

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU
Faculty of Humanities
Baltic Sea Region Studies

Overlapping Space Theory:
A Study of Three Institutions of the Baltic
Sea Region(s) and the Nordic Region

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ABSTRACT

Regions Regions are spaces of human construct, specifically spatial ones – this thesis is a study of regionalization theory and it explores the happenstance of regions which are overlapping that can be called “overlapping space”. It is asked what this ‘overlapping space’ is, how regions regard it and what possible influence it has on regions, regionalization, and the processes thereof. A hypothesis of how “overlapping space” works is conceptualized and tested through analysing interviews with spokespersons of the regions and of the strategy documents that the selected case regions have produced.

By studying the concept of an overlapping space of regions this thesis has a theory developing operationalization; it puts an emphasis on proper methods of theory development and requirements on material gathering and analysis. As a theory developing study the purpose is not to come up with “yes” or “no” conclusions but rather to make suggestions of feasible arguments for the mechanisms and functions of a hypothesis or a theory.

The procedures of this thesis problematize the driving forces behind regionalization and suggest that “legitimacy” is an additional theoretical mechanism which can explain how regions form. It is concluded that the strict bottom-up “historical process” of regionalization is not a rule and that a single-policy institution could be a seed for the process of creating a region independently – on any bottom-up or top-down perspective, even by stepping in “from the middle”. This conclusion results in a suggested theory that can be called the “Sectoral Regions Theory”.

Keywords: Regionalization theory, Theory development, Overlapping Space, Sectoral Regions Theory, Baltic Sea Region, Nordic Region.

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1 Introduction

This thesis is a result of determined curiosity: while reading through articles about theory of regionalization I had to question if an interesting topic had gone unnoticed. In an aspiration to develop the works of Anssi Paasi's regionalization theory further Jonathan Metzger and Peter Schmitt combined that theory with ideas from the Actor Network Theory (ANT) and specific ideas from the field of sociology. In the paper *When soft spaces harden: the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*, from 2012, Metzger and Schmitt develop an 'extended' regionalization theory (here addressed as 'the spokesperson-theory'). A key concept developed in their theory is the 'spokesperson'-institution which embodies and functions as a representative of the region it is designated by. I noted that their choice of region to use as a case example was just one of many "regions" which shared geographical space and I wondered "should not shared space by different regions have an effect on the regionalisation process?".

Metzger and Schmitt structures the spokesperson-theory around the case of the 'macro-regional strategy' developed under the aegis of the European Commission; the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The paper *When soft spaces harden: the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* examines the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the European Council (EC) as a spokesperson of the Baltic Sea Region¹. The case they make by the utilization of their theory for the statement that the EC is the spokesperson for the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) is seemingly functional. However, (as their paper constructs a theory which then is applied to a "most likely case"-example where they barely test nor do they mention the existence of other regional bodies which, in various degrees, exists in the same space) they leave work to be done on this developed theory; both for their theory to be tested and further explored.

¹ Metzger J, and Schmitt P, 2012

1.1 Research questions

What is aspired here is multiple; firstly, a conceptualization of 'overlapping space', secondly, the examination of how regions approach the overlapping space and thirdly, the consideration of a theory exploratory or testing approach to the "overlapping" of the spokesperson-theory.

- What is this 'overlapping space'?
- How do regions strategize about 'overlapping space'?
- How does 'overlapping space' affect regionalization?

The answers to these questions are tightly connected to concepts and functions of regionalization theory and an extended understanding of the dynamics of regions. Answering them adds to the understanding of the regionalization theories, and to what theoretical and policy implications 'overlapping space' might have for the regions themselves. This in turn provides a possibility for regional spokespersons with a base for rethinking their strategies.

1.2 Operationalization

The research questions are closely tied to the dynamics of regionalization theory. The construct of an "overlapping space" is a potential concept regarding how the dynamics of how the regionalization process works. Therefore, finding the proper approach to methods of theory development and its requirements on material gathering and analysis takes a prominent position as seen in chapter two and three.

What a theory is and how they function is presented in chapter two. By which methods and what requirements they can be tested, developed and new theories created is the focus of chapter three.

In accordance with Metzger and Schmitt, the appropriate institutional characteristic to focus on for material gathering is the spokesperson institution. The regions are supra-national institutions and have presented a large source for various materials and aspects of how to study them. Regions are a space of human construct, specifically a 'spatial' construct. As all non-physical constructs, regions are not so easy to understand and one cannot simply look at it and know what it is.

To answer the first question, of what overlapping space is, a hypothesis has to be constructed. In chapter four the current understanding of these human constructions is presented along with important concepts to the processes of regionalization so to present what the regionalization theory consists of; spaces of human construct (space, time, borders), followed by the theories of regionalization, both Paasi's, Metzger and Schmitt's spokesperson theory. This procedure gives us an idea of a hypothetical "overlapping space" that can be related to and tested in the case analysis of chapter five. The hypothesized concept of overlapping space, its implications and importance is discussed in chapter six, as is the theory mechanism "legitimacy", a potential missing mechanism between the phases of regionalization. The answers and conclusions are presented in chapter seven.

1.3 Case Selection

The word origin of 'region' is from Latin: *regiō*, derived from *regere* which stands for "to govern". A '**region**' is a large area of land that is considered as a unit for geographical, functional, social, or cultural reasons which is different from other areas of land because it is one of the different parts of a country with its own customs and characteristics, or because it has a particular geographical feature².

² Definition of 'region', 2018

According to Paasi's regionalization theory, a region emerges through a continuous process of institutionalization³. Tensions of what the region is, conflict about its content and what it shall be is part of this historical process that is on-going on all sorts of geographical scales⁴.

Metzger and Schmitt's concept of a '**regional spokesperson**' comes from combining Paasi's theory of regionalization with an idea from sociology; "*that in the emergence of social groups [...] there is always one member who represents and personifies the whole group, or else a small number of them[...] who each in a different respect, individualize it no less entirely in themselves*"⁵. By producing discourse in the name of, and in the interests of the region, the regional spokesperson attempts to articulate a particular version of the supposed essence of the region⁶.

Many spatial levels of regions exist but the area of land that the concept of region here is applied to here is supra-national, meaning that the regions consist of two or more countries. This is so partly in correlation with Metzger and Schmitt's own paper which focused on the case of the EUSBSR, but also in response to an aspiration to maintain a certain level of abstraction when considering theory development and its methods.

The selection of cases, regional spokespersons, naturally continues where Metzger and Schmitt left off, with the EUSBSR and the European Council (EC) as a spokesperson of the Baltic Sea Region. To study 'the overlapping space' the additional regional spokespersons studied have a self-defined space on the supra-national areal level of or about the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Sea is a geographical area with many different regional constellations surrounding it; prominent examples (aside from the EUSBSR itself) are The Nordic Region with the organisations The Nordic Council and The Nordic Council of Ministers [collectively called "The Nordic"], and The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as an alternative spokesperson for the Baltic Sea Region (one not created by the EC/EU). A large part of the Nordic region overlaps

³ Paasi A, 1986

⁴ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

⁵ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:268

⁶ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:268

geographically with the Baltic Sea region. Both the EC/EUSBSR and the CBSS are active spokespersons of self-defined areas that in parts differ but that include the Baltic Sea as a central theme of these areal definitions. It is a natural selection to start with these as possible candidates for the study of overlapping space.

1.3.1 The CBSS

As stated on the website of the CBSS is an overall political forum for regional inter-governmental cooperation⁷. The role of the Council is to serve as a forum for guidance and overall coordination among the participating states. The Members of the Council are the eleven states of the Baltic Sea Region as well as the European Commission. The states are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and a representative from the European Union. The CBSS has three long-term priorities: Regional Identity, Sustainable and Prosperous Region and Safe and Secure Region. The CBSS are seemingly of the view that the Baltic Sea identity exists but that it needs to grow in the consciousness of a shared Baltic Sea society. Their stated goal is: *“To develop the Baltic Sea Region as a model region of sustainable societies able to manage and use resources efficiently, to tap the economic, technological, ecological and social innovation potential of the region in order to ensure its prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion”*⁸.

This case has a defined regional space which is in sync with the imagined space of the region. Identity is one of its top priorities. This emphasises that the CBSS is a regional spokesperson institution that joins the imagined space of the Baltic Sea Region with the whole “society” of that said region.

1.3.2 The EC/EUSBSR

“The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the first Macro-regional Strategy in Europe. The Strategy was approved by the European Council in 2009 following a

⁷ *Building collaboration & trust*, 2017

⁸ *Building collaboration & trust*, 2017

communication from the European Commission [(EC)]. The Strategy is divided into three objectives, which represent the three key challenges of the Strategy: saving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity. Each objective relates to a wide range of policies and has an impact on the other objectives”⁹.

The EUSBSR is defined by EU-member states which surrounds the Baltic Sea. In the communication approving the creation of this macro-regional strategy eight of the nine states bordering the Baltic Sea were members of the European Union¹⁰. The EU member states involved in the EUSBSR are Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The EUSBSR is coordinated in close contact with the European Commission and “all relevant stakeholders”, i.e. other member states, regional and local authorities, inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies¹¹. The EUSBSR also welcomes cooperation with EU neighbouring countries (Russia, Iceland, Norway and Belarus). In the EUSBSR-case, we see an institution collecting many actors and content under its overview. Note that the space of the EUSBSR is defined by the EU-member states around the Baltic Sea. That thus makes a difference between the imagined space of the region (the Baltic Sea) and the outreach of the institution at hand. The possible issue thereby posed to this study is one of legitimacy of the regional spokesperson at hand. It also has to be noted that the EC is a supra-national institution that did not emerge in the Baltic Sea Region, rather its position as a regional spokesperson for the Baltic Sea Region was introduced Top-Down. The institution brings together a large number of actors around defined issues and interests. The EUSBSR’s three objectives are “saving the sea”, “connecting the region” and “increasing prosperity”. “Saving the sea” is an ecological priority, “connecting the region” is a broad statement which possibly includes more than just transportation (quite possibly “connecting” means more) and “increasing prosperity” is an economic goal which depends on many variables. These issues and interests are specific but

⁹ *About EUSBSR in a nutshell*, 2017

¹⁰ *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*, 2009

¹¹ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>, 2017

also possibly quite wide in content, making the EC/EUSBSR a good case with potential for having an overlapping space that can be defined.

1.3.3 The Nordic

The Nordic countries or the Nordics are a geographical and cultural region, they are most commonly known as *Norden* (literally “the North”), which has two primary institutions that represent the region; the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Both are geo-political inter-parliamentary forums for co-operation between the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as well as the autonomous areas of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. The Nordic Council of Ministers is constituted by the ministers of each country. While they are officially two different institutions they share office, staff, and have the same webpage. The Nordic Council of Ministers was also established to complement the Council. The two will therefore be seen as “one” institution. While the criteria for selection “defined spokesperson” here are lucid (as to the Norden Region institution being organized in an "actor dependent" style) the Norden makes a strong case for itself as a Region and has an institutional framework which lets the region act together and that that institution facilitates an agenda whereby they reach outwards as one.

Obviously, the regions and their institutional have differences which limit their comparability, but with a cautious case selection process they are possible to compare and to study effectively.

The review of relevant research and of theoretical background leads to conceptualizing overlapping space as a space of regions which exists when two regions or more share the same space and that they share a modicum of “same” objects in this space. This same space is included in the regions idea of “self” to such consistency that it is part of the regions idea of their imagined space. That the regions share space is not enough for the space to be ‘overlapping space’, in that space there must be an object that both share; agendas or issues relevant to both regions. This object can be a policy, a problem or resource. The object in shared space must be of such nature that it is more than just fleeting; that gives time for the

interactions of regions. This would be necessary for the ideas of society and identity to react.

The criterion's for selection by extension of Paasi's region and Metzger and Schmitt's spokespersons:

- A defined region – Sharing space on a comparatively “same” spatial level.
- Matching institutional level of the region. The types of organization should be comparable and sharing agendas to some degree.
- Defined spokespersons.

1.4 Limitations to the study

The two narratives of this study are the theoretical concept of overlapping space of regions and its implications of actually overlapping regions. While the concepts and dynamics presented to some extent can explain how the case regions are constructed the way they are today and potentially what they can become, that is not the purpose of this thesis.

This study is kept on a scale where spatial structure can be discussed independently of superseding regional formations so not to muddle it with regionalization processes on different spatial scales.

The thesis does not extend to additional cases but it keep to an abstract logic of general concepts, mechanisms and functions – other cases has been left for later studies, to test the feasibility of what is concluded here.

2 Methods of Theory Development

“Theory consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts (though only plausible, its plausibility is to be strengthened through continued research). Without concepts, there can be no propositions and thus no cumulative scientific knowledge based on these plausible but testable propositions”¹².

The theoretical background of this thesis has offered possibilities for both theory development and theory creating. The choice of methods was made to leave both possibilities open during the research process, especially since the possible results of this thesis did not exclude either possibility. With a well-developed approach to theory development and theory constructing they would not be mutually excluding. Since the thesis is a few-case study this has also implicated that to be theory developing it is important to consider how case-study research can be causative.

2.1 Theory Development

According to Esaiasson et al. 2007, there are, to be precise, only two types of theory developing activities. The first one has to do with finding explaining factors¹³. It can either be about the suggestion of complementing explaining factors or about competing explaining factors. The second theory developing activity is about the developing of causal mechanisms. With the later one, the ambition is to better understand the phenomenon that interests us, how it works and what it affects.

¹² Strauss A, and Corbin J, 1994:278

¹³ Esaiasson et al. 2007

It is said that the ground rule for theory testing studies is that it is better to study many cases rather than just one or a few cases and that the opposite principle is true for theory developing studies: if one wants to use the empiric to develop theories then it is better to collect much material about a few number of cases than to go for less information about a larger number¹⁴.

It is said that many researchers who work with intensive close up studies of few cases are enthusiastic about their way of working and do not see the distinction between theory testing and theory developing as superfluous (see example McKeown 1999). The critics of the distinction claim that the differences between the two are about the degree and not the type of activity. Since there is always some degree of an idea about where to look for explanations, all studies with an ambition to explain something are to some degree theory testing. However, arguments based on deterministic and probabilistic explanations oppose these critics. Deterministic explanations state that (X) is sufficient for something else (Y) to happen, while probabilistic explanations are more modest and say that if X then maybe Y will happen¹⁵.

A general aspect of how to appreciate the way to conduct theory developing studies is to always remember that they are theory testing. For the conclusions to be validated they will need to be tested again. Another suggestion to help the theory developing study along is to direct it towards causal mechanisms. The empiric variables observed in the study are just the first step on the way towards well-founded conclusions. Until one is in the clear with how the connection between the phenomenon in focus and the factors that it affects or result in the study is only half done and through the detailed study of the cases we can get a picture of what mechanisms that have been involved. The focus on causal mechanisms thus keeps us from drawing the wrong and trivial conclusions. This focus can also help us detect additional explaining factors that might be involved. Since we are aware that complementing explaining factors can be involved we are kept from dismissing them on an early stage.

To further the understanding of theory developing methods we look at the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) upon which case choices made on the basis

¹⁴ Esaiasson et al. 2007

¹⁵ Esaiasson et al. 2007

of general context usually related to. A grounded theory inspired study has the spoken purpose to develop theories that are established in empiric research and not desk-constructions¹⁶. Generally speaking, the thought behind the GTM approach to theory development is that the theory should be adapted to the data. The idea is that theory development is done by certain steps. To start with relevant categories and concepts are created which captures the central aspects of the studied phenomena, thereafter the internal order of how these categories and concepts are connected are determined. This is an extensive inductive approach; the researcher should to the greatest extent build on the observations that are made in the study of the present case studied. The most interesting part about the grounded theory approach for this thesis is that the GTM starts with 'theoretical sampling' where one starts with studying one or a few cases that for some reason are found interesting. Once a case has been selected and studied, a first 'draft' of vital concepts and possible conclusions are discussed and set up in a possible, tentative theory. These are then tested by finding alike cases to test them on. When the conclusions have been tested by this 'most-likely' case selection the next step is testing by 'least likely' cases. With this process one ensures that the theory is always deeply rooted in empiric data. A grounded theory is never finished but evolves constantly based on what the latest examined cases bring forth in regard to earlier results. A theory and its concepts are re-evaluated in regard to the number and type of case where it is developed. If the theory is based on many cases, it is more interesting than if built on a lesser number or more alike cases.

The types of cases usually studied with this approach are often less data-extensive and more numerous. The GTM method is best applied where the study of cases can be observed first hand or direct accounts of cases exist. The overall approach to the development of theory is the same for both the general method of theory development and for the grounded theory method, thus; the GTM method provides a way to inspire the structure employed for this thesis. By approaching this study as a case of theoretical sampling, with a well-analysed material, set principles for conceptualizations and the descriptions of possible functions of processes of the

¹⁶ Esaiasson et al. 2007

'overlapping space' can be hypothesized and examined. In possible later research and application on other cases, results can be validated or disputed.

Conceptualization

Although the base line of a theory has often been thought of in the lines of an equation (Conceptualizations and functions + Conceptualization and functions = Theory) the process of how to conceptualize has been harder to find in the general theory development texts. Strauss and Corbin present how this is done in GTM¹⁷.

According to Strauss and Corbin "*there is built into the GTM style of extensive interrelated data collection and theoretical analysis an explicit mandate to strive toward verification of its resulting hypotheses: this is done throughout the course of a research project*"¹⁸, instead of assuming that confirmation is reached only through follow-up quantitative research. Enhanced also by the procedures of the GTM style is the possibility of developing theory of great conceptual density and with meaningful variation. "Conceptual density" is the richness of concept development and relationships – reached through considerable familiarity with associated data and are checked out systematically with these data (not the same as "thick descriptions" which puts emphasis on description instead of conceptualization)¹⁹. "*An distinguishing characteristic of GTM besides the constant making of comparisons, include the systematic asking of generative and concept relating questions, theoretical sampling, systematic coding procedures, suggested guidelines for attaining conceptual (not merely descriptive) "density" variation, and conceptual integration*"²⁰.

To this thesis' theory development method, we remember that theory evolves during actual research and the continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. Theory may be generated, or if existing, be elaborated and modified as incoming data are meticulously played against them. Regardless of level of theory, as Strauss and Corbin writes, "*there is built into this style of interrelated data*

¹⁷ Strauss A. and Corbin J, 1994:278.

¹⁸ Strauss A. and Corbin J, 1994:273-285

¹⁹ Strauss A. and Corbin J, 1994:273-285

²⁰ Strauss A. and Corbin J, 1994:273-285

collection and theoretical analysis an explicit mandate to strive to verification the resulting hypotheses”²¹. Verification can be achieved throughout the course of a research project, it is not only possible through follow-up quantitative research.

The general procedure is to ask, what are the influence of power, social class, or another concept of study, on the phenomena under study, or in this case; what are the effects of overlapping – then to trace this influence as precisely as possible, as well as its influence flowing in the reverse direction. Theory developing procedures forces us to, for example: What is the mechanics here? What function has this concept and how does this function manifest here, by whom, when, where, and with what consequences²²?

2.2 Misunderstandings regarding Case-study research

What can be explored from few cases when regarding theory development? In the article *Case-Study Research Misunderstandings Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research*, from 2006, five common misunderstandings about case-study research are examined:

“(a) General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge; (b) One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development; (c) The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, at the first stage of a total research process, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; (d) The case study contains a bias toward verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions; and (e) It is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies”²³.

According to its author, Flyvbjerg, the case study *can* have a value in and of themselves – they do not have to be linked to hypotheses following the hypothetico-deductive model of explanation. The five misunderstandings indicate

²¹ Strauss A. and Corbin J, 1994:273-285

²² Strauss A. and Corbin J, 1994:273-285

²³ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

that it is theory, reliability, and validity that are the actual issues. General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge²⁴. To understand why the conventional view of case-study research is problematic there is a need to grasp the roles of cases and theory in human learning²⁵. Two points are made in this context, firstly that *“the case study produces context dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts”* and secondly that *“in the study of human affairs, there appears to exist only context dependent knowledge, which, thus, presently rules out the possibility of epistemic theoretical construction”*²⁶.

*“Such knowledge and expertise also lie at the centre of the case study as a research and teaching method or to put it more generally still, as a method of learning. Phenomenological studies of the learning process therefore emphasize the importance of this and similar methods: It is only because of experience with cases that one can at all move from being a beginner to being an expert. If people were exclusively trained in context-independent knowledge and rules, that is, the kind of knowledge that forms the basis of textbooks and computers, they would remain at the beginner’s level in the learning process. This is the limitation of analytical rationality: It is inadequate for the best results in the exercise of a profession, as student, researcher, or practitioner”*²⁷.

Furthermore, it is commonly thought that a single case is in itself to “individual” to be a basis for generalization, because of this the case study has less to offer to scientific development. Flyvbjerg corrects this second misunderstanding by declaring that *“One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the force of example” is underestimated”*²⁸. Flyvbjerg continues by quoting to Anthony Giddens who writes that

²⁴ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

²⁵ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

²⁶ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

²⁷ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

²⁸ Giddens, A, 1984:328

*“Research which is geared primarily to hermeneutic problems may be of generalized importance in so far as it serves to elucidate the nature of agents’ knowledgeability, and thereby their reasons for action, across a wide range of action-contexts. Pieces of ethnographic research like... say, the traditional small-scale community research of fieldwork anthropology—are not in themselves generalizing studies. But they can easily become so if carried out in some numbers, so that judgements of their typicality can justifiably be made”*²⁹.

