

SPECIAL SESSION 9, REGIONS AND REGIONALISATION

INTRODUCTION

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Background, trends, theories and models

Historical studies of regions is not a new field of scholarly interest. In countries like Germany, France and the United States, regional history became a specialised discipline as early as the second half of the nineteenth century, parallel to national history. In Germany regional history was an extension of *Landesgeschichte*, strongly inspired by the collaboration between Friedrich Ratzel and Karl Lamprecht at the University of Leipzig in the 1890s, of which the search for *Geschichtslandschaften* became an important dimension. In the interwar period, this tradition took a special interest in 'Boden und Volk', focusing in particular on the so-called 'lost' eastern lands. In France the experience of the Great Revolution in the long run came to mean a great deal for the development of modern regional consciousness, in spite of the fact that after the revolution national homogeneity was regarded as a prerequisite for an effective state policy and that the traditional particularism represented by the historical landscapes of the departments of *l'ancien régime* had been broken down. The idea of 'natural' historical landscapes, however, survived among historians, geographers and writers. Partly inspired by German geographers, at the turn of the century Paul Vidal de la Blanche paved the way for a new focus on the region in France, with geography as the dominant discipline. In the United States regional history saw a breakthrough in the years immediately after World War I, but its roots lay in Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis of (geographical) 'sectionalism' in the history of the federation, in his view more or less equivalent to 'nationalism' in Europe (Frandsen 1994). In the Nordic world there has generally not been any strong scholarly tradition of regional history.

National history, with overall focus on the nation state, has been so dominant that it has taken on a *finalistic* character in the sense that the nation state has almost been regarded as the end product of history (Aronsson 1995). Research on the modern region has thus largely been dominated by fields other than history, such as geography and political science.

To some extent, however, regional history has existed for a long time; for example, in Sweden in the concept of 'stadsregional historia' (*city-regional history*), which has produced city monographs. On the other hand, in Finland and Norway, and possibly in Iceland, i.e. the youngest Nordic nation states, historians have for a considerable time taken an interest in studying larger rural regions as well (Gidlund & Sörlin 1992:192-194).

In recent years, historians have become increasingly interested in modern region formation and the regional processes taking place within, for instance, the European Union. The appearance of historians in the field is to some extent a reaction to the fact that studies conducted by social scientists frequently lack an historical perspective. Recent debates on integration theories within the social sciences, and on neo-functionalism and its deconstruction of the nation state, have contributed to increased interest in the region among historians, but have as well led to renewed interest in the nation state (Milward 1992, 1993; Harvie 1994). There has also been a development toward interdisciplinary collaboration on the study of regional integration processes and integration efforts, with a focus on, for instance, cultural barriers, cultural diversity, identity and ethnicity (Macdonald 1993; Zetterholm 1994). On the other hand, there is little doubt that this renewed interest in the region on the part of historians demonstrates that subjects of research often tend to be prompted by the political debates of the day and those questions that happen to be on the agenda at any given time.

The new interest in the history of regions has appeared almost world-wide, however, with a particularly sharp focus on Europe, but also in Africa, Canada, the United States and other parts of the world. In some regions ethnicity and issues of indigenous autonomy have been foregrounded. In Europe the interest seems to be linked particularly with political processes within the European Union, with the rising focus on what have been regarded as new geopolitical concepts in political co-operation and economic development, namely *regions*, *regionalism* and

regionalisation. Especially since the 1980s, regional politicians, confronted with the ideas of various patterns of federalism in the Single European Act of 1986, have been developing the 'principle of subsidiarity' - which implies an interpretation of improved options for devolution of powers to the sub-national or regional level - have broadened the framework of the European Community Regional Policy adopted in the mid-1970s. In the last few decades these processes have speeded up and expanded at an amazing rate. The term *l'Europe des régions*, coined by the French geographer Jean Labasse in his book of the same title in 1991 - which by the way was manifest to some degree in literature as early as the 1950s and 60s - is a good expression of this new feature of European political architecture, or rather the ambitions of it. Since then the term has been adopted in numerous studies and also turned into a political slogan. The term clearly signals a search for new political and administrative models to meet the economic, social and cultural challenges of late modern developments in Europe, with a recognition of the region as an interesting geopolitical level.

What then is a region? The word 'region' is old in most European languages, but for a long time it had a dual signification, indicating on the one hand the demarcation of a geographical territory, associated with 'rule' (*regere*), and on the other hand with much wider reference, like the sciences, parts of the body, etc. The term applied to territories was never central in the political vocabulary of the early modern state. The administrative designations of territorial entities within the state naturally varied in time and space, like *pays*, *Land*, *län*, *shire*, etc., until one particular name experienced a breakthrough, namely 'province' (in spite of the fact that the origin of the term was rather dubious; *provincia* originally meant a territory conquered by Rome). The modern rise of the 'region' was in part an effect of the fall of the traditional notion of the 'province' (Anderson 1994).

Today 'region' covers a multitude of definitions and theoretical approaches. One way to define it is simply to state that a region is *either* smaller *or* larger than a state, and more often than not, is not demarcated by formally drawn boundaries, as the German Ludwig Petry stated already in the nineteenth century: the most characteristic of the region is that it is "in Grenzen unbegrenzt" (Petry 1978).

Other writers use definitions which primarily include regions within states. They might emphasise different criteria, but the crucial characteristic is that regions are larger than the smaller traditional local units such as parishes, counties or

provinces, even though this is not always the case, for instance, within the European Union. The historical distinctions are, of course, sometimes difficult to draw. A modern county might be a classical, historical landscape which deserves the appellation region, or it might be an older, more or less independent territory, such as, for instance, Lombardy or Catalonia. Regions might also be the inventions of bureaucrats and technocrats, and such examples are found both within many countries and across state borders, particularly within the European Union. It is also worth pointing out that the criteria for delimiting a region vary greatly as regards historical conditions, function and size. In the Nordic countries there is a strong tradition of regions comprising several counties or older 'historical landscapes'. Within the European Union, new regions have been created that are as small as the 'Kreitze' level.

