, has also included Denmark and Finland as part of an emerging 'Russophobic' bloc within the EU (see *Helsingin Sanomat International Edition*, 8 December 2004).

to varying degrees, adopted much more critical approaches. In a sense, the issue here is a question of the extent to which this New/Old Europe distinction will become important in framing European politics in the future. To the extent that it does this may well undermine regional dynamics as states begin to align ever more with those in other parts of Europe sharing their views.

At the same time, in northern Europe the New/Old Europe split transcends the War on Terrorism to also include economic elements that may actually be a cause of considerable competition in the region. This is most notable in that whilst the Nordic countries may have been rather successful in exporting Liberal Institutional ideas of security to the Baltic States, they have been far less successful in exporting their 'third way' egalitarian social democratic economic model. In contrast, the Baltic States have rather become champions of a more neo-liberal, Anglo-American conception of capitalism that some in the Nordic countries find distinctly threatening (Lehti 2004).

These pessimistic views regarding the future of regional cooperation in northern Europe following the dual enlargements, however, can also be contrasted with more optimistic arguments that have appeared in the debate. For example, if a shift from a period of 'stabilisation' to one of 'normalisation' is taking place then this indicates that a certain level of desecuritisation (Wæver 1995) has been achieved. Indeed, in this context it seems that northern Europe has rather successfully managed to transform itself into a security community (Deutsch et al. 1957), and might even be on the trajectory to become part of a future expanded Nordic '(a) security community', a description used by Joenniemi (2003) to refer to the fact that in relations between the Nordic states traditional security questions are simply not on the agenda. In other words, with the major security issues seemingly resolved it might be argued that there is an enhanced possibility that region building might shift further away from the state towards municipalities, cities and other trans-national actors. Or put another way, with much of northern Europe now members of the EU (and with Norway integrated into the EU through its EEA agreement), the region has become ensconced within the EU's common social and economic spaces, with the result being that regionalisation shifts away from state directed activities to more local levels. Meanwhile, even though Russia remains a problem in this regard, not least being excluded by the Schengen visa regime, Moscow is also pushing its own 'common spaces'

agenda with the EU.

3. The North and the Construction of European Political Space

So, having reflected on changing developments within northern Europe in the context of the War on Terrorism and the dual enlargement of the EU and NATO we now need to analyse how developments in northern Europe since the end of the Cold War have impacted on Europe more generally. At the same time, there is also a need to reflect on changing EU approaches towards the region and how this is in turn impacting on what is possible there.

To start with the first issue, it seems that even marginal and peripheral regions like northern Europe are able to ‘bite back’ and to have an impact on the ways in which European (and Russian) political space has, can and will develop. It is simply enough to here note Parker’s (2000) argument that being on the margins and edges of an entity can provide the margin with significant resources to define the nature of the boundary between the inside and outside of a particular territorial entity, thereby impacting on the nature of the entity in question. In the case of the north, the fact that the region includes a border between the EU and Russia has been particularly notable in this regard. Throughout the 1990s, in the north this border (and the more general problems of the region) was understood as a challenge to be overcome. Since the EU’s approach to northern Europe throughout much of the 1990s was largely passive it was the northern actors themselves who began to take the lead in developing regional and cross-border cooperation. This was especially the case along the Finnish-Russian border, where cross-border cooperation was facilitated via the Nearby Region Agreement signed between Finland and Russia in 1992. This permitted municipalities on either side of the border to engage in cooperative dialogue outside of the states’ direct control (Eskelinen, Haapanen and Druzhinin 1999: 333; Tikkanen and Käkönen 1997: 169–70). As such, when the EU enlarged to include Finland and Sweden in 1995 it incorporated a new external border with Russia along which cross-border interaction was becoming increasingly common.

Beyond this, however, it should also be noted that there was considerable recognition on the part of northern actors that activism in

northern Europe could also have a much broader impact on the EU. The north has sometimes been presented as a 'blank space' upon which new stories of European identity that transcend East-West divides might be written. Likewise, Ojanen (1999) has argued that Finland's ND initiative should be seen as a rather successful attempt by Finland to 'customise' the EU, to make the EU more Finnish/northern by orienting it towards northern concerns, but also by framing just what those concerns should be understood to be and providing a framework laying out just what types of solutions might be considered. At a time when the EU was rather reluctant to engage with its new neighbour, through the ND it was all of a sudden presented with the question of just how to think of its new common border with Russia. Whilst many EU members were in favour of relatively closed borders, Finland was instead promoting active regional and cross-border cooperation in order to avoid Russia's isolation, and a policy that actually called for providing Russia with an equal voice in elements of EU policy formulation. However, Russia's northern regions have also at times caused similar headaches for Moscow regarding how to think about Russia as a political entity and how to conceptualise the nature of its borders (Sergounin [Sergunin] 2005).