Flyvbjerg agrees to this but complements that this is not the only way to work: it also depends on the case in question and how it is chosen³⁰. An illuminating example is Galileo’s contradiction of Aristoteles theory about gravity were a critical case study was constructed to test the theories; random and large samples were at no time part of the picture. A strategic choice can add much to the generalizability of a case study, so also in social science.

Regarding case selection, if a theory could be proven false in a favourable case then it will most likely be false for intermediate cases. Flyvbjerg states that formal generalization, whether on the basis of large samples or single cases, is considerably overrated as the main source of scientific progress³¹. It has been shown that *“the most important precondition for science is that researchers possess a wide range of practical skills for carrying out scientific work: generalization is just one of these [...] and formal generalization is only one of many ways by which people gain and accumulate knowledge. That knowledge cannot be formally generalized does not mean that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society”*³². In fact, it has been argued that case studies are likely to produce the best theory.

Since case studies are useful for generalizing by use of the type of test called “falsification”, which in social science is used for critical reflexivity. *“Falsification is one of the most rigorous tests to which a scientific proposition can be subjected: If just one observation does not fit with the proposition, it is considered not valid generally and must therefore be either revised or rejected”*³³.

²⁹ Giddens, A, 1984:328

³⁰ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

³¹ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

³² Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

³³ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

The third misunderstanding Flyvbjerg corrects is that the case study has its greatest use for generating hypotheses, as in contrast to other methods which supposedly are more suited for hypothesis testing and theory building. This misunderstanding is similar to the previous one, that generalization on the basis of individual cases cannot be done. Because that misunderstanding has been revised, as above, Flyvbjerg corrects the third misunderstanding by observing that the case study is indeed useful for both the generating and testing of hypotheses, however, is not limited to these research activities alone. *“The testing of hypotheses relates directly to the question of “generalizability,” and this in turn relates to the question of case selection. Here generalizability of case studies can be increased by the strategic selection of cases”*³⁴.

The general advice given on how to identify critical cases is to look for either “most likely” or “least likely” cases³⁵. Another possibility is the “Paradigm cases”, cases that highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question. Flyvbjerg himself have some problem understanding what a paradigm case is and thus approached another to ask this question, Dreyfus as his name was, replied that *“you recognize a paradigm case because it shines, but I’m afraid that is not much help. You just have to be intuitive. We all can tell what is a better or worse case — of a Cézanne painting, for instance. But I can’t think there could be any rules for deciding what makes Cézanne a paradigmatic modern painter.... It is a big problem in a democratic society where people are supposed to justify what their intuitions are. In fact, nobody really can justify what their intuition is. So you have to make up reasons, but it won’t be the real reasons”*³⁶.

There is a worry that the case study contains a tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions. This bias toward verification is general, and the case, along with other qualitative methods, are often seen as less rigorous than are quantitative, hypothetico-deductive methods. Flyvbjerg thinks of this critique as fallacious since case studies has their own rigor, different but not less strict than of quantitative methods. The case study has the advantage that it can “close in” on situations and test ideas directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice.

³⁴ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006

³⁵ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

³⁶ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222 (Flyvbjerg/ Dreyfus personal communication, 1988)

The case study forces the researcher to focus on the type of falsifications described above. It is falsification, not verification, which characterizes the case study³⁷.

A perceived problem with case studies is that a single case study is often difficult to summarize and that it difficult to develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case study. Again, Flyvbjerg argues against this perception as another misunderstanding. “*Case studies often contain a substantial element of narrative. Good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life. Accordingly, such narratives may be difficult or impossible to summarize into neat scientific formulae, general propositions, and theories. This tends to be seen by critics of the case study as a drawback. To the case study researcher, however, a particularly “thick” and hard-to-summarize narrative is not a problem. Rather, it is often a sign that the study has uncovered a particularly rich problematic. The question, therefore, is whether summarizing and generalization, which the critics see as an ideal, is always desirable*”³⁸. Flyvbjergs answer is that the summarizing of case studies can be difficult, however, that is less correct in regard to case outcomes. The problems in summarizing case studies have more to do with the properties of the reality studied, not the case study as a research method. “*Often it is not desirable to summarize and generalize case studies. Good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety*”³⁹.

Explicit warnings has been raised against summarizing dense case studies: “*It is simply that the very value of the case study, the contextual and interpenetrating nature of forces, is lost when one tries to sum up in large and mutually exclusive concepts*”⁴⁰. The dense case study has more usage for its user and is more interesting for social theory than factual “findings” and high-level generalizations of theory according to Lisa Peattie⁴¹. The opposite of summing up and “closing” a case study is to keep it open.

Openness can communicate whole case in its diversity, allowing it to unfold from many sides, showing its complexity, and potentially conflicting notions. By relating the case to broader philosophical positions that cut across specializations

³⁷ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

³⁸ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

³⁹ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

⁴⁰ Peattie, L, 2001: 260

⁴¹ Peattie, L, 2001: 260

one can leave the scope open for different interpretations, this allows one to draw diverse conclusions regarding the question of what the actual case is a case of⁴². *“The goal is not to make the case study be all things to all people. The goal is to allow the study to be different things to different people”*⁴³.

⁴² Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

⁴³ Flyvbjerg, B, 2006:222

3 Materials and Methods of analysis

“Overlapping space” of regions demands that multiple regions (partly) share space which is considered part of both regions. A correct conceptualization of both what this space is and how it influences regionalization theory has required an overview of previous research on the field of ‘regions’ and an analysis and comparison of regions which has such a ‘overlapping space’. To properly observe ‘overlapping space’ (and related dynamics of regions) it has been important to approach this process with care and with selected tools.

In accordance with the developed ideas of Metzger & Schmitt, the appropriate institutional characteristic to focus on for material gathering is the spokesperson institution⁴⁴. Material with the highest validity relating to how regions strategize are gathered through interviews with their representatives, correlated with policy documents and various other policy out-put the institutions produce such as recently develop agendas and organization purpose descriptions. For example; the *Action Plan for the EUSBSR*, the *Action Plan for Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council 2018 – 2019*, the *Nordisk råd – Internasjonal strategi for Nordisk råd 2018-2022*, and the *Decision by the Council of the Baltic Sea States on a review of the CBSS long term priorities Adopted through silent procedure on 20 June 2014*.

The basic method of gathering the texts and documents is simple: gather them and read them with a basic cautionary to source-critical analysis. For an analysis of the gathered text and documents the qualitative text analysis has been used. The method for qualitative text analysis is explained in the first part of this chapter (3.1). Interviews have been conducted with Torkil Sørensen (Previously for the Nordic Council Secretariat, Senior Adviser, IR-relations), Johan Lindblad (The Nordic Council Secretariat, Senior Adviser), Peter Schenk (European Commission,

⁴⁴ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2012

Director General for Regional and Urban Policy – Competence Centre Macro-region and European Territorial Cooperation – EUSBSR), and with Bernd Hemingway (Deputy Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat)⁴⁵. All of whom can be considered either, the spokesperson of the institution that they represent or, that institutions leading expert on the relevant subject. In the second part of this chapter (3.2) methods of conducting interviews in relation to a few case scenario is described and then followed by methods of interview analysis⁴⁶.

3.1 Qualitative text analysis

Qualitative text analysis processes are about active reading, to question the text and asking if the text, or yourself, can answer those questions. Sources usually have to be read and analysed multiple times for a deep understanding of them⁴⁷. The usefulness of this method can be distinguished by two separate main types of text analytical inquiries: firstly, those about systematising the content of selected text and secondly, those meant to critically review their content. Systematising is a variant of describing analysis done to distinguish thought structure of a specific actor, to find logical order and to classify the texts. The cases for this kind of text analysis can easily be applied to actors of any kind. An example of text systematising analysis is done by Patrik Hall in his book *Den svenska historien* (2000), where he tries to reveal/distinguish how a less defined power of state has acted to create a Swedish identity through the centuries. The approach has been

⁴⁵ Interview with Torkil Sørensen (Previously for the Nordic Council Secretariat, Senior Adviser, IR-relations), Johan Lindblad (The Nordic Council Secretariat, Senior Adviser), with Peter Schenk (European Commission, Director General for Regional and Urban Policy – Competence Centre Macro-region and European Territorial Cooperation – EUSBSR), and with Bernd Hemingway (Deputy Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat).

⁴⁶ As social constructions strategies between actors (regions, regional spokespersons) sometime need to be viewed from a skeptical perspective I also prepared to use a motive analysis method for potential added insight. The analysis did not encounter any contradicting motivations and the prepared motive analysis method proved unnecessary. Therefore, since it could have proven useful (and likely would be in a case region where spokespersons could have different inter-relations than these spokespersons in the Baltic Sea), it has been excluded from the thesis but included in the annex (Annex 9.4).

⁴⁷ Esaiasson et al. 2007:239

applied to various primary and secondary sources of texts produced of and about the case regions, both policy documents, news articles and policy documents⁴⁸. The resource gathering was done with a basic cautionary to source-critical method in order to determine reliability of the material⁴⁹. The content analysis helped revealing spokespersons interests and policies which i.e, the content regions assign to their space, thus defining what kind of space the regions make for themselves and their spaces of activity.

Critically reviewing research goes a step further than the systematising studies method. The idea critical approach works to decide to what extent a given argumentation adheres to some set norms – rational or moral⁵⁰. Conducting a text critical review showed little meaning for this thesis. The research questions about how regions strategize and how this affect the regionalization processes are not related to ideologies and thus more suitably examined with a motive analysis method then by a method for analysing the rationale of norms and morals.

3.2 Conducting interviews and interview analysis

How these regional spokespersons understand their relationships with other regions are expressed by representatives of the regions. The interview method chosen here is the 'key informant interviews' which are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in a specific community. Key informant interviews collect information from people who have first-hand knowledge about the community. These key informants, with their expert knowledge and understanding, provide insight on the nature of problems and give added context on the subject at hand.

This part of the paper, regarding interview methodology, is based on the report *Conducting Key Informant Interviews in Developing Countries A.I.D. Program Design and Evaluation Methodology Report No. 13*⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Hall, P, 2000

⁴⁹ Defined by Thurén, T, in the book *Källkritik* from 1997

⁵⁰ Esaiasson et al. 2007:240

⁵¹ Kumar, K, 1989

Key informant interviews involve interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject⁵². Two characteristics of this method need special mention. The first characteristic, is that *“only a small number of informants are interviewed. Such informants are selected because they possess information or ideas that can be solicited by the investigator. Depending on the nature and scope of an inquiry, the investigator identifies appropriate groups from which the key informants are drawn and then [select] a few individuals from each group”*⁵³. The second characteristic is that key informant interviews are in essence qualitative interviews. Such interviews are conducted by *“using interview guides that list the topics and issues to be covered during a session. The interviewer frames the actual questions in the course of interviews. The atmosphere in these interviews is informal, resembling a conversation among acquaintances. The interviewer subtly probes informants to elicit more information and takes elaborate notes, which are developed later. If all the relevant items are not covered in a session, the interviewer goes back to the key informant”*⁵⁴. Interviews are invested with special meaning and relevance in the present discussion because of their unstructured nature⁵⁵.

Kumar tells us that key informant interviews are appropriate *“when understanding of the underlying motivations and attitudes of a target population is required: key informant interviews can help determine not only what people do but why they do it. Such interviews are excellent for documenting people’s reasons for their behaviour”*⁵⁶. Thus, they are also perfectly complemented with an expressed motive analysis⁵⁷.

Some advantages of conducting interviews are; (1) that data originates directly from knowledgeable people and may offer confidential information, providing data and insight that would not be revealed in other settings; (2) this method provides the flexibility for the researcher to explore new ideas and issues that had not been

⁵² Kumar, K, 1989

⁵³ Kumar, K, 1989

⁵⁴ Kumar, K, 1989

⁵⁵ Kumar, K, 1989

⁵⁶ Kumar, K, 1989

⁵⁷ Kumar, K, 1989

anticipated while planning the study/interview but that are relevant to its purpose; (3) it is generally easy to find people with the necessary skills to conduct key informant interviews because most social scientists possess the professional training and experience required. Key informant interviews provide a limited basis for quantification and therefore they are rarely appropriate when quantitative data is needed⁵⁸. Interviews are only one part of the source material for this thesis. With the few interviews conducted the validity of this study is achieved through the correlation of various sources of materials. Validity of a higher degree is required when making anything less abstract than a feasible argument for the mechanisms and functions of a hypothesis or a theory; it is thus not as much of a requirement for the development of theory as when confirming a theory.

3.2.1 Analysing interview data

I found it suitable to work with a version of summary sheets with the main advantage of enabling one to reduce vast amounts of information into manageable themes that can be easily examined. Each interview summary sheet provides information about the key informant. According to Kumar summary sheets should contain the reasons for his or her inclusion in the study, the informant's main observations, the implications of these observations and the interviewer's assessment of the key informant, together with any insights and ideas that evolved during the interview⁵⁹.

Once the tentative findings are made, it is necessary to review them carefully for accuracy and to ensure that they are grounded in empirical reality. The key informant interview method is susceptible to errors and biases. I conducted this analysis in relation to the content analysis of various text-based sources to insure empirical reality.

⁵⁸ Kumar, K, 1989:3pp

⁵⁹ Kumar, K, 1989:29p

Krishna Kumar describes some steps that can help reduce the most common sources of biases and errors in key informant studies. By so doing Kumar assesses the reliability of key informants in terms of five different criteria⁶⁰:

“-Knowledgeability: A good key informant has first-hand knowledge of the issues and is therefore in a position to give accurate information. If the informant is relying on secondary sources, they too, must be proven reliable and accurate.

-Credibility: The key informant answers questions thoughtfully and candidly. He or she is perceptive about the issues and does not exaggerate or play up his or her own importance.

-Impartiality: In some cases, a key informant may have an ulterior motive for providing inaccurate information. For example, it is not uncommon for the management staff to exaggerate the positive in the project’s performance and accomplishments and the problems in project implementation. A respondent whose comments are overly positive or negative does not make a good key informant.

-Willingness to respond: If, for some reason, an informant is not totally cooperative during the interview, his or her hesitancy should be considered during the data analysis stage.

-Outside constraints: The presence of outsiders during the interview can seriously influence responses. For example, project participants are less spontaneous in the presence of program managers than when they are alone with the interviewer. An added problem in some studies is that interviewers are accompanied by two or three staff members. The arrival of a group of “officials” also intimidates some key informants, especially those from low socioeconomic groups“⁶¹.

It is also important that the investigator to look at his or her own biases, they may affect interviews and the analysis of the data generated by them. Notable biases to be aware of are the ‘hypotheses confirmation bias’, and the ‘concreteness bias’.

Hypotheses confirmation bias: is the most persistent bias in key informant interviews and arises from a focus on the information and ideas that confirm the investigator’s preconceived notions and hypotheses. Investigators should therefore take care to demonstrate objectivity and not to ignore contradictory ideas⁶². When producing a hypothesis once should make a point of looking for the unexpected, the evidence that its feasibility faulty.

⁶⁰ Kumar, K, 1989:29p

⁶¹ Kumar, K, 1989:29p

⁶² Kumar, K, 1989:31p

Concreteness bias: “a key informant who provides vivid descriptions may be given more credence than others who make substantive points without concrete illustrations”⁶³. An informant who describes an isolated event in great detail can make a deeper impression on the interviewer, as can specific data may impress an interviewer even though such data may be partial or even inaccurate. It is important for the investigators to be conscious about such biases⁶⁴.

⁶³ Kumar, K, 1989:31p

⁶⁴ Kumar, K, 1989:31p

4 Space of Human Construct

Regionalisation is a process of structuring human space within which the structuring that occurs over time. Independent of which space it might be (social, political, economic, historical, special or geographical priority) human space is the setting for regional development. Therefore, it is needed to have an understanding of 'time' and 'space' before we can have an adequate understanding of 'regions' and the processes of 'regionalization' or for what can be created out of a theory testing and developing study.

This chapter reviews the theoretical foundation of 'regionalization'; starting with the concepts of time and space of the human construct of regions and what can be abstracted from space and objects regarding social theory, then more concrete concepts of the academic field of regional studies so to extract a denser understanding of the dynamics that an "overlapping space" would be depending upon. For an actual understanding of a hypothetical concept, this review is important.

4.1 Space influence social relation theory

Space itself is a debated subject in many disciplines which results in different interpretations and distinctions between these disciplines. In the book *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, from 1985, by Derek Gregory and John Urry, 'space' is approached with a discussion about the "*long-established philosophical debate as to whether space and time are to be viewed as in some sense absolute entities, possessing their own natures or particularities*"⁶⁵; it is asked whether space is casually productive: should it be distinguished from matter since it has a structure

⁶⁵ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:49

or should it be considered just 'relative', a way to describe relations and connections between objects of the real world?

The latter view is 'an order of co-existences as time is an order of successions. By this perspective on space, the universe is simply consisting of different objects, composed in various ways, and these objects exhibit spatial relationships between each other and between their own constitutive parts. According to the Gregory and Urry it is the relationists argument that if any statements do appear to assign properties to space it will be logically possible to reduce these properties to the relations between the objects concerned⁶⁶.

“Most of the conventional distinctions between disciplines (especially those between economics, politics, and sociology, on the one hand, and history and geography, on the other) make it difficult to relate time and space to this analysis of social relations. Specifically within sociology the distinction between social system or social structure and social change seems to restrict temporal analysis merely to the latter. Likewise, the concept of 'society' constrains analyses within certain socio-spatial parameters and makes difficult the theorization of structures and processes which do not conform to the concept of the individual 'society'”⁶⁷.

It is therefore problematic to specify what difference space makes. How important is it and how should space and its supposed effects be understood? What are the implications of space for social theory and practice⁶⁸?

While the difficulties of theorizing might seem severe it is argued that the difference it makes and its possible implications for social theory are misunderstood. The view is that the difficulties in theorizing space are largely due to failures to distinguish abstract from concrete research⁶⁹. Abstractions involve concepts designed to refer to particular one-sided aspects of objects. Usually, the 'objects' of study are many-sided or “concrete”; as such, the various constitutive elements isolated by abstractions need to be synthesized⁷⁰.

To the realism approach 'objects' are understood to possess casual powers and liabilities to do or suffer certain things by virtue of their structure and composition,

⁶⁶ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:45pp

⁶⁷ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:45pp

⁶⁸ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:49

⁶⁹ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:49

⁷⁰ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:49

where whether specific liabilities or casual powers are activated depending on contingently related conditions⁷¹. Realism pays considerable attention to the nature of relations and distinguish between necessary relations (such as that a husband and wife does not exist as a single part without the other) and contingent relations (neither necessary nor impossible). Weather, relations are necessary or contingent, *“abstract theory must remain agnostic about their form on any particular occasion, or at least make claims about what might happen in them conditional upon an assumption about their existence”*⁷².

The given answer to what difference space makes is that space can only be understood in terms of the objects that constitute it. An implication of this is that the study of space, and regions, must be rooted in social theory⁷³. Regionalization is grounded in social theory and should be seen through a realist perspective. To understand the space of an object, a region, in relation to any other object, we must understand the regions separately and also that the space between the constituting objects in said space must be explored.

4.1.1 The difference that space makes

That space makes a difference is proved by mundane reflection according to Sayer: that things has to be in the right place if we are to use them or be affected by them is common sense⁷⁴. This argument might seem odd but if we look closer at the meaning of `space`. Space, in terms of geographical absolute space, is empty. Relative space only exists where it is constituted by matter. While space is constituted by objects it is not reducible to them. Space only exist in and through objects and is also independent of the types of objects there. Matter always necessarily has spatial extension and spatial relation only exist through objects⁷⁵. There is no understanding space without its content since there is no space without content. *“Yet depending on the nature of the constituents, their spatial relations may make a crucial difference [...] but only in terms of the particular casual*

⁷¹ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:50

⁷² Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:50

⁷³ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:51

⁷⁴ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:51

⁷⁵ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:52

*powers and the liabilities constituting it. Conversely, what kind of effects are produced by casual mechanisms depends inter alia on the form of conditions in which they are situated*⁷⁶.

According to Oxford References 'Social space' is "[t]he combined use and perception of space by distinct social groups, as opposed to personal space. [It] is produced by societies according to the spatial practices that exist within the society"⁷⁷. The produced space is a set of relations between objects within the space [...]. Social space provides an environmental framework for the behaviour of the group; it is flexible/networked [...] multi-dimensional and multi-layered social space defined by political, social and institutional capacities' [...]"⁷⁸.

In social space 'objects' are of a different nature than a pure physical entity. Henri Lefebvre tells us that "[social] space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or 'ideal' about it as compared, for example, with science, representations, ideas or dreams. Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. Among these actions, some serve production, others consumption (i.e. the enjoyment of the fruits of production). Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge"⁷⁹. Social space can be understood as a place of what is and what it should be – it is the discourse and understanding of 'the here and now', the objects in it, its resources and the how and why to get 'there'. It is our understanding of our surroundings and how it could or should be viewed. Abstract social theory only needs to consider space insofar as necessary properties of object are involved, which according to Sayer does not amount to very much. However, "abstract social science cannot ignore the fact that the possibilities and problems of

⁷⁶ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:52

⁷⁷ In this study of overlapping social space it would be the spatial practices between (as societies) the regional institutions.