Thus, geographically speaking, there are two main types of regions, namely so-called *sub-national regions*, covering landscapes within a state, and *transnational regions*, crossing state borders, also named *macro regions*. Within the European Union the latter type are often named *euromregions*, of which more than 50 have been established, most of them since 1980. Examples, with a diversity of sub-variants, are the regional co-operation between Baden-Württemberg, Rhône-Alpes, Lombardy and Catalonia, between Saarland, Lorraine and Luxembourg, and between Salzburg, South Tyrol, Veneto and Slovenia (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alp Adria*), further the Baltic Region, and the Euro Arctic Barents Region, a co-operation between the northernmost parts of Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway, formally established in 1993. The national region shows variants as well, with two main types. The first may be called *historical regions*, sometimes also named *identity regions*, with features of common identity stretching way back in history, sometimes with roots that are older than the host state of today. The other type can be labelled *administrative* and *functional* regions, with a shorter history, the boundaries of which often cross those of the historical landscapes in question (Fure 1998). In some European countries a large number of formal regions have been established in recent decades, for example the 22 regions of France (out of 95 *départements*), and the 20 regions of Italy (out of 95 provinces). In other, smaller countries only a few regions have been set up, as in Belgium, with three regions formed out of nine provinces.

In political sense the region is of course constructed, 'imagined', or 'invented', in the same way as the nation. However, the degree of construction versus the degree

of historical foundation is a matter for debate (Hrbek 1993; Petschen 1993; Leonardi 1993; Cochrane 1994; Harvie 1994; Jones & Keating 1995; Lindström, Hedegaard & Veggeland 1996; Veggeland 1996; Østerud 1999; Puhle's paper). This discussion has parallels with the well-known debate on the nation, where the constructionist position forms a dichotomous relationship with the essentialist position, with its primordialism or perennialism (for a more recent discussion, see for example Smith 1998). On the one hand, it is thus clear that territorial units are constructed through modern political regionalisation processes. On the other hand, constructed territorial units, be they nations or regions, often have some kind of historical foundation. As the London historian Josep R. Lobera puts it: They "cannot be created or invented *ex nihilo*" (Lobera 1994). Social scientists have sometimes accused historians of over-emphasising the historical background of regions and thus letting themselves be used by politicians wishing to legitimise region formation historically. There might be some truth to this claim. But investigating the historical dimensions of regionalism and regionalisation is nevertheless a perfectly legitimate and challenging research activity.

Although the use of the terms varies somewhat in the literature, it might be useful to distinguish between the concepts *regionalisation* and *regionalism*. In most studies 'regionalisation' stands for state penetration of a region, launching a wide range of measures to integrate the region within the state and control it. The motives may vary, as we can see from European examples after the Second World War. On the one hand, regionalisation may in some instances represent a response to developments towards regionally based institution-building and a rise in regional consciousness. On the other hand, desires for social planning, economic reform and welfare programmes have necessitated an intermediate level between the national and local levels, in spite of the seemingly unavoidable centralisation which has taken place since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

'Regionalism' represents endeavours to create a consciousness and a political ideology within or on behalf of the region. Regionalism has often implied strong suspicion of the centralised state and a desire to turn the region into something akin to an alternative 'nation state', but full independence and separation have only rarely been express goals. In modern regional processes we also see that national and regional interests may converge - the region-builder appears as a nation-builder, and vice versa.

However, charting and analysing the relations that might exist between regionalism and regionalisation, and the possible variations in time and space are challenging tasks.

So far the terms 'region' and 'regionalism' have been rather poorly theorised. The main reason is probably the simple fact that the field is relatively new. The nation state and other kinds of state formation have been centre stage, and often the region has been treated historically, consciously or unconsciously, as a transitional stage on the road toward the integrated state (Gidlund & Sörlin 1992). Theories resulting from research on nations and nationalism are, however, frequently used in the literature. This is hardly surprising since, as many researchers have pointed out, there are parallels between the region and the nation, between region-building and nation-building, and between regionalisation and other forms of national and state expansion. It is no coincidence that regionalists have been called 'minority nationalists' (Puhle's paper).

The best-known and most influential of the theories of nationalism which have also been used in the study of region formation is undoubtedly Miroslav Hroch's theory, which is based on studies of the smaller nations in northern and central eastern parts of Europe (Hroch 1968/1986). A whole series of studies have shown that Hroch's terminology and theses can be applied with good results in case studies of other geographical areas as well. His theory implies a model of development in which nation-building occurs in three distinct phases. Phase A is characterised by the early appearance of national consciousness and is primarily related to smaller groups of intellectuals, focusing in particular on linguistic and cultural distinctions. Phase B represents a massive breakthrough for national consciousness and a culture-based nationalism, while phase C implies fully-fledged political nationalism, which in some cases leads to the establishment of independent nation states. Hroch assumes a strong, active bourgeoisie in the development of fully-fledged nationalism and the establishment of the nation state, that is, particularly toward the end of phase B, and then in the transition to, and for the duration of, phase C. In the earliest stages, Hroch attributes crucial significance to the intellectual elites.

Of other scholars working on nationalism and nation-building who have also been influential in research on regionalism, we should mention Tom Nairn (1977) and Michael Hechter (1975) and their work on Britain, which focuses on relations between

England and the peripheries. Hechter's study of the relationship between core areas of Britain and 'the Celtic Fringe' has been highly influential. His theory of 'reactive ethnic cleavages' is inspired by imperialism and dependence theory and can be considered a structural theory of domination, in which the central policy is characterised by 'internal colonialism' and the core area possesses dominant economic power and allocates economic resources. Many subsequent studies have addressed aspects of ethno-regionalism, not only criticising, but also modifying and expanding Hechter's theory (for instance Ragin 1976; Tägil 1984, 1993; Rönnquist 1990). Johan Galtung's theory of rank disequilibrium also belongs to the large group of conflict theories inspired by Marxist ideas, based on tensions between uneven participants in social systems or between regions, although here status and rank are more important than class (Galtung 1971). Nathan Glazer's and Daniel Moynihan's theory of the relationship between 'group inequality' and ethnic identification has been the inspiration for the approaches and perspectives taken in several studies (Glazer & Moynihan 1975). In the same context, Albert Hirschman's theory of group pressure is also worth mentioning, with its three alternative group reactions: 'exit', 'loyalty' and 'voice' (Hirschman 1972).

