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**REGIONALISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE DIRECTION  
IN BELARUSIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH:  
BETWEEN RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAST  
AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE FUTURE**

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**Abstract:** The relevance of the study of regionalism in historical research is due to the active processes of territorial and transnational regionalization. In the modern world, regionalism appears in two forms: at the subnational level (territories within the structure of a state) and at the supranational level (interstate associations). In both cases, the main subject and reference point in the construction of a region is the nation-state. Thanks to historical research, regional projects undergo reification and begin to position themselves as objectively existing and self-sufficient spaces. Unfortunately, the reverse process associated with criticism and rethinking by historians of certain regional projects in modern historiography has not been observed. Deprived of access to the sea, small landlocked states are, more than others, forced to take part in regional associations, which suggests their historical grounding. The problem is that regional projects (concepts) are developed by philosophers, writers, and diplomats of hegemonic countries. Modern national historiographies of small European countries are forced to adapt their national historical narratives to regional projects imposed from outside. For the Republic of Belarus, a young landlocked European state, this means a difficult choice between five regional projects developed by European or Russian philosophers and writers that are associated with the concepts of Eastern Europe, the Western Rus', Eurasia, Central–Eastern Europe, and the Eastern European borderland.

**Keywords:** regionalism, social constructivism, Belarus, Eastern Europe, choice of a regional project.

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of region is one of the most common in modern humanities and social sciences: from the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and territorial development strategies to local history, popular science works, and tourist guides. This popularity has an inevitable negative side. The concept itself turns out to be unusually vague and is applied to various levels of social reality. A region can be understood as being some part of the territory of a unitary or federal state—a district, region, territory, land, state, province,

etc. (the subnational level). In the system of international political and economic relations, however, a region is usually considered to be a group of neighboring states that, to one degree or another, pursue a common foreign policy and carry out deep economic cooperation, at least within a free trade regime (the supranational level). European historical schools and national historiographies began addressing regional issues in the second half of the twentieth century. Prior to this, the most requested by readers of historical genres were the stories of rulers, wars, states, and nations. A social demand for regional histories emerged at the turn of the twenty-first century within the context of integration processes and a global world. By this time, most of the regional concepts—Western Europe and Eastern Europe, Central Europe, and the Balkans—had already been developed by philosophers, writers, and politicians. European national historiographers faced the problem of adapting or integrating national historical narratives to the influential external regional concept and the discourse of regionalism.

## 2. The genesis of the European discourse of regionalism

Ambivalence within the understanding of region makes it possible to clearly indicate the reference point relative to which the intellectual or administrative process of regionalization of a social, cultural, political, or economic space is carried out. This reference point is a modern state that officially delegates part of its powers either to the subnational level of territorial-administrative units, or to the supranational level of international associations. As a result, each region acquires a certain subjectivity, which is at the same time dialectically limited and enhanced by the economic and military-political potential of a particular state. As the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann noted, the main reason for modern regionalization is the ever deeper “functional differentiation” of society, which determines such multidirectional processes as “internal segmentation” and “functional crossing of territorial boundaries.”<sup>1</sup> As a historical analysis of the genesis and early evolution of the concept and socio-political practice of regionalization in European history shows, initially the concept of region was in opposition to the concept of the province. In ancient Rome, a region was understood as being a part of the original ethnic and state-political territory (e.g., the regions of Italy). Provinces were territories conquered and submitted to Roman power. Roman colonies were brought into the provincial territories with varying degrees of intensity. Over time, colonies of Roman citizens had an increasing influence on the social structure and political and cultural life of the provinces. The gradual Romanization of the provinces turned them into *de jure* regions of the Roman Empire, although *de facto* they continued to be called provinces. During the decline of the Roman Empire, the settlements in the barbarian federates on the lands of the Romanized provinces began to be perceived as special territories. Like the early Roman provinces, they differed from Roman settlements, but unlike provinces completely subordinate to Roman power, they had broad autonomy.<sup>2</sup> In medieval feudal Europe, the concept of region lost its meaning because each region was a unique province, and there was no normative or unifying state

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<sup>1</sup> Luhmann 1997: 808–811.

<sup>2</sup> Donskih 2021: 6–8.

center. The Holy Roman Empire was too weak and amorphous. The Holy See (through the *Romanus pontifex*) was inclined to follow political changes when creating new dioceses rather than impose fundamentally new spatial structures.