⁷⁸ Oxford Reference: Social space, 2019

⁷⁹ Lefebvre, H, 1991:73

reproducing and transforming social forms depends on the integration of their elements in space-time”⁸⁰.

Regarding ‘space’, one common error of thinking about it is to assume “*that because space only exists where it is constituted by objects it is wholly reducible to them*”⁸¹. Another type of error is thinking that, one; space (territory) is not just something outside and prior to society, rather it is something produced by society; and two, thinking that the spatial hence is therefor social. The constituents of space are neither reducible to its objects nor is it correct to reduce to just those constituents which are socially produced. “*The spatial is partly constituted by the social, but is reducible neither to natural nor social constituents. Certainly spatial structures may have ‘roots in production and class relations’ but there are plenty of other possible constituents – natural and social – of space*”⁸².

To accurately describe the world the description would have to be as large as the world. To describe one of the case regions, reduced to space, objects, their constituents and relations is also a large undertaking. This study involves the relation between multiple regions. Researchers in fields such as this chose to depend upon aggregates and averages which describe the whole system but fails to observe causality by ignoring spatial form or to conduct studies which allow concrete analysis and casual explanation of limited parts of the subject but which leave substantial areas uncovered⁸³.

4.2 Dynamics and Concepts of Region-space and objects

According to Paasi’s theory, first presented in his paper *The institutionalization of regions A theoretical framework for understanding the emergence of regions and the constitution of regional identity*, from 1986, the region emerges through a

⁸⁰ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:58pp

⁸¹ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:58pp

⁸² Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:58pp

⁸³ Gregory, D, and Urry, J, 1985:61pp

continuous process of institutionalization⁸⁴. The region is understood as “*a process in the course of which a specific areal unit within a society gradually emerges, through the mediation of various functions, as an entity with a status of its own not only as the territorial exponent of certain functions but also as a specific part of the areal system internalized in the consciousness of the society in question*”⁸⁵. Paasi’s theory has been referred to as a “processes of spatial formation”. These processes of regional institutionalization occur in four phases and over time:

- 1; Areal or territorial delineation
- 2; Conceptual or symbolic formulation
- 3; Institutional establishment and
- 4; Acceptance as an areal entity

By the fourth stage the area may be said to possess a special regional identity of its own. It is a repeated argument that “*regions should be analyzed as congealed, or at least partially stabilized, products of processes of regionalization, which are always interventions in the world, and whereby the drawing up of boundaries, both tacit and explicit, and effects of inclusion and exclusion are produced, both internally and externally*”⁸⁶. The process of regional formation is on-going, never complete and always changing. Regions are entities that can be seen as a process that is mutable, porous, un-even, never complete and always changing. Tensions of what the region is, conflict about its content and what it shall be is part of this historical process that is on-going on all sorts of geographical scales⁸⁷.

4.2.1 Regionalization, spatial planning, ‘soft space’ and ‘fuzzy boundaries’

“Patterns of movement and flows of people, culture, goods and information mean that it is now not so much physical boundaries - the geographical distances, the seas or mountain ranges -

⁸⁴ Paasi A, 1986

⁸⁵ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

⁸⁶ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

⁸⁷ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

*that define a community or nation's 'natural limits'. Increasingly we must think in terms of communications and transport networks and of the symbolic boundaries of language and culture - the 'spaces of transmission' defined by satellite footprints or radio signals - as providing the crucial, and permeable, boundaries of our age"*⁸⁸.

*"Boundaries exist in many ways as manifestations of socio-spatial consciousness (and power) in social practices and discourses: in politics, administration, economics, culture or the organisation of ethnic relations. They doubtless also have material and textual manifestations (newspapers, books, maps, drawings, paintings, songs, poems, various memorials and monuments, etc.) which reveal and strengthen the material and symbolic elements of historical continuity in human consciousness"*⁸⁹.

'Spatial planning systems' refer to the methods and approaches used to influence the distribution of people and activities in spaces of various scales. Spatial planning can be defined as the coordination of practices and policies affecting spatial organization. Spatial planning takes place on local, regional, national and international levels and often results in the creation of a spatial plan⁹⁰. There are quite a few definitions of spatial planning. An early one is found in the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter (often called the 'Torremolinos Charter'), adopted in 1983 by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT):

*"Regional/spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organisation of space according to an overall strategy"*⁹¹.

Allmendinger and Haughton have highlighted the emergence of numerous entirely new planning scales in the form of '**soft spaces**' with '**fuzzy boundaries**', these spaces consists of informal or semiformal non-statutory spatialities of planning with

⁸⁸ Morley & Robins, 1995:1

⁸⁹ Paasi, A., 1996:24

⁹⁰ *Spatial planning*, 2018

⁹¹ The Torremolinos Charter, 1983:13

associations and relations stretching across both formally established boundaries and scalar levels of planning and across previously entrenched sectoral divides⁹². These emerging soft spaces of planning can to various degrees be seen both to supplement and to supplant existing 'hard' (i.e, formally recognized and statutorily defined) planning spatialities⁹³. Activities of spatial planning is becoming progressively more focused on the type of activities referred to as 'metagovernance' practices⁹⁴.

“Metagovernance can be seen as a “complex process for creating shared understandings of acceptable behaviours, enforced through diverse mechanisms, not least the shared involvement in creating strategic documents required by the policy integration agenda, and agreement on the instruments for ensuring conformity”: metagovernance is thus a form of “governance of governance”⁹⁵.

By this “governance of governance” the “rules of the game” are codified and policies are scripted⁹⁶. Spatial planning work has been described as always beginning 'in the middle' – in a situation constrained by multiple factors which are beyond both control and (usually) knowledge of the planner⁹⁷. Metzger and Schmitt's spokesperson-theory, with their added insights on regionalization theory further developed from ideas based in Actor-Network Theory (ANT), regard *“processes towards regionalization are seldom streamlined, but generally marked by strife and struggle over the right to determine the ascribed boundaries and substance of a certain regionalization”⁹⁸.*

“Concerning the case of any specific region, various actors can be intervening and propose new variations upon how the region should be conceive and it may lead to situations with multiple and often conflicting suggestions as how to envision that region which is floating around at the same time, sometimes partially connecting, sometimes standing in direct conflict with each other or appearing as mutually excluding. That might mean that one often cannot talk of 'the region' in

⁹² Allmendinger, P. and Haughton, G, 2010

⁹³ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:265

⁹⁴ Allmendinger, P. and Haughton, G, 2010

⁹⁵ Allmendinger, P. and Haughton, G, 2010:808

⁹⁶ Allmendinger, P. and Haughton, G, 2010:808

⁹⁷ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

⁹⁸ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

the singular, but must rather refer to it in the multiple, as simultaneously existing, alternative versions of a region that are often (but not always) mutually excluding. Even at the case of just one region; at some points the development towards a singularization of a specific region may occur, either due to the launching of intentional programmes of action or as the unintended outcome of the unfolding of events”⁹⁹.

How this holds true for situations where multiple different regions co-exist must depend on the content determining the difference between those regions (example: identities can coexist but can they merge?) Economic areas might more easily become one singular area if the interests of the actors/regions are the same. Various fields of constructs should be variously adaptable depending on its constitution. The process of merging is called 'singularization'. As a general merging of different versions of a region, singularization is never absolute or incontestable.

According to Metzger and Schmitt, *“increased degrees of singularization should be seen as a form of ontological closure which makes active contestation more difficult and costly, as greater amounts of resources and allies need to be mustered to have a reasonable shot at prying apart the strong associations which may have become established through such a process. When a certain version of the region becomes more stabilized, fixed, and formalized, it may in time become more or less a ‘collateral reality’ which is taken for granted and reproduced daily without much reflection”¹⁰⁰*. The formation of spatial entities, such as regions, is a produce of the alignment and stabilization. The products of these spatial processes are regions ever changing, not without an end but always dependent on the processes that creates, sustain, and dissolves them¹⁰¹. Questions of 'soft spaces' and 'fuzzy boundaries' should not be confused with questions concerning the durability or fragility of spatial entities. According to Metzger and Schmitt a “fluid robustness” of spatial entities only lasts *“as long as there is ‘no single strongpoint to be defended in order to preserve continuity’, no ‘need for fixed frontiers to be patrolled’, no ‘need for police action to safeguard the stability of elements and their linkages’, and ‘no network structure to be protected’”¹⁰²*.

⁹⁹ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

¹⁰⁰ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

¹⁰¹ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

¹⁰² Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267p

Metzger and Schmitt's concept of a '**regional spokesperson**' combines Paasi's theory of regionalization with the idea "*that in the emergence of social groups there is always one member who represents and personifies the whole group, or else a small number of them who, each in a different respect, individualize it no less entirely in themselves*"¹⁰³. Metzger and Schmitt recognize that "*one of the important steps in the process towards the potential singularization, stabilization, and institutionalization of a spatial entity is the emergence of regional spokespersons who, through 'grouping talk', act as the [...] spokesperson of the [...] interests of the, in this case, spatial entity*"¹⁰⁴. The term '**territorial spokesperson**' can signify any actor which is gifted or capable of taking upon itself the capacity to act as the voice of a spatial entity, such as regions, confronting spatial issues and presenting spatial solutions. By producing discourse in the name of the region and in the name of the interests of the region, a regional spokesperson can claim legitimacy and takes upon itself [or is given?] the right [or ability?] to "*formulate the interests of the region and the power to define what does and does not belong to the region, hence both attempting to position itself as the legitimate embodiment of the voice of the region and, at the same time, articulating a particular version of the supposed essence of the region*"¹⁰⁵. This "regional spokesperson" of Paasi's theory could be said to be an additional mechanism to the fourth phases of his theory, one which focus on the singularization process of regions. One can speculate if legitimacy is not only taken but also be given by other actors if they find one among themselves that has the capacity to function as their spokesperson.

4.3 The Space of Regions

Space itself is a debated subject in many disciplines which results in different interpretations and distinctions between these disciplines.

¹⁰³ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:268

¹⁰⁴ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:268

¹⁰⁵ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:268

Social space here is between the regional spokespersons around the Baltic Sea and how they use it. Regional content is produced by the needs of the society within a singular region. Common needs between regions opens up for cooperation. Societies which share more also have more to cooperate about. Depending on how they cooperate about issues and objects that they share, practices are developed. According to the definition of social space¹⁰⁶, the character of these practices between the regional spokespersons reflects the practices that exist within each region.

The regions are objects themselves and the processes, a “social calculation” of regionalization, soft space and hard boundaries, singularization, which takes place in a complex space through interaction of differently compositional objects and over **time**. The **space** of a region is the space it imagines as its space of relevance. We see this in how a region/spokesperson identifies towards a specific area of the world and its relation with actors therein.

The **objects** of a region are determining factors of various forms that it has to have a relationship to: actors, resources, obstacles, the interests it holds and process it bring about as an institution.

Boundaries are the distinctions between spaces, a distinction made by specifying which objects (such as specific issues, problems or resources) that belongs to either space. Not all boundaries separate the same objects but different boundaries are made up of the inclusion or exclusion of various objects.

Regionalization, as ‘metagovernance’, are a complex process for creating shared understandings of acceptable behaviours and “processes of spatial formation” – The rule of the game for how regions interact is an exponent of the societies that creates them, their space, their objects, their values and their interests.

4.3.1 Hypothesis of what ‘overlapping space’ is:

After the above review, the overlapping space can be conceptualized by the happenstance that two regions or more not only share the same space but when that space is also defined by the same subject or issue /that the regional spokespersons

¹⁰⁶ *Oxford Reference: Social space*, 2019

of each regional space have self-specified agendas and interests in common with each other.

The same space must be included in the regions idea of “self”, of such consistency that it is part of the regions idea of their imagined space. That the regions share space is not enough for the space to be ‘overlapping space’, in that space there must be an object (a single issue, problem or resource) that both share; an object of subject relevant to both regions. This object in shared space must be of such nature that it is more than just fleeting; this gives time to the interactions of regions which would be necessary for the ideas of society and identity to react.

If this conceptualization of ‘overlapping space’ captures the essential relevant mechanisms of time, space, and regionalization, we can hazard some further deductions. One rule of interaction would be that the dynamics of interactions between two social entities are based on their idea of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Therefore, it is important to examine how regional spokesperson institutions approach each other and how they see the overlapping space: ‘Is the overlapping space or the other region a threat?’. With that restricted and calculated logic we can structure a proposal for how regions strategize about overlapping space. The hypothesis is that their strategizing is the collective output of relational dynamics dependent on some limited options.

The regional spokesperson might act to:

- 1; to include the other in their overlapping space,
- 2; to exclude each other from their overlapping space,
- 3; to include objects of the overlapping space, i.e. to add content to their space or
- 4; to exclude objects of said space, to null the resource/issue and redefine that which is shared.
- (5; to stun us with something unforeseen).

The function of this relational dynamics would, from each of the regions points of view have to consider the following; 1) is it a resource that we share the object or an issue and, 2) do we want to protect it from others or are the others wanted for cooperation? With such a function we can sketch up some scenarios for region strategization and tentative outcomes, by so doing we can also determine some central topics which determine the dynamics of regionalization in overlapping space.

5 The Cases and “Profiling” Analysis

It is important to assess how the regions were formed, how the institutions defining interests came into being, how they view their space. With this focus the dynamics of the regionalization theory is related to and its mechanisms and functions problematized. Does the region formation process match Paasi’s theory? What has driven the process onwards? It also tests the hypothesis of the previous chapter: How do the regional spokespersons act regarding overlapping space? If they find objects to be shared, one way or the other, then the overlapping space exists. In this manner we can also look for any “unforeseen” circumstance which can problematize the hypothesis.

In this chapter, with the various sources of materials that have been gathered, I have produced a ‘region profiling’ by asking questions alike “what are their *modus operandi*?”, “what space is the space of their region?”, “how do they reflect upon ‘the other’?”, “what are rule of the game for how regions interact?”, “what are the objects the regions have to consider?”, “what are their space of interest/relevance?”, “what is the regional identity?”, “which processes forms this region?”. The aim of these profiles is to familiarized with their organization, history (society/political connection), space and objects (policy), their relation to the other regions, their “others”, and how they act towards these. This operationalization results in that some key notions are brought up and reflected upon. These notions are pointed out at the end of each “profile”. This ‘profiling’ is an easy overview of the regions that does not describe the whole world (as an accurate description of the world would have to be as large as the world itself) but these questions, of a general nature, are derived from the dynamics and concepts of regionalization theory; they should therefore allow a concrete analysis and casually explain factors relating to the research questions and the viability of the hypothesised ‘overlapping space’.

In accordance with the operationalization these notions are related to previous research and theory that was brought up in the previous chapter while keeping in mind that processes and mechanisms are the makings of theory and that theory

consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts. Theory is never finished but evolves constantly based on what the latest examined cases bring forth in regard to earlier results. A theory and its concepts are re-evaluated in regard to the number and type of case where it is developed.

The case regions are the CBSS, the EC/EUSBSR and the 'Nordic'. The second of these regions and Schmitt dubbed to be a regional spokesperson for the Baltic Sea region¹⁰⁷. The second and third are both regional institutions of (about) the same spatial scaling with aligning interests and space.

The profiling itself is a simple construction beginning with the space and objects of each region, one region after the other. Regional strategization towards 'the other', i.e. testing how the hypothesis has held up, is also carried out in this context. The notions lifted out for a closer look in chapter six are mainly observations on the regions constituent "objects" and structures of relations between these case regions.

5.1 CBSS profile: Spokesperson, Space and Strategy

The CBSS spokesperson:

*"When we were created it was kinda of surrounded experience of the just fall of the Berlin wall and the and the kind of dismantling of the two blocs that had [...] of occupied the Cold War for the longest period of time in Europe and of course it was important [to] see how, in regions that were at the border between those two blocks how to [...] bring people closer together [...] on common issues and then of course the whole issue of an integrated Europe and to [...] see how it could bring countries together to avoid [...] cold or real war was kind of [at the heart of] Europe again was what I think the main reason behind creating this so to kind of create a forum were people and countries were able to identify their common issues and to address them"*¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁷ (perhaps it was a restrictive dubbing as a 'the Baltic Sea of Europe' with a singular focus and identity as the Baltic Sea being part of Europe and EU)

¹⁰⁸ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

“the CBSS, and to underline my conviction that Europe’s Northern Dimension stands on the threshold of tremendous new opportunities – for continuing democratic development, for enhanced regional cooperation, and for shared prosperity”¹⁰⁹.

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) is a good example of a regional spokesperson. It is an overall political forum for regional inter-governmental cooperation¹¹⁰. *“The CBSS was established by the region’s Foreign Ministers in Copenhagen in 1992 as a response to the geopolitical changes that took place in the Baltic Sea region with the end of the Cold War. Since its founding, the CBSS has contributed to ensuring positive developments within the Baltic Sea region and has served as a driving force for multi-lateral co-operation”¹¹¹*. The role of the Council is to serve as a forum for guidance and overall coordination among the participating states. The Members of the Council are the eleven states of the Baltic Sea Region as well as the European Commission. The constituting states are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and a representative from the European Union.

The CBSS has three long-term priorities: Regional Identity, Sustainable and Prosperous Region and Safe and Secure Region. “Regional identity” tells us that the CBSS accounts for a society of “us” in this region. In this context they describe their goal for their intention to both foster a Baltic Sea Region identity and to create a notion of unity across borders¹¹². That statement clarifies that they have the view that the Baltic Sea identity exists but that it needs to grow in the consciousness of a shared Baltic Sea society. “Sustainable and Prosperous” connects primarily ecological and economic interests. Also for this long-term priority, when the CBSS describes its goals for ecology and economy, they emphasise a “society of the region”. Their stated goal is: *“To develop the Baltic Sea Region as a model region of sustainable societies able to manage and use resources efficiently, to tap the economic, technological, ecological and social innovation potential of the region in order to ensure its*

¹⁰⁹ Chris Patten, 2002-03-06

¹¹⁰ *Building collaboration & trust*, 2017

¹¹¹ *Building collaboration & trust*, 2017

¹¹² *Building collaboration & trust*, 2017

prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion”¹¹³. “Safe and Secure” indicates not just a priority of stability in itself but also a shared view on what that safety should be, thus showing that the Baltic Sea Region has shared values and interests. Identity is one of its top priorities which emphasise that the CBSS is a regional spokesperson institution which “society” of that region. One observation that should be noted here is the process of how the formation of the institution did not originate in any specific “Baltic Sea society” but rather as a result of different actors reaching out from around a common area, an area not defined by society which had been prohibited by the Iron Curtain but by a geography of common issues and potential new relations.

The space and objects of CBSS’s Baltic region

A progress report on these long-term priorities, *Progress in Strategic Actions to Implement the CBSS Long-term Priorities*, present activities that have happened over the years and projects that are being run as of 2015, it informs the reader that the Nordic Council of Ministers focus on capacity building for local and regional authorities and awareness raising campaigns¹¹⁴.

In the document *Decision by the Council of the Baltic Sea States on a review of the CBSS long term priorities Adopted through silent procedure on 20 June 2014* the CBSS declares, amongst much else that they are agreeing that: “*the CBSS should strive to improve regional cooperation, where added value can be attained, seek synergies and ensure coherence with other actors, enhance competitiveness, develop cross-border activities promote sustainable use of resources and improve communication to implement the Vilnius Declaration and other regional strategic documents as appropriate [...]* and that “*the work of the CBSS should reflect the principles of democracy, social inclusion, sustainability, cultural diversity and non-discrimination, including gender equality; and that these principles should be mainstreamed in all its work*”¹¹⁵.

¹¹³ *Building collaboration & trust*, 2017

¹¹⁴ *Progress in Strategic Actions to Implement the CBSS Long-term Priorities*, 2015:3

¹¹⁵ *Decision by the Council of the Baltic Sea States on a review of the CBSS long term priorities Adopted through silent procedure on 20 June 2014*, 2014

The CBSS has a defined regional space which is in conjugation with the imagined space of the region. The make-up of participating actors was remarked as being a very diverse region where most of its countries are members of the EU. Bernd Hemingway's comments on the actors of the regions are *"we have two countries in the north, Norway and Iceland who don't belong to the union but are very close to the union and to a certain extent also implement EU legislation and then we have one country that is not at all connected, or kinda, not to that extent, which is Russia"*¹¹⁶.

The CBSS actors/participants come from a space determined by the geographical image of the Baltic Sea. However, in the constellation of participants we also see Iceland and a representative from EU. The geographical image is characterized by the countries around the Baltic Sea which has access to the sea. This geographical image of the region is enforced by a historical continuum where the sea was the main conduct for connectivity. That Iceland, which lacks border to the Baltic, is associated to this region could be explained by accepting that the idea of a space is created by more than geographical boundaries but also by a cultural or a political spread of "us"; through Iceland's political affinity and/or cultural belonging. The image of the Baltic Sea Region that the CBSS represents would not be equally bearing to the other actors of the region as an image without Iceland. The EU has been given room in the context of CBSS's Baltic sea region too; the reasons therefore can be scrutinized with questions over which came first the, EU or the CBSS? The CBSS originated from a need to draw the Baltic Sea together into something more than two sides of an ocean after the fall of the wall and the Soviet. The EU had a central part in the development of the CBSS, EU-policy has had a major part in what the CBSS channels, and today EU is a formal part of the actors constituting the CBSS. It begs the question of which identity the CBSS implement in the region of the Baltic Sea. While the channelled identity in the region and the cultural affinity of the EU can be further examined, the political importance of the EU in the context of the CBSS's Baltic region can't be ignored.