Naturally, various approaches to nationalism based on modernisation theory also continue to influence regional studies, and Karl Deutsch's classic study, particularly its focus on modern societies' need for new forms of communication, is often used as one of the key reference texts (Deutsch 1953). This study represented both continuity and innovation in relation to works on nationalism by Carleton B. Hayes and Hans Kohn (Hayes 1931; Kohn 1944), 'the twin founding fathers' of the field (Kemiläinen 1964). Especially since the 1980s, the literature in the field has become very extensive (e.g Smith 1971, 1986, 1998; Gellner 1983, 1997; Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Alter 1989/1985; Hobsbawm 1990; Østerud 1994; Periwal 1995; Benda-Beckmann & Verkuyten 1995; Delany 1995; Balakrisnan 1996; Brubaker 1996; Guibernau 1996, 1999; Hoskin & Schöpflin 1997).

In the 1960s, Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan developed an influential theory of the emergence of organised regionalism with features reminiscent of, for instance, Deutsch's theory of modernisation and communication and Hechter's study on the fringe societies' relations with the nation's core area, which is in turn actually theoretically indebted to Lipset and Rokkan. The Lipset/Rokkan theory is based on a

centre-periphery model which assumes three preconditions. The first is the powerful upsurge of a counter-culture within a limited area. Second, there are limited possibilities for communication between the region and the outside world and few opportunities for trade with the core areas of the nation state. The third precondition is that the region has a limited degree of economic dependency on the core area, so that it has the economic potential for some forms of autonomy (Lipset & Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1987). This theory has, for instance, been used in a case study of regionalism in North Norway before the Second World War, but with limited success (Niemi 1993).

One of the most inspiring theories of regionalism in recent years is that of the Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi, based on what he calls a regional 'institutionalisation model', based on four chronological phases, starting in the mid-nineteenth century with the assumption of territorial space and the development of the idea of a specific regional area. The second phase represents the development of conceptual or symbolic shape, expressed for example in the naming of the region, either by reviving an old name or inventing a new one. In the third phase formal institutions are established in the region, aiming both at identity building and bargaining strength vis-à-vis the central authorities. Finally, in the fourth stage the region stands as an end-product, in terms of identity as well as formal organisation within the framework of the state (Paasi 1986I, II, 1996; see also Niemi 1993).

On the one hand, it is clear that Europe has a central place in research on regions, regionalism and regionalisation. That this research has been so focused on Europe is to a large extent connected to real historical processes that have been occurring in this part of the world in modern and late modern times. Europe can thus to some extent be regarded as the birthplace not only of nationalism but also of regionalism. On the other hand, it is self-evident that this is not an exclusively European concern; the somewhat narrow preoccupation with Europe might come across as Eurocentric. Other parts of the world have also seen manifestations of the same or virtually the same phenomenon, as pointed out in the beginning of this article. The contributions to this session also bear this out, as does other literature as well (Fawcett & Hurrell 1995). Several of the theories mentioned above are tested in the papers, even as some of them offer new theoretical perspectives.

The contributions

There are nine papers in this session. Although they all deal with the region in some sense of the concept, they range far and wide in terms of time and space, as well as issues and perspectives. Whether they be regional case studies, comparative papers, or historiographical papers focusing primarily on patterns of development within the field, most of the contributions are chronologically located in the 19th and 20th centuries. There is, however, one contribution which diverges from this chronological pattern, and that is a paper dealing with regionalism or tendencies resembling regionalism in the Caribbean in the 17th century.

In his paper, «Transnationalism 'beyond the Line': the Caribbean, 1655-1763», Wim Klooster states that one «of the most dramatic regional transformations in the history of the western hemisphere was that of the Caribbean in the 17th century. [...] From an economic backwater, the area became an economic laboratory, where the reign of capitalism was unchallenged». Mercantilism in the early modern age meant that colonial trade would be closely regulated to the advantage of the imperial powers. Colonial exports to rival imperial powers were forbidden. Economic monopoly was a frequently used tool. Large companies in the European imperial powers were thus given exclusive rights to trade with the colonies, often supplemented by extensive administrative tasks in the colonies. Spanish Atlantic trade had been regulated immediately after the Conquest; e.g. goods from the Americas could only be shipped to Castile. Trade with 'foreigners' in the West Indies was strictly forbidden; violations were punishable by death and confiscation of all property. English colonial trade was not systematically regulated until after the Civil War, when the Navigation Acts, the first in 1649, the second in 1660, gave the English a virtual monopoly on transatlantic trade. France also introduced strict national regulations on overseas trade, especially to curb trade in the West Indies by the Dutch, who had come to dominate around the middle of the seventeenth century. The Dutch in particular supplied the French colonies with slaves and linen goods; some Dutch merchants even lived in the French colonies in the Caribbean and owned property there. The establishment of the Compagnie des Indes Occidentales in 1664 imposed a formal ban on Dutch trade in the region. In the eighteenth century, France extended its regulations on 'legal colonial

trade'. A small colonial power like Denmark also ran its West Indian trade through trading companies that enjoyed monopolies and were subject to strict regulation of their relationships with other nations.

In his paper, Klooster shows that there was quite a gap between the strict regulations of the trading laws on the one hand and the economic realities of the Caribbean on the other. The inside-out perspective makes it particularly clear that trade and other economic transactions, as defined and regulated by the colonial powers, was by and large a construct which regional conditions made difficult to implement. Moreover, through various forms of 'illegal' trade and network building, a development was taking place in the direction of transnationalism or rather 'transnational regionalism'. More often than not, unlicensed 'foreign' traders were not obstructed. Contraband trade was also widespread because officials, whose task it was to suppress such trade, either took part in it themselves or were tolerant of it. Widespread corruption added to the picture of an administrative system that was far from the underlying ideal. For example, Dutch bribes for permission to trade in slaves in 'the French West Indies' were accepted by the agent of the *Compagnie des Indes Occidentales*, which had a formal monopoly on trade in these colonies. In Santo Domingo a contemporary observer saw Dutch and English merchants moving freely «as if they were at home», and in Río de la Hacha he observed several 'foreigners' keeping shops.

