RUSSIA'S PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK SEA REGIONALISM

The Black Sea Region is between two competing spatial orders, that of the EU/ Europe and that of Russia/CIS. A "counter-coalition to Russia" is being formed in this region. It is an academic truism to speculate about "fuzzy borders" of the EU; yet the contours and shapes of Russian spatial order are also not that simple. The ambiguity stems from numerous nationalist voices in Russia questioning the belonging of Crimea to Ukraine, as well as from the existence of sizeable communities of Russian citizens in Transnistria, Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia. The closer EU and Russia get to each other geographically, the more conflictual the relations between them tend to become. If the coalition against Russia is successful, it might lift Ukraine to the status of regional power and, conversely, drag Russia down from the level of great power to that of regional power. Under this scenario, the idea of a Moscow-led "second, non-Western Europe" (to include Russia itself along with Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and even some Balkan countries) advocated by some Russian intellectuals, will definitely fail.

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Among a variety of constructivist interpretations of region-building, two particular approaches deserve special attention for analyzing the developments in the Black Sea region (BSR).

The first approach connotes with what might be dubbed "New Regionalism." Contributing to the "New Europe" debate, the allegedly novel type of regionality challenges those views that stick to rather fixed, centralist and security-geared frameworks of analysis. This post-sovereign/ post-structuralist pattern of regionalism violates uniformity, supports ambiguity, and encourages rather than penalizes the crossing of borders and the transcending of hierarchies. It increases the tolerance for diversity, variance, decentralization and fragmentation. As Pertti Joenniemi puts it, too much control, regulation and structuring could destroy the inspiring and emancipatory aspects of regionality.[1] In his view, the network-based "neo-regionalism" produces ambivalence and plurality rather than clarity and order. Therefore, the regional cooperation is not only spontaneous and impulsive, but –what is of utmost importance– is inclusive as well, since it blurs the boundaries between the inside and the outside.

An alternative approach is grounded in the idea of Regional Security Complexes (RSCs) introduced by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever. At the center of their theory is a variety of "security regions" as international subsystems where most of the security interaction is internal. Therefore, the difference between the inside and the outside appears to play the key role in this conceptualization of regionalism. Unlike the first approach, the second one argues that RSCs are mutually exclusive, i.e. each of them has to differentiate itself from the neighboring areas. RSC is defined as a set of units whose major processes of securitization and de-securitization are so interlinked that their security problems cannot be analyzed or resolved apart from one another.[2] This description leaves ample space for imagining different types of RSCs which are *not* necessarily zones of peace. What is of primordial importance is that the durable patterns of amity and enmity have to be rooted within regions' setting. In other words, members of RSC may jointly securitize an external power or a specific threat, or may securitize each other as an indispensable element of their identity-building. Rivalries are quite

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[1] Pertti Joenniemi "Regionality: A Sovereign Principle of International Relations?" in Heikki Patomaki (ed.) *Peaceful Changes in World Politics.* Tampere Peace Research Institute, Research Report No 71, 1995. pp.338-373.
[2] Barry Buzan and Ole Waever. Regions and Powers. *The Structure of International Security.* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.44.

feasible within RSCs which, in this case, are dubbed "conflict formations". What RSC theory tells is that these rivalries should not be "imported" from the global system level; of crucial importance are regional conditions to predetermine the security constellation.

Both approaches share constructivist roots in the sense that they recognize the importance of identity as shaped by images, discourses, narratives and speech acts. Yet differences between them are also visible, as visualized in the scheme sketched below.

New Regionalism Approach	Regional Security Complexes Theory
Post-sovereign	Sovereignty-based
De-bordering (no strict inside–outside separation)	Bordering (rigid delineation of "members" and "non-members")
Marginalization of security problematique	Security is a cornerstone of region-building
Variance	Unified context and standardization of security practices
Institutions matter less than "feelings" and "imaginations"	Institutionalization is encouraged
Anti-politics" / "anti-hegemonic project"	Hegemony is inevitable

How can we apply these two approaches to the study of the BSR?