¹¹⁶ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

The defined interests of this region are its three long-term priorities: Regional Identity, Sustainable and Prosperous Region and Safe and Secure Region. In the space of this region and over time the CBSS draws together actors to attend the issues and possibilities related here to.

It is a goal for the long term priority “Regional Identity” to *“develop the concept of Baltic Sea Region identity for and a sense of belonging to the Baltic Sea Region through engagement, participation and multilevel governance, in a community spirit and to create a notion of regional unity across borders by developing people-to-people contacts through dialogue, macro regional networks and institutions”*¹¹⁷. “Regional identity” binds the region together and creates legitimacy. With this priority they want to *“create a notion of regional unity across borders by developing people-to-people contacts through dialogue, macro regional networks and institutions”*¹¹⁸. To this end, several activities, programmes and networks are organized: Balticlab – an initiative aimed at increasing regional future-thinking, innovation and prosperity by encouraging entrepreneurial and creative industry collaborations, and; EuroFaculty Pskov, and the CBSS Summer University which report to the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea Region through the CBSS Group of Senior Officials on Culture and events like “Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2017” which aims to bring regional cooperation into perspective by engaging future generations¹¹⁹.

“Sustainable and Prosperous Region” address problems and possibilities that the actors around the region have in common. Goals of the CBSS are to:

“develop the Baltic Sea Region as a model region of sustainable societies able to manage and use resources efficiently, to tap the economic, technological, ecological and social innovation potential of the region in order to ensure its prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion”; To contribute to the eradication of obstacles hampering the comprehensive and sustainable development of the region; Objectives: To improve the overall competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region through sustainable economic growth and labour markets, research and development, innovative infrastructure, an integrated maritime policy, transport and communications; To support the transition of the Baltic Sea region towards a competitive, green

¹¹⁷ Decision by the Council of the Baltic Sea States on a review of the CBSS long term priorities Adopted through silent procedure on 20 June 2014, 2014

¹¹⁸ Building collaboration & trust, 2017

¹¹⁹ Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2017, 2017

and low-carbon economy thereby ensuring sustainable development and inclusive growth; To support further action to reach a good environmental status and a healthy ecosystem supporting a prosperous Baltic Sea Region; To strengthen the region's capacity to adapt to climate change and the resilience capacity of ecosystems and societies; To ensure further mainstreaming of sustainable development at all levels and in all policy sectors, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects; To promote sustainable and green technologies and initiatives in order to protect the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Baltic Sea region”¹²⁰.

The belief is that regional cooperation contributes to improved living standards for the BSR, that the joint knowledge and efforts of the countries in searching for efficient solutions contributes to accomplishing sustainable economic and social development, healthy societies and dynamic ecosystems in a balanced and integrated manner¹²¹.

The priority area of “Safe and Secure Region” aims at enhancing “*societal security and safety in the Baltic Sea Region and to ensure that people of the Region are protected from and resilient to violence, accidents and emergencies through preparedness, and safeguarded against harm caused by criminal exploitation and human trafficking*”¹²². This priority area is supported by several specialized CBSS-related networks and structures. Well-developed cooperation exists in civil protection network, based on cooperation between national rescue and crisis management authorities, as well as in most fields of law enforcement, such as cross-border crime-related networks of police, border guard, prosecutors and tax administrations. These different structures and networks have defined the level, degree and nature of cooperation and activities quite differently. Some of the CBSS related civil security networks meet only annually at the highest level to exchange views, whereas others have established permanent communication channels and take joint operational actions on the ground. However, the general tendency is a move towards more operational, concrete and practical cooperation¹²³.

5.1.1 Noted observations and questions regarding the CBSS case:

¹²⁰ *Building collaboration & trust*, 2017

¹²¹ <http://www.cbss.org/safe-secure-region/>, 2017

¹²² <http://www.cbss.org/safe-secure-region/>, 2017

¹²³ <http://www.cbss.org/safe-secure-region/>, 2017

CBSS overlapping space exist in regards to the EU, the Nordic region and with Russia. The CBSS-strategy towards these spaces depends on the objects concerned. The overall strategy CBSS is the fostering of cooperation which is the policy on most of its specified interests. The CBSS works together with other actors and regions “where it makes sense” and keeps in mind that what is positive for one member is also positive for all members of the region. The notable exceptions are in regards to Russia - a member of the region but where cooperation is more limited - and in regard to cooperation with the Nordic region on the topic of identity.

When working together with other actors there are different mechanisms that work out. There are institutions which facilitate arenas for different issues such as “the four-sea state council” of which the CBSS is one and the others are the Arctic council, the “Barents Sea / Arctic Council” and the “Nordic Council” (these institutions are at one times called “the sister councils”).

“we are actually working where it makes a sense and [...] a lot together. We are also working together on [...] soft policy areas like for example in the area of trafficking of human beings, in particular with the Nordic Council, and other areas and with the EUSBSR”¹²⁴.

The cooperation with Russia appears to deal with a lack of synergy between different policy spaces:

“[W]e are speaking to find and see how we can bring in the ‘Russian Strategy for the North-Western Region’ which is under development and how are we able to connect that with the EU strategy and how we can find synergies between those two strategies that also makes a sense together. So that is how we try to connect all of these areas, to coordinate, to work together where it makes sense, engage where we have added value and otherwise to kinda keep in contact and keep the conversation going and the exchange of information”¹²⁵.

We can therefore note that the inclusion of Russia in the CBSS Baltic Sea Region appears to be with some form of boundary challenge.

¹²⁴ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹²⁵ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

With a strategy ruled by “cooperation” the CBSS becomes one actor among many where many interests and issues correlate between them. *“I think the work for “the sister council” is in a way of co-ordination so it is not policy setting but it is of course [helping] [and aided] by analysing and learning from others”*¹²⁶.

For the CBSS the region of the Baltic Sea is a space where they try to connect the different objects of its space to its related actors to find added value and if not, to learn from each other: *“we try to connect all of these areas, to coordinate, to work together where it makes sense, engage where we have added value and otherwise to kinda keep in contact and keep the conversation going and the exchange of information”*¹²⁷.

The CBSS strategy is that where they have found common issues in shared space and on these issues they are *“...working where it makes a sense and [...] a lot together...”*¹²⁸. However, a problematic relationship with Russia has been observed and this relationship seems to be due to value differences and thus also signalling borders. These borders limit cooperation on policies and produce a situation where cooperation has to be undertaken with greater care to political differences. This sort of dynamics of overlapping space also determines which actors who can be allowed to bring added value to cooperation. Value differences towards others and other regions are marked by lower, or more struggling, cooperation where areas for policy overlays and cooperation are fewer. Inherent values of a policy determine what space that policy can cover with legitimacy of its own. Values connect to identity. Identity is space- and actor bound and both are limited by space.

Russia, to some degree, seems to be the “other” but the CBSS strategy applies to them as well – where added value for both parts can be found there is cooperation. Where space is shared it facilitates interaction and the spread of understanding of values or of shared interests which can best be faced together. Interconnectivity is part of the dynamics of space – expressed implicitly through the concept of soft space and fuzzy boundaries.

¹²⁶ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹²⁷ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹²⁸ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

Noting the “Bottom-up” question and “Identity”

The CBSS represents a Baltic Sea region. It is a rather new organisation and has its foundation in a Baltic Sea society. A related question is how deeply rooted this Baltic Sea society is, but as the “historical processes” which forms this region has been dominated by division of states and larger entities it is quite possible that the Baltic Sea region has a low connection to a shared society. If that is true, then any spokesperson institution for this region might suffer from low legitimacy and therefore also a lesser possibility to develop on its own. It could also explain why “Regional Identity” is a long term priority of the CBSS. Identity is one area where the same object in the same space differs between the CBSS and neighbouring regions. Identity is not an obvious object to cooperate with others on since identities differ between the regions.

According to Bernd Hemingway, the Northern countries have a northern identity because they have been working together for a long time and the Baltic Sea Region is working on its own identity, in a way in parallel to see how it engages with those countries that are not part of the North: *“there are areas where [it] makes more sense and some like this one where it does not make that much sense but [where] we still kind of working together to see and to learn from each other”*¹²⁹.

On the question of how the CBSS consciously has developed its strategy for cultural identity Bernd Hemingway answers that *“when you look back to the situation in Europe in 1992 the situation in the region was quite different. And because it is, or it was, only two of the Baltic Sea states members of the EU, namely Germany and Denmark. So, the main aim at the time was to support European integration on a regional level, and that I trust for the first years for the longest while was the main aim”*. When much of the Baltic Sea states had integrated into the EU *“is [...] also the time when the CBSS started to re-orient itself and that was the time when it started to work on this, on this long-term priorities”*¹³⁰.

¹²⁹ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹³⁰ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

“[Identity] needs to develop and that needs to be promoted in a way and that needs to have a chance to find out, to grow and that for the all the activity. In a way everything we are doing kind of promoting the regional identity”¹³¹.

“[I]t was important to kind of see how, in regions that were at the border between those two blocks how to kind of bring people closer together and to on common issues and then of course the whole issue of an integrated Europe and to kind of see how it could bring countries together”¹³².

“There is a regional identity but of course it is to be worked on. It needs to be recognised”¹³³.

“[T]he ‘regional identity’ is the most challenging of those long-term priorities because it is also something that needs to be developed and that people have to buy into”¹³⁴.

In these passages (and in the implicit institutional timeline presented on their homepage¹³⁵) we observe that the CBSS came into being to connect the different actors of the Baltic Sea, to try to integrate them into an EU community. When this was implemented the focus of the institution changed and began working on its long term priorities: “Regional identity”, “Sustainable and Prosperous”, “society of the region”, and “Safe and Secure”. The confirmation that there were no “identity” so much as a “geographical awareness” can be deemed to reflect that the “Baltic Sea Region” was not a region created out of a historical process bound to an existing society, rather the CBSS was created by actors reaching out to create a forum, a forum which later formulated an agenda for a still becoming Baltic Sea Region that still lacks much of an society, an identity, that people still have to buy into.

¹³¹ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹³² Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹³³ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹³⁴ Bernd Hemingway, 2016-06-23

¹³⁵ <http://www.cbss.org/council/history/>, 2017

5.2 EC/EUSBSR profile: Spokesperson, Space and Strategy

EC/EUSBSR Spokesperson:

The EUSBSR is defined by EU-member states which surrounds the Baltic Sea. In the communication approving the creation of this macro-regional strategy eight of the nine states bordering the Baltic Sea were members of the European Union¹³⁶. With the adaption of the first 'macro-regional' strategy the EU has started to charter new territory in transnational cooperation and cohesion policy¹³⁷. The eight EU countries that make up the Baltic Sea Region face several common challenges which are reflected in the jointly-agreed *Action Plan for the EUSBSR*¹³⁸ (sometimes simply referred to as "The Strategy").

The EU member states in the EUSBSR are Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The EUSBSR is coordinated in close contact with the European Commission relevant stakeholders such as other member states, regional and local authorities, inter-governmental and NGOs¹³⁹. As is stated the EUSBSR also welcomes cooperation with EU neighbouring countries (Russia, Iceland, Norway and Belarus).

The European Commission coordinates the efforts of the European Union (EU) Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The Strategy is an agreement between the Member States of the EU and the EC to strengthen cooperation between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea in order to meet the common challenges and to benefit from common opportunities facing the region.

"The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the first Macro-regional Strategy in Europe. The Strategy was approved by the European Council in 2009 following a communication from the European Commission. The Strategy is divided into three

¹³⁶ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, 2009

¹³⁷ Gänzle, S, and Kern, K, 2016:3.

¹³⁸ *Action Plan for the EUSBSR*, 2017

¹³⁹ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/about>, 2017

*objectives, which represent the three key challenges of the Strategy: saving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity. Each objective relates to a wide range of policies and has an impact on the other objectives”*¹⁴⁰.

The EUSBSR, along with strategies developed for the Danube Region (EUSDR) the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the Alpine Region (EUSALP), is a ‘macro-regional strategy’ which under the EU Cohesion Policy is defined as “*an integrated framework endorsed by the EU, which is supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds among others, to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area relating to Member States and third countries located in the same geographical area which thereby benefits from strengthened cooperation contributing to achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion*”¹⁴¹. In the book “*A 'Macro-regional' Europe in the Making, Theoretical Approaches and Empirical Evidence*” by Stefan Gänzle and Kristine Kern (2016), it is stated that these macro-regional strategies are in theory new multi-level governance instruments and that this creates new ideas about territorial spaces, the opportunities and challenges in these spaces and which provides new ideas on forms of intervention¹⁴². These strategies have been criticised for their practical difficulties in reconciling different versions and interests of stakeholders, as have their priorities in relation to the available resources¹⁴³. “*Conceptually, macro-regional strategies have also been criticized for their incoherence, questionable legitimacy and effectiveness*”¹⁴⁴.

Other EU ‘macro-regions’ have, as Gänzle and Kern puts it “started to self-identify” and the developments that they ensue has been depicted as a new tool of European integration¹⁴⁵. These regions are “socially constructed”. Their space is soft and their boundaries fuzzy. Historical and cultural commonalities are not their core origin but rather “*macro-regions are both ‘imagined’ and ‘manufactured’ the need for functional cooperation around, for instance, a common regional sea,*

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/about>, 2017

¹⁴¹ *Macro-regional Strategies*, 2017

¹⁴² Gänzle, S, and Kern, K, 2016:47

¹⁴³ Gänzle, S, and Kern, K, 2016:47

¹⁴⁴ Gänzle, S, and Kern, K, 2016:47

¹⁴⁵ Gänzle, S, and Kern, K, 2016:3

mountainous area or river system, which [transcends all territorial frontiers]”¹⁴⁶. The conceptualization of these macro-regional strategies is that they are an integrated framework relating to member states and third countries in the same geographical area; that they addresses common challenges; and that these benefit from strengthened cooperation for economic, social and territorial cohesion¹⁴⁷. Many elements provide a basis for macro-regional cooperation – a regional sense of identity, a wish for common strategic planning, and to pool resources¹⁴⁸. The macro-regional strategies are regional building blocks for unison EU policies as they create a calling for national approaches into coherent EU-level implementation¹⁴⁹ that draw functional cooperation and territorial cohesion closer together by bringing together groups of units that are at the same time part of (or related to) a more comprehensive polity entity than national or other administrative regions. A possible way to look at the EUSBSR is as a purely soft space *administrative tool* for the EU which, in itself, does not aim at defining its allotted space or objects as anything “us”-regional. Potentially, the EUSBSR-institution could be a tool for that purpose if the EU were so intent. The Macro-regional strategies would have to have their capacities and/or functions redefined to include strategies for EU-identity and values. An “other” and borders would be required; the soft space administrative tool would probably be less of a soft space then. The idea of a ‘Europe of Regions’ has been proposed by European federalists such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Denis de Rougemont. According to Gänzle and Kern their argument is that regions could be a means of safeguarding the principles of subsidiaries and democracy within a larger federal entity¹⁵⁰. This way of imagining the ‘Europe of Regions’ also view the region as a structural base which legitimizes the entity above. An argument is that an “EU region of the Baltic Sea” would be *supra-regional*, above the Nordic or Baltic Sea, on an identity/society scale and

¹⁴⁶ Gänzle, S, and Kern, K, 2016:4

¹⁴⁷ *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Concerning the Added Value of Macro-regional Strategies*, 2013

¹⁴⁸ *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Concerning the Added Value of Macro-regional Strategies*, 2013

¹⁴⁹ *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Concerning the Added Value of Macro-regional Strategies*, 2013

¹⁵⁰ Gänzle, S, and Kern, K (Eds.), 2016:10

identities are not mutually excluding: Nordic and Baltic identities would not be a hindrance to a European identity.

Space

Additionally to the eight EU countries of the Baltic Sea Region some countries outside the EU also participate actively in projects under the Baltic Sea Strategy¹⁵¹. Norway is often involved, as is Russia, as an important partner country. Iceland and Belarus also participate at times. The determining factor for members of this region is that they are member states of the EU and that they border the Baltic Sea. For additional participants of cooperation, the determining factor is that they face common challenges or add value to the (EC-value based) cooperation of the EC-value based Baltic Sea.

By its institution which joins together a large number of actors around defined issues and interests: their three objectives; saving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity. Saving the sea is an ecological priority, “connecting the region” is a broad statement which possibly includes more than just transportation; quite possibly “connecting” means more; increasing prosperity is an economic goal depending on many variables.

Objects/region defined interests

The EUSBSR comprises a number of policy areas/horizontal actions to save the sea, connect the region and increase prosperity – each with flagship projects as well as identified targets and indicators for set policy goals. For example, the EUSBSR regards cleaning up polluted sea, mitigating against the effects of climate change, and combating cross-border crime. It focuses on “*joint problem-solving and all of the many opportunities that cooperation provides*”¹⁵². The EUSBSR is used as a tool to streamline and prioritise actions in the Baltic Sea Region. The Strategy helps to mobilise relevant EU funding and policies, it coordinate the actions of parties such as the European Union itself, EU-member states, pan-Baltic organisations,

¹⁵¹ *Action Plan for the EUSBSR*, 2017

¹⁵² *The Baltic Sea Region Strategy for Beginners*, 2017

financing institutions and NGOs to promote and it balances development of the Baltic Sea Region¹⁵³.

-“EU member states identified common challenges and common opportunity which could be best tackled at the BSR; so for which issues for which the member state is too small an entity and the EU 28 is too large”¹⁵⁴.

In addition to issues regarding the Baltic Sea itself that are specific to the EU countries bordering it, the EUSBSR covers many other common challenges and opportunities. Whether the issue concerns transport solutions, joint education ventures or the environment, the starting point is always the same: that common challenges can be solved better if the work is done together. In the first instance, the EUSBSR concerns the EU Member States in the Baltic Region. The Baltic Sea Region Strategy’s objectives are; “Save the Sea”, “Connect the Region” and “Increase Prosperity”¹⁵⁵. The “Save the Sea”-objective aims at achieving a good environmental status and biological diversity in the Baltic. These sub-objectives are: clear water in the sea, rich and healthy wildlife, clean and safe shipping, and better cooperation. The “Connect the Region” -objective aims at *“bringing people closer to each other so that they can benefit from [the exchange of] knowledge and ideas and by doing business with each other. This can be through student and research exchanges for instance, or via business contacts. It’s also about ensuring access to communications options and the Internet. Connect the Region also fosters cooperation projects aimed at combating cross-border crime such as human trafficking and smuggling stolen goods”¹⁵⁶*. “Increase Prosperity” promotes entrepreneurship, innovation, trade and digitally-driven growth. Through better cooperation in research and development and by deepening the internal market the countries bordering the Baltic can strengthen their competitiveness and their prosperity¹⁵⁷. The Baltic Sea region strives for deepening and fulfilling the single market, the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy,

¹⁵³ EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, 2017

¹⁵⁴ Peter Schenk, 2016-06-30

¹⁵⁵ The Baltic Sea Region Strategy for Beginners, 2017

¹⁵⁶ The Baltic Sea Region Strategy for Beginners, 2017

¹⁵⁷ The Baltic Sea Region Strategy for Beginners, 2017

improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region, climate change adaptation, and risk prevention and management.

Strategy

For the EC/EUSBSR the 'overlapping space' is part of the reality by which it has been designed to work. Any "other" is not mentioned by the EC/EUSBSR in this context. The overall strategy is very straight forward, as made clear by the interview held with Peter Schenke:

*"The main rationale for the strategy, why it was created is that you have member states around the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), EU member states identified common challenges and common opportunity which could be best tackled at the BSR; so for which issues for which the member state is too small an entity and the EU 28 is too large. [...] it is a clearly defined geographical area, you have; [...] the ecological state of the Baltic Sea, that is obviously identified as a problem that could only be solved when if all Baltic Sea states jointly take effort to improve the state of the ecological state of the Baltic Sea. [...] If you look at the economic growth, at research, at education, [...], transport, energies, security, lot of transport connections in the Baltic Sea: a lot of issues where it was considered that this could best be dealt with at the level of the member states around the Baltic Sea"*¹⁵⁸.

*"we are working very much with these existing networks so the idea of the strategy is [...] not to duplicate the activities which are already taking place but rather to increase [...] the transparency [of] what they are doing [...] in order to avoid overlaps"*¹⁵⁹.

