# Spaces of Belonging and Intra-European Migration from Southern and Eastern Periphery to the North

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**ABSTRACT**

Vor dem Hintergrund erneut wachsender Migrationsströme innerhalb der EU wertet der Autor Interviews aus, die er in Schweden mit Migranten aus Griechenland und Lettland geführt hat. Dabei geht es ihm darum, zu verstehen, wie sich die EU-Bürgerschaft auf die Identifikation mit nationalen, regionalen und europäischen Räumen auswirkt. Es zeigt sich, dass die nationale die wichtigste Ebene der Selbstidentifikation bleibt. „Europäisch" zu sein wird ebenfalls als wichtig erachtet, zumal es im Immigrationsland einen Zugang zu Rechten garantiert, der Dritten verwehrt bleibt. Im Fall lettischer Migranten wird eine regionale Zugehörigkeit zum Baltikum und Osteuropa definiert, die von Skandinavien und Westeuropa abgegrenzt bleibt. Die griechischen Befragten sehen sich mehr zum Balkan denn zum Mittelmeer gehörig, von dessen nichteuropäischen Anrainern sie sich distanzieren möchten. Als Einheiten gedachte Mittelmeer- und Ostseeregionen spielen für die Erwartungen der Migranten kaum eine Rolle.

One of the fundamental pillars of European integration and the most important element of European citizenship according to Eurobarometer surveys is the freedom of movement among the European Union (EU) member states.[1] The institutionalized right of free movement in the EU was expanded after the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargement to the nationals of the new member states in 2011 and 2014 respectively. The difference

1 Report from the European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/files/ptc-free_movement.pdf (accessed 19 January 2017).

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between the time of accession and the time of acquisition of the right of free mobility was implemented upon request of some of the older member states in order to protect their labour markets from uncontrollable inflows of low-skilled Eastern European workers. The "Polish Plumber"[2] became a symbol of cheap labour and the stereotypical image of the Eastern European migrant found its place in the common imaginary[3] of the people, especially those in Western Europe. Similar attitudes, accompanied by stereotypes related to laziness and fraud, appeared in the European discourse during the Eurozone crisis[4] hitting mainly the EU-Mediterranean "PIGS"[5] countries, which suffered from record high unemployment rates. Hence, free movement inside the European space received a regional dimension based on the current economic and geopolitical context in combination with stereotypes regarding the eastern and southern European movers and in opposition to a positive caricature of a competitive North, reproduced and perpetuated by mass and social media. This type of hierarchical regionalization contradicts the efforts of the EU to become an institutionalized space whose goal encloses the cohesion and cooperation inside the union both at the micro and macro level.[6]

However, the EU, which provides the framework for people, goods, services, and capital to move inside the union, experienced a series of crises during the last years. Many have expressed fears about the cohesion or even the continued existence of the EU, not least because of the possibility of a "Grexit" (the potential withdrawal of Greece from the Eurozone), that would transmit economic instability to other countries in the periphery of the Eurozone. As a solution to the continuous economic crisis in the Euro-periphery some have even introduced the idea of two different monetary unions: one for the rich north and another for the economically problematic south.[7] Also, the incapability of the EU to cooperate on the current refugee crisis has become another matter of division (the eastern EU member states have been very reluctant to accept the number of refugees allocated to them by the European Commission). Many European countries raised fences between their borders, trying to hamper the migration flows, but at the same time putting extreme pressure on the Schengen area. Furthermore, the first actual turmoil in the EU was realized through Brexit after the UK's secession from the EU. The main is-

2 A. Asthana, The Polish Plumber who Fixed the Vote, in: The Guardian, 29 May 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/may/29/france.immigration (accessed 19 January 2017).

3 The first results of a Google search (12 January 2017) using the key phrase "eastern European workers" include four websites of private labour recruitment companies using the motto "It's never been easier to get workers from Eastern Europe," and using photos of a security worker, an in-house cleaning lady, an office cleaner, and a construction worker. The remaining results are British media discussing the actual number of eastern European workers in the UK.

4 D. Barret, Immigration Surge Driven by Eurozone Crisis, in: The Telegraph, 29 August 2013, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10274266/Immigration-surge-driven-by-eurozone-crisis.html (accessed 19 January 2017).

5 The original acronym was PIIGS, which included Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, and also Ireland.

6 J.W. Scott (ed.), EU Enlargement, Region Building and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion, Abingdon 2006.

7 J. Stiglitz, A Split Euro is the Solution for Europe's Single Currency, in: Financial Times, 17 August 2016, https://www.ft.com/content/dbbd151c-62f4-11e6-8310-ecf0bddad227 (accessed 19 January 2017).

sue for the UK, which is also shared with other, mostly northern EU member states, is the migration from other EU countries and the so-called welfare state tourism of other EU citizens. In general, there is an obvious and strong movement in the European continent of introversion towards nationalism and the nation-state in combination with a regionalization of the continent between the binary opposition of north and south, east and west.

In a volatile environment where the EU confronts the rise of nationalism and various types of populism and where the continent seems to be divided between a rich centre and a economically dependent periphery in the south and the east, human mobility is more vibrant than ever before and a core issue of European politics. However, the EU citizens are migrating inside the union for various reasons and relocating their lives in different spaces.

This article examines how intra-European migrants from the southern and eastern EU-periphery relate themselves to three spaces of belonging: the national, the regional, and the European.[8] There are different levels of institutionalization among these three spaces of belonging as the nation, and the EU as a region, have a clear institutionalized structure whereas the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea regions have been pointed out by the EU as institutionalized regional frameworks.[9] More specifically the focus is on migrants from Greece and Latvia representing the Mediterranean PIGS countries and the three Baltic states, two areas that both experienced a financial crisis after 2008 and that belong to the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea regions respectively. Sweden has been chosen as a host-country example as it belongs to the industrialized and rich part of Europe having a one of the most liberal policies when it comes to migration (both labour and asylum-seeking) and the naturalization process of the migrants. Furthermore, the field work was conducted in the urban space of Stockholm and its broader area, which has been a popular destination for both internal, intra-European, and international migration, especially after the economic crisis, making it, according to Adrian Favell's typology, a new Eurocity.[10]

This article addresses the question of how the migrants from Greece and Latvia relate themselves to the national (Greek, Latvian, Swedish), European, and regional space of belonging. It examines how these three spaces of belonging affect their migratory experience in Sweden. It deals with a crucial aspect of the contemporary intra-European migration, which is under-researched and which is significant for the lives of thousands of EU citizens that are residents in an EU country other than their home country.