New Regionalism Approach

The approach advocated by Joenniemi and other like-minded peace research-ers seems to be a radical departure from traditional categorizations of political space and the territorially fixed logic of sovereign states. The "New Regional-ism" ideas are in tune with the opinions of those deeming that for a new type of European regionalism, most effective are "not organizations but rather di-mensions" that are instrumental in bridging "the remaining political divides of the wider Europe" in a "non-hegemonic setting."[3] Joenniemi's idea of inclusive nature of the "borderline Europe" regionalism is manifested through the very existence of different languages of self-description: the "Black Sea Dimension", the "Black Sea–Caspian region,"[4] the "Caspian-Caucasus-Black Sea axis", the

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[3] Terry Adams, Michael Emerson, Laurence David Mee and Marius Vahl. *Europe's Black Sea Dimension.* Brussels and Athens: Center for European Policy Studies and International Center for Black Sea Studies, 2002. pp. 25, 30, 32.
[4] Ida Kuklina. Problemy bezopasnosti v Chernomorsko-Baltiiskom regione, *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnie otnosheniya,* No 1, 2001, pp.90-97.

"Baltic–Black Sea area", etc. What we call the BSR itself could be portrayed in different ways-as a "geopolitical entity", "a process in hand", a "sub-region", a "network", a "framework", a "forum of consultations" or a "project."[5] Some scholars speak about "Southern Dimension"[6] , while others-of "a jungle of agreements, alliances, and acronyms". [7]

Joenniemi, in fact, offers an ostensibly *de-politicized* version of regionality, where politics ranks much lower than economics, environment, communication and technology.[8] There might be no place for politics proper in such a "space of flows" where the distinction between "ours" and "not-ours" is faded away, and security concerns are drastically downgraded. Thus, post-structuralist interpretation clearly demarcates "de-politicized" regionalism from "high politics" of sovereign nations driven by territorial control and geopolitical expansion. In this sense it challenges the primacy of state politics over regional "spaces of flows" which ought to be most effectively grounded in "smaller sub-regional identities"[9] to be able to prevent the return of a more traditional power balancing with its inevitable bordering effects and the accentuation of "negative otherness", fear, violence, and hegemonic control.

Of course, these ideas appear to be more appropriate for Europe's core, yet periphery can also be absorbed and involved in the process of de-politicization. In particular, this can be achieved through the EU's alleged ability to "act as a catalyst for change in conflict areas" through policies of conditionality, norms of diffusion and social learning.[10] The BSR is one of those areas where the EU is eager to transform border conflicts into lines of cooperation.[11] From her part, Russia too appears to be interested in practicing de-securitized approaches (suffice to mention Russia's interest in the success of the Winter Olympics in Sochi). Yet there are factors that push the BSR actors in an opposite direction to be analyzed in a different conceptual setting.

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[5] Yannis Valinakis. The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe. Paris: Institute for Security Studies of WEU, *Chaillot Paper* 36, July 1999.

[6] Pavel Baev, Bruno Coppieters et al. Op.cit. p.183.

[7] Fabrizio Tassinari. A Synergy for Black Sea Cooperation: Guidelines for an EU Initiative. Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies. *CEPS Policy Brief*, No 105, (June 2006), p.11.

[8] Joenniemi. (1995), p.358.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Bruno Coppieters, Michael Emerson et al. Europeanization and Conflict Resolution: Case Studies from the European Periphery *JEMIE: Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, Issue 1, 2004.

[11] Michelle Pace. Governing Border Conflicts: When can the European Union be an Effective Mediator? The University of Birmingham: *EUBorderConf Working Papers Series in EU Border Conflicts Studies*, (March 2004), p.29.

Regional Security Complex Theory

Buzan and Waever adhere to a much more politicized and securitized version of regionalism. Politics and security seem to form, in their concept, a single interpretative chain: securitization might be seen as an incremental stage of politicization, its logical extension.

The BSR may be dubbed a "political region" in the sense that "regions lie where politicians want them to lie", with "political boundaries" stemming from "political reasons."[12] As Merje Kuus convincingly demonstrated, seemingly geographical notions (like "Europe", "Eastern Europe", "Central Europe", etc.) are neither places nor "directly observable phenomena but discourses in which their meaning is produced through statements made in their names… Nobody is completely outside the shifting contours of Europeanness, but nobody is completely inside either. Everyone can be included to some degree, but everyone can also be excluded to some degree."[13] Thus, there are no "natural" – i.e. justified by references to something indisputably "objective" and "rational"– boundaries and criteria for belongingness and exclusion in Europe's Black Sea margins; the more uncertain identities and affiliations are, the more political will to overcome ambiguity is needed. Therefore, it is political logic that sustains the region-building process: key matters are whether the EU supports bilateral or multilateral forms of interaction, whether the BSR countries have their best advocates in Brussels or Washington, etc.[14] The major developments in the BSR are –and most likely will be– driven by political decisions. The issue of acceptance or rejection of the European aspirations of Turkey, Ukraine and Georgia is certainly a political decision, since it amounts to the question of where the borders of Europe lie. Besides decisionism, there is also much space for politics of exceptionality in this area predicated, in particular, on the necessity for the EU to launch special tracks and separate bargaining with countries like Turkey and Russia.[15]