Whilst it is going too far to say that the north has become a post-modern playground for neo-medievalist visions, it is certainly the case that the north has posed challenges for how we think about European politics, and for how the EU and Russia conceptualise political space and their relations with each other and other neighbours. In this respect, the north has, at times, been seen as a resource. The fact that the region did not implode like the Balkans, but rather managed to deal with a range of potentially conflictual issues in peaceful ways, and in the process became one of the most regionalised parts of Europe, has meant that it has stood out as something of an exception. Consequently, the idea that there might be lessons to be learned from the northern experience has become quite widespread. As noted, for example, the United States has explicitly spoken about northern Europe as a 'laboratory' for experimenting with new forms of governance, and has more recently suggested that the Baltic model might be thought about in the context of the problems of the Caucasus and Central Asia (Ries 2002). Similarly, the EU has actually identified two northern models: the EEA and the ND. Both of these have been seen as offering insights regarding how the EU should approach its near neighbours, with the ND being seen as a potential model for the EU's

new ENP, and Norway's EEA experience most recently being spoken about as a possible alternative to Turkish membership of the Union (Vahl 2005). In this context then, it might be concluded that since the end of the Cold War northern Europe, a region usually considered as something of a marginal area in European politics, has been punching above its weight when it comes to shaping the development of European political space.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that these dynamics go in just one direction. Thus, whilst there have been clear issues raised by northern developments that impact on the developing nature of Europe, it should also be noted that developments elsewhere in turn constrain just what that impact may be. Most notable in this context is the growing tendency of the EU, in the face of its recent enlargement, to turn its back on regionalised approaches to dealing with its near neighbours, in favour of a much more centralised agenda. Therefore, despite reference to the ND in the ENP, the ENP does not seem to be in the same spirit as its northern counterpart (see Vahl 2005). This is not least evident in that it basically precludes outsiders from having an equal voice in policy formulation and agenda setting (also see Browning and Joenniemi 2003). Moreover, if anything it rather seems that the ND will in future become somewhat subordinated to the more centralised ENP. One reason for this is that as a result of EU enlargement the ND is increasingly becoming focused around the EU-Russia axis, the consequence being that the policy is increasingly seen as just one instrument in EU-Russian relations, rather than as being a regional instrument. Moreover, the fact that since enlargement EU-Russian relations have not been working well, and have increasingly become focused around bilateral discussions between Brussels and Moscow, has also constrained what is possible through the ND. Put another way, at least for the moment it seems that the space available for heterogeneous approaches along the EU's borders is becoming more limited. Meanwhile, and as demonstrated by Prozorov, much the same dynamic also appears evident in Putin's attempts to wrest power away from Russia's regions and to assert the 'power vertical'.

4. The EU and the Internal/External Security Paradox

In sum then, a tension exists between processes of regionalisation in northern Europe and attempts on the part of the EU and Russia to

construct their territorial and political subjectivities in rather more unified terms. Broadly speaking, this tension might be characterised in terms of competing *modernist* and *post-modernist* approaches to political space and governance, where postmodernism stands for multiplicity and heterogeneity, and modernism for standardisation and universalism. More specifically, however, it can also be argued that both the EU and Russia find themselves trapped in what we might term the ‘internal/external security paradox’. According to this paradox external security would seem to support taking a more relaxed approach to regionalisation and embracing external borders as opportunities for exploration and interaction. In contrast, though, the concerns of internal security on the part of both the EU and Moscow rather tend to promote a fear of regionalisation and the conceptualisation of external borders as problems and as lines of exclusion. In this and the following section, therefore, we will briefly illustrate how this paradox can be seen in both the attitudes of the EU and Russia, and as such also demonstrating why it is that northern Europe provides considerable challenges to how political space is constructed in the EU and Russia, and in Europe more generally.

In the case of the EU the issue at hand is also one of identity, where the EU’s *raison d’être* has often been understood as that of being a peace project with a mission to prevent a return to the fractious politics of the inter-war period (see Wæver 1996). In undertaking this mission the EU has generally adopted policies aimed at undermining the significance of borders between its member states, and has seen enlargement as a process of expanding Europe’s area of freedom, security, prosperity and justice, by constructing a new European order no longer built around the concerns of power politics (Prodi cited in Grabbe 2000: 519). Indeed, within the Union the aim has been one of doing away with borders in favour of creating a space that can be easily traversed by flows of capital, goods and people. Moreover, there has also been a desire to avoid the emergence of sharp and divisive boundaries at the outer edges of the Union, and which largely explains the variety of arrangements the EU has negotiated with various partners in order to ameliorate the effects of exclusion from membership.