8 "National" in this study means the country of origin and the country of destination to which the migrants might have sentiments of belonging. Regional refers to transnational regions, mainly the Baltic and the Mediterranean area without excluding any other possible regional space of belonging. "European" indicates primarily the geographical aspect of the notion without limitation to the institutional regionalization that EU has imprinted on the continent.

9 L. Bialasiewicz et al., Re-scaling 'EU'rope: EU Macro-Regional Fantasies in the Mediterranean, in: European Urban and Regional Studies, 20 (2012) 1, pp. 59–76.

10 See Statistical Year-book of Stockholm 2016, http://statistik.stockholm.se/attachments/article/38/arsbok_2016.pdf (accessed 19 January 2017)

## 1. Two Main Conceptual Tools: Intra-European Migration and European Macro-Regionalization

### 1.1. Intra-European Migration

International migration has taken place in Europe throughout the twentieth century with changing directions, trajectories, and volume. Contemporary migration flows are often multidirectional and transient, mixing different kinds of migration and mobility such as tourism, commuting, and student migration.[11] This can be observed in the European space and especially in the EU, as open borders inside the union have facilitated inner EU-mobility. The EU-citizen status defines the practicalities of migration (the legal presuppositions for establishing oneself in another EU country) and it also creates a particular category of migrants who are both internal and international. The EU internal migration includes different kinds of migrations meaning that Europeans move around Europe for various reasons making European mobility a very complex phenomenon. David Ralph[12] studies the motivations for mobility of Irish cross-border commuters who felt forced out of Ireland after the 2008 economic crisis when the "Celtic Tiger" joined Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain to form the PIIGS. These people, Ralph argues, deal with many complexities in their lives and have to deal with problems that are related to mobility and their need to settle down. He is critical of the expression "EU free movers" because in "their (relatively privileged) lives, [they] are far more nuanced, far more protean than any simplistic picture of nomadic, peripatetic 'free-moving Europeans.'"[13] Michael Braun and Ettore Recchi[14] state that "we know surprisingly little about the objective and subjective profile of the emerging population of free-moving Europeans," and we know even less about the movements that are a by-product of the recent economic crisis, which, in addition to east-west migration, has created a recent south-north one as it has moved southern Europe closer to the social and economic reality of post-communist Eastern Europe, more boldly reflecting the core-periphery structure in the continent.[15] Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas[16] state that by 2014 there were no other academic studies on the topic with the exception of a study on Ireland by Irial Glynn,

11 T. Krings et al., Polish Migration to Ireland: "Free Movers" in the New European Mobility Space, in: Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 39 (2013) 1, pp. 87–103; R. King, Towards a New Map of European Migration, in: International Journal of Population Geography 8 (2002) 2, pp. 89–106; K. O'Reilly, Intra-European Migration and the Mobility–Enclosure Dialectic, in: Sociology 41 (2007) 2, pp. 277–293.

12 D. Ralph, Always on the Move, but Going Nowhere Fast: Motivations for "Euro-Commuting" between the Republic of Ireland and Other EU States, in: Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 41 (2015) 2, pp. 176–195.

13 Ibid., p. 191.

14 M. Braun and E. Recchi, Free-Moving West Europeans: An Empirically Based Portrait, in: H. Fassman, M. Haller M, D. Lane (eds), Migration and Mobility in Europe: Trends, Patterns and Control, Cheltenham 2009, pp. 85–101.

15 J. Magone, B. Laffan, and C. Schweiger (eds), Core-Periphery Relations in the European Union: Power and Conflict in a Dualist Political Economy, London 2016.

16 A. Triandafyllidou and R. Gropas, "Voting With Their Feet": Highly Skilled Emigrants from Southern Europe in: American Behavioral Scientist 58 (2014) 12, 1614–1647.

Tomas Kelly, and Piaras McEinrin.[17] Furthermore, Triandafyllidou and Gropas[18] in an e-survey that they conducted on 1,820 high-skilled Greeks and Italians who had decided to emigrate showed that the migrants moved not only because of deprivation and anxiety about the general conditions in their home country, but also because mobility is nowadays a fundamental element of career and professional self-growth.

## 1.2. Greek and Latvian Migration to Sweden

The mobility of the Greeks to Sweden was at its most vibrant during the 1960s and 1970s. It was the period with the strongest migration flows from the Mediterranean area to Sweden. The Greeks tried to flee from the authoritarian regime that ruled Greece in 1967–1974 and the overall bad economic conditions in the country during these decades. According to Christina Markopoulou,[19] who has studied the level of integration of the Greeks who were living at that time in Sweden, states that they expressed their satisfaction on how the Swedish state had welcomed them as a labour force, but they also stated that they felt like strangers and that they probably would not manage to integrate into the Swedish society as equal members.

For the Latvians, the mobility of individuals from the Baltic states to Sweden during the Soviet period took place primarily in the context of "refugism" because of the political situation in the region. It was rather insignificant in terms of size.[20] In the post-Soviet period, the independence of Baltic states and the 2004 EU enlargement were the two political factors that facilitated the migration from the Baltic states to Europe (including Sweden).[21] However, it was the economic crisis of 2008 and its consequence of high unemployment that boosted migration from the "Baltic Tigers"[22] to other regions of Europe.[23] A 2013 OECD report[24] states that the three Baltic countries have experienced a continuous emigration the last years, with negative consequences for their working-age population, and also a negative impact on the labour market, the general economy, and on social developments.