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[12] Mustafa Aydın Europe's Next Shore:The Black Sea Region after the EU Enlargement, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, *Occasional Paper* No 53, (June 2004), p.20.

13 Merje Kuus "Something old, Something new: Eastness in European Union Enlargement", *Journal of International Relations and Development.* Vol.10, No 2, (June 2007), p.151.

[14] Pavel Baev, Bruno Coppieters et al. *The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU* ed. Dov Lynch. European Union Institute for Security Studies, *Chaillot Papers* No 65, (December 2003), p.11.

[15] Daniel Hamilton. A Transatlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea? In Hamilton, Daniel and Mangott, Gerhard (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives.* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), pp.331-333.

Security interdependence comes as a projection of political logic sustaining the region building. Yet Buzan and Waever's explanation of the nature of RSCs through the concept of interdependence ought to be further problematized. One understanding of interdependence presupposes common solutions of security problems and is ultimately conducive to the formation of regional security community. Yet in another version, interdependence should be interpreted not as interconnectedness, but through the prism of a more flexible idea of intersubjectivity. The point is that countries forming RSC may not be able to construct their particular identities without resorting to constant references to other countries belonging to the same RSC. This process of mutual constructing of identities is by no means free from controversies and conflicts; what is important is that there is no way to describe the Russian identity without, say, pointing to such emblematic regions as Crimea in general and Sebastopol in particular; in the same way that it is unthinkable for Georgia to speak about its identity beyond the narratives of Abkhazia or Southern Ossetia. It is in this sense that one may agree that Ukraine raises identity questions for Russia; by the same token, Armenia raises identity issues for Azerbaijan and vice versa.[16]

Intersubjectivity is also applicable to the EU role in the BSR. Based upon the experience of the Baltic Sea countries engagement with the European Union, one could claim that "the meanings and functions of the EU's eastern border are not simply imposed on the accession states; they are also produced in the accession states and projected to the center."[17] In other words, it is not unthinkable that the EU identity may be partly formulated or challenged from the outside, by countries like Russia and Turkey. Ukraine and Georgia may influence the state of debates within NATO by unveiling serious gaps in positions taken by its member states in regard to these two countries' application for membership.

Against this background, two ways of conceptualizing the BSR as seen from the RSC perspective may be singled out. Firstly, this region might be viewed as one moving from "conflict formation" to a kind of "pre-subcomplex", i.e. a set of bilateral security relations that seem to have the potential to bind it together, but has not yet achieved sufficient cross-linkage among the units to do so. This

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[16] Rainer Freitag-Wirminghaus "Prospects for Armenia and Azerbaijan between Eurasia and the Middle East", in Hamilton, Daniel and Mangott, Gerhard (eds.) *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives,* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), pp.53-58.

[17] Merje Kuus "The Flexible Edges of Europe: The Making of the European Union's Eastern Border", Paper presented at the *Association of American Geographers (AAG)* annual meeting in Philadelphia, (March 2004), p.8.

interpretation is obviously very optimistic; potentially it may come true only in case of NATO extension to Ukraine and Georgia, paralleled by Russia's closer contractual association with NATO within the "Partnership for Peace" program and other institutional links.