The concept of region was again in demand in the nineteenth century, with the formation and strengthening of nation-states. It is significant that Paul Vidal de La Blache, the founder of French historical and humanitarian geography, was the first to solve this problem. He drew attention to the fact that dozens of small departments into which the French Revolution had divided the historical provinces of the Bourbon's Kingdom did not form effective and viable territorial-administrative units. The development of France began to be reduced to the glory and success of the capital Paris alone. Vidal proposed forming larger regions on the basis of common geographical and historically developed economic and cultural features, from which an "ensemble of France" should be formed and should be characterized by the "harmony and balance of parts." It is noteworthy that, having devoted his main work to the subnational level of regionalization, Vidal also touched upon the problem of the supranational level. According to Vidal, France is located at the junction of two macro-regions that are unique in all respects: the Mediterranean (southern Europe) and the Continent (northern Europe) as historical and geographical regions.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the concept of region acts, historically and functionally, not so much as a descriptive concept but as a normative one and as an instrument of sociocultural constructivism. Within this context, a significant problem implicitly emerges. Regional zoning is based on a set of features that are recognized by scientists as being significant and sustainable. This is the fundamental difference between regionalization and the usual allocation of certain areas according to one attribute (artifact, cultural form, social institution, etc.). This kind of simple regionalization is a priori functional and does not pretend to reveal root causes or entities. The complex nature of regionalization involuntarily endows allocated and designated spaces with deep meaning. There is an involuntary reification or "objectification" of the intellectual construction, which begins to be perceived as a real object. If the construction of this or that region turns out to be productive, then soon administrative practices, narratives, and intellectual traditions endow the region with its own history, cultural identity, and even political subjectivity. A striking example of this kind of reification is the regional concepts of Europe and the West. It is noteworthy that the complementary Other for the concept of the West—the East—can be deconstructed as an intellectual phantom, but the "Western World" is already an undeniable political, economic, and cultural reality for most politicians and journalists whose ideas, to a greater or lesser extent, influence public opinion in Third World countries.<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious that the process of regionalization is a process of development and appropriation of a certain space by the "center"—a dynamically developing large city and/or region (the subnational level), or an influential state claiming hegemony in the emerging region (the supranational level). At first, regionalization is an exclusively intellectual and symbolic project. At this stage, "conflicts of regional identities" are often observed when several "centers" try to draw peripheral territories into the orbit of their regional projects.

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<sup>3</sup> Vidal de La Blache 1979: 29–38.

<sup>4</sup> Ferguson 2011: 294 – 299; Said 1995: 32–35.

Over time, successful regional projects are institutionalized through legalized territorial-administrative divisions or international treaties, and failed regional projects are “surrendered to the archives” of world or national history.

It is noteworthy that in European international relations between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, blocs and alliances were often built not regionally but transnationally, with distant states pitted against neighbors with whom there were territorial conflicts. As examples one can point to the famous Franco–Turkish alliance against the Habsburgs formed in the early sixteenth century, or to attempts to establish an alliance between the Austrian Habsburgs and the Russian Tsardom against the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the mid-sixteenth century. Relatively stable and effective regional blocs emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries due to the processes of globalization. In the context of global competition, the old territorial disputes of nation-states have become too small, and the need to jointly defend similar interests is urgently needed. On this basis of joint opposition to global challenges and threats, regional blocs have begun to form which the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has aptly described as “continental regimes.”<sup>5</sup> An acute awareness of the commonality of interests within the framework of such associations makes it possible to predict a trend toward the development, substantiation, and implementation of new supranational regional projects in the mass consciousness.

In the early twenty-first century, Jürgen Habermas proposed a distinguishment between two levels within the world system: the high or supranational level and the middle or transnational level. In this context, it can be assumed that the lowest level is still that of the nation-state. According to Habermas, the transnational level of the world system is based on a complex system of agreements that coordinate joint actions and long-term cooperation between several nation-states. The supranational level presupposes the presence of global organizations that limit and direct national sovereignty. Habermas admits that, at present, the supranational level remains wishful thinking. It has been replaced by the hegemony of one state: the United States. Real integration processes for the formation of regions take place only at the transnational level through interstate agreements.<sup>6</sup> Thus, when speaking about the construction or formation of regions, it is necessary to consider the interests of the main actors in this process, which include around two hundred nation-states and only one global hegemon. Since the economic, technological, and demographic capabilities of individual states are not comparable with each other, the process of forming regions within a global world will include cultural export and economic and technological co-optation among the leading “global players,” and adaptation and compromise among the majority of nation-states.