17 I. Glynn, T. Kelly, and P. McEinrin, Irish Emigration in the Age of Austerity, Dublin 2013.

18 Triandafyllidou and Gropas, "Voting With Their Feet,"1614–1647.

19 C. Markopoulou, Sociocultural Effects of Intra-European Migration: A Cyclical Research Study in Greece and Sweden, University of Goteborg, Göteborg 1981.

20 K.B. Mayer, International Migrations of European Workers, in: Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 1 (1972) 3, pp. 173–182; A.M. Ekengren, Soviet Refugees in Postwar Sweden: Asylum Policy in a Liberal Democracy, in: Baltic Worlds 4 (2014), pp. 57–59.

21 Sweden, Ireland, and the UK were the three old EU member states that put no restrictions in place regarding the mobility of workers from the new Eastern European EU member states, the so-called A8.

22 Baltic Tigers is a term (nickname) used for the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania especially with reference to their huge economic growth between 2000 and 2007.

23 J.W. Holtslag (ed.), Making Migration Work: The Future of Labour Migration in the European Union, Amsterdam 2013; E. Apsite, E. Lundholm, and O. Stjernström, Baltic State Migration System–The Case of Latvian Immigrants in Sweden, in: Journal of Northern Studies 6 (2012) 1, pp. 31–51.

24 J. Joost and G. Engbersen, Emigration from the Baltic States: Economic Impact and Policy Implications, in: Coping with Emigration in Baltic and East European Countries, Paris 2013, pp. 13–27, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/coping-with-emigration-in-baltic-and-east-european-countries/emigration-from-the-baltic-states-economic-impact-and-policy-implications_9789264204928-4-en.

## 1.3. European Macro-Regionalization

The European power differential as well as the migration trajectories that it establishes, create the notion of two major regions inside Europe: the core, which includes the central and northern part, and then the eastern and southern periphery.[25] In addition to this type of regionalization, there is an institutional one that is not only embodied by the EU as "a post-national cosmopolitan polity based in a regional territorial logic"[26] but is also operated by the EU as a region builder.[27] Most scholars who study regionalism tend to agree on the social constructivist dimension of regions.[28] This notion of region is similar to the concept of nation as an imagined community with common cultural characteristics.[29] As Rolf Petri has noticed, there are similarities in nation and region building. [30] In the case of the EU, identity making accompanies the Europeanization process that is illustrated in the plethora of tools of nation building that have been used (common institutions, flag, anthem, constitution).[31] Furthermore, the EU as region builder has taken initiatives for two macro-regions,[32] the "Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region" (EUSBSR) around the Baltic Sea and the EU-funded project "MEDGOVERNANCE" in the Mediterranean, which lie in the periphery of Europe and include both economically developed and less developed member-states. Regarding the Baltic Sea region, since the end of Cold War, intensified regional cooperation emerged and the EU's interest in the region became vibrant after its expansion to the east, constituting the Baltic as an internal EU sea (with the exception of the enclave of Kaliningrad and the area of Saint Petersburg).[33] Though the EU's effort to regionalize the Mediterranean area began much earlier than in the Baltic Sea case,[34] high diversity and institutional division between EU

25 R. King et al., Eurocity London: A Qualitative Comparison of Graduate Migration from Germany, Italy and Latvia, in: Comparative Migration Studies 4 (2016) 1. pp. 1-22.

26 E. Recchi and A. Favell (eds.), Pioneers of European Integration: Citizenship and Mobility in the EU, Cheltenham 2009.

27 According to the Oxford Dictionary, the etymology of the word "region," which comes from the Latin "regere," to rule, to direct is very illustrative on how regions have been used through centuries as a governmental tool.

28 D. Gregory (ed.), The Dictionary of Human Geography, Blackwell 2009; V. Petrogiannis and L. Rabe, What Is It That Holds a Region Together? in: Baltic Worlds, in-house issue (2016).

29 B. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Rev. ed. London 2006.

30 R. Petri, The Resurgence of the Region in the Context of European Integration: Recent Developments and Historical Perspective, in A. Bauerkämper and H. Kaelble (eds.), Gesellschaft in der europäischen Integration seit den 1950er Jahren, Stuttgart 2012, pp. 159-171.

31 J. Fornäs, Signifing Europe, Chicago 2012.

32 Macro region, a political concept borrowed from the field of international relations, according to EU's administration terminology is "an area including territory from a number of different countries or regions associated with one or more common features or challenges (…) geographic, cultural, economic or other" (European Commission, 2009: 1 and 7), that contributes to "Europeanization" (A. Stocchiero, Macro-Regions of Europe: Old Wine in a New Bottle?, 2010, http://www.cespi.it/wp/wp%2065-cespi%20macroregioni%20europee%20_eng_.pdf (accessed 19 January 2017).

33 N. Götz (ed.), The Sea of Identities: A Century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class, and Gender, Huddinge 2014.

34 L. Tsoukalis, The EEC and the Mediterranean: Is "Global" Policy a Misnomer? in: International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 53 (1977) 3, p. 422; L. Bialasiewicz et al., Re-scaling 'EU'rope: EU Macro-Regional Fantasies in the Mediterranean, in: European Urban and Regional Studies, 20 (2012) 1, pp. 59–76.

and non-EU countries make the construction of the Mediterranean into an EU macro region a much more complex task than the Baltic Sea[35] as the external element is much more extensive (in the Baltic Sea macro region, only Russia is a non-EU country). The initiative towards a "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" (EMP) was "aiming at integrating the two shores of the Mediterranean, not just at the political or economic levels, but also at the social and cultural levels."[36] However, in both cases this diversity (political, economic, cultural) makes EU macro-regions and macro-regional strategies a tool for European integration and increased territorial cohesion.[37] The EU's regionalization of the Baltic and the Mediterranean Sea areas implies a formation and reproduction of a regional identity that is meant to support the process of regionalization. However, as Anssi Paasi[38] has emphasized, this identity-building never comes to a final completion, but is rather continually reproduced by social communication.