Alternatively –and far more realistically– the BSR may qualify for the status of "insulating mini-complex"[18] unable to link the two RSCs, namely EU/Europe and Russia/CIS. This is exactly what constitutes the kernel of debates about the Black Sea regionalism: two RSCs, EU- and Russia-centered, are competing with each other and do not tie together. The point made by a Polish author gives a clear picture of divisive nature of security arrangements here: "Only by separating from Russia can Ukraine become a visible political partner for others…The choice is…either with Russia or with the Union."[19]

The BSR represents a "boundary case" where the division between the EU/Europe and post-Soviet RSC is neither final nor uncontested. Drawing on Noel Parker's concept of marginality, this is an example of a marginal region which "is neither confined to the inside nor the outside of"[20] the two competing spatial orders. It is an academic truism to speculate about "fuzzy borders" of the EU; yet the contours and shapes of Russian spatial order are also not that simple. The ambiguity stems from numerous nationalist voices in Russia questioning the belonging of Crimea to Ukraine, as well as from the existence of sizeable communities of Russian citizens in Transnistria, Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia. The closer EU and Russia get to each other geographically, the more conflictual the relations between them tend to become (thus, Transniestria is feared to turn into "a second–after Kaliningrad–Russian oblast bordering the EU"[21]). In the meantime, most of in-between solutions (for example, the concept of "multi-vector policy of Ukraine, i.e. balancing between Europe and Russia) are either ridiculed as "flirtation"[22] or rejected as irrelevant.[23]

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[18] Buzan and Waever, (2006), p.485.
[19] Zdislaw Najder's Report in *Where Ukraine is Heading?* Sample of conference proceedings, ed. Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Warsaw: Center for International Relations, 2003, p.9.
[20] Noel Parker "A Theoretical Introduction: Spaces, Centers, and Margins" in Noel Parker (ed.) *The Geopolitics of Europe's Identity. Centers, Boundaries, and Margins,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.9.
[21] Noel Parker "A Theoretical Introduction: Spaces, Centers, and Margins" in Noel Parker (ed.) *The Geopolitics of Europe's Identity. Centers, Boundaries, and Margins,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.9.
[22] George Dura "The EU in Moldova: The Last Post-Cold War Battle in Europe?" *Eurojournal.org*, (16 December 2003), p.2.
[23] Janusz Onyszkiewicz Ukraine and NATO, Warsaw: Center for International Relations, 2003, p.7.

This explains why all attempts of the EU to extend its influence to the Russia-dominated part of the post-Soviet area reactivate classical geopolitical rivalries the EU is not used to.[24] Following the logic of Buzan and Waever, the BSR is a place where a "counter-coalition to Russia" is being formed, which if successful might lift Ukraine to the status of regional power and, conversely, drag Russia down from the level of great power to that of regional power.[25] Under this scenario, the idea of a Moscow-led "second, non-Western Europe"[26] (to include Russia itself along with Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and even some Balkan countries) advocated by some Russian intellectuals, will definitely fail.

From this perspective, it is of primordial importance to see how the processes of securitization and de-securitization proceed in BSR. What exactly does Russia securitize? *Firstly*, Russia securitizes all attempts to treat her as an anomalous country. The key Russia security problem, as Buzan and Waever claim, is the threat coming from the lack of recognition and respect.[27] In fact, what is at stake is Russia's place in the international society which, as Moscow feels, is either questioned or contested by many in the West. In fact, the drawing of the borders of this "international society" and the distribution of roles within it is key to Russia's positioning in the adjacent regions. The Kremlin fears being excluded from the international security domain on the basis of Russia's alleged failure to meet the Western standards of democracy. It explains the reasons behind Russia's multiple attempts to draw the attention of the Western leaders to the allegedly undemocratic nature of the Ukrainian and Georgian political regimes.

Secondly, NATO enlargement is clearly perceived in Russia as one of the major threats to her security. Within the BSR this type of securitization leads to serious problems in Russia's relations with Ukraine and Georgia. Russia uses NATO as one of the most important reference points in the mental construction of the "unfriendly West" and, therefore, puts it in a highly negative discursive framework. The peak of securitization was reached with Putin's statement of a possibility to re-target Russian missiles to the Ukrainian territory should this country join NATO. This type of reaction could, to a significant extent, be explained by the

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[24] Oleksandr Pavliuk and John Tedstrom "Ukraine and the West: Policies for Progress" *East-West Institute Policy Brief,* (July 2002), Vol.1, No. 4, p.6.

[25] Fiodor Lukianov Promezhutochnoe soglashenie, *Vedomosti*, (23 June 2008), p.A04.

[26] Buzan and Waever, (2006) p.344.

[27] Andrey Okara. "Evropa-II kak tsivilizatsionnaya alternativa dlia Rossii i Ukrainy", Humanitarian Geography. Scientific, *Cultural and Educational Almanac*, Issue 1, (Moscow: 2004), p.209.

feeling of traumatic defeat that Russia suffered in course of the "color revolutions" a few years ago.