### 3. Reception of the discourse of regionalism outside the Western core of Europe

In my opinion, it is a mistake to consider regionalization from the point of view of the primordialism of regions that, in the process of historical development, reveal their original essence. It is more productive to analyze regionalization from the point of view of

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<sup>5</sup> Habermas 2004: 135.

<sup>6</sup> Habermas 2004: 134–136.

the subjects and initiators of this process. This makes it possible to clearly identify political, economic, and sociocultural centers that form a regional structure around them. For example, in recent Belarusian historiography, one can find a number of works, including monographs and collections of academic articles following the results of conferences focused on the Western region of Belarus, Western Belarus, Eastern or Western Polesia, or Belarusian Polesia.<sup>7</sup> However, there is not similar body of work devoted to Eastern Belarus. It can be concluded that, in Belarusian historiography, there is an unspoken consensus on the representation of Brest, Gomel, and Grodno as regional centers (the regions of Western Belarus, Western Polesia, Eastern Polesia). With regard to the Brest region, one can even speak of “double regionalization,” since its territory fits into both current subnational regional discourses in Belarus: Polesia and Western Belarus. At the same time, Eastern Belarus is not perceived and is not represented as a region. For Belarusian historiography, the lands around Polotsk, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Mstislavl and Minsk are the historical and ethno-cultural “center” of Belarus and its foundation as a sovereign state and a modern nation. The historical and cultural heritage of this territory is primarily national rather than regional.

A similar “subjective approach” to regionalization at the supranational level makes it possible to point to the Western Europe of the Enlightenment as a historical entity interested in the formation of its Others: Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, and most other macro-regions. These mental constructions are necessary not only for cognition, but also to serve as “Others” in opposition to Western Europe.<sup>8</sup> The emergence and rapid development of the German Empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave rise to a need for the formation of the concept of Middle or Central Europe as a space for German political, economic, and cultural hegemony.<sup>9</sup> The defeat of Germany in two world wars led to the decomposition of the concept of Central Europe and the integration of Germany into Western European structures. Middle or Central Europe was cut by the notion of the Iron Curtain, which deprived the concept of an obvious referent.

The historical realities of the European continent during the second half of the twentieth century was often interpreted as a confrontation between the capitalist West and the communist East. In order to break out of the symbolic circle of Eastern Europe, from the 1950s to the 1970s opposition-minded groups of Hungarian, Polish, and Czech intellectuals attempted to justify the existence of a third European historical region—Central–Eastern Europe—that gravitated toward the West, but periodically fell under the influence of the East. The most correct Hungarian version of this concept recognized that the social structures of Central and Eastern Europe were rather Eastern European, but the cultural influence was predominantly Western European. Together with a lack of natural resources, which was a significant factor for development after the start of the Industrial Revolution, this led to many tragic pages in the history of the region during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>10</sup>

In the early twenty-first century, a process of rethinking and reformatting the concept of Central–Eastern Europe began after the post-socialist states of Eastern Europe entered

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<sup>7</sup> *Zahodni ryegiyon Belarusi vachyma gistorykau i krayaznaucau*: 11–18.

<sup>8</sup> Wollf 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Naumann 1917.

<sup>10</sup> Szücs 1983: 176–178.

the European Union. The region began to be positioned as a basis for the “New Europe” (as opposed to the “Old Europe”). This region is based on the common historical and cultural heritage of the medieval “Little Europe” (referred to as *Europa Minor*, meaning the kingdoms that adopted Christianity around 1000) and the close international cooperation between Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia (the countries of the Visegrád Group, or the V4). In this new model of regional differentiation in Europe, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine began to be interpreted as a “borderland,” which pushed the borders of Eastern Europe on the new mental maps even further to the east. This process essentially equated the Russian Federation with Eastern Europe.<sup>11</sup> It is significant that the concept of Central–Eastern Europe had to compete to some extent with the Scandinavian or Baltic regional projects but not with the project of a new Eastern Europe, which remained a typical colonial object of representation and interpretation without its own voice.