## 2. Focus Group and Method of Sampling

The material analysed in this article is the product of eight semi-structured face-to-face interviews with migrants from Greece and Latvia who moved to Sweden after 2004 and whose profiles are presented in table 1. The sample is balanced in terms of gender and level of education, as it includes four male and four female participants who either have tertiary (having university degree / are highly educated) or do not have tertiary education. The advantage of this balance is that it makes the research inclusive in the sense that different voices and opinions are shared from both men and women with high and low educational capital. The "age" and the "time of arrival in Sweden" are two additional variables that offer a plurality of opinions based on the distinctive experiences the participants have as individuals who belong to different age groups and have lived through different time periods as migrants. The interviews were conducted between June 2015 and December 2016 and their length varied from one hour to a maximum of two hours.
The technique used to gather the current sample was a "selective snowball sampling" as the intention was to create a group of people with specific characteristics. Initially, the first participants were recruited through the researcher's personal network in Stockholm and also via social groups on Facebook (especially for the Latvians) who later introduced to me some of their acquaintances that fitted to the needs of the sample. For the organi-

35 J.C. Tourret and V. Willaert, 3 Scenarios for a Mediterranean Macro-Regional Approach, in: S. Terracina (ed.) A Mediterranean Strategy is Possible, Turin 2011, pp. 75–121; A. Jones, Making Regions for EU Action: The EU and the Mediterranean, in: L. Bialasiewicz (ed.), Europe in the World: EU Geopolitics and the Making of European Space, Farnham 2011, pp. 41–58.

36 S. Panebianco, A New Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Identity, CITY HERE 2003.

37 A. Dubois, EU Macro-Regions and Macro-Regional Strategies – A Scoping Study. Nordregio Working Paper 2009:4, http://www.nordregio.se/Publications/Publications-2009/EU-macro-regions-and-macro-regional-strategies/ (accessed 19 January 2017).

38 A. Paasi, The Institutionalisation of Regions: A Theoretical Framework for the Understanding of the Emergence of Regions and the Constitution of Regional Identity, Fennia 164 (1986), pp. 105–146.

zation of the interview a questionnaire was used that was divided to six themes. The first part of the questionnaire includes general questions to acquire personal information about the interviewee as an individual, but also to have a complete picture of his/her life both in Sweden and in the home country. The second cluster of questions discusses issues related to migration and integration in the host society. The third thematic unit of questions addresses the notion of the nation and interviewees' identification with it. The fourth part of the interview discusses issues related to Europe and the EU. The fifth section concerns the connection between regions, regional identification, and migration. The last part of the interview is the conclusive one where the interviewees are asked to freely add any comments or bring up issues that have been already discussed previously.

Table 1

| Preudonym | Country of Origin | Gender | Age | Education | Arrival in Sweden |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sofia | Greece | Female | 38 | No Tertiary education | 2012 |
| Nikos | Greece | Male | 55 | No Tertiary education | 2013 |
| Eleni | Greece | Female | 32 | No Tertiary education | 2007 |
| Konstan-tinos | Greece | Male | 31 | No Tertiary education | 2013 |
| Maiya | Latvia | Female | 41 | No Tertiary education | 2004 |
| Emma | Latvia | Female | 53 | No Tertiary education | 2009 |
| Ludis | Latvia | Male | 47 | No Tertiary education | 2010 |
| Kalvis | Latvia | Male | 28 | No Tertiary education | 2011 |

The informants are listed according to their country of origin and chronologically based on the date of the interview from the earliest to the most recent.

Both the small number of participants and the non-representativity of the sample of the migrant population makes it challenging to generalize the findings of the study. Each migrant had a unique life story, individual experiences, and personal approaches to their identifications and spaces of belonging. Despite these circumstances, I will suggest some generalizations and track some patterns, which may reflect overall experiences of the Greek and Latvian post-2000 migrant population. Some of the Latvians were inter-

viewed in English instead of their native language while the Greeks were interviewed in Greek. However, the highly educated Latvians had a very good command of the English language and they did not have any difficulties expressing themselves. The non-tertiary educated Latvians, who did not speak English fluently, were interviewed with the assistance of a Latvian interpreter in order to minimize the language-bias and to have an unhindered discussion.

## 3. Analysis – Three Spaces of Belonging

The analysis of the material is divided into levels of identification and belonging of the Latvian and Greek migrants in Sweden according to three territorial units: the nation, Europe, and the trans-national regions Baltic Sea and Mediterranean.

### 3.1. The Nation

Generally, and expectably, the Greek or Latvian nation among the spaces of belonging is the one to which the migrants feel the strongest relation. Each of the eight interviewees showed a different level of attachment to their home country, but for all of them their nation is what has affected them the most, both in their lives back in the home country and in Sweden. The time period of migration affects this sentiment for most of the participants. Sweden, despite not being a primary space of belonging, is a very important one because it is a goal for the migrants to integrate into Swedish society and be perceived as part of it. It seems that time gives a certain legitimization for belonging in Sweden to the migrants, regardless of the level of integration (knowledge of Swedish, socialization, acculturation). This probably reflects the fact that the process of naturalization is universally based, among other criteria, on that of the total period of residence.