The most recent developments stemming from Ukraine's NATO application have only augmented the Moscow-inspired securitizing moves: on the one hand, first vice premier Sergei Ivanov has predicted that in a few years from now there will be a visa regime between the two countries; on the other hand, Russia's representative to NATO Dmitry Rogozin has put Crimea in a group of territories, along with Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia, which will seek secession if NATO accession of the involved countries proceeds.[28] As a Western observer claimed, "for Putin, Ukrainian statehood is nothing but the vanity of delusional nationalism…" Putin has threatened to encourage the secession of the Crimea and the Russian-speaking, pro-Moscow eastern part of Ukraine if Kiev decides to join NATO. He was quoted as saying Ukraine would cease to exist as a state (after having said it was not a real state in the first place). In other words, Putin is challenging NATO to a showdown: if you accept Ukraine into your ranks, we will foment civil war in one of your member states."[29] In fact, Putin's deliberately provocative statement was a reverberation of an anti-Ukrainian platform developed by one of the leaders of Russian conservative nationalism, Yegor Kholmogorov, who advocated the pursuit of a policy of "pragmatic irredentism" (meaning that Moscow should have an upper hand in supporting political claims of Russian-speaking communities in neighboring Slavic countries), the treatment of Ukraine as a country with "secondary" or artificial statehood, and the recognition of "technical" (i.e. temporary and conventional) nature of the interstate borders with adjacent CIS countries.[30]

Thirdly, the entire spectrum of border-related issues is tackled through the security prism in Russia. Particular examples of this type of securitization are Russian claims that Georgia turns a blind eye to the infiltration of Chechen terrorists to Pankisi Gorge, as well as Russia's unexpected attempt to build the dam at the small island of Tuzla that provoked conflict with Ukraine. Arguably, Moscow is playing a double game in this respect: on the one hand, it itself shows readiness to fortify borders; on the other hand, it interprets all recommendations of the European experts to impose stricter regulations on the border regime between

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[28] http://news.mail.ru/politics/1826332/print/, 18 June 2008.
[29] Richard Lourie "Those Ukrainian, Iranian NATO Blues" *The St.Petersburg Times*, 15 April 2008, p.14.
[30] Yegor Kholmogorov *Zaschitit li Rossiya Ukrainu*, (Moscow: Evropa Publishers, 2006). p.149.

Ukraine and Russia[31] as unfriendly and provocative moves precisely because of their divisive effects.

Fourthly, there are a number of identity-related issues which Russia places in a security context when dealing with countries of the region. The Kremlin has repeatedly claimed that Russian language is discriminated in Ukraine, and some groups in this country are willing to rewrite the history of the Second World War. In particular, the attempt of the Ukrainian government to equate Golodomor – mass-scale starvation in 1930s– as a case of genocide was harshly rebuffed by Moscow which –falsely, in my mind– presumed that any criticism of Stalinism automatically translates into lambasting and challenging the identity of today's Russia as the USSR successor.

Fifthly, alleged encroachments on Russia's economic interests are also securitized. Countries like Georgia and Moldova are portrayed as sources of low-quality products that presumably are below Russian food standards, while Ukraine is treated as a threat to Russian economic security because of its non-payment for Russian gas and because of its participation in constructing new energy transportation routes that bypass Russia (including the Odessa–Brody pipeline).

It is important to note that it is exactly along these five lines that Russia itself is securitized by some of the BSR countries. Russia's attempts to present itself as a "normal power" are frequently equated with the resurgent Russian imperialism; Russia's resistance to NATO eastward enlargement is interpreted as a challenge to the independence of Georgia and Ukraine, etc. This situation could be called "symmetric securitization": Russia not only faces alienation and securitization from the part of other Black Sea nations but itself also launches similar mechanisms against them.

Yet securitization is never complete since Russia is trying to simultaneously articulate two different arguments: all attempts to interpret the foreign policies of Ukraine and Georgia as threatening Russia's interests are paralleled by repeated endeavors to discursively debilitate both countries. As a Russian scholar noticed, the "post-orange revolution" Ukraine is predominantly covered in the

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[31] See, for example: Taras Kuzio "EU and Ukraine: A Turning Point in 2004?" Paris: Institute for Security Studies, *Occasional Papers* No 47, (November 2003), p.31; Bogumila Berdychowska et al. *New Neighbourhood – New Association. Ukraine and the European Union at the Beginning of the 21st century.* Warsaw: Stefan Batory Foundation Policy Paper 6, (March 2002). p.15.