It should be emphasized that the centers of the global world do not suffer from the problem of “regional creation” as a means of self-understanding and positioning. In an era of globalization, this particular occupation is the lot of outsiders. As the German scholar Sebastian Conrad has aptly noted, in regard to the narratives of global history, the problem of one’s own uniqueness is the concern of researchers from countries such as Germany, Russia, and Japan, which largely develop in their own way. Scholars from the USA or Great Britain, on the other hand, are more interested in the question of their exclusivity—a complex of geographical, historical, and sociocultural reasons that allowed these countries to “create the modern global world.”<sup>12</sup>

For Second and Third World countries, the inevitable process of regional identification is primarily concerned with the choice between presentation and representation. We talk most often about the need to adapt a previously articulated representation to one’s current interests and goals. In the case of a presentation, the construction of a region is a creative process of local (national and regional) elites, who thus try to position, defend, and promote their national and/or regional interests. In the case of representation, the model for and image of the region are often brought in from outside and are followed by the reception and appropriation (internalization) of a particular regional discourse by the local community.

As a rule, old imperial discourses are what is behind the representation, and which are rejected by national elites but are based on such a deep historical tradition that it is not possible to quickly eliminate them from the public consciousness. For example, for modern Russian socio-political thought, the concept of the “Near Baltic Region” (*Прибалтика*) as a subregion consisting of three states (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) is still relevant. At the same time, the intellectual and political elites of these states clearly define their regional affiliation as the Baltic. It is obvious that participation in the Baltic region allows Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to position themselves as proper European countries, and the concept of the Near Baltic Region correlates them with the space of Eastern Europe, which the national elites of these countries would like to distance themselves from as much as possible.<sup>13</sup>

The problem often lies in the fact that for states with relatively low economic and

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<sup>11</sup> *Cywilizacja europejska: różnorodność i podziały*: 157–162.

<sup>12</sup> Conrad 2016: 41.

<sup>13</sup> Valodz’kin 2022: 349–360.

demographic potential, the number of “regional projects” of their own identification is much greater than for “major players” on the regional and global stage. For example, for Sweden, the regional choice is limited to just two projects: Northern Europe (“Nordism”) and/or the Baltic region.<sup>14</sup> For Poland, the problem of regional identity has been closely connected with the concept of “Central–Eastern Europe” for the last thirty years. It has allowed the country to distance itself from the classical Enlightenment concept of the ever-lagging-behind Eastern Europe (a sphere of permanent Russian influence), and to also join forces with its neighbors (the Visegrád Group: Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic). It is noteworthy that British discourse still emphasizes the eastern vector of this region—“East Central Europe” (rather than “Central and Eastern Europe”), which is an obvious tribute to the classical established discourse of Eastern Europe.<sup>15</sup>

The issue of choosing a regional project and its adaptation to national historical and cultural traditions and the priorities of socioeconomic development is especially acute for small states that are deprived of access to the sea. Even theoretically, landlocked countries do not have the opportunity to form direct global links (transnational network cooperation) and are doomed to deep regional integration with their neighbors. Under these conditions, the most effective strategy for small landlocked states is to interact with several regional associations, which would allow them to maintain a greater degree of national independence.

#### 4. Belarusian historiography before choosing a regional project

The Republic of Belarus is a vivid example of a complex search by a landlocked country to position and integrate itself into the global world while taking into account its national, historical, and cultural characteristics and development priorities. Belarus is a small European state that gained independence in 1991 after the collapse of the USSR. The case of Belarus is interesting because the country has a rich historical past but does not have a clear and widely known historical narrative about its national statehood. Between the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries, Belarusian lands were part of multinational states: Ancient or Kievan Rus' (also known as the Rurik Empire), the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, all these states had disappeared from the political map of the world, but they have generally recognized political heirs: the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Poland, and the Russian Federation. Therefore, as a nation-state, the Republic of Belarus forms its own historical narrative through understanding the role and place of the Belarusian lands in the large multinational states of the past.<sup>16</sup>

It is possible to escape from under the umbrella of historical narratives of neighboring countries with the help of a regional project that reveals the meaning and role of Belarus in a broader historical context. With regard to Belarus today, there are around five more or less well-known regional projects that perceive, explain, and determine the context of the country’s positioning in the European arena in their own way:

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<sup>14</sup> Makarychev 2003: 149.

<sup>15</sup> Wolff 1994.

<sup>16</sup> *Istorija belorusskoj gosudarstvennosti*, Tom 1: 5.