For the Greeks, it seems that their conscious decision for a permanent migration to Sweden is related to deprivation in their home country and a feeling of insecurity and pessimism for the future of Greece. For those who arrived in Sweden after the 2010 economic crisis, the reasons for a permanent migration are the reasons for the migration itself, which is linked to the socioeconomic effects of the crisis. For Eleni, who is highly educated and moved to Sweden in 2007, the decision to emigrate is first and foremost related to career ambitions and lifestyle choices, but for her the 2010 crisis and the following socioeconomic consequences are what steer her life decisions. Scholars who have conducted research in the post-2008 economic crisis intra-European migration trends have found and discussed similar results.[39] Sussane Bygnes,[40] for example, stated that

39 C.G. Enríquez and J.P.M. Romera, Country Focus: Migration of Spanish Nationals during the Crisis, 2014, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/gonzalezenriquez-martinezromera-espana-emigracion-espanoles-crisis-spainmigration-crisis#.VKPdiKPKyUk (accessed 29 January 2017); R. Gropas and A. Triandafyllidou, Survey Report, Emigrating in Times of Crisis: Highlights and New Data from an E-survey on High-skilled Emigrants from Southern Europe and

highly skilled Spanish migrants in Norway avoid mentioning the economic crisis as the reason for their relocation and instead emphasize the overall negative social and political situation in the country. Regardless of the level of education or gender, all four Greek migrants are negative about the Greek state mentioning the corruption, clientelism, and nepotism. Especially in this matter the comparisons with Sweden, and generally with Scandinavia, were many. Ranging from more sophisticated to more vulgar expressions regarding this comparison, statements on the overall development level in comparative terms between Sweden and Greece were very negative towards their home country. For the non-highly educated Greeks, the migration was initiated and realized and facilitated through contacts (family, friends) who were already residents in Sweden, while for the highly educated, the movement took place through more institutionalized methods like post-graduate education or job applications.

Similarly, for the highly educated Latvians their decision to move and stay in Sweden and become integrated in Swedish society is related more to lifestyle choices, even though the bad economic situation in Latvia and the low salaries were mentioned during the interviews. For them, migration was a personal choice and not a relocation of need because of the current politico-economic condition in their home country. The Latvians who did not have a higher education decided to immigrate to Sweden because of the effects the 2008 economic crisis had on peoples' lives and is specifically related to unemployment, low demand for services, and loan debts. Again, the non-highly educated Latvians, similarly to the Greeks, used acquaintances as a medium for their relocation to Sweden, but employment agencies were also involved in this process.

Despite the fact that all participants have, to different degrees, showed sentiments of belonging and clear identification to their country, their sometimes contradictory or unclear answers to questions related to national identity show the existence of an implicit hierarchy between the national identifications: Greek vs. Swedish and Latvian vs. Swedish, with Swedish perceived in the supreme position. Several participants stated ironically that their primary national identification was Swedish instead of admitting to being Latvians or Greeks. For example, Sofia's identification to her home country is very strong. She feels proud to be Greek and she would not like to be anything else. She states, "I would like to be neither Swede nor German." However, this statement suggests that Sofia positions Sweden and Germany on a higher level than Greece and that, rationally, she would have wanted to be a Swede or a German, although she actually does not. This becomes clearer when the participants were asked about how they position themselves in relation to Swedish society; they showed a will to become or a desire to be Swedes. They would like to identify themselves with the Swedish nation and, if possible, acquire Swedish citizenship. However, they think that it is rather difficult to become Swedes or to

Ireland, Florence 2014; A. Triandafyllidou, and R. Gropas, "Voting With Their Feet,", pp. 1614–1647; S. Bygnes, Are They Leaving Because of the Crisis? The Sociological Significance of Anomie as a Motivation for Migration, in: Sociology (2015), pp. 1–16.

40 S. Bygnes, Are They Leaving Because of the Crisis? pp. 1–16.

start feel like Swedes because either a strong identification to their nation or the thought that they would never manage to succeed. The majority of the participants have applied for or intend to apply for Swedish citizenship for various reasons, which are related both to Greece and Latvia. Mainly this concerns a feeling of insecurity for the future of their country. In migration theory there are "push factors" (economic situation, political corruption, external threats to sovereignty) and "pull factors" (economic and political stability, welfare state, acquire all the benefits that the Swedish citizens have). When asked about their EU-citizenship status, the migrants answered that the naturalization will bring more rights, in comparison to those derived from the EU-citizenship, and a sense of stronger belonging to the country but also to the fact that they worry about the future of the EU or the position of their country inside the EU (mainly Greeks).

All the Greek interviewees had a negative overall attitude towards their compatriots, especially those who migrated to Sweden earlier than they did. For the non-highly educated Greeks the complaint or the accusation against the early Greek migrants is related to a general lack of solidarity or empathy for the newcomers who are in need, while for those with high education the problem is mainly about a lack of cosmopolitanism, non-synchronization with the current cultural trends, and an inclination for nation-centrism. None of the four Greeks was actively participating in the Greek community, though all of them at a certain point came in contact or participated in some of the events organized by the Greek community.

However, this is similar only for Maiya, a highly educated female Latvian and not for the other three Latvians who seem to have a smooth relationship with their compatriots and who might also participate in the activities of the Latvian community. For Maiya there is a difference between the early migrants, who in most cases were refugees, and the migrants who moved to Sweden after Latvian independence. She finds the early Latvian migrants irritatingly curious about her personal life and furthermore, she mentioned that they think that they have rightfully been in Sweden in comparison to the newcomers who are merely economic migrants and this is something that, according to her, makes her feel uncomfortable. She feels that she is being seen stereotypically as an economic migrant only because she moved from Latvia to Sweden after 1990.

Integration into Swedish society is a goal for almost all interviewees. The only exception is Konstantinos whose left-wing political views obliged him to suggest a more cosmopolitan, non-nationalist perception of his identity and belonging, though he said at the end of the interview that he tries to comply with the social conventions of the country (he always uses the zebra crossing, he quit smoking and started chewing tobacco instead), indicating at least an intention to feel and become part of the new society. The level of integration is apparently related to the overall period of residence each individual has in the country, but a factor that is crucial in this process is language skill, primarily English and Swedish. Especially the Greek non-highly educated migrants, and to same degree the Latvians, are lacking or only have a basic knowledge of English, something that forces them towards co-national socialization. In contrast, all the highly educated migrants had at least proficiency in English and this was an advantage for a more rapid integration into

the host society by breaking the co-national circle of socializing and the possibility of meeting locals and people from other countries. Because the informants all lived in the broader Stockholm area, which is an internationally oriented metropole, the command of English worked for them as a tool of basic integration to the new society.