A notion that comes to view through this 'profile' of the EC/EUSBSR is a regional spokesperson which, while fitting in with the concept of a regional spokesperson, relates to the Baltic Sea Region differently than that "region" which is conceptualized in Paasi's regionalization theory: the EC/EUSBSR is structured and oriented towards the coordination of various policy spaces in the region. Furthermore, the institution is limited to coordinate funding and to the coordination of policy spaces of existing networks. All the EU macro-regional strategies are developed based on the policy principle called 'three No's'; no new

¹⁵⁸ Peter Schenk, 2016-06-30

¹⁵⁹ Peter Schenk, 2016-06-30

institutions, no new legislation, and no new funding¹⁶⁰. The Three No's: No 1: Before the establishment of the EUSBSR as a macro-region "under the EU umbrella", quite a few institutions already existed in the BSR (including the CBSS, the Helsinki Commission, the EU's Northern Dimension and the Nordic Council). None of these institutions did take an integrated approach to coordinating all the sectoral policies that are relevant to the BSR. It is said that as a result thereof, together with a lack of resources on their own part and sufficient resources and local knowledge available at the macro-regional level, the EC did not want to manage the strategy directly – instead a governance model involving institutions and organizations from the participating regions should be applied¹⁶¹. No 2: The member states have decided to implement the strategies but no binding regulations are issued. No 3: Coordination on the already existing resources was more important than additional funding. *"The key emphasis is on aligning existing resources available at the EU, national, subnational and/or local level, using both public and/or private resources – established under diverse policy themes and territories to develop jointly agreed actions and projects"*¹⁶².

The institution holds no direct connection to either claimed region identity or regional society. It is observed that, unlike the previous spokesperson-cases, the EC/EUSBSR shows a distance between its institution, its region space and the identity of the region. This distance between identity, region and institution could likely explain the critique of low legitimacy aimed at the EU macro-regional strategies as a whole. The importance of the EC/EUSBSR in terms of overlapping space is that of 'function' or capacity; to coordinate funding through space to policy. An additional observation from the interview with Peter Schenke is that the idea formulating regards funding and that the institution responds to an idea of heightened effectiveness. The idea was legitimate enough in this context to create an institution.

¹⁶⁰ *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Concerning the Added Value of Macro-regional Strategies*, 2013

¹⁶¹ Gänzle, S, and Kern, K (Eds.), 2016:50p

¹⁶² Gänzle, S, and Kern, K (Eds.), 2016:50p

5.2.1 Noted observations and questions regarding the EC/EUSBSR case:

It is noted that the EC is a supra-national institution that did not emerge in the Baltic Sea Region, rather its position as a regional spokesperson for the Baltic Sea Region was introduced Top-Down. An essential question that has to be answered in determining the EC's legitimacy as a spokesperson for the BSR is whether the BSR is considered a region in its *own* worth or that as a region whose worth is as a subdivision of the European Union. While this question is unanswered this does not make for disqualification from selection as a case, the EC/EUSBSR is still a regional spokesperson of a defined region.

This institution collects many actors and content under its overview in order to act as a coordinator. It is also noted that the space of the EUSBSR is defined by the EU-member states around the Baltic Sea, not the countries of the Baltic Sea as such; this means that there is a difference between the imagined space of the region (the Baltic Sea) and the outreach of the institution at hand. It is possible that this explains some of the legitimacy issue for this regional spokesperson – that there seemingly is no definite connectivity between the region and the institution.

The EUSBSR as presented, as a regional spokesperson, is quite sterile at first sight; defined as a tool for handling issues and creating possibilities in a common space. All the EU macro-regional strategies are developed based on the policy principle called 'three No's'; no new institutions, no new legislation, and no new funding¹⁶³. The space itself (determined by challenges and opportunities shared by EU member states which are in proximity to one another) and any there-to connected society seems glanced over: first when we look a step higher, to the EC, coordinators of the EUSBSR, can we discern certain values connected to a specific society or identity. Through the EC the society and identity that might be channelled in this region is a European idea.

¹⁶³ *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Concerning the Added Value of Macro-regional Strategies*, 2013

This perceived sterility and the possibly passive channelling of a society or identity has its explaining factors. The institution is a non-claimant to regional Baltic identity and maybe not even EU-identity though strategies of communication should point to EU legitimacy (ex: visible by putting the EU flag on produced material). EC/EUSBSR has a capacity, the institution claims space and it holds society based values (by redirection to the EU). Is it possible that functions can claim space and extended function? “Capacity” or “function” here relates to the ability of coordinating actors in a larger context and the heightened effectiveness that this contributes to; all in the name of EU.

5.3 Nordic profile: Spokesperson, Space and Strategy

The Nordic or “Norden” spokesperson

The Nordic Council is a geo-political inter-parliamentary forum for co-operation between the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries or the Nordic are a geographical and cultural region in Northern Europe and the North Atlantic, where they are most commonly known as *Norden* (“*the North*”) and consists of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, including Greenland and Faroe Islands—which are both constituent countries within the Kingdom of Denmark—and the Åland Islands. It was formed after the Second World War (in 1952) to promote co-operation between the five Nordic countries. The Council consists of 87 representatives from the countries and the autonomous territories, the autonomous territories have the same representation as states. In 1971 the Nordic Council of Ministers was formed as an intergovernmental forum, is responsible for inter-parliamentary co-operation. While they are officially two different institutions they do share office, staff, and webpage. The Nordic Council of Ministers was established in 1971 to further integrate the intergovernmental cooperation between the countries of Norden. The two shall therefore be seen as “one” institution.

The space of *Norden* has been under consideration from time to time. Two political processes have in past times proposed cooperation or unification between the states of this region; Political Scandinavism and Political Nordism. The Nordic council and Nordic council of ministers is an outcome of the later.

Political Scandinavism paralleled the 19th-century unification movements of Germany and Italy. As opposed to the German and Italian counterparts, the Scandinavian state-building project was not successful. Based on common ethnic, linguistic, political and cultural heritage, political Scandinavism supported the idea of Scandinavia as a unified region or a single nation, countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden^{164 165}. The Scandinavianism movement lost influence after the second Danish-German war over Schleswig, when the Swedish government refused to join an alliance against the rising German power on the continent.

Political Nordism promoting civil cooperation between the Nordic countries and was introduced with the Nordic Association [Swedish: Föreningen Norden]. It started through Swedish initiatives in 1919 and is still active today. Political Nordism includes nurturing the sense of cultural affinity and, especially in the past, lobbying for open borders in the region¹⁶⁶. Typical activities are related to rising the awareness about language, culture and social conditions in the Nordic countries. The movement also includes Finland, Iceland and the Danish territories Greenland and Faroe Islands and have an ideological base in Nordic economic co-operation and integration. Fields of cooperation include the job exchange program Nordjobb (an exchange programme that offers young people summer jobs in the Nordic countries) and town twinning between Nordic countries. The Nordic Association was a proponent for the establishment of the Nordic Council¹⁶⁷.

Nordic overlapping space

Norden has an institutional design with specific and active content that let the Nordic countries act together and that that institution facilitates an agenda whereby they processes space and objects therein as one. Both the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers have a number of partners and are active participants in other regional co-operations. The Nordic Council of Ministers has established

¹⁶⁴ *Scandinavia*, 2018

¹⁶⁵ [Fun fact?] These three countries are referred to as "three brothers" in the sixth stanza of the national anthem of Norway. The Swedish anthem was written in the spirit of *Scandinavism*: "Du gamla, du fria"/ "Thou ancient, Thou free" was originally named "Sång till Norden"/ "Song to the North"; it puts *Norden* in centre and any mention of *Sweden* is not in the text).

¹⁶⁶ *Foreningen Norden*, 2018

¹⁶⁷ *Foreningen Norden*, 2018

four Offices outside the Nordic Region, namely in all the Baltic states - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - and the German state of Schleswig-Holstein. The Nordic Council and the Council of Ministers define Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia as “Adjacent Areas” and have formal cooperation with them under the Adjacent Areas policies framework. Since the early 1990s, Nordic cooperation has become more regional, European and international. There are also Nordic associations in Estonia, Latvia and Petrozavodsk in North-West Russia. While the traditional intra-Nordic cooperation among the five Nordic countries has continued, the interaction with Norden’s adjacent areas in a larger European context has developed into an important element in the overall endeavours of the Nordic council and the Nordic council of ministers¹⁶⁸. In recent years the cooperation has focused increasingly on Russia¹⁶⁹.

The overall strategy

The later historical process of creation of the Nordic council, from the 50s and onwards has included numerous attempted institutional developments and a strong focus on cultural and identity projects and agendas.

”[...] i början så gjorde man ju ganska många, tog man initiativ till ganska många betydelsefulla avtal. Vi har de här klassiska; passfrihet, gemensam arbetsmarknad och rätten att studera i varandras länder och rätten att bosätta sig i varandras länder utan uppehållstillstånd”¹⁷⁰.

“[...] in the beginning they initiated quite a few prominent treaties. We have these classic –free movement and open borders, right to work and study, the right to establish a living in each other countries without any visa”¹⁷¹. [The authors own translation]

An attempt to create a Nordic defence league collapsed after external pressure by the two new super powers; the USA and Soviet, who did not want an alternative

¹⁶⁸ Etzold T, 2015:148pp

¹⁶⁹ Etzold T, 2015:148pp

¹⁷⁰ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁷¹ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

“block” in-between their spaces of influence since they preferred that everyone should pick a side (west or east) instead of alternatives¹⁷².

The creation of the Nordic Passport Union was the start of the highly institutionalized free movement between the Nordic states. This free movement now includes a free right to study, to work or to live in whichever Nordic country you chose.

During the seventies, a push for an economic and customs union was initiated. This push was stopped by Soviet on the grounds that they thought that Finland was getting too integrated into the West. Finland was made to abort this push, and after that the momentum cased. Mr. Lindblad claims that it was at this point that Danmark and Norway started looking towards the EG for economic cooperation¹⁷³.

*”försöket på slutet av 60-talet att bilda en ekonomisk och tull-union mellan dom nordiska länderna. Och det var ju framförhandlat och i princip klart så att undertecknas det här avtalet, men åter igen så kom stormakter in och [...] Sovjetunionen tyckte att det här kan ju inte Finland vara med i - då blir man ju integrerad i Väst så det ville man ju inte. Då tvingades Finland hoppa av det och då gick liksom andan lite ur resten. Då sneglade Danmark och Norge ner mot Europeiska Gemenskapen”*¹⁷⁴.

*“By the end of the 60ties the Nordic countries tried to establish a trade union between themselves but once again the Great Powers [USA and Soviet] intervened. In the Soviet they thought that this was something that Finland could not join because it would integrate Finland in the west. Finland was forced to withdraw from the project and that brought the momentum down. Denmark and Norway began looking towards the European Community”*¹⁷⁵. [The authors own translation]

Cooperation between the Nordic countries has in spite of external influence continued to evolve. The Nordic Council of Ministers was created in 1971 for direct governmental cooperation while the committees work on specific issues is done by the Nordic Council committees and by the executive body, the Presidium¹⁷⁶, and

¹⁷² Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁷³ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁷⁴ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁷⁵ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁷⁶ *About the Nordic Council committees*, 2017

together the two institutions have continued to work to achieve “Nordic usefulness” [writers own translation of “Nordisk nytta”]. Another rule for Nordic cooperation through these channels are the principle of consensus which results in that the only work that can be done is the work on which they all agree¹⁷⁷.

The overall strategy of the Nordic council of ministers has recently been specified in a strategy document: *Internasjonal strategi for Nordisk råd 2018–2022*¹⁷⁸. It leaves little room for which strategy the Nordic council places its bets on: cooperation is a ground pillar and the organisation is the platform on which it is carried out. Only when pressed by the volatility of Russian international policy has this policy seen changes (See interview with Torkil). “*Action Plan for Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council 2018 – 2019*”¹⁷⁹ is a document confirming that cooperation is the rule and strategy for how the Nordic/Baltic relationship is formed.

*“The Baltic and Nordic countries are linked regionally, politically and economically. Cooperation of the Baltic and Nordic countries is grounded in shared values, mutual trust and solidarity. Cooperation of the Baltic and Nordic countries is a symbol of success”*¹⁸⁰.

The main common interests are sustainability, security, growth and welfare of “the Region”. The action plan also gives us the recipe for how the two regions regard themselves as “one” – “*The Baltic–Nordic region is characterised by credibility, development, sustainability and dialogue. Baltic–Nordic regional relationship, shared values and common interests provide a unique platform to face current challenges and build a common future*”. This is the core of its “us” or outward “branding” of *one* region and thus also the basis for what values it would have to reflect upon when interacting with someone “other”. The action plan, formed between two different regions with much in common, once again points out that they have realized that acting together strengthen themselves in relationship to “others”, external actors, such as Russia and the EU. These are strategies that have been pointed out in the conducted interviews also.

¹⁷⁷ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁷⁸ *Nordisk råd – Internasjonal strategi for Nordisk råd 2018-2022*, 2017

¹⁷⁹ *Action Plan for Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council 2018 – 2019*, 2017

¹⁸⁰ *Action Plan for Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council 2018 – 2019*, 2017

The Nordic/Baltic cooperation is extensive and long lasting and it has by both parties been celebrated and called a “win-win-situation”¹⁸¹. In comment on the 25-year celebration it was noted that the cooperation between the two regions had begun even already when the Soviet Union began to fall:

“Nordic observers followed events closely and with a growing level of involvement. There was a strong sense of solidarity with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as support for their aspirations for independence and democracy. It was no surprise, then, when the Nordic and Baltic regions began to co-operate on a practical level before independence was a reality.

*The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers were pursuing the idea of establishing information centres in the Baltic countries as early as the autumn of 1990. There was broad consensus on this, and the council of ministers opened offices in Riga, Tallinn, and Vilnius in early 1991. Consequently, this year we are celebrating not only 25 years of Baltic independence, but also 25 years of co-operation between our regions”*¹⁸².

Their cooperation has changed over time and at the outset the Nordic-Baltic co-operation was characterised by the establishing of contacts, as well as promoting Nordic culture and social values across the Baltic region. After the Baltic countries joined the EU in 2004, it was decided that co-operation should be on equal terms and guidelines were adopted that form the basis of today’s Nordic-Baltic co-operation. Policy areas for which guidelines was adopted includes cross-border co-operation; gender equality, research, and innovation; co-operation on social affairs and health; and the environment and sustainable development¹⁸³.

*”Det främsta värdet [med Nordiska rådet] skulle jag säga är det nätverk som uppstår mellan parlamentariker i de nordiska länderna, asså att man känner varandra kors och tvärs. Parlamentariker går ju in och ut ur regeringar och både tidigare ministrar och parlamentariker upprättar personliga band på tvärs över gränserna”*¹⁸⁴.

“The greatest value in the Nordic Council I would say is the network that appears between members of parliament of the different Nordic countries – one gets to know each other.

¹⁸¹ Nordic-Baltic co-operation – a 25-year success story, 2016

¹⁸² Nordic-Baltic co-operation – a 25-year success story, 2016

¹⁸³ Nordic-Baltic co-operation – a 25-year success story, 2016

¹⁸⁴ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

Parliamentarians' moves in and out of the governments and bot ministers and parliamentarians establish personal bonds across the borders"¹⁸⁵. [The authors own translation]

5.3.1 Noted observations and questions regarding the Nordic case:

Actor dependent structure? Two institutions one region

The Nordic council and the Council of Ministers are the institutions that have developed for the Nordic region to be able to work as one but at the same time remaining highly independent. This has let the countries to select divergent strategies in international politics while integrating on the issues they find it important to cooperate on as one. This "one" institution is found highly legitimate as a structure for the region. The Nordic region repeatedly draws both suggestions of added space (new members; Scotland and the three Baltic states have applied for membership¹⁸⁶) and added functions (has gone through four phases of institutional direction¹⁸⁷). It is possible that this region still can develop into something more, and has tried so in the past, but larger interests (the USA and Soviet) has influenced these possibilities. The Nordic region is a voice-full region where the institution helps coordinating its actors' joint interests into a stronger voice outward: e.g. it has pushed for an international ban on mercury and is a strong normative spokesperson on areas such as environment and human values.

Language border

There is a space of language that fixates "Baltic" as not "Nordic". The subject of "language" has been mentioned in different contexts and referring to a (this far) imagined possibility that the "Nordic" of the day should be expanded to a "Nordic/Baltic" constellation.

The language border has been overcome before when Finland was included in the Nordic region constellation. Additional connections drew the then geographically Scandinavia-bound Nordic to include an added space of Finland (this space was perceived as "Baltic" due to the main language spoken there). These

¹⁸⁵ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁸⁶ Johan Lindblad, 2017-12-06

¹⁸⁷ Sundelius, B. and Wiklund, C. 2017

connections can presumably be narrowed down to the history that Sweden and Finland share. The same historical connections exist between Sweden and Estonia, though that was severed much earlier. The language connection that Finland and Estonia has is also an argument for Estonia to have a deeper connection to the Nordic than the other Baltic States. Despite this, there is no indication that the inclusion of the Baltic states as a whole (nor Estonia in particular) is about to become a reality. While other arguments have been raised in opposition to a “Nordic/Baltic” constellation, like questions of stability in the Baltic region and economic development compared between Nordic and Baltic States, the lasting argument of two different spaces is the language barrier. However, in the interview with Sørensen a potential paradigm change of the Nordic/Baltic language space was hypostasised: it was noted that the language dynamics are changing¹⁸⁸. Younger generations are using English for inter-Nordic communication. This would possibly change the policy of having “Nordic” as the working language for Nordic cooperation and it could therefor also remove this weighted oppositional argument against a “Nordic/Baltic” constellation. Time will tell if this scenario comes to be.

EU

The EU is an integrate object of the regions studied. Most of the Nordic countries are members as is, since 2004, also the Baltic States. The institutionalized relationships between Nordic/EU and Baltic/EU placed the EU as an integrated external partner with whom much cooperation takes place and experiences shared through joint projects. Nothing in the interviews does support the notion that the EU as a region is coming to dominate the agendas or content of neither the Nordic nor Baltic regions; rather it is pointed out that they have found purpose to strengthen their internal cooperation so to better influence the EU. The dynamics with EU both as a partner and as an object of regional space can be said to function on a win-win exchange where cooperation brings added value; values in forms of experience, funding and a more streamlined dynamics with neighbours.

¹⁸⁸ Torkil Sørensen, 2018-02-06

Nordic cooperation with Russia

The council had several offices in the Baltic countries and in Russia. These offices were built for representation of the Nordic countries, to build networks with national authorities and organisations, and to find opportunities for co-operation¹⁸⁹. Russia later labelled Nordic council of ministers employees in Russia as “foreign agents” and made it very difficult for the Nordic council to work in Russia. Because of this, the Nordic council of ministers later chose to close down their offices in Russia; offices which for many years had worked on cultural co-operation between the Nordic countries and Russia and sought to strengthen ties between the countries' civilian populations. One example of how this has been perceived in the Nordic region is the response issued by former Norwegian state secretary Tore Hattrem, 2015-10-26, in his opening address at a conference 26 October 2015 on Russia and the Nordic Countries:

“After being branded in such a way, there is no reason for us to continue our activities at this time,” Carsten Hansen, the minister for Nordic co-operation, told DR Nyheder. All of the group’s activities in northwest Russia have been suspended “indefinitely”¹⁹⁰.

These developments prompted a change of strategy for how the Nordic/Russia relationship should be addressed.

“Our Russia policy follows a dual track: On the one side defending our values and principles - loud and clear, if need be. And on the other side seeking pragmatic and practical cooperation of mutual interest. [...] The answer is Russia’s actions in Ukraine and worsening conditions for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We will, however, continue practical cooperation where we have common interest. A deep political cooperation will require a return to common values and the path of international law. [...] By engaging in cooperation, promoting people-to-people contact, supporting civil societies and respecting human rights, we contribute to trust, peace and security in our part of the world”¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁹ Nordic ministers close Russian office, Council decides to leave Saint Petersburg after Russian authorities brand them as spies, 2015

¹⁹⁰ Nordic ministers close Russian office, Council decides to leave Saint Petersburg after Russian authorities brand them as spies, 2015

¹⁹¹ Russia and the Nordic Countries – Relations and Cooperations, Oslo, Lysebu, 26 October 2015, 2015

In this change of approach, we can observe that Hattrem formulates a **fifth alternative on how one can strategize** in response towards others. “*On the one side defending our values and principles - loud and clear, if need be. And on the other side seeking pragmatic and practical cooperation of mutual interest*”¹⁹² is a strict and actively passive position which still invites to conditional cooperation with the second parties.

Ukraine is a subject of importance when it comes to cooperation with Russia. The Crimea crisis, started in February 2014, marks Russia as a security threat to both Nordic and Baltic States and it has led to a breach of trust. Cooperation is hampered and inflamed when Ukraine is part of the “dynamics at hand”. Interviews with persons connected to the CBSS and the Nordic council remark that the cooperation related to the Baltic sea area and states are close to this subject and that this is not equally so when cooperation concerns the Artic region. The Artic Council is further away, which there leaves Ukraine at lesser relevancy to the agenda and it is easier to keep that issue “low key” when working together.

¹⁹² *Russia and the Nordic Countries – Relations and Cooperations, Oslo, Lysebu, 26 October 2015, 2015*

6 Discussion and Theory development

What is this 'overlapping space'? How do regions strategize about 'overlapping'? How does 'overlapping space' affect regionalization? Processes and mechanisms are the makings of theory and theory consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts. The correlation of different sources has revealed institutional differences between the three case regions as institutional spokespersons, a clear picture of how the regions regard one another, and of how they chose to strategize in an overlapping space¹⁹³.

In the text following, the structure of this chapter will handle the research questions one by one to start with. Through this process, attention is drawn to certain aspects of the regionalization process itself: one additional question that arise is what function actually drives regionalization along – can Paasi's "historical process", how the phases of regionalization moves from phase one till phase four, be defined?