Increasingly, however, the effort of establishing internal freedoms has been accompanied by growing anxieties about the ability of the external borders to keep out various ills such as transnational crime, illegal immigration and terrorism (see Andreas and Snyder 2000; Geddes

1999). It is in this context that the EU has begun moving towards the view that it needs to have an all-encompassing and continuous external border that operates on the basis of a uniform set of departures. This aim for more standardised policies has been evident in the context of the recent eastern enlargement, where the applicant countries/new members have been expected to apply the Schengen *acquis* in full, with very little flexibility in the application of Schengen being foreseen (see Den Boer 2002). Similarly, the instigation of the ENP can also be read as an attempt to curtail the multiplicity currently evident in the EU's policies towards its near neighbours, and to instead provide some sense of future standardisation and to concentrate decision making back in Brussels. These are all efforts that are likely to undermine regionalisation processes and that instead promote a rather modernist understanding of the EU as a political entity with clearly defined borders between inside and outside.

In the case of northern Europe these dynamics in EU practices have been most obviously apparent in its approaches towards Russia's Kaliningrad *oblast*, which with the recent enlargement has become (with the exception of its Baltic Sea coastline) surrounded by the EU. In the Kaliningrad case the EU is struggling with two apparently conflicting aims. On the one hand, it wants to prevent the infiltration of crime and illegal immigration from the Russian enclave in order that it might preserve its own internal freedoms. On the other hand, however, it also wants to enhance the Union's external security by developing its relationship with Russia. The tension arises in that preserving *internal security* is seen to require a strict border regime with Kaliningrad in order to prevent the infiltration of unwanted elements into the Union. However, the negative effects of EU enlargement on Kaliningrad, in terms of restricting Kaliningraders' freedom of movement and undermining the regional economy as a result of the imposition of EU standards and of the impact of the Schengen visa regime in restricting the activities of cross-border shuttle-traders, has threatened to destabilise the EU's relations with Russia.⁷ Thus, it is argued that in order to foster *external security* and preserve the EU-Russian relationship, the border with Kaliningrad should be relatively open and porous with the semi-integration of Kaliningrad

⁷ On the problems that EU enlargement will cause for Kaliningrad see Baxendale, Dewar and Gowan (2000) and Fairlie and Sergounin [Sergunin] (2001). For a more detailed exposition of the current argument see Browning (2003b).

into the EU space, perhaps in a manner similar to that of Norway. However, preserving external security through opening up the Union's external border is seen to undermine internal societal security. In this context, the Kaliningrad question has become one of how best to manage these contradictory demands, of how to manage this boundary rather than of how to overcome it, whilst critics of the Schengen regime tend to argue that the balance has fallen too far in favour of internal security (Huisman 2002: 6–7).

Thus, whilst the EU has conceptualised itself as a peace project and has rather successfully managed, through promoting cross-border networks and multiple overlapping local, regional and European identities, to overcome amongst its members the problems caused by the exclusive nationalisms of the past, when it comes to its external borders the Union remains stuck in rather modernist ways of thinking. As such, the outside remains seen as unstable and potentially threatening, with the security of insiders and outsiders seen as disconnected by claiming that the outsiders have to sort out their own problems. Thus, the Union's peace-policies, in their original form, are restricted to the internal sphere and not seen as applicable in a more general sense and therefore are not to be unquestioningly extended to the nearby regions.

In this context, in which clear distinctions are being drawn between insiders and outsiders, localised and regionalised solutions (as, for example, envisaged in the ND) are seen as potentially opening the EU to contamination, in this case from Kaliningrad. Instead, the alternative option is to press for uniform and unambiguous policies such as the ENP and to try and shift the locus of EU-Russian relations to bilateral discussions between Brussels and Moscow. In such a modernist frame of reference the external borders remain conceptualised as a first line of defence. However, the consequence of this perceptual frame may actually be to undermine peace and stability in Europe.