Another issue, which refers mainly to the Swedish space of belonging, is related to the stereotypical Swedish phenotype, something mentioned directly or indirectly from some of the migrants. The similarity to the Swedish phenotype, it seems, enhances the sense of belonging to Sweden among the Latvians who said that they feel happy when the locals perceive them as Swedes because of their northern European outer characteristics. For example, Maiya said that she even sometimes avoids speaking Swedish in order not to expose her Latvian and national origin and in that way, be taken for a Swede. In her analysis Guðbjört Guðjónsdóttir[41] illustrates a similar social acceptance or social "(in)visibility" as she states, based on the characteristics of "whiteness" of Islander migrants in Norway enhancing their sentiment of belonging to Norwegian society in comparison to other migrants. Stereotypes also follow the Greek migrants whose phenotypes might not be identified with either Swedish or Greek spaces of belonging. Eleni who is blond with bright-coloured eyes has been asked why her outer characteristics are such despite her coming from Greece. The much darker Konstantinos, who has chosen also to grow a beard, has experienced some incidents of hostility because he was taxonomized as a Muslim Arab.

The majority of the interviewees, both Greeks and Latvians, when they were asked about their integration to their host society stated that it matters more to them and it more substantially affects their lives in Sweden how the others see them rather than what they believe, where they position themselves or how they identify themselves. For all Greek and Latvian participants (Konstantinos was again an exception) the word migrant brought negative connotations linked to experiences and discourses they brought from their home countries (people in need, refugees, economic migrants, or people not integrated in the society). However, they admitted that in practice they were also migrants and said they do feel sometimes as such when the others, intentionally or unintentionally, make them feel like strangers.

Some informants mentioned personal experiences of discrimination and difficulties in accessing the labour market or in their career development, which were related to the Swedish language or to the fact that they were coming from low status countries. The issue of national stereotyping was also discussed with the participants who said that national stereotypes do exist and those who follow the Swedish media added that they were created or reproduced by them. However, everybody had an overall satisfaction for the quality of life and well-being in Sweden and no unpleasant experience to share during their everyday interaction with the local society.

41 G. Guðjónsdóttir, We Blend in with the Crowd but They Don't: (In)visibility and Icelandic Migrants in Norway, in: Nordic Journal of Migration Research 4 (2014) 4, pp. 176–183.

The Greeks reported an overall positive attitude towards them as a great majority of the Swedish people shared memories of being tourists in the country. However, Eleni who moved to Sweden before the 2010 economic crisis mentioned a shift in the attitude towards her not only from the locals, but also from other migrants, as the perception of the Swedish society about Greece changed from tourist-related towards another type of generalization, reflecting the bad economic performance of the country.

The Latvians were also satisfied with the way they were treated by the local society. However, some of the Latvians also referred to stereotypes the Swedes have about them. These were seen as both positive and negative, related to how skilful and hardworking the Latvians are, but they were also seen as imported cheap labour threatening the rights of the local workers in Sweden. Maiya in particular shared an experience of discrimination at her workplace during the incident of *Vaxholmskonflikten*.[42] Furthermore, the Latvian women participants noted a gender-related stereotype in Swedish society as Latvian women are perceived as easy to have an affair with.[43] Some of these stereotypes and generalizations are spread to the public through the media. Maiya said that she has several times corrected false information or stereotypes about Latvia that her Swedish friends and co-workers listen to and reproduce from the Swedish television.

## 3.2. Europe

In the minds of the participants, Europe is a region that coincides with the European Union. When reference was made to Europe, the migrants understood it as the EU, and when they mentioned Europe they meant (most of the time) the EU. Konstantinos again was the exception as he was very clear when he differentiated the geographical from the institutionalized notion of Europe expressing negative sentiments towards the EU, though he recognized some initial good intentions. Though all the interviewees have a sense of belonging in Europe, either the continent or the EU, or both, none of them believes that a common European identity exists. They rather argue – sometimes very explicitly – that national identities are still strong and that they will continue to be so in the future. Some of the informants, not only the highly educated, recognized a certain political intention on the part of the European elite to construct a European identity. However, they believe, especially the Greeks, that any progress achieved in the European identity project has been cancelled by the recent economic and refugee crises.

42 The Latvian company Laval Un Partneri Ltd came in conflict with the Swedish labour unions after its refusal to sign the Swedish collective agreement and applied it to the Latvian workers employed in an infrastructure project funded by the Swedish state. The labour unions went on strike and the company brought this case to the European Court of Justice; see: Case C-341/05, Laval un Partneri Ltd v Svenska Byggnadsarbetareförbundet and Others, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?isOldUri=true&uri=CELEX:62005CJ0341 (accessed 19 January 2017).

43 According to Jenny Olofsson, the main gateway among immigrants from Russia, the Baltic States, and Poland to Sweden before 2004 was marriage and maybe that is the reason for the existence of this stereotype that Maiya is referred to. J. Olofsson, Go West: East European Migrants in Sweden, Umeå 2012.

Furthermore, there is a consensus among the informants, even those who clearly showed a negative stance against the EU, on the benefits they have received because of the EU and EU citizenship. This is mainly related to visa-free movement and relocation inside the EU, and to some social benefits that they have in the EU-country that they have decided to reside in. For some of the interviewees the EU citizenship is the reason, or the excuse, that makes them argue for the lack of adoption of an immigrant identity as they ascribe the identity of immigrant to non EU citizens or refugees. For some participants, both Greek and Latvian, Europe is associated mainly with Christianity as they showed in their answers some negative attitude against Islam and Muslim migrants.[44] Similarly to Guðjónsdóttir's[45] Islanders in Norway who used their white phenotype, common language, and assumed same racial link, Greeks revoke religion and geography to enhance their belonging not only to Europe but also to Sweden. These efforts of achieving a level of belonging through strategies of identification, which are formed by notions of exclusion and inclusion,[46] declare the need of the informants to associate themselves closely to certain spaces of belonging and make their presence more legitimized.