6.1 What is this 'overlapping space'?

Each regional spokesperson body collect actors from a largely shared space; many of the countries included in one region are also included in the other region. Each regional spokesperson collects agendas and issues (objects in space) that are either shared or has a direct counterpart in the other region: each region has an economic focus, political agenda and at the very least try to relate to a specific society to draw legitimacy from. This shared spaces and shared objects to which they all relate makes for regional spokespersons with overlapping space.

¹⁹³ (Motive analysis was not necessary to use to draw conclusions since no contradicting motivations regarding cooperation between regional spokespersons were found).

The conceptualization on 'overlapping space' held together through the analysis process. The hypothesis presented possible strategies for how regions might act in overlapping space and towards each other. The analysis has presented a fifth "unforeseen" strategy but even so that strategy can be explained with available knowledge of the concepts and mechanisms of regions and space. This conceptualization grasps the essentials of the dynamics of a space of regions and predicts possible ways of regional strategies for how to approach "the other". The overlapping space of regions can therefore be defined as:

1) The happenstance that two regions, or more, share the same space and that that space is also defined by the same object (subject or issue). The regional spokespersons of each regional space have self-specified agendas and interests in common with each other and therefore have to consider the other regional spokesperson.

2) The same space would be included in the regions idea of "self", of such consistency that it is part of the regions idea of their imagined space. That the regions share space is not enough for the space to be 'overlapping space', in that space there must be an object that both share; an object of subject relevant to both regions. This can be a single issue, problem or resource.

3) This "object" in shared space must be of such nature that it is more than just fleeting; this gives time to the interactions of regions which would be necessary for the ideas of society and identity to react.

As this conceptualization of 'overlapping space' did capture the essential and relevant mechanisms of time, space and regionalization processes the hypothesis, too, was quite accurate: that that regional strategizing is a collective output of relational dynamics ('us' and 'them') and therefore there are limited options for strategizing.

6.2 How do regions strategize about 'overlapping space'?

The “profiling” of the cases, enables an appreciation of the tendencies that indicate how the regions act in this overlapping space:

1; “Including space”:

Spaces of relevant parties with shared object are included: EC/EUSBSR includes additional space (seeks cooperation outside its own sphere) when the actors of that additional space share the same object and when there is added value to cooperation. The inclusion of others ('us' and 'them') and the lasting overlapping over time of both space and objects create grounds for interaction and learning opportunities. This strategy also creates an extended space for collaborated policies which furthers the span of influence of specific policies and objects.

In “Including space” the regions choose to complement each other; space is shared if the objects or values there in are the same. This is clearly visible when it comes to shared values and on agendas such as human trafficking and environmental issues.

Extended space for policies means collaboration and negotiation over values. One can view this space as quite soft and thus borders become fuzzy. The different definitions of these separate spaces might meld.

2; “Excluding space”:

Russia has been pointed out as 'other' – another region with which cooperation is struggling. There is a border between Russia, the other spaces of the Baltic Sea and the North. This border is less soft than others we have come across in this study and “objects” are not shared over this border as they are in other happenstances of this overlapping space.

With an “Excluding space”, the space extension of certain policies will not reach across the borders of where the policy emerged. Values don't easily extend over such borders as across others; in turn cooperation will be more of an effort to achieve.

3; “Including objects”:

Helping each other out with different types of issues would be to lend strength to one another as specific points in time and on certain objects. Cooperation on single issue subjects is to include objects momentarily.

The regions share experiences and knowledge where added value might be found (this is evident in all interviews): if there are ideas (objects) that might add value to more than one region (space) then, relating to the regions general strategy of cooperation, the regional spokespersons will welcome said idea and incorporate that idea, or at least think it through for themselves. This could be viewed as an example of how the objects can be said to have a space of their own.

This object-specific space might be shared with different regional spokespersons when cooperation bring added value. While momentary cooperation does not include or extend “space” (and therefore, does not blurs boundaries) the added value, it strengthen each institution.

4; “Excluding objects”:

The EC/EUSBSR has a low connectivity to the space of the Baltic Sea which limits their institution – It works with a defined set of restrictions of it capacities with the ‘three NOs’ as a coordinating function. The ‘three NOs’ can indicate that the EC/EUSBSR restricts itself as that could be a possibly harmful over-ambition for an institution that has yet to implant a steady connection from the region.

There is no “same” identity shared between the Baltic Sea and the Nordic which puts the field of “identity” slightly to the side when they interact, but overall values are much the same which makes transitions of objects easy between their spaces.

The exclusion of certain objects from cooperation in general has (in this case study) not been a sign of avert motivations but of a sign a lack of added value.

5; “The unforeseen”:

The occurrence of the Crimean crisis did shake relations extensively and in response towards Russia the Nordic countries chose a fifth, by me unpredicted, strategy for regional cooperation in overlapping space: *“Our Russia policy follows a dual track: On the one side defending our values and principles - loud and clear,*

*if need be. And on the other side seeking pragmatic and practical cooperation of mutual interest*¹⁹⁴.

As a strategy, this can possibly be considered as a clear boundary between two regions which are open for cooperation, but under strict terms of the objects exchanged over that border. This 5th, the “dual track”, combined strains from different strategies in order to hold open the Nordic space for cooperation with Russia, under restrictions related to value-adherence. Russia had broken the rules of the game and it was not appreciated.

6.3 How does ‘overlapping space’ affect regionalization?

There are few limitations in the connectivity between regional spokespersons. Therefore, the regional spokespersons strive to cooperate where there are, or can become, added value to shared space and objects therein. A general choice of strategy in the overlapping spaces of the Baltic Sea region is an inclusion of both space and object whenever possible.

When the regions choose to complement each other, momentarily or not, the space between them is soft which results in fuzzy borders. Depending on the degree of cooperation and time, these borders can evaporate or the spaces can merge.

Exclusion is rare in this overlapping space of regions. When they occur it is a result of either value differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’ or, of lasting historic borders where objects are not shared.

There were two strategies that differed from the norm of inclusion of both space and object for added value. First, in the case of regional identity: while both the Baltic Sea Region and the Nordic region share space and both regions have the same object (identity) connected to this overlapping space, it is not shared; policies and work programs on the object are held apart from the regions. However, while

¹⁹⁴ *Russia and the Nordic Countries – Relations and Cooperations, Oslo, Lysebu, 26 October 2015, 2015*

there is this border of identity between the regions they still share knowledge and experiences on the subject with another. This is definite evidence of how regional spokespersons strategizing in overlapping space strive to benefit from the “other’s” existence. Second, the only “other” where the border between spaces was both space- and object-exclusive was the Russia. With the 5th strategy, even this case the selected strategy strived to include the other.

Inherent values of a policy determine what space that policy can cover with legitimacy of its own. Values connect to identity, identity is space- and actor bound and both actors and identity are limited by space. Perhaps added value of cooperation ads less where the shared objects of shared space are fewer. However, times do change: before 1991 there was a clear border between two definite regions or “social spheres”. The iron curtain fell and new shifts will come with time.

6.3.1 Notions to ponder

“Theory consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts (though only plausible, its plausibility is to be strengthened through continued research)”¹⁹⁵.

Theory developing activities includes both the finding explaining factors (suggesting complementing explaining factors or about competing explaining factors) and the aim to develop causal mechanisms with the ambition to better understand a specific phenomenon of interest, how it works and what it affects. The theoretical grounding of this thesis has been heavy, reviewing concepts and mechanisms of regionalization theory. The research questions have been aimed at developing a new concept in this context of previous research; the questions were not aimed at suggesting a missing theoretical function. The concept of “overlapping space” deliberates an area of regionalization processes not previously dwelt on. The analysis thereof lets one see the regionalization process from a different perspective. “Overlapping space” lets us review the mechanisms of the regionalization processes and their function. It also questions how regions should

¹⁹⁵ Strauss A, and Corbin J, 1994:278

be viewed. Are they regions which have interests or, differently, as policies and interests that have space?

The institutional characters of the spokesperson-bodies of the EC/EUSBSR, the CBSS and the 'Nordic' do differ significantly in some aspects: the EC/EUSBSR can be said to have entered the region as a supra-governmental institution ("Who's" "society" /identity that lie at the core of their regional idea is unclear; is it a region of Europe or of the Baltic Sea that they promote?), the CBSS is a newly formed intergovernmental institution, while the Nordic has a long history and is a voice-full actor but its institution is close to actor dependent or "co-governmental".

Does Paasi's "historical process" in actuality describe the slow working progress of identity formation? And is "identity" (by extension) a core object in determining "legitimacy" of a region?

A "Density of Space"?

With regions that share practices and also share objects, can we talk about such a thing as "density of overlapping space" (density as a number of shared objects and practices)? Logically – yes, we definitely can. Is growing density a sign of aligning (or even merging) regions? Aligning, yes, I would say so (especially in terms of policies, economic interests and social values), but as merging? No – as an expressions of societies, regions are still depending on the definition of 'us' and 'them'. Without examining this defining social aspect, drawing that conclusion would be to go too far. However (conscious or unconscious) the probability of circumventions between distinction of 'us' and 'them' can be assumed to reflect the density in the overlapping space.

Regions, as the end function of a "social calculation", take time to form. By the formation of social discourse of what they could should be the discourse could hurry the process on. Through an overlapping social space – where knowledge is shared and where common tools/practices are beginning to become developed through the interaction of more than one region – the conscious or unconscious developed idea of 'us' is likely to occur faster. This should be the case when the regions reinforce any singular identity a region without a distinction of 'them' towards the other regions with which it overlaps. Actors of such a climate would transcend "internal" boundaries easily and experience a "fuzzing" out of the boundaries between the overlapping regions. It would also become natural that they

act together on an increasing number of issues, as in the case of the Russian 'other' and the Crimean crisis.

Regions Top-Down or Bottom-Up?

Is there a controversy about regions being formations of bottom-up or top-down processes: are both possibilities of equal theoretical functionality?

The theory of Passi describes the region as a construction of the society which imagined it. It is formed through four distinct phases, by a bottom-up historical process. Can the mechanisms and functions be put separately; can the region come into existence top-down? If the theory is jumbled this way, the 'historical process'; is lost and replaced with some other kind of "yeast" that still produces regions and regional spokespersons.

The analysed cases have different organizational structures that did not always follow the bottom-up historical process: they have different historical backgrounds (origins of the idea of "us"), and different solidity in their imagined space today. The EU/EUSBSR was implemented top down. While lifted up as a regional spokesperson by Metzger and Schmitt that role was downplayed by the interview subject. It was observed that legitimacy is low because of the distance between the main institution (EC) and the region society; this in turn has the EUSBSR to limits their capacity for cooperation. The CBSS is also new but can be said to be "created from the middle" which would be the states of the region reaching out to one another to face joint problems more than being joint since earlier (not grass-root nor top down). They have common grounds and a vague society base that they try to extend into something more. The Nordic is a region that has connected itself throughout a long period of time. It is regarded as one of the most integrated regions of the world and yet an institutional format which has had to adapt to external influence and is restricted by a strong will for independence of its actors.

Processes towards regionalization as seldom streamlined, but generally marked by strife and struggle over the right to determine the ascribed boundaries and substance of a certain regionalization¹⁹⁶. The spatial formation processes are a struggle for the ability to define space and objects. If one accepts that the

¹⁹⁶ Metzger J. and Schmitt P, 2011:267

EC/EUSBSR as a regional spokesperson then, this seems like a case which only slightly adheres to Paasi's regionalization theory. EC/EUSBSR had no "society" of its own in its designated region. An institution was formed from up above onto an idea of a space and with just a few restricted capacities. These capacities were defined from above to address certain issues of a specific space. It can possibly be argued that as a regional spokesperson it is only legitimized by these issues through the ability of its functions/ capacities. So argued there is no historical process through which has designed its space or agenda. However, there is legitimacy and function. A conclusion then is that functions/ capacities connected to an institution can create legitimacy. Is "legitimacy" the same yeast as the "historical process"?

6.3.2 Legitimacy

Legitimacy isn't a prominent feature in neither Paasi's nor Metzger and Schmitt writings but it is arguably the missing mechanism which can explain how the process of regionalization finds momentum to go through the phases of regional construction. Legitimacy could work as a driving force between Paasi's four phases; making one areal or territorial delineation more likely accepted by a specific society than another, making one conceptual or symbolic formulation more closely related to that society. The conditions for legitimacy defines the form of the institutional establishment and, finally rules whether the region is or isn't acceptance as an areal entity. Legitimacy as a mechanism could be the ruling stick by which the regionalization process stimulates one version of the region or its passing.

How would legitimacy work as a driving force? Tentatively; society is key. Legitimacy is created by functionality and distinction, functionality of addressing issues and distinctions by objects to differ "us" from "them". An institution taking on the role of a regional spokesperson needs legitimacy to back its claim. Institutions "carving out" its vision of a region need to legitimize it too. The more one vision of "what should be" is embraced by a society the more probable it is that vision both become and to last. Legitimacy could be harnessed by a function – an institutional capacity to meet a need (as the CBSS was formed to meet a need for communication and joint efforts in a new political space or as how the

EC/EUSBSR is a forum for coordination and a voice for the Baltic Sea region towards the EU). If an idea lacks legitimacy it would result in exclusion (like how one group of countries/actors belong to another language group or how their economy is not stable enough). It is also possible that any institution with credibility could legitimately add additional functions (institutional capacity), staking claim or a bigger role, and it could be the means by which the rules of the games are changed.

Driving force behind of regionalization – Legitimacy?

Institutional capacity+ => 1) Institution legitimacy+ 2) Added capacity

Idea of something = legitimacy of this something

Institution not functioning => less legitimacy and eventual removal of capacity or of institution as a whole?

EUSBSR is held back from “becoming more” though its lack of legitimacy (three No’s, and how firm they are in their specific function as a coordinator). Arguably the EUSBSR’s restricted function in the Baltic sea/Nordic spaces is due to lack of connectivity to the “us” (identity) of the region. The Nordic and CBSS present themselves with a strong value base from which they draw legitimacy to focus on why they are needed actors in their space. “Branding” is done to create legitimacy for without legitimacy they would not continue functioning in the roles that have defined themselves and the space they represent. If the EC/EUSBSR do what they do well, then it is possible that institutional change will come, ex; removal the three NO’s. Then the EC/EUSBSR can evolve into a regional spokesperson with a larger agenda, an active proponent for EU-society connected values of the region.

The Nordic has a very strong connectivity to its region. It has evolved over a long time and the process behind it is definitely historical and includes economic unions, defence agreements and policy cooperation on a wide range of fields. However, The Nordic Federation has not emerged, in spite of a continuous production of articles with titles which includes themes like: “It is possible”¹⁹⁷,

¹⁹⁷ *En nordisk union är möjlig*. 2016

“Why don’t we?”¹⁹⁸, and “That’s why it should be done”¹⁹⁹ which points out how strong the region is economically and how much the Nordic countries have in common, and that in this insecure world security can be found in the Nordic community. The long-lasting call for deeper integration of the Nordic states faces the problem of having little impact. This is due to the lack of one unison idea of what the separate Nordic states would found their furthered cooperation on. The Nordic states seem to hold their individual independence very close to heart and the vision of a Nordic federation is too controversial to be accepted. Also, as was mentioned in one of the interviews with the representatives of the Nordic Council, past notions of this idea has been shouted down by larger external powers: the USA and the Soviet did not wish for a new large and strong entity between them. The legitimacy in the idea of a single Nordic state has not been strong enough to push against the difficulties of producing that possible future.

The conceptualization of ‘overlapping space’ noted that the regions must share not only space but also objects, factors or issues, which concern both regions – seen another way these objects have a space of their own. If these objects calls for actors to address them (like how the need to supervise a heavily trafficked sea route and the issues related to this task calls for many actors/nations to be part of the administrating process), this object would do so within a specific space where the object is a shared issue. An institution could likely be set up to address this specific object in its space. While this scenario shares some features of how regions develop in Paasi’s regionalization theory, this object, its space and its institution is not a region. The institution would need to aspire to branch out – through its own device to reach for added function: if the space (within which it has its purpose and function) held more objects with issues needed addressing, this institution could possibly claim relevance as an institution with capacity. Such a claim would need to involve both “legitimacy” and “function” (institutional capacity) for the claim to possibly be confirmed.

Seen this way, one single policy institution could be a seed for the process of creating a region independently on any bottom-up or top-down perspective, even by stepping in “from the middle”. Legitimacy could be the mechanism which makes

¹⁹⁸ *Varför bildar vi inte en nordisk union?*, 2017

¹⁹⁹ *Därför ska de nordiska länderna bilda en union*, 2017

the regionalization process move from one phase to the other by confronting perceived issues and presenting solutions. An institution with a functional response to a seen object or issue finds legitimacy.

The EUSBSR is partly defined by its function as an administrating body without inherent substance, and administrative tool of soft space, that cannot claim legitimacy as it is now to draw onto itself additional functions or through such a different role as an actor in the space it is institutionalized. The way an institution could reach out and claim added institutional capacity can possibly be suggested by the theory of Multi Level Governance (MGL).

7 Conclusions

What is 'overlapping space'? – The conceptualization on what the overlapping space is, held together through the analysing process. This conceptualization grasped the essentials of the dynamics of a space of regions and helped predict possible ways of regional strategies for how to approach “the other”. The overlapping space of regions can therefore be defined as:

- 1) The happenstance that two regions, or more, share the same space and that that space is also defined by the same object (subject or issue). The regional spokespersons of each regional space have self-specified agendas and interests in common with each other and therefore have to consider the other regional spokesperson.
- 2) The same space would be included in the regions idea of "self", of such consistency that it is part of the regions idea of their imagined space. That the regions share space is not enough for the space to be 'overlapping space', in that space there must be an object that both share; an object of subject relevant to both regions. This can be a single issue, problem or resource.
- 3) This “object” in shared space must be of such nature that it is more than just fleeting; this gives time to the interactions of regions which would be necessary for the ideas of society and identity to react.

How do regions strategize about 'overlapping space'? – The resolute stances these regional spokespersons have in favour of cooperation on shared subjects do not hint at my conceptualization of overlapping space being wrong. The hypothesis was confirmed and its predicted dynamics checks out as far as seen. In addition to the four basic strategies that were drawn up, the unforeseen 5th strategy was found when we viewed how the Nordic chose to handle a changing political climate in

regards to the Crimea conflict. This 5th strategy combined strains from different strategies in order to hold open the Nordic space for cooperation with Russia, but under restrictions relating to values.

The concept of “overlapping space” exists. It is a factor of regional space and regions do strategize about it. The strategy that these regional spokespersons strive for is to cooperate where added value can be found. Where a lesser degree of cooperation emerges it indicates borders between “us” and “them” which are clearer.

How does ‘overlapping space’ affect regionalization? – The strategy favoured by the regions studied here was that of cooperation. The overlapping space of regions around the Baltic Sea can be called friendly and open. The theoretical implication of overlapping space is that their cooperation has the potential to soften boundaries and easing up space for the inclusion of new objects or actors. The regions are learning from each other to bolster efficiencies and to spread their values.

The cooperation between regions has been referred to as Win-Win deals where learning and wider understanding of problems and solutions are shared. This win-win situation opens up the ability to make more gains from a limited amount of resources – even if the object “identity” is not shared between the regions they can still learn what works or what doesn’t. With that mind-set for cooperation, the regions can also find ways to draw value out of cooperation even in that space the two regions do not share.

The added value of cooperation is not held within the overlapping space but possibly exceeds, or nullifies, differences between spatial scales. Multilevel government (MGL) exists outside set spatial scales and brings shared issues to the same table.

Identity does not necessarily merge through their work – though, since identity can co-exist, an identity might spread or identities might merge; finding fundament in space and thus add more or lose legitimacy for its region.

“Sectoral Regions Theory” – Legitimacy is a mechanism of the regionalization process, possibly even the driving force. This fact nullifies the bottom-up rule of the “historical process”. As a result we can construct a “Sectoral Regions Theory”. Regions can be constructed in other ways than described by Paasi: the concepts of

the phases are all there but they can be jumbled up, put together differently. Legitimacy is not only drawn from the identities of societies but also from the functions (institutional capacity) or objects of the institution. It is likely that both the objects' an institution or regional spokesperson represent, and the agenda it holds, do have legitimacy of its own. Both the functions that the institution offers to its space, and actors therein, carries legitimacy. The "yeast" of regionalization need not be initiated by a historical process and the bottom-up perspective of Paasi's four phase's does not have to be certain. An institution could be connected to a specific issue. The institution could branch out to reach for added function: if the space (within which it has its purpose and function) held more objects with issues needed addressing, this institution could claim relevance as an institution with capacity. Such a claim needs to involve both "legitimacy" and "function" (institutional capacity) for the claim to possibly be confirmed. A single-policy institution could be a seed for the process of creating a region independently on any bottom-up or top-down perspective, even by stepping in "from the middle". Legitimacy could be the mechanism which makes the regionalization process move from one phase to the other by confronting perceived issues and presenting solutions. An institution with a functional response to a seen object or issue finds legitimacy.