Klooster maintains that smuggling and other forms of 'illegal' trade were so widespread that they represented «in fact free international trade» within the region, a trade which was profitable for all parties. Not even wars could prevent these «friendly inter-imperial relations». During the wars of the mid-eighteenth century, so-called flags of truce were introduced, i.e. smuggling ships sailed under a peace flag. And gradually neutral ports emerged to facilitate commerce between traders of different nationalities, such as Danish St. Thomas, Dutch St. Eustatius, and the British Virgin Islands. During the Seven Years War the port of Montecristo in Santo Domingo had a similar function in trade relations between English and French traders. This willingness to make compromises and practical arrangements was an important reason why the Caribbean colonies tended to develop separately from the metropolises. As Klooster puts it: «This tendency stemmed from the pride felt by local elites about the key positions they and their islands occupied in the imperial networks». Also the

proximity of other empires was a major factor, with the increased economic competition this involved and opportunities for local actors to operate between the trading systems of the empires. Unwritten laws and local adaptations to written laws gave the various islands and many ports a large degree of freedom, which in turn implied a weakening of ties to the imperial power. This regionalism thus meant that the Caribbean saw the emergence of not only many types of separate economic networks, but also of regional legal traditions and cultural exchange, as seen for example in architecture, manners, habits, language, clothing, etc. The region thus developed «along culturally hybrid lines, presenting a remarkable counterpoint to both Anglo-Saxon North America and Catholic Hispanic America, where a single colonial power left its imprint on the whole region». Thus, «beyond the Line», i.e. west of the longitude of the outermost Azores and south of the Tropic of Cancer, policies designed in the imperial metropolises of Europe were to a large extent «ignored or interpreted in favor of local elites».

In his conclusion, Klooster maintains that even though one cannot justifiably speak of the emergence of a true Caribbean identity until the twentieth century, «its contours had first appeared in another era». In spite of the obvious theoretical and methodological problems involved, it would be interesting to do a comparison between the *early* modern regionalism described and analysed by Klooster and the type of regionalism which has usually been defined as a *modern* or *late modern* phenomenon. Such a comparison would shed light on important questions concerning the roots of modern regionalism and the relationship between continuity and change in historical processes.

Gerald Friesen's paper, «The Evolving Character of Canadian Regions», is the only contribution to deal with the regional development of a whole country over time, and with the debate concerning the role and position of the region within the nation, as reflected from various perspectives in contemporary tendencies in politics and science. Friesen claims that regional consciousness tended to be stronger earlier, but that the region and conceptions of the region remain strong, especially in popular opinion. Furthermore, Canada has recognised the existence of regional communities within the nation state ever since its foundation in 1867.

The earliest conception of the region was rooted in originally European ideas that every human community was shaped by its physical surroundings. The human

and the natural world were to a large extent seen as one and the same. This perception also influenced the regional dimension during the colonisation that took place before the formation of the Canadian state, when people of different European national backgrounds established their own «everlasting enclaves of settlement and thereby introduced another cause of regional difference», manifested through, for instance, linguistic barriers. The establishment of the Canadian state introduced another version of the region, namely a perception which was no longer based on environment or language but rather on political institutions and economic ideas. This idea of the region is reflected in, for instance, the organisation of the Canadian parliament as two houses; representation in the House of Commons was based on population, while the Senate was based on a principle of 'regional equality', with the three original regions (or 'provinces') each having twenty-four seats in the Senate. (In later years this distribution has been changed). A whole range of different factors contributed to this focus on region at the time of the establishment of the federal state, such as imperial wars, the spatial system established by immigrants of different national background, aboriginal culture and history, and the relations between aboriginals and whites, etc. Friesen says of this background that: «Both historical forces and peoples' relations with the physical environment shaped perceptions of region in the nascent Canada».

The political, economic and administrative development that took place up to the period between the two world wars increased the importance of the region as an expression of the new nation. The West was regarded as a region with «a touch of glamour as a free and untrammelled frontier»; Manitoba's legislation to grant women the vote was an expression of the pioneer spirit. In the 1940s, several observers noted that the Canadian region was often described as virtually analogous with the nation. Quebec was, for instance, referred to as «a true State, a people, a nation», which is in retrospect a forewarning of the sovereigntist movement in Quebec. The aboriginal peoples' quest for 'self-government' can likewise be seen as an expression of the importance of regions in Canadian political life into the second half of the twentieth century, even though the region had largely ceased to be the prominent force that it was in earlier times.

The academic debate on the region now came to be more marked by ambivalence and diversity. Some scholars claimed that the relationship between space and place had never been stronger, while others saw the region as something that

could be defined in just about any way. The political reform movements and the public debate on separatism and regional self-government also contributed to the strong theoretical focus on the term 'region'. The discipline of geography was the first to express doubts about the older, environmentally based, conception. But it was primarily a social science approach influenced by neo-classical economics which served to oust the old interpretation of region: Societies were not created by the land itself, but by economic forces. The new concept of the region was more focused on the 'functional' aspect than on the environment as such. Geographers and historians followed suit, suggesting that Canadian regions were distinguished by urban patterns, class and ethnicity, and 'the Canadian value system', thus introducing the notion of 'imagined communities' into Canadian historical studies. Historians turned to themes like 'regional consciousness' and 'regional protest', political scientists to development strategies and distribution of wealth. Students of literature, under the influence of the 'linguistic turn' and postmodernism, however, maintained that identity is not first and foremost linked to material reality, but rather to stories, myths, and fantasy - the realm of the imagined.

According to Friesen, Canadians are today more divided than ever. Judging from everyday conversations, the division is not so much linked to the place of regions in social life, but is rather a question of language, race, ethnicity, gender, etc. However, Friesen claims that the region is far from irrelevant in today's Canada. The region is still a useful and important unit of analysis for anyone trying to understand Canadian history and contemporary reality; many aspects of the country's history cannot be explained without reference to the region, a viewpoint which Friesen, by the way, shares with all the other contributors to the session. Conceptualisations of place, whether in a relational and contextual perspective or in terms of space, also seem to be a widely used common-sense notion: «land and place continue to play an important role in daily life». The history of the region in Canada has also shown that «regions are not simply nations in waiting», or «necessarily contradictions or enemies». The old dictum that many 'races', or identities, within one country is an expression of «the useful tension that region introduces into national life», contends Friesen, in spite of the difficulties in accepting the notion that Quebec can be both a nation and a region, not separate from, but within Canada.