Russian media as an unstable country connoted with "selfish servant-girl" or "fickle conduct", unable to take "serious decisions."[32] This peculiar feminization of Ukraine in Russian media narratives is a cultural phenomenon which, in a way, runs against the logic of securitization.

Beyond "New Regionalism" and "Regional Security Complex" Theories

The theoretical approaches discussed above might be seen as two cores that structure a wider spectrum of theories of regionalism. Borrowing from Michael Emerson's typology, one may argue that the idea of RSC is constitutive for the so called "security regionalism" which in the BSR context is grounded in "two overriding security fears shared by all or most EU and Black Sea States: international radical Islamic terrorism and the security of energy supplies."[33]

In an imaginary mental map of theories not so far could be located what Emerson dubs "geo-political regionalism" relating to the objectives of leading powers to secure their spheres of influence. The geo-political dimension of regionalism is manifested by Buzan and Waever in the concept of "overlay" – a situation when great power interests transcend mere penetration, and come to dominate a region so heavily that the local patterns of security relations cease to function. Indicative is the phrase of French Prime Minister Francois Fillon who opines that "we are opposed to the entry of Georgia and Ukraine [to NATO] because we think it is not the right response to the balance of power in Europe and between Europe and Russia."[34] Same type of overlay is even more noticeable in the case of the United States policy which, as some observers suppose, "is becoming less and less constrained by concerns about Moscow's reaction" and in fact constitutes "a new form of Russian containment."[35] Most of Russian experts admit as well that "most of the problems which exist today in the BSR are not so much regional problems but rather regional projection of more fundamental differences that exist in Russia's relations with its major Western partners – the EU, NATO and the United States."[36]

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[32] Tatiana Riabova Chuzhie rossiiskosti i chuzhie russkosti: gendernoe izmerenie, in *Problemy formirovaniya obscheros-siiskoi identichnosti: russkost' i rossiiskost,* (Ivanovo State University Publishers, 2008), pp.73-74.

[33] Michael Emerson "The EU's New Black Sea Policy. What Kind of Regionalism is This?" *CEPS Working Document* No 297, (June 2008), p.3.

[34] Gideon Rachman "Rethinking Spheres of Influence" *The St.Petersburg Times*, 18 April 2008, p.4.

[35] Yannis Valinakis, (1999), p.14.

[36] Nadia Alexandrova-Arbatova "Troubled Strategic Partnership: The Black Sea Dimension of Russia's Relations with the West" in Hamilton, Daniel and Mangott, Gerhard (eds.) *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), p.293.

Arguably, Emerson's "compensatory regionalism" can be viewed as a narrower case of overlay: "a major block, in practice the EU, seeks to compensate outsiders immediately beyond its frontiers for the disadvantages of exclusion."[37] This exclusion is predicated upon the assumption that in a wider Europe "classical security problems will mainly be located in the periphery…and pushed on the outside." Therefore, one may continue, "the notion of the insecure East has not dissolved but multiplied; there is now not a single insecure East but many ones, marked differently in different circumstances."[38] The BSR is one of those interfaces where the West not only meets but –what is even more important– also securitizes the East, which "explains a lot why in some issues the securitizing element of Russia remains central in the EU policies.[39] "Due to historical experiences and the domestic usefulness of a Russian threat, it will probably continue to be invoked for a while, and, like all securitization, it can have an effect even if the threat is implausible."[40] In "compensatory" version of regionalism the majority of the BSR countries will remain "close outsides" to be assisted economically but not admitted to what is considered EU-Europe.

As far as the "New Regionalism" core/pole is concerned, three possible species of regionalist arrangements, as introduced by Emerson, could be located in its vicinity. The formula of "good neighborliness regionalism" describes the attempts of "neighboring political jurisdictions to organize congenial activities with a view to building good relations and friendship."[41] "Technical regionalism…can be entirely matters of efficiency of public policies at the regional level, where all parties can in principle have the same or similar objectives, and which may be effectively depoliticized."[42] "Institutional regionalism", in its turn, focuses "on the administrative and organizational structures devised to promote regional cooperation."[43]

In the meantime, a number of phenomena can be explained through the lenses of both "New Regionalism" and RSC approaches, which means that they might share explanatory capabilities. On the one hand, the *New Regionalism* school, as exposed by Joenniemi, with all the praise for desecuritizing practices within

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[37] Michael Emerson. (2008), p.2.