The regions work together to confront perceived spatial issues and presenting spatial solutions in order to be more efficient, and to add both institutional capacity and legitimacy to their space. 'Overlapping space' is a resource where different regions have shared values and are able to cooperate. This facilitates a win-win strategy. When conflict emerges or when the value gap between regions widen, the cooperation falter and the border between them gets sharpened, space hardens (as was seen in the case of Nordic/Baltic and Russia fewer objects of the same space are shared between them). The occurrence of the Crimean crisis did shake relations extensively and in response towards Russia the Nordic countries chose a 5th and unforeseen strategy for regional cooperation in overlapping space: *"Our Russia policy follows a dual track: On the one side defending our values and principles - loud and clear, if need be. And on the other side seeking pragmatic and practical*

cooperation of mutual interest”²⁰⁰. As a strategy, this can possibly be considered a clear boundary but open for cooperation, on the terms of that boundary. It should be safe to assume that there are other versions of these “dual track”-strategies.

²⁰⁰ *Russia and the Nordic Countries – Relations and Cooperations, Oslo, Lysebu, 26 October 2015, 2015*

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9 Annex

As you might recall my RQs are: (1) What is this overlapping space?, (2) How do regions strategize about 'overlapping'?, and (3) How does this affect regionalization? The questions I have come to think about while reading up on space are of the kind alike: What are the regions assets that they use? What are the regions affected by? What makes up my cases 'space'? What are the objects of their space? What are this spaces constituents? Do the regions have a concrete consciousness regarding their space & spatiality/ locality?

Trying to get away from the abstract and towards some more mutually understandable questions leads me to try to make them talk more on their own about their region and the organisation that they work within.

Asking them to tell me about their region and its organisation

What is their region - how do they find the organisation connected to the region

What do they focus on as an organisation

What is their purpose

What are their resources/ tools in their different ventures, and for their organisation in general

After questions like those I was thinking to ask them about a specific region /if there is a region with which they have a developed cooperation, what for, in what ways and if this is only beneficial to them both.

9.1 Interview Peter Schenk (EC/EUSBSR)

Interview with Peter Schenk (European Commission, Director General for Regional and Urban Policy – Competence Centre Macro-region and European Territorial Cooperation – EUSBSR), conducted 2016-06-30 through Skype.

Q is for "question" and always asked by Ulf Friberg.

A is for "Answer" and always given by the person interviewed, this time by Peter Schenk.

Q: I was thinking about what you describing to me what the EUSBSR do and its constitution, the parts that constitutes the Baltic Sea Region.

A: Jaa, I mean, it is a, I mean the Baltic, you mean very general what the strategy does? And how this is constituted in a way, how it works?

Q: Yeah, and which areas you consider what the strategy applies to.

A: Yea, I mean the, you mean geographical areas or thematic?

Q: Thematic.

A: Yeah, uhm, I mean it's... the reason why the strategy. The main rationale for the strategy, why it was created is that you have member states around the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), EU member states identified common challenges and common opportunity which could be best tackled at the BSR; so for which issues for which the member state is too small an entity and the EU 28

is to large. So something in-between so it is a very, it is a clearly defined geographical area, you have; to give you an example of course; it is the ecological state of the Baltic Sea, that is obviously identified as a problem that could only be solved when if all Baltic Sea states jointly take effort to improve the state of the ecological state of the Baltic Sea. So that in principal the rational and then it is also, you could also look at common challenges but also opportunities I mean. If you look at the economic growth, at research, at education, so many, transport, energies, security, lot of transport connections in the Baltic Sea: a lot of issues where it was considered that this could best be dealt with at the level of the member states around the Baltic Sea. So that was, lets say, initial rationale for creating this first macro-regional strategy. Now, as you might know, there are others which has followed this example, and, but the principle, the rationale behind it is has also been the same so. Now have one strategy in the Danube Region, one in the Alpine Region and one in the Adriatic Ionian Region.

Q: As a

A: If you, I mean if you... lets say: there are many now, we have seventeen different areas which are cross-cutting and other policy areas most of them and you can find a lot of detail. The actions which they are planning to implement and the objects in an action plan of the strategy which explains in detail what the different areas and what the strategy intend to do. And of course, I mean the, it's the first part of the action plan is related a bit to the governing so it works but then there is one part of the objective 'what do we want to achieve' by working together. And then there's a long part what are the concrete actions we plan to take.

Q: As I

A: There is a web-site also for the strategy and there you can also find a link to the action plan. There is also a link which might be interesting: a list of flag ships. So there is... often there are projects or processes which are then developed in these different policy areas and if they are of macro-regional relevance and important for all member states around the region then they can receive a flagship status and you will also find a list of all these flagships which are currently being implemented and also those who have already been finalized also much for description.

Q: Lots of the work the EUSBSR do rests or are in co-operation with other institutions around the Baltic Sea area such as the Nordic Council and the CBSS and you work some close co-operation with them.

A: Yes, I mean we work indeed very... We are closely co-operating with all the main regional organizations, with the CBSS but also with the Northern Dimension: some on health, on transport, on environment, uhm, with also, but also with HELCOM of course in the environmental field, with VASAB when it comes to [sustaining] planning, with also with organisations representing the local and regional role authorities, with for example the Union of Baltic Cities which have a role in strategy co-ordinating role with the Baltic NGO-network which also have a role under the strategy in one of the horizontal areas. So, we are working very much with these existing networks so the idea of the strategy is not, has been, not to duplicate the activities which are already taking place but rather to increase in a way the transparency what they are doing because in order to avoid overlaps, so if you have, just to give you an example: if you have this one policy area 'culture' and there is a lot going on in very different organisations in the Baltic Sea, ARS BALTICA, there is the CBSS doing something on culture under this strategy and there everybody is represented. So they can exchange what they are doing, To see

exchange sort of avoid that, ehm, to provide a kind of forum for all of them, to exchange what they are doing and to make sure that they are all working in the same direction and not overlapping in a way. So that's, uhm. No, they are closely involved with regional organisations. Many of them have responsible role actually as co-ordinating the policy area of bio-economy for example but also innovation in the field of innovation policy area innovation which is a very important one so uhm so they are quite involved as well.

Q: I was thinking: since, eh, well I have main two cases in his study is the Baltic Sea and Nordic Regions and both two regions do with culture and identity as part of their agenda; do you have a thing alike identity or... to draw the region together as one?

A: Yeah, I mean the question of regional identity is something which you, I mean, you will find it in the policy areas topic, lets say this issue also being discussed in the policy area 'culture' so they have some, some also projects which are going into this direction. I think if you have a look at the list of flagships then you will find these specific projects. So, it's for example some of them go to, relate to, ehm, to the question of history defining the region, sort of looking at the common background and so on, communities, so there is a number of specific, lets say, specific areas in which this question of regional identity is translated into a... in a certain way.

Q: Okey...

A: But probably it I best to look really at what specific projects, what specific flagships are being implemented.

Q: Maybe I should ask...

A: Or maybe even better, maybe even better: get in contact with the coordinators of the policy areas of culture just to call them directly to have a conversation with them.

Q: Yeah I think that would be a bit more suitable.

A: Yeah

Q: They might be a little bit more... closer to the details I want to ask about

A: Yes absolutley. I am sure they would have a lot, a lot to tell you about this field.

Q: Because the different structures of how the organisations works I think that my questions might not be so well adapted to this interview at this time.

[END]

9.1 Interview Bernd Hemingway (CBSS)

Interview with Bernd Hemingway (Deputy Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat), conducted 2016-06-23 through Skype.

Q is for "question" and always asked by Ulf Friberg.

A is for "Answer" and always given by the person interviewed, this time by Bernd Hemingway.

Q: How would you describe the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) that you represent? [is it a region?]

A: That is a very open question. It is a very diverse region. It is a very diverse region with regards to this... to one extent diverse region with regards to its setting because we have countries that belongs to the ... to the European Union, actually the majority of the countries belongs to the EU. Uhm, then we have two countries in the north, Norway and Iceland who don't belong to the union but are very close to the union and to a certain extent also implement EU legislation and then we have one country that is not at all connected, or kinda, not to that extent, which is Russia. On the other hand, of course the region has benefit from the joint history, which to some extent given ehm, that there have been, ehm, a lot of war in Europe in the past, is to some extent a negative naturally. But it also had a lot of positive history in terms of culture, of... culture which is that ... identical of warrying size, of art, that is [very good] and the development of the region. So, on the one hand it is diverse, on the other hand it is kind of ... has interests in common and that is what we try to bring together.

Q: What do you feel would actually be the things that draw this region together? What does join the region to one entity and not many different entities? [What kind of a region is it?]

A: Yes, yes. I think the thing that of course is the connecting thing is the Baltic Sea in the end of the story because it is the connecting thing but, eh, and it is historically the one that connected the different countries with each other because for the longest while the only means of transport for many of the countries for to each other so that is the main connecting thing. But then we look at the policy field of course there are a number of, what can I say, political challenges that you have to adopt and and that you have to address regionally. I just want to give an example of the ... of the sustainable development focus that has been [bringing your class here] and with your work but sustainable development that is something that you have to agree on an international level but you also have to do your own work on a regional level. And when we talk about climate change it is an important issue that you can only address jointly. You can agree on global issues but you also have to support climate change, CM2-emmissions, and things like that on the regional level. And then maybe one example from the security field when we talked about civil security about how to respond to disasters. It is very often that either when you have forest fires or when you have oil spillage in the Baltic Sea or any other environment, but disasters in the sea that none of the countries are equipped to handle on their own so there is a need for working together and using the existing equipment to the best possible use.

[lost the sound-feed so started a new recording]

Q: When working together on issues do you work together with the Nordic region or do you work together with the EU to find common strength? [Overlapping of what sort?/ working together to find common strength?]

A: Yeah, I mean, there are different mechanisms that work out. Ehm, first of all we are working together with what we call "the four-sea state council" in the region which is the Artic council, the "Barents Sea / Artic Council", the "Nordic Council" and also the Baltic Sea States, and we are working very closely together. One example is that I went to "Arcam" yesterday for the "Plant-implementing". It is positives in Poland for us that, you know, with the infrastructure that will support different things like tourism, economic development, that kind of positive connection to our region and we will keep that in mind. So, we are actually working where it makes a sense and, uhm, a lot together. We are also working together on, how shall I say, soft policy areas like for example in the area

of trafficking of human beings, in particular with the Nordic Council, and other areas and with the EUSBSR. We are actually working very closely together because we are the co-ordinator for the three areas, namely the horizontal action and neighbours of the EU in ... as a member in the CBSS namely Russia, Norway and Iceland. Ehm, we are the coordinators for Safe and Secure which is also one of our long-term priorities as CBSS. And in the area of climate change. And in the other policy and horizontal areas we are very very heavily involved. So that works together and that makes a lot of sense and we also kind of very active as we are speaking to find and see how we can bring in the "Russian Strategy for the North-Western Region" which is under development and how are we able to connect that with the EU strategy and how we can find synergies between those two strategies that also makes a sense together. So that is how we try to connect all of these areas, to coordinate, to work together where it makes sense, engage where we have added value and otherwise to kinda keep in contact and keep the conversation going and the exchange of information.

Q: In what areas does it make sense to work together?

A: Well! I mean the... I think in some areas it is kinda quite obvious, and in others we are still working together but it is not the case and for example in regional identity we of course we have a very, kind of, specific, how shall I say; when the Northern countries there is a northern identity of the country involved because they have been working together for the longest while and this is something of course we are then the Baltic Sea Region is working on its identity in a way in parallel to see how it engage with those countries that are not part of the Northerners. How shall I mean, so there are areas where there makes more sense and some like this one where it does not make that much sense but when we still kind of working together to see and to learn from each other because I think... especially when it is about identity it is a good example of how the Northern country manages to kinda, you know, to bring [pro-sections] of being peaceful, of being...

[Sound broke of again. Restarted the recording]

Q: Do you feel that the Baltic do have a regional identity? [How does this region fit in the theory of regionalisation?]

A: Yes. I really do. There is a regional identity but of course it is to be worked on. It needs to be recognised and it needs to be, needs to, ..., it is for sure [where the Baltic [consummation]. I trust to tell you we agree [a lot] on priorities in the CBSS which is prosperous and sustainable region, safe and secure region and the 'regional identity' is the most challenging of those long-term priorities because it is also something that needs to be developed and that people have to buy into, and, well, given that we have some challenging [laws?] issues at stake for the time being it is, at least on a political level it is, because to do that. And then the other point in this matter, in a way, regional identity is something that you can not, how shall I say, by order of the government say "now we have a regional identity" it is more or less a grass-root event as well – people have to buy into it. And that needs to, kinda, that needs to develop and that needs to be promoted in a way and that needs to have a chance to find out, to grow and that for the all the activity. In a way everything we are doing kind of promoting the regional identity because that is what, kinda, people-contact is about, and because in particularly the contact of young people like youth exchange, youth dialogue and summer university [in the] are particularly important with regards to the development of this huge identity. So, it is in a way [the argument] when you talk about the Baltic region:

people know what [this is] about, but it is more the geographical knowledge than about a identity knowledge as we speak for the time being but...

Q: When you develop your strategy for building up, working with culture, identity, you have been inspired by... How have you consciously been developing your strategy for cultural identity? [Did the 'other' affect development?]

A: In the beginning in a way where you look back a little bit, I mean the, we are 25 years next year, and when you look back to the situation in Europe in 1992 the situation in the region was quite different. And because it is, or it was, only two of the Baltic Sea states members of the EU, namely Germany and Denmark. So, the main aim at the time was to support European integration on a regional level, and that I trust for the first years for the longest while was the main aim and, of of the CBSS. So, in a way this has now kind of things seems to have settled in a way that we know that we have Iceland and Norway as European economic area countries associated with the EU, Russia and the rest of the member states of the EU- That is basically also the time when the CBSS started to re-orient itself and that was the time when it started to work on this, on this long-term priorities so it is basically

[sounds breaking. Restarting the recording again]

[We could compare method with the EU] and I think there is a kinda, you know, challenge as well to find a European identity, or EU-identity which kinda takes a long time to develop.

Q: But when you start this in 92 was the reason for creating the CBSS it was to draw people together to, as you said, draw it into European context? [European or Baltic core region / identity?]

A: I think the founding fathers, in a way, in a way there were any fathers ... When we were created it was kinda of surrounded experience of the just fall of the Berlin wall and the and the kind of dismantling of the two blocs that had kinda of occupied the Cold War for the longest period of time in Europe and of course it was important to kind of see how, in regions that were at the border between those two blocks how to kind of bring people closer together and to on common issues and then of course the whole issue of an integrated Europe and to kind of see how it could bring countries together to avoid that kind of cold or real war was kind of [at the heart of] Europe again was what I think the main reason behind creating this so to kind of create a forum were people and countries were able to identify their common issues and to address them.

Q: I think I should go back to when the CBSS... there are issues that we do work together with one another, organisations, with and separately [apart] by yourself, ehm: how much does this influence what you do in your daily organisation? [strategy about overlapping?]

A: I think the work done in, ehm... of the... I think the work for the sister council is in a way of co-ordination so it is not policy setting but it is of course [helping?] [and aided] by analysing and learning from others who were doing a good job and sometimes were doing a bad job ... sometimes we learn more from a job bad done and that is kinda [dubious] as well. Uhm, then of course what is very inflating in terms of policy is the Russian Strategy for the North-Western Region and the EUSBSR. And because that is, uhm, is of course very influential in terms of policy setting and of ... [founding/funding] available so, uhm, so lets say the influence is the... the biggest influence is of course is by the Council and by the Committee of senior officials who do the, how shall I say, the day to day management of the organisation. That is where policy is developed and then they draw in the council

and we... Then but of course you [develop/ look] left and right and you have your stakeholders and of course you have the EU as a full member in the organisation and then of course the influence

Q: ...

Q: ... I think that we have actually covered some of the main points that I wanted to ask you about.

A: Okey. Sounds good. I feel you have asked everything that I would have talked about anyway.

Q: Well good then.

A: Yeah, that sounds good.

A: what is kind of your aim your, kind what are you making out of this then?

Q: [research talk]

A: [He wants a copy]

[END]

9.2 Interview Johan Lindblad (Nordic)

Interview with Johan Lindblad (The Nordic Council Secretariat, Senior Adviser), conducted 2017-12-06 over a call by mobile phone.

Q is for "question" and always asked by Ulf Friberg.

A is for "Answer" and always given by the person interviewed, this time by Johan Lindblad.

Q: Berätta för mig vad norden är och just nordiska samarbetet och hur [hårt] institut ionaliserat det är

A: Vill du specificera någon liten aning annars kan jag börja med universums uppkomst

Q: Just syftet med er organisation, vi kan ju hålla oss till den och hur ni står till norden som region.

A: Okey. Ja alltså, man kan väl säga så här: under mellankrigsperioden, alltså 20-talet och 30-talet så var ju till exempel... Finland ansågs ju inte vara "norden" utan tillhöra Baltikum. Så där var man väl lite, på lite sätt utdefinierad som ett nordiskt land, men det ändras ju sen igen. Om vi går till tiden efter andra världskriget så... så försökte man skapa ett nordiskt försvarsförbund, 1949, som kollapsade eller misslyckades på grund av... [...] Det var ju långt gånget, det var bara det att stormakter grep in och ville inte ha något sådant här alternativ block emellan öst och väst utan man ville ha att man skulle ta ställning. Så det föll ju och då insåg man på politisk nivå i norden att det behövde ändå ha en arena för politiskt diskussion, och ja, dialog. Inom då norden och då är ju Finland med i den svängen igen även om man då inte gick med i Nordiska rådet förens 1955 medans dem andra gick med redan 1952 och bildade då det här parlamentariska samarbetet; förstås oförpliktigande men ändå reglerat i Helsingforsavtalet om vad man ska samarbeta om och formerna för det. Och om jag ska säga vad jag bara personligen tycker så... Asså i början så gjorde man ju ganska många, tog man initiativ till ganska många betydelsefulla avtal. Vi har de här klassiska; passfrihet,

gemensam arbetsmarknad och rätten att studera i varandras länder och rätten att bosätta sig i varandras länder utan uppehållstillstånd osv va. Så där gjorde man ju ganska mycket i början och det var ju... tunga namn och tongivande politiker i länderna, partiledare och andra toppfigurer som satt med i nordiska rådet. Det var nästan lik-tydligt med internationellt samarbete på den tiden. [...] Och för Finland så var ju Nordiska rådet också en slags av Sovjetunionen tolererad länk till Väst för att hålla lite balans i den här lite känsliga läget som Finland befann sig i i efterkrigstiden. Sen med tiden så har ju Nordiska rådet kanske asså de faktiska maktbefogenheterna har ju inte bestått i någonting annat än rätten att skriva förslag till regeringarna och vetorätt över budgeten (över det nordiska regeringssamarbetets budget). Nu snackar jag om 70-talet och framåt. Så jag tycker att med tiden har det nordiska rådet utvecklats till att bli... Det främsta värdet skulle jag säga är det nätverk som uppstår mellan parlamentariker i de nordiska länderna, asså att man känner varandra kors och tvärs. Parlamentariker går ju in och ut ur regeringar och både tidigare ministrar och parlamentariker upprättar personliga band på tvärs över gränserna. [...min 6:40] Och sen [växer] man, man förstår ju mera varandras system och villkor och man åker ju runt och hamnar på olika platser så man får ju en större förståelse för hur [...] politik och samhälle fungerar i olika delar av nordens och det är ju också en stor fördel naturligtvis.

Q: Det har ju blivit, det finns ju nordiska ministerrådet också, deras samarbete borde ju vara rätt så liknande det här också

A: Ja det känner jag också väl till för där har jag jobbat och det är samma hus som jag befinner mig i nu, vi sitter i samma sekretariat.

A: Ministerrådet bildades 1971. Och det var också en sån här "flopp" som gjorde det. Nämligen; försöket på slutet av 60-talet att bilda en ekonomisk och tull-union mellan dom nordiska länderna. Och det var ju framförhandlat och i princip klart så att undertecknas det här avtalet, men åter igen så kom stormakter in och [...] Sovjetunionen tyckte att det här kan ju inte Finland vara med i - då blir man ju integrerad i Väst så det ville man ju inte. Då tvingades Finland hoppa av det och då gick liksom andan lite ur resten. Då sneglade Danmark och Norge ner mot Europeiska Gemenskapen (EG): hade folkomröstning om man skulle gå med där och Danmark gjorde ju det och Norge gjorde inte det. Och då ville man liksom, som plåster på sår, göra någonting annat. [min 8:16] Skapa någon annan slags struktur kring regeringssamarbetet och det blev då Ministerrådet 1971. Och det bygger ju på principen om samsyn eller konsensus. Man kan bara göra det som man är överens om: man kan inte göra nånting [när man inte är det].

Q: Mycket av det regionen arbetar med det är kultur också o så och identitet.

A: Ja alltså, Nordiska rådet har ju ett antal priser man ger ut varje år så att för att sätta lite fokus på det kulturella; det är ju litteraturpris och annat, filmpris och så där, och det är väl kanske det Nordiska rådet lite granna mest är känd för - framförallt mest litteraturpriset. Sen har man ju en kultur- Nordiska kulturfonden finns ju också som ska stödja nordiskt kultursamarbete. Delar ut pengar till diverse projekt och administrerar del länder inblandade. Mest är, på de[n] officiella sammarbetesnivån att man satsar på kultur. Sen är det ju klart, vi har ett kulturministerråd och dem satsar ju på diverse olika frågor ock så där.

Q: Samarbetet som sker det är, som du säger, bara i det ni är överens i men är det begränsat på något vis eller är det bara att ni hittar frågor som går att samarbeta i?

