

The BSR from the Ukrainian perspective

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BSR as an “invented reality” and “imagined community”

- the renovation/reintroduction of the concept in the 1980's, when the Iron Curtain collapsed.
- Lehti: “as a concept, the Baltic Sea area was introduced during the last few years of the 1980s into the speeches of a few politicians and academics as a new future option for the North to escape marginality and to control the disintegrating East”.
- the discussion started by historians M. Männikö (Finland) and K. Zernack (Germany) at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, continued by D. Kirby and M. Klinge in the early 1990s – as a result the new term of a Baltic world to describe the area was introduced.

Central components in defining and implementing the BSR:

- ✓ geography
- ✓ clear vision of the common past of a Community;
- ✓ culture
- ✓ politics
- ✓ economy

Geographical framework:

- Baltic sea as a common drainage area;
- climate and weather conditions;
- the landscape – plains and lowlands combined with mountains;
- natural resources;
- as a result – Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany included

The Baltic Sea Area



Historical arguments as the keystone in building the Baltic regional identity:

- the long tradition of the common strategic interests;
- common trade, cultural and religious exchange;
- constant reference to the Hanseatic League (1250-1525) and to the Union of Kalmar (1397-1521) as the symbols of interdependence, unity and collective sense of belonging across the region.

Cultural component

- the only one major cultural difference in the region is language – Finnish group vs German vs Slavonic
- mainly the region of Protestant culture, but also Catholic and Orthodox included;
- nowadays development of the educational networks, which promote the physical mobility of learners and teachers, virtual mobility “introduce a new cultural pattern with the equal access to the existing facilities for everybody” (Musial).

Economics

- one of the European biggest growth rates and life levels;
- interdependence (f. e., in trade, foreign direct investments);
- the Öresund region was considered as the best practice of the cross-border cooperation in the end of the 1990s.

BSR as different leveled interplay:

- Non-governmental organisations;
- Sub-national (local governments around the Sea, f. e., the Union of the Baltic Cities);
- Intergovernmental (f. e., CBSS).
- Supra-national (UN programs, World Bank, EBRD).

Conclusion

despite the fact of its “inventing” or “imagining”, the BSR nowadays is in the fact not just an intellectual paper project, not supported by anything real, but becoming true every single day