1) Belarus as part of Eastern Europe: In this project, Eastern Europe is seen as a historical region lagging behind and/or catching up with the classical West (Western Europe). Historically, this is the first and most influential form of regional discourse, which relies on the high authority of the social philosophy of the Enlightenment. Since the late eighteenth century, liberal, Marxist, and neo-liberal intellectuals comprehended the past, present, and future of Belarus through the concept of “Eastern Europe” as something that needed to be overcome and modernized.<sup>17</sup> There is a full-fledged discourse regarding Eastern Europe that is based on an almost three-hundred-year-old intellectual tradition of opposition between the West and the East of Europe. This axiom has inspired so much historical research that Western and Eastern Europe are perceived by most scientists, politicians, and journalists not as products of reification but as objectively existing entities. For example, the well-known British historian Norman Davies quite reasonably mapped at least seven borderlines dividing the west and east of Europe, ranging from the limes of the Roman Empire and Christian denominations to the industrialization of the nineteenth century and the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. Only in one division was Belarus included in the western part of the continent: beyond the line of Ottoman advance and the spread of Islam.<sup>18</sup>

2) Belarus as Western Rus' and as a part of a unique East Slavic Orthodox civilization: The discourse of “Western Russianism” (*Западнорусизм*) has been known since the late nineteenth century. Initially, it was aimed at the revival of “primordially Russian principles” in the Western Territory of the Russian Empire (the Russian World in the modern interpretation) through a strengthening of East Slavic unity.<sup>19</sup> Currently, Western Russianism as a regional project is presented in Belarus in the academic community at less generously funded universities outside the capital city seeking financial support from Russian academic networks and funds, and by active internet resources (Regnum, Western Rus', etc.), most of which were blocked by the Belarusian authorities in early 2020.<sup>20</sup>

3) Belarus as a member of the Eurasian project: Eurasianism as an ideological trend emerged in the 1920s and 1930s among Russian emigrants and became widely known in the post-Soviet space by the late twentieth century. It was based on the idea of the uniqueness of the “Great Steppe,” which was neither Europe nor Asia and had followed a special path of historical development. Paradoxically, the Eurasian discourse, which occupies a marginal position in the Belarussian intellectual space, correlates perfectly with the republic’s foreign policy in the early twenty-first century. For example, in *The History of Belarusian Statehood in Five Volumes*, prepared by the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (2018–2020), the concept of Eurasia was never even mentioned!<sup>21</sup>

4) Belarus as part of Central–Eastern Europe: The regional concept of Central–Eastern Europe was developed in the late twentieth century by emigrants and dissidents, mainly of Hungarian and Polish origin from the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Central–Eastern Europe was seen as the real Europe, which, as a multinational region and

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<sup>17</sup> *Istorija belorussoj gosudarstvennosti*. Tom 2: 198–209.

<sup>18</sup> Davies 1996: 18.

<sup>19</sup> C'vikevich 1993.

<sup>20</sup> *Sovremennye global'nyje transformacii i problema istoricheskogo samoopredelenija vostochnoslavjanskich narodov* 2009.

<sup>21</sup> *Istorija belorussoj gosudarstvennosti*. V 5 tomah.



a long-standing target of aggression from the German and Russian empires, had fallen behind the communist Iron Curtain by sheer force of historical circumstances.<sup>22</sup> At present, this discourse has become widespread, even to the point of institutionalization within the Visegrád Group and the EU Eastern Partnership program. Up until 2020, the concept of Central–Eastern Europe was often used by Belarusian diplomats, journalists, and activists from non-profit organizations. Belarusian historians have occasionally used this concept but have not tried to uncover its historical content.

5) Belarus as a part of the Eastern European borderland: This is the only regional project that was developed in the early twenty-first century by scholars associated with the European Humanities University (Minsk, after 2004 in Vilnius) with the participation of Belarusian intellectuals organized around Pavel Tserashkovich and Ihar Babkou. They considered Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova to be a unique “large borderland” located between Europe and Russia with its own historical destiny.<sup>23</sup> This project did not find sympathy or support among Belarusian political elites, who took chose to follow various vectors of integration into broader regional associations within the global world: the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (official vector), or the European Union (opposition vector).