[38] Merje Kuus "The Flexible Edges of Europe: the Making of the European Union's Eastern Border" Paper presented at the *Association of American Geographers* (AAG) annual meeting in Philadelphia, March 2004. p.8.

[39] Michelle Pace (2004), p.17.

[40] Buzan and Waever (2006), p.366.

[41] Michael Emerson (2008), p.2.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

Europe-EU, recognizes that security still matters for neighboring areas. Therefore, *New Regionalism* may embrace security problematique provided that there is a political distinction between the "core Europe" (a desecuritized, de-bordered and largely post-modern) and its periphery (including the BSR) still steeped in security imbroglio.

On the other hand, with all the priority given to security-based explanations, the RSC approach does not entirely neglect desecuritization perspectives that should also be taken into account. Yet what hinders the perspectives of desecuritization is the almost endless expansion of the very concept of security. The classical functionalist argument –let us occupy ourselves with technical issues to avoid security clashes– does not seem to properly work in the BSR. The shift to such presumably non-political issues like environment or economics might be as divisive as hard security. Therefore, the ideal of desecuritization can be reached, realistically speaking, mostly as a by-product of the domination of one single security platform, as happened in the Baltic Sea region with NATO and EU enlargement.

The BSR may be considered as a terrain of competing forms of regionalism.[44] It is likely that "security regionalism" and "geopolitical regionalism" will be promoted mostly by Russia and the United States. Russia will, with all likelihood, keep perceiving the Western sponsorship of the Black Sea integration as a geopolitical move aimed at further distancing countries like Ukraine and Georgia from the Russian sphere of influence. As far as the U.S. is concerned, its interests will be dominated by energy transit, counterterrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the traffic in drugs and people[45], all bearing both security and geopolitical connotations. The EU will most likely oscillate between "compensatory" and "good neighborhood" models of regionalism. The first one contains strong bordering and exclusionist impulses, while the second one seems to be more inclusive and accommodating. As far as "technical" and "institutional" forms of regionalism are concerned, their implementation is almost unfeasible without long-term structural commitments from the part of all local actors who are supposed in this scenario to heavily invest in jointly bridging the existing gaps.

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[44] Charles King "The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century" in Hamilton, Daniel and Mangott, Gerhard (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), p.16.
[45] Ibid.

Conclusion

Where does Russia stand in this debate and how might Russia's positions be changed? Firstly, Russia should not engage in battles it cannot win. Threatening Georgia and Ukraine is strategically counter-productive since it provides the best justification for these countries' developing their identities in opposition to Russia in general and for their strategy of membership to NATO in particular.

Secondly, Russia's explicit sympathies to Ukraine's disintegration and support to unrecognized territories creates grounds for the questioning of Russia's policy of trying to prevent Kosovo from gaining international legitimacy and recognition.

Thirdly, Russia's confrontation with Georgia and Ukraine prevents it from developing a truly global policy. Paradoxically, Russia is eager to prove its great power status on a regional level. Russia seems to act as a classical regional power overwhelmingly concentrated on its near abroad at the expense of exploring the possibilities of dealing directly not only with the U.S. and the EU, but also with countries like Turkey, China, India, Brazil in such issues as climate change and global warming, environmental degradation, fostering transparency and anti-corruption strategies, anti-terrorism policies, etc. Overly deep concentration on regional security matters decreases Russia's international status.

By now, both Russia and the EU seem to confirm Parker's hypotheses that "what are deemed the capacities of the center are already, in some sense, hostage to the margin."[46] This argument has much in common with RSC theory of predominantly internal (intra-regional) dynamics of security relations within regions. What logically stems from this supposition is that margins may possess significant power by constraining centers' international roles. "Superpowers by definition largely transcend the logic of geography and adjacency in their security relationships."[47] Buzan and Waever claim. In BSR multiple territorial rivalries in which Russia and EU are involved prevent both of them to develop truly global policies.

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[46] Noel Parker. (2008), p.12.
[47] Buzan and Waever. (2006), p.46.