

North-South Regionalism: A Challenge for Europe in a Changing World

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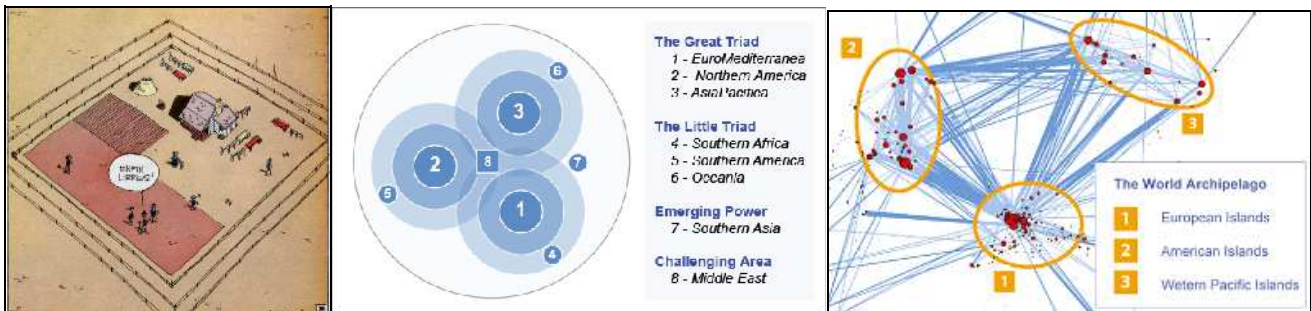
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The three dominant views of Europe in the world

"continent"
designed & secured borders
cities

"centre-periphery"
old rich centre vs. dynamic peripheries

"archipelago"
global networks of world



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Executive summary

Planning and other territorial policies within Europe are more and more dependant upon its relations with the rest of the world. The growing international flows (migrants, trade, investments, polluting agents) interact with the European territories; moreover, the vision the Europeans have of their place in the world, has a strong impact on the EU's policies. Many political decisions apparently related to purely "internal affairs", are in fact based on a wider conception of the world.

Three dominant representations of Europe in the world are currently available: (i) the "continent" view, which describes territories in the traditional – but still active – shape of continents or civilisation areas; (ii) the "centre-periphery" view, which stresses the dissymmetry of the North-South relations; (iii) the "archipelago" view, based on the networking organisation of space, which highlights the remote connections of territories. Each of these views provides partial evidence of reality. They are not really contradictory, but they have to be distinguished because their territorial impacts are quite different, and because they give rise to different European territorial policies.

(1) The "continent" view of Europe entails several assets: Central and Eastern European member states would benefit from subsidies and western private foreign direct investments; Trans-European Networks would be implemented at a large European scale, which would be favourable to all the European territory; the German territory would become the genuine centre of Europe. On the other hand, this view drives to territorial shortcomings: a "Nimby" interpretation of the European Neighbourhood Policy would have negative impacts on the peripheral parts of the EU's space; obstructing population exchanges with the neighbourhood would hamper the European economy and territory as a whole, and increase its ageing.

(2) The "centre-periphery" view would quite deeply change the European geography due to a greater Euro-Mediterranean economic integration, despite being asymmetrical. More than the eastern peripheral parts of the Union, its southern ones would benefit from this change. In the short run, the European economy would partly catch up with its Asian and American counterparts, although not on the high-tech basis of the Lisbon Strategy. Nevertheless, the relocation of the environmental burden (Dirty-Difficult-Dangerous activities) to the southern shore could only be a short-term solution. A prominent policy of migration control would diminish the rise of the European Mediterranean rim, and would not reduce the brain drain.

(3) The "archipelago" view would drive to many territorial advantages: most of the major European cities would become highly internationalized metropolitan areas; western countries, which benefit from such metropolises, would experience a particularly fast economic growth. On the other hand, territorial disparities in Europe would increase, within Western Europe and within the new member states – which would rapidly loose their competitive advantage due to the rise of salaries and costs in their capital cities. The destabilisation would be dramatic in the Mediterranean neighbouring countries, due to a tough 2010 liberalisation of trade, namely in agriculture (rural emigration toward the large cities' suburbs and toward Europe).

The paper shows a desirable and feasible vision of Europe that would imply the territorial assets of the three former views without their main shortcomings. This vision is based on the idea that Europe and its neighbours represent one major world region, according to the North-South regionalism that occurs between the US and Mexico, or between Japan and its emerging peripheries. Here, **the European Neighbourhood Policy becomes the key policy** to complement the Lisbon Strategy and to enhance all European territorial policies. Completing a regulated North-South regionalism in the European region, would imply two main innovations:

a) along with the four freedoms (goods, services, capital, people), **four principles of common action** should be added: *solidarity* with the southern shore of the Mediterranean (and over a longer time span with Sub-Saharan Africa); creation of *meshing networks* over the greater regional territory (banking services connecting the two shores, integrated transport and electricity networks, compatible patterns of higher education's degrees in order to promote mobility); economic *complementary* (a better sharing of the value chain in agriculture, manufacturing and services); common policies for *regional public goods* (air and sea pollution namely).

b) **The tools of the European Regional Policy have to be widely used by such an ENP**, in order to develop efficient territories, to tackle the many social issues in the South which cannot be met without taking the local territories into account, to enhance local actors as a key way for democratisation, and in order to coordinate the various European actions in this neighbourhood through an Euromed Spatial Development Perspective.