For the interviewed Latvians, Europe has only positive connotations related to freedom, democracy, free mobility, and to common values that all Europeans share. All Latvian informants associate themselves with the continent and the EU as they answer positively to the question about whether they feel like Europeans. When it comes to the definition of Europe it seems that Russia is the limit that defines the continent and the EU. Although some of them recognized a partial common cultural heritage with Russia (mainly the western part), there was a general agreement on the position of the country as definitely outside the EU. The only consideration expressed from the Latvians against the EU is the concern regarding efforts from the EU to homogenize the culture and identity of the member states.

The Greeks, both those with and without tertiary education, are more political in their answers mentioning the power relations and the hierarchical constructions inside the EU. They position Greece at the lower level of this hierarchy, something that affects them, and they have a much more negative attitude towards the EU than the Latvians. They are sceptical towards the idea of belonging to something that is European and they reject, as the Latvians also do, the existence of a common European identity. For them, Europe is a suppressive institution, which creates a certain hierarchy inside and outside the continent. European identity symbolizes either a differentiation between the supreme European countries and the others, or an economic differentiation inside the EU between the rich and the poor.

Most of the interviewees think that there is a hierarchy among the European nations that is mostly based on the economic power these nations have. The Greeks stand criti-

44 The interviews took place in a period when many terrorist attacks committed by radical Islamists hit Europe.

45 Guðjónsdóttir, We Blend in with the Crowd but They Don't, pp. 176–183.

46 F. Anthias, Intersectionality, Belonging and Translocational Positionality: Thinking about Transnational Identities, in: G. Rosenthal and A. Bogner, Ethnicity, Belonging and Biography, CITY 2009, pp. 229–249, p. 232.

cal against this while the Latvians, though they recognize this hierarchy, would like to be placed among the Nordic countries, which are at the top of the ladder. Furthermore, Maiya said that this hierarchy is reflected also in the Swedish society where the Anglo-Saxon countries are more appreciated than others and that this hierarchy hinders her from finding a better job. Maiya mentioned that she once lost a position because, despite the fact that knowledge of Swedish was a requirement for the job, an English woman with no skills in the Swedish language was chosen instead of her.

### 3.3. Baltic and Mediterranean Regions

The space of belonging related to the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea regions is rather weak and also quite fragmented in the minds of the people. It appears to be difficult for the migrants to identify themselves with such an amorphous geographical region. Sub-regions within the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea appear to be closer to a sense of belonging for the interviewees. This shows that cultural and historical factors create a space of belonging rather than top down efforts to institutionalize regions and create regional identities.

All the Latvian informants identify themselves with the three Baltic states as a region and in a more general way with the Baltic Sea as part of Eastern Europe, excluding Scandinavia and Germany. For them, the Baltic Sea is the sea of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, and perhaps Russia. Maiya, for example, recognized the superior role of Germany and Scandinavia for having the know-how for many issues and problems and operating as a paradigm that the Baltic states should follow. This hierarchical and patronizing and discriminating attitude which Maiya referred to has been mentioned by several scholars[47] who studied the post Iron Curtain relations in Europe. This negative attitude found in public, political, and private discourses, which reflects the east-west division, takes also a macro-regional dimension, which is translated into the supreme role of specific countries (Germany) and areas (Scandinavia) in the Baltic Sea over the three Baltic republics. Maiya stated emphatically that she comes from the Baltic states. In her mind, there is a strong connection between the three Baltic nations that is associated not only with their common Soviet past but also with the period of the Hanseatic League.[48] All four Latvians showed a distance towards Russia and attempted to create historical, cultural, and geographical links to Sweden and the Nordic countries as they mentioned the time Latvia was part of the Swedish empire, experienced the Viking era, or by positioning Latvia as part of "northern Europe" instead of eastern. The Latvian interviewees even mentioned

47 M. Krzyzanowski and F. Oberhuber, (Un)Doing Europe: Discourses and Practices of Negotiating the EU Constitution, Brussels 2007; R. Wodak, and B. Matouschek, We Are Dealing with People Whose Origins One Can Clearly Tell Just by Looking: Critical Discourse Analysis and the Study of NeoRacism in Contemporary Austria in: Discourse & Society 4 (1993) 2, pp. 225–248.

48 The Hanseatic League is the name of the commercial and defensive federation of mainly German merchant guilds and their towns in the Baltic and North Sea in which they based their economic activities in the period between the 13th and 15th century. "Hanseatic League." Britannica Academic, Encyclopædia Britannica, 11 May. 2016, academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/39167 (accessed 20 January 2017).

that during the Soviet period the three Baltic states were considered to be different from the rest of the Soviet Union; they were the "West" of the "East," a richer region with its people being seen as something exotic.

For the Greek interviewees, the Mediterranean is not a region that they would identify themselves with, though they find some cultural similarities with the other EU Mediterranean countries. They distinguish southern Europe from the North African and Asian part of the Mediterranean without forgetting to add that the region has been connected throughout history for many centuries. Sofia, Eleni, and Nikos identify themselves with the Balkan Peninsula and they feel closer culturally to the Balkan countries. Nikos said ironically, maybe because of lack of historical references that connect Greece and Sweden, the region he is coming from is Scandinavia, adding immediately after that Greece, including himself, belongs to the Balkans. Konstantinos, on the other hand, finds similarities in the way of life among European Mediterranean countries mainly because of common climatological conditions in the area, adding that he feels comfortable associating with individuals from the region.