Robert Johnston's paper has a rather provocative title, and intentionally so: «Is it Time to give up Regional History in the United States?» It is the only paper in the session which is primarily a contribution to a debate on research policy. At the same time, the paper, which focuses on problems of doing regional history, presents important trends and schools within contemporary American historical research.

Johnston's point of departure is, first, the observation that in recent years we have seen a «quite dramatic» revival of regional history in the United States, and, secondly, that this recent historical research has had some very unfortunate scientific effects. One clear expression of this is that the federal government has begun to officially sanction regional history, which constitutes a break with an old tradition of separation between government and culture. One of the most important initiatives in recent years is that the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) has started to «pour millions of dollars into ten regional history centers». An official reason for this is to be found in the following statement by the chairman of NEH: «By exploring regions that have shaped us, we discover American culture». Johnston's contention is that such a strong focus on regional history is «more trendy, and politically savvy, than intellectually wise and challenging». This thesis is tested in a case study of the research done on one region, the American West, in the last twenty years.

'New Western History' has become an important field of historical research which has won many major prizes, and leading New Western historians are among the outstanding American historians today. Johnston emphasises three important positive results of this research: It has, first, contributed to a more differentiated picture of the people of the American West. Secondly, it has provided substantial new insights into environmental history. And thirdly, it has shown that the «de-easternizing [of] US history» is possible. But these achievements have come at a price. According to Johnston, the way 'the West' has been recreated reveals «that a renewed 'western history' may be increasingly unviable». The development of New Western History has in fact been based on an essentialist, stereotyped, frozen view of the 'West' - exclusively liberal in capital formation, property-obsessed, extremely individualistic, etc. According to Johnston, this has served to strengthen the old one-dimensional picture of the West, and the differentiation of human experience is overlooked. In the effort to legitimise the field, new grand theories are launched to replace the theses of Frederick Jackson Turner, with the result that new, stereotyped narratives are created.

Johnston predicts that, if New Western History continues in this track, the field is likely to «go into intellectual decline» because it is heading into a trap.

In his analysis of these trends, Johnston highlights one representative study in particular - Patricia Linerick's *Legacy of Conquest*, subtitled *Unbroken past* (1987) - which is still the most influential text of New Western History. The main thesis of the book is in the subtitle: The history of the West is unified and continuous, virtually impossible to divide into periods. It is the history of one region, with one set of persistent, unique characteristics, and the oppression of savage peoples and wild places is emphasised. In Johnston's view, this account is just as one-dimensional as Turner's, and moreover, there are important problems in terms of methodological and theoretical approach. Johnston is especially critical of the author's treatment of attitudes to property, in which there is a total lack of complexity and ambiguity. The history of the West is, in Johnston's opinion, presented one-dimensionally within a regional straitjacket, so that there is now a pressing need for a viable history of the West based on «non-regional ideas». He also claims that increasingly, the best historical works today are being written by scholars who do not belong to the school of regional history.

Johnston thus proposes a fresh reorientation within the field, one that breaks free of «its current analytical boundaries». First, concepts such as 'the West' and 'the frontier' should be abandoned. For example might new, less geographical concepts be more suitable for analysis. Secondly, with reference to recent model examples, for example from gender history, he recommends a stronger focus on political history. With reference to Christopher Lasch, Johnston emphasises in his conclusion the historian's responsibility for pointing out the diversity of the past, for interpreting history in a wide context, and for the «democratic project» of «opening up the past in order to explore the hope that is embedded in history». With the help of Robert Unger, he argues that scholars should transcend the 'false necessitarianism' of their analyses, and hence also transcend 'western history' itself - and thus, most probably, regional history. Johnston's position and arguments are undoubtedly of fundamental relevance to the general debate on regional history and deserve to be discussed.

There have not been many studies of regions, regionalism and regionalisation by Africanists, Martin Zachary Njeuma remarks in the introduction to his paper. The main reason, he says, is the fact that Africanists tend to divide Africa into extensive

areas which are not based on historical or political processes, but rather on more or less convincing purely geographical perceptions, such as North, East, West, and Southern Africa, or Africa south and north of the Sahara. Each of these areas, of course, consists of a number of modern nation states. African historical studies have developed along these lines, partly as a result of the legacy of imperial studies, with their Eurocentric perspectives, and later partly under the influence of global perspectives. The result is that to date African history has only to a limited degree been analysed from within, in ways «consistent with Africa's internal logic». So far, African historians have, naturally, focused mainly on the nation state. The region has received little attention, first and foremost because the term 'region' has been relatively unimportant in political vocabulary and political life in Africa.

In his paper, Anthony I. Asiwaju also points out an irony in the comparison between the history of post-colonial Africa and the post-war development of Europe. While large parts of Europe, led by the European Union, were trying to discard the 'state nationalism' of earlier times and placing more emphasis on interstate collaboration, particularly through regional programs, the political geography of post-colonial Africa remained based on ideas of sharp national borders. In this way, a European colonial inheritance was upheld by the ruling elite of post-colonial Africa, even as Europe itself was abandoning it.

Nevertheless, this session has two African contributions to the field: Asiwaju's «Transfrontier Regionalism: the European Union Perspective on Post-colonial Africa with special Reference to partitioned Borgu», and Martin Njeuma's «Regionalisation and Creation of a 'Northern Cameroon' Identity». Both studies are influenced by the regional processes under way in Europe and by the extensive research taking place within the field here, which is also apparent from the title of Asiwaju's paper. Both studies comprise case studies, but Asiwaju's paper also contains a thorough discussion of European regional processes, a comparison of European and African region formation, and also thoughts on the potential of such a comparison.

Asiwaju claims that, contrary to popular belief, the development of state territories and state borders is not all that different in Africa to what it is elsewhere in the world where nation states have come into being, and also in other areas which experienced imperialist expansion and colonial domination by European powers. He also points to several parallels between transfrontier regions in Africa, 'Afregions', and

Europe, 'Euregions', in spite of the fact that African examples have been largely neglected in the literature. He claims, for example, that there are «extremely close similarities» between the position of the Catalans in the Eastern Pyrenees, «an ethnic group neither French nor Spanish», and that of the Western Yoruba and the Hausa, «ethnic groups neither French nor British», split by the present-day Nigeria-Benin and Nigeria-Niger borders, respectively.