It is significant that all of these regional concepts were developed by philosophers and writers from Europe or Russia. When summarizing the historical path of the Belarusian nation, Belarusian academic historiography uses exclusively classical Enlightenment concepts of Europe, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe. In the general publication *The History of Belarusian Statehood in Five Volumes* (2018–2020), Europe is mentioned 146 times, Eastern Europe 71 times, Western Europe 27 times, and Central Europe 20 times.<sup>24</sup> The concept of Central–Eastern Europe was used by Belarusian historians only four times and only in the second volume, which is dedicated to the history of Belarus during the Russian Empire (from the late eighteenth until the early twentieth century). Briefly explaining this position, the editors of the publication noted that the Belarusian people are an East Slavic community living in the “geographical center of Europe, on a civilizational fault line, and at an important geopolitical crossroads.”<sup>25</sup> The concepts of the Western Rus', Eurasia, and the Eastern European borderland have therefore remained unclaimed by Belarusian academic historiography.

Thus, regionalism in historical research is primarily an important element of constructivist practices that seek through historical arguments to position regional structures as objectively existing sociocultural phenomena, inextricably linked (relative to the subnational level) or organically interconnected (relative to the supranational level) with a certain state. This fact does not detract from the obvious heuristic potential of the regional approach to historical research (at least as a promising hypothesis) and its ability to identify stable connections and mutually beneficial relationships in the past within certain sociocultural spaces. National historiographies very often neglect or underestimate this

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<sup>22</sup> *Historia Europy środkowo-Wschodniej* 2000; Szücs 1995.

<sup>23</sup> *Crossroads. The Journal for the Studies of Eastern European Borderland* 2006; *После империи: исследование восточноевропейского Пограничья* 2005.

<sup>24</sup> *Istorija beloruskoj gosudarstvennosti. V 5 tomah.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1: 4.

aspect. Unfortunately, for most countries the choice of a regional project does not mean substantiating their own presentation but instead adapting to a representation imposed from outside. All significant regional projects have been developed by philosophers, writers, and politicians from the leading Western states. Another significant issue is related to the fact that all regional historical research is aimed at proving regional concepts developed outside of historical science. In this case, political order consistently prevails over historical analysis. To date, there is not a single historical study worthy of mention on the basis of which this or that regional project could be rethought or adjusted. There is no “feedback” when, according to the results of historical research, there is revision, criticism, or rejection of any regional project as being inconsistent with historical tradition. Post-colonial criticism reveals the cultural and historical conditionality of various kinds of regional projects, but this does not mean that regions do not have cultural and historical foundations and socioeconomic prospects. Moreover, small countries are interested in the formation of effective and equal regional associations that will allow them to go beyond the negative discourse of peoples “forever dependent” on their more successful coastal neighbors.

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**СЈАРГЕИ ДАНСКИХ**  
Државни универзитет Јанка Купала у Гродно

**РЕГИОНАЛИЗАМ КАО АЛТЕРНАТИВНИ ПРАВАЦ  
БЕЛОРУСКИХ ИСТОРИЈСКИХ ИСТРАЖИВАЊА:  
ИЗМЕЂУ РЕКОНСТРУКЦИЈЕ ПРОШЛОСТИ  
И КОНСТРУКЦИЈЕ БУДУЋНОСТИ**

**Резиме**

Релевантност проучавања регионализма у историјским истраживањима је последица активних процеса територијалне и транснационалне регионализације. У савременом свету регионализам се јавља у два облика: на субнационалном нивоу (територије у структури државе) и на наднационалном нивоу (међудржавна удружења). У оба случаја, главни субјект и референтна тачка у изградњи региона је национална држава. Захваљујући историјским истраживањима, регионални пројекти пролазе кроз реификацију и почињу да се позиционирају као објективно постојећи и самодовољни простори. Нажалост, у савременој историографији не уочава се обрнут процес везан за критику и промишљање историчара појединих регионалних пројеката. Лишене излаза на море, мале „без копнене“ државе су више од других принуђене да учествују у регионалним асоцијацијама, што указује на њихову историјску утемељеност. Проблем је што регионалне пројекте (концепте) развијају филозофи, писци и дипломате хегемонистичких земаља. Савремене националне историографије малих европских земаља су принуђене да своје националне историјске наративе прилагођавају регионалним пројектима наметнутим споља. За младу европску државу без излаза на море – Републику Белорусију – ово имплицира тежак избор између пет регионалних пројеката које су развили европски или руски филозофи и писци, а који су повезани са концептима Источне Европе, Западне Русије, Евроазије, Централно-Источна Европа и источноевропска граница.

**Кључне речи:** регионализам, друштвени конструктивизам, Белорусија, Источна Европа, избор регионалног пројекта.

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