In order for the EU to be faithful to its peace mission, different (post-modern/post-sovereign) conceptual lenses would be required that would embrace a much more regionalised approach to European governance in general. It would also require significantly rethinking the nature of the EU's subjectivity by accepting and encouraging action from the margins. The current perceptual frame of reference of the internal/external security paradox, however, instead reproduces rather modernist understandings of subjectivity, central to which is the notion that subjects require clearly

demarcated territorial spaces and borders over which they exercise sovereign control. In turn this conflation of identity, territory and sovereignty tends to lead to the reification of selfhood to the negative characterisation of those outside the borders of the EU as potential threats to the EU's security. Consequently, there is little space for outsiders to join in the construction of an integration-related Europe and gain subjectivity and a legitimate voice in the constitutive discourses pertaining to the configuration that unfolds.

It seems clear, against this background, that the idea of the EU as a peace project comes mentally to a halt, and remains restricted to the internal sphere. Consequently, the Union is not able to project its peace-related identity across the new borders. This shortcoming and restraint shows itself clearly in the case of Kaliningrad, but has implications for the discourse on borders with Russia more generally, with the Union basically treating Russia as a rather monolithic entity. It is no surprise, therefore, that the Union has thus far refrained from developing any regionalising policies in relation to the relevant Russian regions in the north, such as Karelia, Pskov, St. Petersburg, the Leningrad region, as well as Murmansk.

5. Russia and the Internal/External Security Paradox

More briefly, a similar internal/external security paradox can also be identified in the case of Russia. Again, and as with the EU, a certain duality can also be traced in Russian views on national identity, political space and how to think about borders. In the first instance, there is clearly a rather strong modernist legacy in Russian thinking that emphasises the need for strict territorial control and that draws a close link between national identity and the territorial state (see Trenin 2002, 2005). In this way of thinking national identity is elevated above other alternatives, thereby leaving little tolerance for any overlapping, loosely bordered spaces (Morozov 2002: 42). It is notable, therefore, that the Russian administration has tended to be suspicious of the concepts of globalisation and regionalisation. Preoccupied with consolidating Russian sovereignty following the end of the Cold War many Russian leaders have understood globalisation and regionalisation to be part of a subtle Western attempt designed to further marginalise Russia in world affairs, and perhaps even as aimed at promoting its further disintegration (Haukkala 2001: 8–9;

Makarychev 2000: 26–7). In contrast to decentralisation, it has rather been felt that a strong centralised state is essential in order to keep Russia's diverse ethnic groups and territorial spaces together. Thus, throughout the 1990s, Moscow became increasingly concerned at the growing power of some of the regions *vis-à-vis* the centre, fearing that this was a prelude to separatist ambitions. Putin's federal reforms reasserting the 'power vertical' can be seen as a direct response to these concerns, and that are aimed at consolidating Moscow's control over the regions and borders of Russia.

Most recently, the prevalence of traditional geopolitical thinking has been evident in the spat between the EU/West and Russia over the Ukrainian presidential elections towards the end of 2004. Many Russian (but also European) leaders clearly saw the dispute over who the rightful winner actually was, as being a matter of whether or not Ukraine is moving outside the Russian sphere of influence. If it makes sense to think of the EU as having imperial characteristics and tendencies, then it seems that Russia's fear is that it is being steadily pushed to the edges of European political space, and remains destined to be excluded (see Browning 2005a). In this context, it is also worth noting the tendency that exists in Russian discourses on Europe to draw a distinction between *True* and *False* Europes. As Morozov (2004, 2005) has pointed out, according to this way of thinking Russia represents 'true' European values that are primarily built around ideas of the territorially sovereign nation-state. This contrasts with the de-bordering, post-modernising project of the 'False' Europe of EU projections. Whilst such a discourse enables Russia to locate itself at the normative heart of a particular reading of Europeanness, the Europe projected in the discourse is one that leaves little space for engaging in projects of regionalisation and cross-border cooperation. Indeed, it seems that Russia is, to some extent, excluding itself from the major developments in European governance (see Prozorov 2005).

However, alongside these rather modernist elements that result in regionalisation being viewed as an external threat to the territorial integrity of Russia, there are also contradictory tendencies present. Despite apparent efforts to keep European regionalisation at a distance, Russia has also at times taken a much more proactive stance, particularly in northern Europe. The fact that some 50 per cent of Russia's foreign trade is now with the EU means that isolating Russia is not a realistic goal. In a sense, Russia simply has to engage with the regionalising and

globalising EU. As noted, in this context it is precisely in northern Europe that Russia has felt able to experiment to some extent with ideas of regionalisation and decentralisation that ultimately would entail rethinking dominant conceptions of Russia and the nature of Russian political space.