In Africa, as in Europe, several factors serve to promote regionalism and collaboration between bordering regions. One is the wishes of the local population, which might share language, culture, religion, memories of common ancestral origin, kinship ties, etc. Another factor has to do with the economy and the need or desire for cross-border trade, which might also be stimulated by researchers and consultants working for international development and donor agencies. A large number of transnational regional economic treaties have lately been signed in many parts of Africa. A third factor which encourages regionalism is transborder natural resources, including natural habitats and ecosystems. Joint use of river systems, lakes and mountains is part of peaceful regional development, but may, on the other hand, also be a reason for inter-state conflict, which Africa has seen many tragic examples of. All in all, the attitude in many regions is that the arguments in favour of regionalisation are persuasive from economic and cultural perspectives, as well as from the perspective of war and peace, including issues related to refugees and displaced persons.

According to Asiwaju, Borgu exemplifies Africa's «potential transfrontier regions», with a «unity in the diversity of ethnicity, culture and politics». The Borgu region is situated on the banks of the river Niger; it was partitioned between French Dahomey, now the Republic of Benin, and British Nigeria in 1898. It covers 70,000 square kilometres and has about two million inhabitants. Since partition, Borgu has consisted of a western Francophone part in Benin and an Anglophone eastern Nigerian part. Various territorial arrangements from both colonial and post-colonial times have also split the territory on both sides of the border. Traditional differentiation into various ethnic and linguistic groups and sub-groups contributes to further fragmentation. The dominant groups are the Baatonu and the Boka, who constitute the majority of the population and the ruling elite within both parts of the region. Nevertheless, the Borgawa, as the inhabitants of the region are traditionally called,

consider themselves 'one people', Asiwaju says, and they refer to Borgu as 'our country', the 'patrie' of all Borgawa. History has several examples of how the Borgawa fought collectively to prevent conquest, and this fact remains important in collective memory today. Even if the international border is a reality, it is felt more strongly by western educated elites on both sides than by the non-literate majority of the local populations who are still attached to the indigenous culture and its traditions. All of this means that Borgu has most of what is necessary for the creation of a modern trans-national region of the type found, for instance, in Europe; these factors «constitute reliable pointers to Borgu as one of Africa's most prospective transfrontier regions».

While Asiwaju's paper is a case study of a trans-national region, Njeuma focuses on a region within a state, namely northern Cameroon, in the Republic of Cameroon. Nevertheless, the inter-state aspect is clearly present in this case as well, since the history of this area, which is today divided by national borders, is marked by frequent transactions that criss-cross the territory. In the introduction to his paper, Njeuma says that the main purpose of his study is «to clarify confusion and uncertainties about the historical foundation of regionalisation in northern Cameroon». The study ranges from pre-colonial times to the present. Njeuma rejects the widespread opinion that northern Cameroon identity stems from the Fulbe uprisings of the early nineteenth century, sometimes referred to as 'jihads', claiming instead that such an identity «can be traced back to a remote past». Conditions were right for such a development, given the more or less natural delimitation of the region by the river Benue and its tributaries and Lake Chad, and the region had a rich variety of natural resources. Through history the area has witnessed many encounters between ethnic groups and cultures which have either settled in or migrated through the area. By the sixteenth century, relations between the Muslim states of North Africa and West Africa across the Sahara desert exercised a strong Muslim influence in the region. On the one hand, raiding for men and property became a kind of regional phenomenon, while Muslim penetration led on the other hand to increased contact with the surrounding world.

The next phase of region formation in the area occurred during the Fulbe period, from the early nineteenth century until the invasions by the European colonial powers towards the end of the century. Institution building, strong development of the

regional economy, including plantation building and trade in the labour force, as well as Islamisation made their marks on this period. Regional identity was also expressed in the regional name, Fombina. An active exchange of values and culture was taking place between Islam and Fulbe, and these shared values were often referred to as 'Pulaaku'. Bilingualism and multilingualism were widespread. The Fulbe settlement in the region took place in waves and was undertaken by smaller groups, which limited the number of open conflicts with other groups, although such conflicts did occur. Immigration was also sufficiently deep-rooted that there was respect for the principle that first occupancy established ownership claims to land. The Fulbe also had a strong hand in terms of the wealth and knowledge, possessed at least by their leaders, and also in their theocratic model of government, based on Islam. Gradually the vague notion of Fombina gave way to the creation of the Emirate of the wider region, but this did not impede regionalisation. All in all, people and resources were more important for the Emirate than were territories with formal borders.

Around 1880, Mahdism developed ideas of a larger Muslim union, but European colonialisation prevented such ideas from being realised. In 1884 Germany acquired protectoral rights over Cameroon. The Germans first developed an administrative system in the south, while the 'Muslim North' of Cameroon was left more or less to itself for a long time, a fact which reflects the regional traditions, and probably also the respect in which they were held. But when the Germans finally, after about fifteen years, entered the northern 'hinterland', it soon became evident to the population that a new regime had been introduced. Compromises were nevertheless arrived at with Muslim leaders, a practice which Europeans have referred to as 'indirect rule'. But even though Islam formed a barrier against complete German domination of the area and a last outpost of regionalism, Njeuma maintains that German penetration proved disastrous for the cultural, economic and political development of the area. Moving the regional capital of northern Cameroon from Yola to Garoua was a further effort to break regional traditions and the remnants of Fulbe influence. Yola had been the centre of Fulbe power and Islam in the region, represented by the Muslim Fulbe leaders, the Lambbe.

The situation did not change much during the Allied occupation of 1914-16 or under French rule, in spite of certain administrative reforms in the 1930s. The period from 1945 to 1960 was difficult for the Muslim leaders in the north, since it was

marked by nationalist mobilisation led by Christian leaders in the south. However, a compromise was reached on the election of Ahmadou Ahidjo, a northerner from Garoua, as the first president of the Republic of Cameroon in 1960. As long as the one-party state of Ahidjo existed, there was also a regionalisation programme in the north. One of the consequences of this programme was «that Muslims remained at the centre of political, social and economic development in the region», even as Ahidjo aimed at 'national unity'. However, Ahidjo resigned as president in 1982. Soon afterwards, the new regime found that regionalism in the north, founded on religion and traditions, was not consistent with national unity. The northern region was broken up into three provinces. According to Njeuma, partition and the abolition of the one-party system in 1990 constitute the main reasons for the later development toward «boundless political competition» and conflict.