The Mediterranean region as a space of belonging does not appear to influence the migratory experience of the Greeks much. Regarding Nikos and Sofia this may be related to the fact that they speak only Greek, which leads to a co-national socialization constraining their social circle and their perceptions from a local Swedish or international environment. However, the Latvians, who all interact in a more substantial way with Swedish society, feel that their region of belonging affects their lives as migrants in Sweden. Some of them had experienced some incidents of discrimination, which were mainly related to their nation. But since Swedes tend to mix up the three states, their capitals, and treat them as one country, it can be argued that this has a regional aspect. Maiya and Emma, for example, expressed their disappointment and irritation about the attitudes some Swedes have towards the Baltic states.

## 4. Conclusions

The main analysis illustrated that the significance of the three spaces of belonging is related to the level of institutionalization the spaces have, but also to the geographical and historical context the interviewees position in their nation of origin. Nation is still, despite the predictions,[49] about the decline of its importance after the end of Cold War, the most important space of belonging. The EU migrants from Greece and Latvia see themselves and are seen by Swedish society mainly through the lens of the nation-state. The country of origin and the host country are the key spaces of belonging that define the lives and the migratory experience. The first serves as the identification that accompanied the migrants when they first came to Sweden and the latter as the identification with which they have started a dialogue for the possibility, however pessimistically un-

49 See F. Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man, New York 1993.

likely, of belonging to it. The majority of migrants choose not adopt the migrant identity for themselves stating that the local society created and imposed this identity on them. When it comes to identification with the national space Alexandra Wangler confirms what the Latvian and Greek migrants stated regarding the Swedish identification: "The concept of national identity is therefore closely interconnected with the way that people are identified by others and how they react to it."[50]

Europe, despite being a massively bigger space, a greater and much more heterogeneous region in comparison to the nation-state, has managed through years of EU integration and institutional development to infuse a sense of belonging to the residents of the Union, however often in a controversial and unclear way. Moreover, the EU and Europe are two notions that overlap in the minds of the interviewees because the use of the word Europe most of the time signifies also the EU. Michael Krzyzanowski and Florian Oberhuber[51] reported this overlapping of the geographical with the institutional aspect of Europe in negotiations among the participants for the conference for the European Constitution. This is an indication that the EU's elite has succeeded in overriding geography in favour of the political agenda in the continent in the minds of the Europeans. All the migrants acknowledged that free mobility inside the Union facilitates the relocation from one EU member-state to another. Generally, the Latvians had a positive attitude towards the EU and identified themselves with this space of belonging. This positive attitude towards the EU is part of the binary opposition West–East where the EU now is the continuation of what the West meant for Eastern Europeans during the Soviet times. These notions are opposite to the experience that the three Baltic states had during the Soviet period, both because of the authoritarian Soviet regime and because of the restriction of people's mobility. On the other hand, although the Greeks were quite negative towards Europe and the EU and they had no explicit identification with it, they linked themselves to Europe through exclusion. Third-country migrants (people from countries outside the EU) and Europe's neighbouring areas functioned as the Other that made it clear that Greeks were part of Europe and the EU respectively. For Latvians, the "Otherness" comes from an exclusion of Russia, if not from Europe as such then definitely from the EU, and the "sameness" is operated by their whiteness. This mechanism of enhancing a sentiment of belonging through exclusion is similar to the way the Islandic migrants position themselves in Norwegian society.[52] Besides their North European phenotype, which is a justification for including the Nordic regionalization has created another spatial entity in which free movement applies. The Nordic citizens enjoy more premium mobility and residence rights than the rest of the EU citizens inside the Nordic macroregion. Hence, this type of regionalization creates new spaces of inclusion and exclusion similar to the EU member states and third-country status.

50 A. Wangler, Rethinking History, Reframing Identity: Memory, Generations, and the Dynamics of National Identity in Poland, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 197.

51 M. Krzyzanowski, and F. Oberhuber, (Un)Doing Europe: Discourses and Practices of Negotiating the EU Constitution.

52 Guðjónsdóttir, We Blend in with the Crowd but They Don't, pp. 176–183.

Despite the fact that the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea regions are much smaller than Europe, the institutionalized framework of the EU creates among the migrants a feeling of belonging, but also a negative attitude and criticism against Europe. The Mediterranean and Baltic Seas are not particularly important for the interviewees and it seems that these regions do not affect their migratory experience in Sweden in terms of social ("Mediterraneans" or "Baltics" socialise with other "Mediterraneans" or "Baltics") and personal identity (regional self-presentation). An explanation to this could be that the national discourse is so strong that it covers other possible identification, such as the regional one. For the Latvians, the Baltic Sea is a space that unites the countries around it through a common past but also a space that divides the area between the progressive and backwards because of the Cold War division. However, the Latvians express a clear sentiment of belonging to a sub-region of the Baltic Sea, the Baltic states. They feel close to their neighbours in terms of culture and history, and they also noted that the Swedes also tend to see the three Baltic states as a common region although in a fuzzy way. For the Greeks, the Mediterranean Sea is a region with a great variant of cultural elements that they find difficult to identify with. They would group themselves mainly with the northern Mediterranean, without excluding, however, other parts of the region because of their long historical coexistence. A smaller region that some of the Greeks find more intimate is the Balkan Peninsula, again for cultural and historical reasons.

In conclusion, the sentiment of belonging to various spaces varies significantly in each individual in terms of density, but it is certainly more abstract, more blur and for that more inclusive. The participants showed some kind of attachment to all national, regional, and European spaces. However, an identity, which the migrants consciously bear and which attributes to the formation of their status in the host society, it is much more demanding than simple belonging. The construction of collective identities presupposes the existence of the "Other," of "insiders," and "outsiders,"[53] and this construction is more rigid inside an institutionalized space. Hence, only the national space succeeds in this and, secondly, the European one through the EU.

53 B. Stråth, Belonging and European Identity, in: G. Delanty (ed). Identity, Belonging, and Migration, Liverpool 2007, p. 37.