On the one hand, the ND has been seen as a positive development, even described by Deputy Prime Minister, Viktor Khristenko (2001), as a 'brave political experiment' calling for 'unconventional decisions' promoting sub-regional cooperation that ultimately might develop into 'a common European social and economic space'. The one complaint, however, has been that in practice Russia has not been given the equal voice in policy formulation originally planned for in the initiative. However, it has been with regard to Kaliningrad that some of the most interesting interventions have been made, most notably the 1999 suggestion that Kaliningrad could become a 'pilot region' in the development of EU-Russian relations. Moreover, actors within the Kaliningrad regional administration have also called for Kaliningrad's greater internationalisation and for its partial inclusion within the EU's economic space, in ways similar to Norway's EEA arrangement. However, the tensions and the internal/external security paradox that Kaliningrad poses for the EU are also evident for Russia in this case. Thus, alongside such openness and various innovative suggestions, there have also been periods of backlash and recurrent emphasis made to the fact that the territorial sovereignty of Russia in the case of Kaliningrad cannot be tampered with.⁸ Thus, it has been in northern Europe, perhaps more than anywhere else that different visions for the future configuration of European political space, and of the identities and subjectivities of the EU and Russia, have been most clearly evident.

Conclusion: Future Visions/Models

In a broad perspective, the dynamism that originated with the regional and local actors seems to have to some extent stalled in Europe's North, although the various institutions established are still there and continue to yield results. In some cases the structures have even expanded, as indicated by the fact that between 2003 and 2004 two more Europe-

⁸ For an analysis of the different discourses surrounding the Kaliningrad issue see Browning and Joenniemi (2004a).

regions were established, one in Kaliningrad (between Russia, Poland and Lithuania and Latvia) and another one in Pskov (Russia and Estonia). It appears obvious, however, that Northern Europe is not on its way to spearheading the unfolding of a rather regionalised European configuration, an idea sometimes described in terms of a Europe of Olympic Rings, i.e. a configuration different from the ENP-related centre-periphery based pattern. A demise in ‘indigenous’ region-building is discernible—to the extent that it was there in the first place—and instead the initiative appears to rest increasingly with the EU in a rather centralised manner, this then speaking for a concentric rather than de-centred European configuration. This is not to say that region-building is coming to an end, but that to the extent that it moves forward, it will reflect a standardised EU-approach with relatively scant space for deviations and peculiarities. In fact, the logics underpinning for example the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI) and that of the ENP are clearly different, and if the NDI is brought into the purview of the ENP, it will distinctly change in character.

The political order emerging in Northern Europe is increasingly an EU-based one and it appears that Russia is also largely able to live with such a development. However, for Russia the important question appears to be whether within that order it gets positioned as an outsider, or if it can aspire for and acquire the position of being a ‘close outsider’, or in some spheres even a kind of ‘semi-insider’ with a voice that to some extent carries even in matters that are basically internal to the EU. As to the ENP, Russia has positioned itself as an outsider but stresses that it is nonetheless a kind of ‘special partner’ with a status of its own. The importance of the energy dialogue, Russia’s position in view of various issues in the sphere of security that are also important for the EU, as well as Kaliningrad’s posture as a ‘little Russia in the sphere of EU’s policies’, all provide inroads that allow Russia to bolster its weight and influence in European developments.

With regionalisation still a prominent feature of the political, economic and cultural landscape in Northern Europe, but increasingly reflecting dynamics of the Union’s core as well as developments along the EU-Russia axis and disagreements between the various EU-members of the region, what is the best way to visualise the unfolding pattern?

In this respect, something is obviously needed between the models and visions of a concentric Europe and that of the Olympic Rings. One

suggestion could be to think of a configuration with two cores, Brussels and Moscow. Within this pattern, strong centredness would not constitute a hindrance to regionalisation, but would rather be a precondition for such a development. In contrast to much recent analysis which tends to perceive centredness as undermining any serious efforts of region-building, the reading could be that it is rather to be seen as a precondition for regionalisation to unfold. The relationship is not either-or, but one of both-and.

If seen in this, less polarised light, Europe's North could still be seen as a kind of testing ground and experimental area. It exemplifies that two constitutive principles—that of a sovereign core and the one pertaining to regionality—can in fact coexist and jointly shape the unfolding of post-Cold War Europe. Northern Europe stands out among the different parts of Europe as the sphere where the cores are able to lean on and buy into a departure that is usually seen as standing in outright opposition to the rule of the core. On a more theoretical level Europe's North invites an analysis that is premised on a broader repertoire of options that just of a concentric Europe and the one pertaining to the Europe of the Olympic Rings. In other words, it calls for analytical approaches that do not categorically play constitutive departures such as sovereignty and regionality against each other from the very outset, but that rather aspire to go beyond such a bifurcated approach.

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