Njeuma thus shares with Asiwaju a firm belief that the development of regionalism in Africa based on historical and traditional conditions has the potential to prevent conflict and promote peace.

Three of the contributions to this session are case studies of regions in the Nordic world. All three deal with regions on the fringes of the Nordic countries, in the extreme south, east and north: Jutland, Karelia and northern Norway, respectively. All three regions have throughout history been regarded as border areas between cultures, and, especially in recent times and from the perspective of the respective states, they have been seen as bastions of separate cultures and nationalities. All three regions have thus been given a role in state and nation building, although this has not been generally acknowledged. The regional historical approach has shown that the picture of the homogeneous, centralised Nordic nation state, with its apparently problem-free national traditions, is not as unambiguous as has generally been assumed. Steen Bo Frandsen says of his case that such an idea of the nation state «makes a regional view a fruitful and in many respects provocative approach». The region has existed and has been constructed in the Nordic countries. It is important to the extent that the history of the nation cannot be fully comprehended without reference to the region, he maintains, as Friesen does in his paper, as we have seen, I Frandsen's words: «A regional approach is an appropriate means of discussing a society, which cannot be understood in the simple categories of the nation-state». He adds that regional

historical studies are also important for an understanding of the ongoing process of European integration.

In his case study, «A Regional Approach to the Formation of Nation-states: The Case of Jutland in the 19th Century», Steen Bo Frandsen starts by reminding us of the situation of the Danish state after the Napoleonic Wars. Denmark lost Norway, but was given the Duchy of Lauenburg as compensation, and managed to retain the Duchy of Holstein, which Denmark conquered in 1806 as Napoleon's ally. Denmark thus came to have a much larger German population than earlier. However, integration policy was moderate, with an emphasis on modernisation efforts, which, it was hoped, would contribute to the creation of a patriotic consensus. The Danish state was still a territorial state under absolutist rule, accepting multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism. The July Revolutions of 1830 reached Hamburg, which caused concern in Copenhagen. Certain liberal reforms were carried out in Denmark, among them the establishment of provincial Estates. According to Bo Frandsen, this was a clear sign that there was an awareness of the regional dimension in Danish state and nation building. The kingdom was divided into four parts, Schleswig, Holstein, the islands and Jutland, each with its own provincial Estate.

Jutland occupied a special position in the kingdom as an historical region which was «naturally» divided into two or three sub-entities. The city of Viborg was the historic centre, and not until the late nineteenth century did Aarhus take over. The debate that took place in the Estate of Jutland during its short-lived history (1834-48), is, in Bo Frandsen's view, unique in Denmark's political history. Jutland regionalism never became the basis of a strong nationalistic ideology, as happened in Holstein and to some extent in Schleswig. Rather, the most characteristic aspect of developments in Jutland was that there was never any separatism; the Danish king «could always count on his loyal Jutish subjects and the bonds with the rest of the kingdom were never questioned». Jutland regionalism primarily took the form of material demands made of the state authorities, e.g. demands for railway construction. The king also saw good *Real*-political reasons to support the region in order to counter increasing German influence, represented in particular by Hamburg, which after 1814 became the *de facto* new economic capital of Denmark. As nationalism spread in the 1840s, Jutland and Copenhagen clashed on the important issue of the railways. Jutland wanted railway connections with Hamburg, while Copenhagen wanted a line to the capital. Spurred

by national arguments, the latter alternative won, and this would determine the development of Danish infrastructure in the future. Nationalism, the abolition of absolutist rule in Denmark in 1848, and the war of the same year also put an end to the regional Estates, and to an extremely interesting period of regionalism in Danish history, though without implying that regionalism as such had come to an end in Denmark.

Antti Laine's contribution, «Between East and West: Karelia in a Regional Historical Perspective», sketches the long characteristic lines of Karelian history. Karelia is perhaps the Nordic borderland *par excellence*, situated as it is «between east and west», in the border areas between Russia and Finland. The Karelians, a people closely related to the Finns, were in the Middle Ages a separate people with their own social structures, which were gradually dismantled as Novgorod advanced northward. Their large territory, stretching from the White Sea in the north to the shores of Lake Ladoga in the south, has since the late Middle Ages been divided by shifting national borders. Frequent wars have also had major consequences for the Karelians in the form of large population movements.

During the national awakening which took place in Finland in the first half of the 19th century, which had its roots in the 18th century, Karelia became a strong symbol of Finnishness, an idea which drew nourishment from national romantic ideas of genuine traits of popular character and culture. A decisive event was the publication in 1835 of Elias Lönnrot's collection of folk poetry, which became the heroic national epic 'Kalevala'. During the modernisation of Finland, Karelia and 'Kalevala' remained symbols of 'true' Finnishness, which was now gradually being lost. In nationalism, which found one expression in a dream of uniting «all the lost Finnish tribes» in a Greater Finland, Karelia was considered particularly important among the Finnish peoples of the diaspora. For a long time, 'Karelianism' was a primarily cultural movement, but after Finland's Declaration of Independence in 1917, political, and even military dimensions, were added. Among the White Sea Karelians, the idea of an autonomous Karelia was discussed, and Finnish volunteers actually fought in Karelia after the end of the Civil War in Finland over the question of East Karelia's sovereignty versus its position in the Soviet Union. The Academic Karelian Society (AKS) was established in Finland by volunteers who had fought in Karelia and students and scholars; its manifesto supported the Greater Finland movement.

The Reds, who had lost the Finnish Civil War, developed a plan for creating a socialist commune in Karelia, headed by the academician Edvard Gylling. A socialist commune in Russian Karelia was thought to be the starting point for a 'Soviet Republic of Scandinavia'. The Soviet Union accepted the plan, and thousands of Finns moved eastward. But it all came to nothing. The Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of Karelia was established in 1923, but was in reality a purely Soviet construction. A failed language policy of Karelia contributed to the fiasco. The large-scale Soviet industrial and military developments in Karelia in the inter-war years were an obstacle to Karelian regionalism. Russification and the purging of Finns from leading positions from the mid 1930s served to clear Finns out of Karelia.