A: Det finns ju fasta konstellationer, alltså, det heter ju Nordiska ministerrådet som om det vore ett singularis men det är egentligen elva stycken ministerråd där varje ministerkonstellation har et eget ministerråd: arbetsmarknadsministern har ett,

finansministrarna har ett osv. Och så finns det några områden då som av hävd ligger utanför: det är utrikespolitik, det är försvars- och säkerhetspolitik, och, det har också från 2015 ligger även transportpolitik och bostads- byggande frågor utanför dom prioriterade bortom-grejorna helt enkelt. Men annars så finns det ministerråd för alla områden, inklusive ska jag då tillägga, regionalsamarbete och då menar jag inte Norden utan då menar jag stor-regionerna, de har vi ju massa: vi har tio eller elva olika gränsregionala kommittéer; Nordkalotten och [Mittnorden] och Kvarkenrådet och sådanahärana, Svinesundskommittén, där vi ju inte kan styra med järnhand men där man, då, med lite styrda pengar som de här regionerna då kan söka om, som dom kan få: och dom kommer med vissa villkor och dom ska bidra till det gränsregionala, gränsöverskridande samarbetet på [stor]regional nivå. [11.15].

Q: Det är [...] Koppla de här länderna och de mindre regionerna närmare varandra som mycket av det här riktar sig mot då, Nordiska rådet och Nordiska ministerrådet?

A: Absolut! Det finns ju den här devisen om att "uppnå nordisk nytta"; alltså att om man tjänar på att göra saker tillsammans [eller] att stå var och en för sig som länder, så ska vi sträva efter att göra det tillsammans. Det är ju den ena devisen, den andra är ju kanske lite mer "färskvare" och ändras från tid till annan men statsministrarna har ju proklamerat att Norden ska vara världens mest integrerade region – vad det nu innebär.

Q: Och det har det ju rykte om sig att vara.

A: Ja, precis. Det kan man ju nog nästan säga att det är det förmodligen ändå redan. Gissningsvis. Det vet ingen annan som har ett så ingående samarbete.

Q: Jag har inte hittat [någon] annan region heller som har fokuserat på ett samarbete under en så pass lång tid utan att utveckla nått mer institutionaliserat.

A: Ne. Jag är ingen expert på Benelux-samarbetet men jag har ändå en känsla av att det inte är lika långtgående. Tror inte det. Det skiljer sig så [...] jag kan inte redogöra för det. Ne, men det beror nog också på att [i tillägg] till Nordiska rådet och Nordiska ministerrådet så finns ju hela det här civilsamhälleliga samarbetet som har funnits sedan 1800-talets första årtionden. Föreningen Norden brukar vara en klassiker, men det är inte bara det utan det är ju i princip [...], jag har hört någon säga att det finns tretusen nordiska [sub-]bi-organisationer och det kan ju vara allt från tåg-entusiasternas klubb och frimärkssamlarnas till...

Q: Lite svårt att hålla koll på alla dem tror jag. Hitta alla dessutom.

A: Ja men, men dem bidrar till att hålla ihop kittet mellan länderna och [for]mera känslan av, alltså det finns någonting, det är nånting [...] som känns som om man vill göra saker tillsammans...

Q: Det finns en väl-etablerad gemenskap.

A: Ja. Det kan man lugnt säga. [13.46]

Q: Jag tänkte på det, östersjön och så, mycket av hur... Ja, Finland var ju inte en Nordisk stat enligt andra till att börja med, eller så där som du själv sa. Men, och jag kan ju tänka mig att det som hindrar att andra baltiska stater från att komma in det är ju sovjet och blockpolitiken så att säga fram till nittiotalet.

A: I hög grad ja.

Q: Men sen har ju i alla fall Estland försökt hävda sig lite som nordiskt.

A: Ja.

Q: Och de har väl någon form av roll i Norden, nordiska samarbetet.

A: Eh asså, de har ju sökt, alla tre, har ju sökt om att bli en del av nordisk rådet för flera år sedan men inte blivit insläppt. Men dem, det finns ju ett ganska nära samarbete mellan Baltiska församlingen och Nordiska rådet. Vi har ju möten och, presidierna möts och, och så visst, vi är inte integrerade med varandras [...] men det finns en dialog, det är väll [...] de Baltiska staternas samarbete och även staterna var för sig [15.00] är väll [Nordiska och de Nordiska länderna.... närstående grannar]

Q: Vad innebär det här samarbetet, hur händer sig det och vad syftar det till?

A: Man deltar i varandras parlamentariska församlingar. På nordiska rådets möten kommer representanter från Baltiska församlingen [till] observatörer [...] och omvänt kommer det då [...] Man har gemensamma internationella strategier, man besöker varandra och deltar i diskussionen i någon grad från gång till gång, punkt till punkt. [Det är inte total-integrerat]

Q: Finns det någonting som jag kan läsa mig på för att se hur, från något möte så där om det finns.

A: Ja jag kan skicka lite grann.

Q: Det hade varit intressant att se det.

A: Nordiska rådet har en internationell strategi som antogs bara för några veckor sedan. Där finns de baltiska länderna med. Den antogs i november, den kan jag skicka till dig.

Q: Det hade varit toppen.

Q: I östersjön finns också Östersjöstaternas råd, och så finns det förstås EUs Östersjöstrategi. Hur förhåller sig noden, hur spelar de här två olika enheterna roll för Norden.

A: Jag tror att om du vill ha svar på det så har jag en kollega här som jobbar med just de internationella relationerna för Nordiska rådets sida sett och det är väll bättre att du frågar honom. Jag tror du får bättre svar. [...] Asså östersjösamarbetet, ja det finns ett samarbete men jag har aldrig sysslat med det personligen därför kan jag inte redogöra för det, men däremot har jag en kollega som har de internationella relationerna på sitt ansvarsområde utifrån Nordiska rådets perspektiv. Han kan säkert ge dig mer "up-to-date" på hur och, så där. Jag kan skicka hans kontaktuppgifter till dig.

Q: Det hade varit uppskattat det med.

A: [...]

Q: Jag hade tänkt dra mer mot de internationella relationerna nu i fortsättningen här.

A: Jag är mer Norden Norden och han är mer Norden i det omliggande. [Norden utåt]

Q: Ja ne, de frågor jag hade där är mer i förhållande till Ryssland och östersjöstaternas råd sen också.

A: Men då är det Arne du ska snacka med. Jag är ingen bra person, jag är mer Norden och regionalt samarbete i de här stor-regionalt, inom Norden. Det är min grej, och gränshinder. Det är mitt gebit.

Q: men i så fall tänkte jag bara fråga också då - Just parlamentariker-samarbete och så vidare det är formen på hur Nordiska ministerrådet, nordiska rådet fungerar idag - är det, det finns väll en hel del röster för att nordiska samarbetet ska bli djupare på något vis ändå.

A: Det gör det ju. Det finns en stark... ett stort folkligt stöd för att nordiska samarbetet fördjupas och man talar ju även inom ramen för det internationella samarbetet för Norden. Att det är viktigare att hålla ihop oss mer internt för att [positionera] i gemensam, gemensamt inte minst emot EU, vi måste bli bättre på att

implementera EU-direktiv, koordinera [ett, rätt, det] i Norden. Så jo, den allmänna känslan och snacket är att Norden har framtiden för sig och hela Brexit-diskussionen gör också någonting - "Okey, Storbritanien var, är, en av våra närmaste partner i EU-samarbetet – Vart ska vi vända blickarna nu?" Och då är det mer Norden, sen blir det lite mer spretigt beroende på vilket sak det snackas om: digitalisering och sådana här grejor det har ju de nordiska länderna Estland [och de baltiska], sen kommer vi in på värde-politik och då är det inte dem [20.18] då är det kanske Holländare eller några andra som ligger närmare så då blir det lite spretigare.

Q: Beroende på just frågan i hand så är det olika samarbeten som är, andra samarbetspartner som skiljer sig åt här.

A: Ja precis.

Q: Ren nyfikenhet, när det var tal om Skottlands självständighet så kom det också röster om... vad var anledningen

A: Ja dom ansökte ju faktiskt om medlemskap i Nordiska rådet också och kom inte heller in. De ansökte innan folkomröstningen gjorde de ju. Men det är ofta sådana här saker, och det kan man ju tycka vad man tycker om, men det är ju språk och "ni är ju inte Norden och har inte... ni talar inte ett nordiskt språk" och i det fallet så tror jag också det var lite känsligt för man ville inte sträcka ut en hand mot Skottarna innan folkomröstningen om självständighet skulle kännas som en...

Q: Fel läge för att bete sig sjyst.

A: Ja det är, ja precis. Men skulle det i framtiden bli så att Skottland lämnar Storbritannien och vill vara med i EU igen och då sträcker ut en hand så vet jag inte... förmodligen kan dem inte det för vi har avvisat Baltiska med hänvisning till språk och lite annat så...

Q: Jag undrar lite vad som avgör om ett land är Nordiskt varför Baltikum inte var Nordiskt och så.

A: Bortsett från språk så vet jag inte, jag är inte säker på att det där finns... Det finns ju alltid ett svar som vi har gett till dem, jag har inte ett det svaret. Jag kan tänka mig bara att språk säkert är ett argument. Det andra kan ju vara att det gjordes på en tidpunkt när dem inte var säkra ekonomiskt helt uppe på samma nivå som det nordiska...

Q: det hade gett en instabilitet i samarbetet kanske?

A: Ja. Och sen tror jag, precis, sen tror jag också att det här också, och det här är ju ingenting jag vet men jag kan tänka mig att det faktum att det bor en relativt stor rysk-språkig minoritet i vissa av de här länderna gör också att man känner att det är lite farligare. Ska man förhålla sig till det hela tiden

Q: En annan form av intern, möjlig intern risk.

A: Ja, men det är bara en spekulation. Det är ju inte långsökt att tänka att det kan vara så [...] Men det finns säkert dokumenterat, Arne kan säkert gräva fram svaren till de här olika.

Q: Jag gräver gärna själv också, jag tänker inte be er att göra mitt jobb åt mig. Det hade varit kul att veta var jag skulle gräva i så fall

A: Vi har det säkert i vårt journalsystem om inte annat.

Q: Okej. Hur kommer man åt det, de får man begära handlingar då.

A: Det får man ju i så fall göra och Arne, det är ju ärenden under presidiet och Arne jobbar jämt mot presidiet så han kan säkert titta på det, gamla handlingar och ta fram det.

Q: Har du någon mejl-adress till Arne så kan jag höra mig av till honom.

A: Han är ny men han är bra, han har kanske inte historiken i huvudet men han har kommit igång bra.
[Uppgiftsutbyte]
Då kan han ju skicka de här underlagen jag sa till dig.
[END]

9.3 Interview Torkil Sørensen (Nordic)

Interview with Torkil Sørensen (Previously for the Nordic Council Secretariat, Senior Adviser, IR-relations), conducted 2018-02-06 over a call by mobile phone.

Q is for "question" and always asked by Ulf Friberg.

A is for "Answer" and always given by the person interviewed, this time by Torkil Sørensen.

I have been trying to get some questions developed from my RQs and from my readings on 'space'.

[Pleasantries and introduction to the thesis theme/ some in Danish and we switched to English after a short while]

Q: Regionalisation theory, dynamics and other partners in the area of BSR – how has your cooperation been there?

A: [Danish at first but we soon switch language min 6.37] We have this Baltic sea of [committing contract] cooperation between both national and regional and it is very important for Nordic council. Then we also have more direct contact - between Baltic countries, we have Baltic Assembly [...] organisation to Nordic council. And in my time it was maybe [the] most important partner we had. And I guess it still is but Im just speaking about my time. And then, we had also more direct contact with Duma and the [reigning] council in Moscow and also regional [prime] of north-west Russia but it was not that... it decreased after the Crimea-crisis started 2014. We still had some cooperation but not as close as before after that. But, we increased cooperation in Polen and to some degree also with all the [?-countries]. We also have some but not extensive contact with the [?]. All around the baltic sea we have... common... [8.14] [cooperation] with parliamentary institutions.

Q: I am trying to formulate a question here – with the three baltic countries and relationship with them – what was the purpose?

A: We have both [have] much in common with the baltic assembly. But we also had for instance common briefings. Sometimes with members of [both] parliaments and members of the opposition parties and sometimes only with opposition parties. When we started to have more cooperation towards Ukraine [indistinct] much cooperation towards former Soviet Union members [poor sound]. And then we had special contact with both Baltic council and the Benelux countries. So we had [...] [interest in EU]

Q: what kind of projects do you have together with the Baltic countries

A: Nordic council is inter-parliamentary cooperation

Q: Yeah OK.

A: Nordic council of ministers has offices and projects in Baltic countries and in north-west Russia but for us it was more discussions and so on.

Q: Discussions on what kind of subjects?

A: Internal things like energy and [environment] but it could also be the security situation in the Baltic sea and Europe after Ukraine and those kinds of things.

Q: And the point was to be able to help each other forward with...

A: yeah. [11.25] And in the NC we had some discussion after the Baltic countries joined EU 2004, at that time I worked for the NATO department, [...] some of my colleagues thought 'now was the time to increase cooperation with Baltic states' [...] We had a special relationship between Nordic countries and Baltic countries after independence and still we are close to each other and [even after they joined the EU we still had much in common about the baltic sea]

Q: This relationship that you had was it special because of something you had in common since before or did it become special

A: [Some words] We were both Baltic Sea countries. [more words]

Q: There was a feeling of brotherhood or?

A: Yes. I think... For a while we thought that Baltic Sea had a too dark view of what had come [out of/ after] the Soviet Union but after quite little we /many countries agreed that it was not just illusion, it was a fact that [...] But still Nordic countries also tried to keep kinda good relations with Russia but [13.35]

Q: I have interviewed some other regional representatives before and the relationship with Russia always, seems to be more, distant and less easy-going to find common ground. Is this something you can relate to? [14.02]

A: Actually, we had strong cooperation with Russia [...] North-Western Russia and they came to Nordic countries. They still do but [stop after Ukraine?] We also had a [...] but they were loaded foreign agents so it was very difficult...

Q: I heard something about Russia trying to size the office in St. Petersburg or documents there

A: They made it very difficult for the Nordic countries to, actually there is still a small office there but it can't function [...] But there is still a direct cooperation

Q: So it is still a space with which you have contact with and can cooperate with

A: We have contact but it is not that easy, not that good.

Q: What has brought about this change in relationship?

A: First, labelling our offices in [St. Petersburg] and Kaliningrad as foreign agencies [...] made it very difficult to work. But then also the situation after Ukraine. But we still there is cooperation. But we have another area in common with Russia – The Arctic cooperation. [...parliamentary platform] [16.35]

Q: And that Arctic cooperation works better than around the Baltic Sea/Nordic relation?

A: Yeah, maybe because of Ukraine is not part of Arctic and that means that even after the crisis in Ukraine [that conflict won't resonate as much there] We try to avoid that conflict. Up to now it functions better than Baltic Sea cooperation.

Q: I'm thinking that the Arctic cooperation works better because it is less connected to society and identity

A: Yeah maybe but [17.27] a big question mark, well not large, but until now it has been less conflict in the north... But I don't know if it is... we try to keep it a bit low key. [Working on strengthening this cooperation, has employed a young Finnish lady for this (just when I was leaving)] [...]

Q: I have gone through most of the more formal questions that I wanted to ask Johan

A: But you could [19.10] come up with something the Nordic [tips on where to find information – Nordic homepage and a document on international...]

Q: Yeah I think I have got that document and bought a book I am reading

A: Actually I never read the final one [about that document on international] [It got the workings]

Q: Im just going to ask some finishing questions [19.49] I have been trying to avoid leading questions but since I have interviewed other people before I have some ideas I want to have tested at least.

Would you say that other organisations that you, like the CBSS and EUSBSR, they are partners that you can contribute with while developing what yourself is trying to work with?

A: Yes, I think the Nordic Council try to work, to have partners to contribute to the cooperation [...] parliamentary [...] more parliamentary cooperation. [...]

Q: I have gotten the answer that these organisations work together when they have something that they can both benefit from and that they can benefit from most subjects that they can find, but when it comes to identity they maybe look more to the other to find how they did or didn't do and tried to develop their own idea of what they [themselves] are supposed to do? [22.03]

A: We learn from what [others did good] but also from what wasn't that good. So... Yeah. It will be interesting to see how other EU members did compared to Baltic/Nordic countries so we can also, ... But yeah...

Q: But since the Baltic region and the Nordic region, they share partly that same space [ex Sweden, Denmark], does this closeness mix sometimes what they are doing or how, does this strengthen or does this affect [23.15]

A: I think the closeness in the Nordic region is so strong that even when the cooperation is not o strong we are very close [...] Baltic is a little further away. Sometimes it is even suggested a Nordic/Baltic Union. [That was] when I started at the Nordic Council. [...] [we have something close in the Nordic countries, and then we can cooperate with the Baltic countries about other things like the Baltic Sea] [Language is a barrier] In the Nordic Council we try to speak nordic but with the new generation in the Nordic coming up more with English

Q: Yeah I think so too. It is a bit of a change

A: Then we could in-cooperate Baltic states but we could not join [24.40] [up to the future]

Q: Yeah, that is interesting to see how that develops.

A: Just for conclusion I think that first when Nordic countries as Finland Sweden went into the EU and then when the Baltic countries went into the EU they may have the feeling that now we don't need our small cooperation so much rather the EU but EU is so bit that we also now need this cooperation.

Q: this is a very interesting subject, yes.

A: One [25.25] part of it is really very interesting [...] that is why we have small offices [...] strength in the EU is also important

Q: Has this fact that the EU has come about [...] meant that the Nordic has drawn together... closer?

A: have the feeling that first [...] important to have cooperation in smaller than the EU

Q: How is it, Scandinavia or Nordic still have some sort of joint embassy in Brussels?

A: [26.53] No. but we had a joint embassy early but [joint meeting] joint all the [...] house in common.

Q: I think I am happy with my questions, or happy enough.
[chatter]

Q: Did you have a name for that document?

A: I think it is called "[...] strategy of the Nordic Council"

Q: Yeah, I think I remember it. [27.47] Johan directed me to it as well and gave me a link. [*"Nordic Council of Ministers Strategy for Nordic Cultural Co-operation 2013-2020 (revised 2016)"*?]

If I have other questions I can come in contact by e-mail?

A: Yes, that is fine.

[End with standard pleasantries]

9.4 Motive analysis

Here the motive analysis is combined with the previously described methods as part of an operationalization to give the larger structure an added edge to the conclusions.

Motive analyses are common in the social sciences but unfortunately connected with great uncertainty. Motive analysis aims at mapping the conscious deliberations of an actor before its decision. It is hard to convincingly state that one has succeeded in correctly clarify an actor's motive on a certain action. Conscious deliberations can have multiple meanings: what do the actor want to achieve, what intentions are there, what is the meaning of this action and how is the collected calculation of the decision? Unaccounted for how the motives are expressed in a study, the goal is the same: When the conscious deliberations have been observed one has also explained why an actor acted as it did²⁰¹.

Some important aspects of the analysis are: the motive analysis is a common approach in the social sciences and the actor or actors can be one or many, state or party. When the actor is a collective (an actor of more than one) it has to be represented in the analysis of a smaller or larger number of physical persons, usually members with decision making capability. Since an organization as such do not have conscious deliberations a motive analysis is logically impossible. The first step of a motive analysis is thus to find the persons who represent the actor (in this thesis they are the knowledgeable persons working for and representing their regional spokesperson institutions). After the subjects have been identified the second step is to consider which the possible motives for action might have been. Here the possible motives are considered without pre-definition, meaning that all

²⁰¹ Esaiasson, P, Gilljam, M, Oscarsson H, and Wängnerud L, 2007:327p

possible motives are open for observation. Studies working without pre-definitions have the advantage to be open to what is actually observed in the material studied. The collection of motive-indicators begins with an overview of the decisions that are to be explained. The theory developing method and the motive analysis method melds into the same process since a standard advice for the application of both are the same; think of implications that follow a possible motive: If the actor is driven by a certain motive like this and that the circumstance, the context should implicate and strengthen the validity of this certain motive. With such a list of implications, the researcher gathers a tool for searching for motive indicators.

One type of indicators that always should be strived to discover are the actors' direct motivations. Strategizing towards 'overlapping space' assumes that regions makes conscious deliberations and it is therefore important to find out how they want to explain their actions. To collect direct motivations, one has to be open to ideas concerning sources of material. This is why more than one type of sources are used and not specified to one type of documents. Esaiasson, et.al writes that since the purpose with interviews are to reach the real motives behind conscious deliberations and the actors certain ways of doing things – the information given can thus be more or less correct²⁰².

The third step in the motive analysis is to value the motive-indicators: to weigh and decide how viable the indicators are to draw conclusions about the actors' conscious deliberations. Even if the materials analysed are not definite indicators, actions and patterns of overall strategization is set in context and possibly indicate certain processes. For an argument about motive to be viable an action has to correspond with the motive in question. Through an analysis between action and motivation there is certainly possible to dismiss some possible motives. However, it is not impossible that one action can be explained by more than one motive²⁰³.

²⁰² Esaiasson et al. 2007:327p

²⁰³ Esaiasson et al. 2007:327p