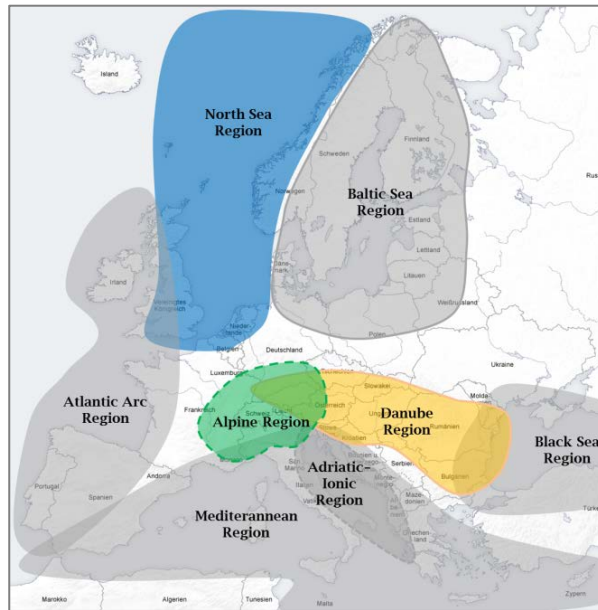


EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND MACRO-REGIONS

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT
AND THE NEW LOGICS OF SCALE



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Impetus of the doctoral thesis

With the development of the EU Baltic Sea Region a new concept of territorial cooperation was introduced into the EU governance framework followed by numerous macro-regional initiatives across Europe.

Macro-regional strategies are the most recent phenomenon with high political dynamics involved. At the beginning of 2014, two macro-regions are currently implemented, two in the making and four more in discussion. This new political concept builds on joint strategies aiming at collaboration for a region with so called functional challenges, such as the Danube River. It remains unclear how macro-regions will effect (1) territorial cooperation, (2) governance & the political landscape as well as (3) policy-making. This doctoral thesis attempts to contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon. The knowledge interest lies in detecting the drivers, the changing governance structures as well as on the analysis of influences on the politics of scale within the EU.

Focus and Aims of research

The macro-regional development raises questions on macro-regions becoming a new level between the nation state and the EU level and how the macro-regional discussion influences the internationalization of policies. Who are the stakeholders involved and what are their agendas? In recent scientific debates

spatial scholars discuss macro-regional strategies in the light of soft spaces, politics of scale and their implications for European territorial cooperation. In line with these discussions the thesis scrutinizes on the role of different stakeholder groups and thereby questions the influences on European and national policy-making.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze

- the dynamics on this new level for interaction by focusing on rescaling processes and
- the implications for tomorrow's Europe, its cooperation and territoriality.

As this political cooperation builds on 'functional arguments' and has proven to develop as a soft form of cooperation it analyses in what sense these soft characteristics are supporting the development or harden. The research broadens the current debate on rescaling through a comparative analysis of 3 case studies within the EU. An in-depth analysis of governance structures reveals characteristics of these new cooperation.

Research Questions

To what extent do macro-regions indicate a general trend in European policy-making towards internationalization of cooperation & what are the characteristics of future European cooperation?

(I) Rescaling

What is the role of different stakeholders? How does agenda setting take place? In what way do macro-regional strategies display a trend towards the internationalization of policies? Do power shifts take place?

(II) European Integration

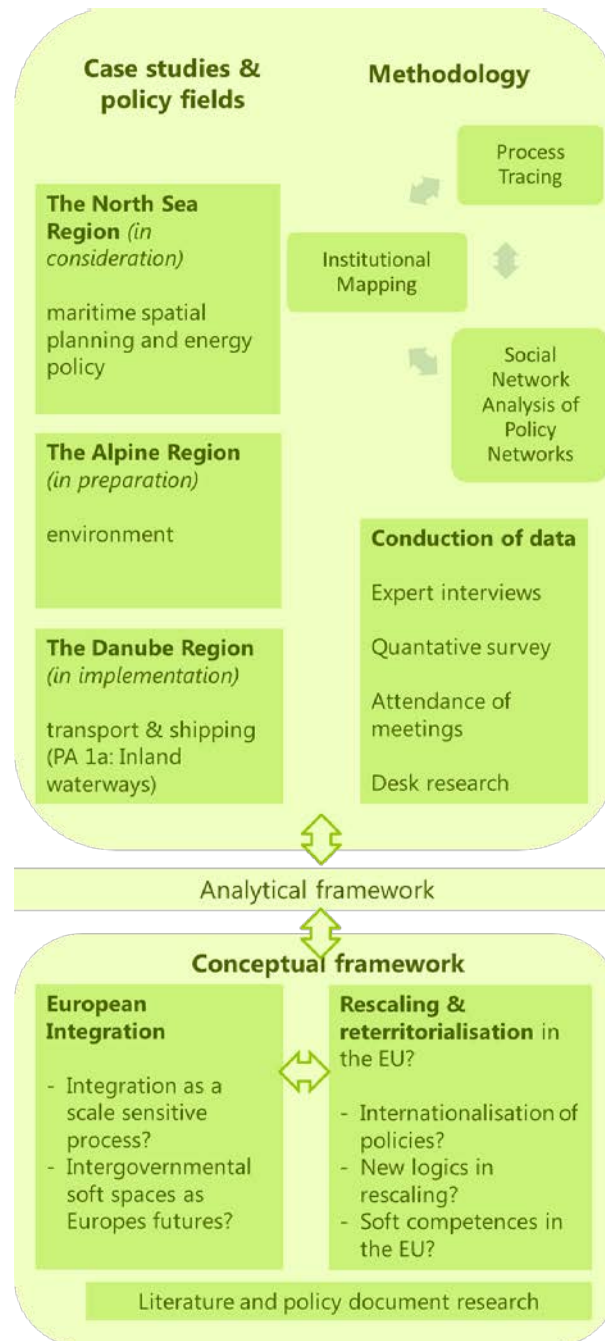
Which forms of European integration do macro-regions represent and why do perimeter and scale gain importance in the EU? What are the characteristics of this cooperation?

Case studies & Methodological approach

The empirical analysis draws on the analysis of 3 case study regions: the Danube Region, the Alpine Region and the North Sea Region.

As a first empirical step, an institutional mapping is conducted, listing all relevant organizations, their characteristics, and functions in the region. Secondly, their role and centrality within the network will be analyzed through a social network analysis. The third step is a process tracing in which the drivers and stakeholder expectations will be detected.

Research Design



Research Process