During the two wars which were fought between the Soviet Union and Finland in 1939 and 1944 respectively, Karelia experienced the most concentrated population movement in the history of the Nordic countries. More than 400 000 Karelians moved to Finland after the Finnish defeat in 1939; during the Finnish-German offensive in 1944 many of them moved back, only to return after the second defeat. The Karelian lands were definitely lost for Finland, and bonds were broken until the Perestroika period, with renewed Finnish interest in Karelia, returning to the world of folklore, history, collective memory, and the shared cultural heritage.

Unlike the other two Nordic contributions, Hallvard Tjelmeland's paper, «The Making of a Sub-Arctic Region: Northern Norway, 1900-2000», deals with the twentieth century, though he traces certain lines back to the second half of the 19th century. His paper also differs from the other two in that the regional processes in this case can be relatively clearly divided into phases, and therefore lend themselves to testing on the basis of relevant models and theories.

Like the other Nordic states, Norway has usually been presented as an homogeneous, centralised modern state. As in the case of Denmark, there are many indications that this perception should be revised. It also seems clear that at least one geographical area of the country was given a regional dimension from early on, namely Northern Norway. The reasons were, among others, the geopolitical position of the region, the fact that it was for a long time economically backward, and, moreover, it was populated by an ethnically and culturally mixed population, which included Sami and Arctic Finns (the latter often named Kvens).

Tjelmeland divides the development of regionalism into three main periods, which to some extent coincide with state penetration, regionalisation, which was in part a response to the rise in regional consciousness. The first phase, c. 1900-1935, was initiated by North Norwegian intellectuals living in the capital of Norway and abroad - students, scholars, officials, etc. - who raised central social issues relating specifically to the region. They used the history and culture of the region to back up their demands. Justice and regional equity were central arguments from the outset. A grand scheme was launched to raise the consciousness of the population of the region, and information formed a central part, as did mobilisation of regional symbols, for example expressed in the invention of a new regional name, 'North Norway'. Research, publishing and the setting up of educational and cultural institutions were important elements of the consciousness-raising which in the 1930s resulted in a comprehensive programme for regional development on the region's own premises. The threat of separatism was exploited, and one of the references was to 'the Russian menace', an old ghost in Nordic foreign and defence policy. But separatism was never really an issue, which it had neither been in the Jutland case as we have seen. Rather the opposite was the case: The leading region builders were also nation builders, who had little sympathy with, for instance, contemporary regional ethno-political movements.

There are many indications that the central authorities, and especially the Labour Party, which came into power from 1935, to some extent took up these regional demands and thus took the edge off them. To some extent, regionalism, regionalisation and nation building in the north thus merged even before the war, but the connection was especially strong during the period of reconstruction after the war, when large parts of Northern Norway were destroyed. The first large regionalisation schemes in Norwegian history were launched in Northern Norway in the post-war period, up to c. 1970. Thus the second of Tjelmeland's phases of regionalism and regionalisation covers the years 1935-1970.

The third and final phase is from c. 1970 to the present. The development during this phase is characterised by pluralism and contradictory trends. One development was the realisation that the grand scheme of state planning had had its costs. Another was that it was probably only in this phase that a 'Northern Norwegian Identity' materialised from below, as can be seen for example in institution building

and culture. However, central concepts such as 'Northern Norway' and 'northern identity' were critically analysed and debated during this period. It became clear that the region did not «express itself with one voice», that there were different identities and cultures within the region, and a diversity of opinions on crucial regional issues. Likewise, there were tensions between primordialisms and constructivisms in the interpretation of important aspects of regional culture and social life. The north Norwegian regional dimension has also encountered competition from the emergence of transnational regional developments, first Northern Scandinavia ('the North Calotte'), and later the establishment of the Euro Arctic Barents Region, embracing co-operation between the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, respectively.

The last paper in the session is Hans-Jürgen Puhle's, «Regions, Regionalism, and Regionalization in 20th Century Europe». While the paper focuses on late modern developments in western and southern Europe, with particular attention to the period after World War II, it also deals with topics and problems of general interest for the field by taking a broad comparative approach and empirically testing many cases against theories and models.

In his introduction, Puhle makes a point of the close relationship in many respects between «'regional' and 'national' constructs and mechanisms». He also reminds us that many regional movements can be characterised as «movements of minority nationalisms», or that the actors involved wish to regard their movements in this way. And he mentions that regionalisation can in some cases be «a strategy trying to address both» minority questions and regional issues as such. We find examples of this in most parts of Europe in the last half century.

Puhle's method is primarily based on Miroslav Hroch's theory, which have been discussed above, supplemented by the theories of, e.g. Deutsch and Rokkan. Puhle applies his analytical model to a comprehensive range of regional examples from western and southern Europe, weighing and characterising those factors in the region which decide the relative strengths and weaknesses of the regional processes. He focuses in particular on economic and social development, regional language and culture, administrative and political institutions, and the extent of frustration, repression or violence. After a general survey of the European examples, a more detailed comparative study of regionalism in Catalonia and the Basque Country

follows. Puhle's findings reveal a highly complex pattern in the development of regionalism, both as regards geography and causes; and historically determined conditions play an important role.

The survey of problems of regionalisation within the same geographical areas provides a detailed picture of the relationship between region and nation, and shows that regionalisation endeavours have many different motives, methods and results. Puhle highlights a pattern of three different groups of «regional autonomous communities»: First, regions which have been allowed to build up extensive bureaucracies with «explicit regionalist loyalties», such as Catalonia and the Basque province. Second, regions which primarily display their distinctive cultural traits in order to promote institution building, especially in education, sometimes with manifestations of «temporary regionalism or regional nationalism», but nonetheless with clear loyalty to the nation, such as Galicia, the Canary Islands and Andalusia. And third, geographically central regions in which regional sights are set low, but where some regional institutionalisation has been regarded as necessary, for instance, «in order to provide a framework for memories and identities».

In his summary, Puhle asserts that regional processes in Europe have led to more competition between nation states as well as a greater degree of openness and flexibility in people's perceptions of belonging and identity, «in the sense of a dual or triple '*patria chica - patria grande*' model», which might be a strength, given the conflicting influences of globalisation on the one hand and localism on the other. However, Puhle also claims that Europe is still far from realising the dream of a 'Europe of the Regions' - «constellations, factors and power structures of national politics» are still barriers to such a development, «even after the treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam».

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