



"Mare Europaeum – How to Explain the Baltic Sea Region Outside Europe"

Region, Regionalism and Identity in Canada and the Baltic Sea Region

Jan-Mark van der Leest

Carleton University

Ottawa, Canada

jmvander@connect.carleton.ca

Analytical Framework

⇒ Canada – a “nation of regions”

⇒ The BSR – a “region of nations”

Canada



Canadian Perspectives

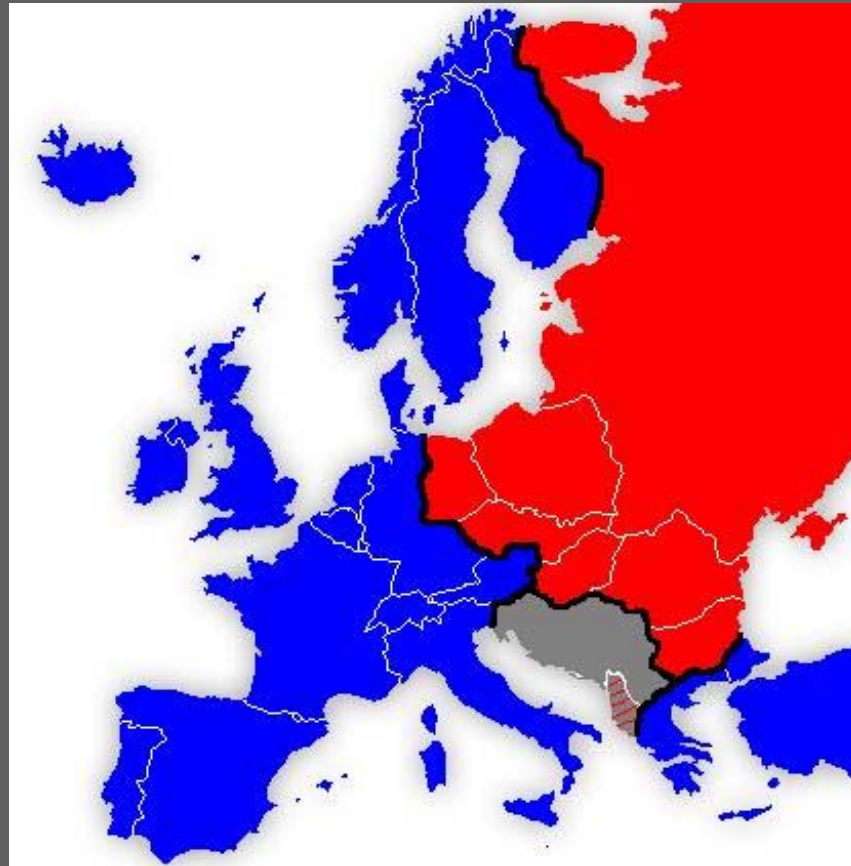
⇒ Pre 1960's

- A nationalist history privileging a Canadian meta-narrative prevailed despite evident regional variation

⇒ Post 1960's

- Social historians promote the idea that national identity is not at odds with regional identification or processes of regionalization

Europe During the Cold War



Regional Cooperation

- ⇒ addressing weak political, legal and societal structures in transition societies
- ⇒ tackling socio-economic disparities in the region
- ⇒ formulating new policies within the framework of EU expansion
- ⇒ dealing with trans-border environmental threats that endanger the Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea Region





The Baltic Sea *Region*

- ⇒ A homogeneous segment of the earth's surface with physical and human characteristics distinct from those of neighboring areas
- ⇒ Interaction *in* the territory surrounding and *on* the waters of the Baltic Sea itself



Baltic Sea *Regionalism*

- ⇒ Frontiers have been increasingly challenged
- ⇒ A transition has occurred from a “space of places” to a “space of flow”



Regional Identity

- ⇒ Identity formation is an on-going socialization process
- ⇒ Identities are constantly being constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed

Baltic Sea *Regional Identity*

- ⇒ National and regional identities can coexist, complement and reinforce each other.
- ⇒ “Identities are not like hats. Human beings can and do put on several at a time”.

The EU Factor

- ⇒ EU enlargement has dynamically affected notions of region, regionalism and identity
- ⇒ EU objectives complement the endeavors of civil society, NGO and institutional actors
- ⇒ Hence, the EU contributes to an evolving Baltic Sea regional identity

Conclusion

- ➔ The comparative perspective of Canada as a “nation of regions” and the Baltic Sea as a “region of nations” represents an avenue for further research
- ➔ Vielen Dank und Auf Wiedersehen