Atlantic Future
Shaping a New Hemisphere for the 21st century
Africa, Europe and the Americas

Jordi Bacaria and Laia Tarragona (eds.)
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Shaping a New Hemisphere for the 21st century: Africa, Europe and the Americas

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This monograph is part of the Atlantic Future project, financed by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme. It is an important part of Atlantic Future, as the monograph provides a synthesis of the project, along with its main results and an update on the research work carried out over the past three years. The monograph, which forms part of the project's outreach goal, is intended to reach an interested public, academics and political and economic decision-makers, who will be able to see the Atlantic Space as a laboratory for globalisation and for the multilateral solutions with which to face the world's new challenges. The Atlantic Future project has made an analysis of the state of affairs in the Atlantic Space in relation to the global space, presenting its evolution and trends in four main areas: the economy and trade flows, energy and natural resources, institutions and citizens, and security. Beginning with this analysis, possible future scenarios have been envisaged with the aim of using this information as the basis for greater knowledge of the Atlantic Space. The objective of Atlantic Future, as set out from the start, has been to study patterns of cooperation in the Atlantic Space and present strategies on how the EU can involve itself in transatlantic relations in the context of the new redistribution of power that is unfolding and the rebalancing of relations around and within the Atlantic Space. An answer was to be provided to the question of what the Atlantic is, through understanding the space itself and its conceptualisation as a space of international relations, comparing it with other oceans and setting it in the context of its own history.

Throughout the project the Atlantic Space has been affected by various events which would have been impossible to predict at the start. Others, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations, which began in 2013, had been in preparation for years. The negotiations of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) were also already underway at the time, although significant doubts surrounded their conclusion. Nevertheless, in October 2015, the TPP negotiations were concluded while, by contrast, only slow progress was being made on the TTIP. The TTIP is an agreement that fully engages with the concept of the Atlantic Space, although it is limited to the North Atlantic, and, by virtue of being a bilateral agreement between the EU and the United
States, leaves out all the countries of the South, as well as those, such as Canada and Mexico, which form part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Not only did the negotiations on the TPP outstrip those on the TTIP in speed of conclusion, but the TPP itself also responds to a different conceptual approach. The process began with the existing Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and an exclusively Asian group of countries, but in the end it was the United States and Japan – not present at the beginning – who drove the agreement’s conclusion. The dynamic in the Atlantic Space is very different. For the moment, no project exists for a North-South agreement of this kind, whether promoted by the EU or the US, or initiated by the South, which for the moment, restricts itself to bilateral initiatives such as that between Mexico and the EU, to the long negotiations between the EU and the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), to the free trade agreement (FTA) between Morocco and the United States and to specific cooperation agreements between Brazil and African countries such as Angola, Mozambique and South Africa.

Among the unexpected events directly connected to the EU and the Atlantic Space was the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In November 2013, the protests against the Ukrainian Government’s decision not to sign the association agreement with the European Union began. The so-called Maidan revolution would lead, in March 2014, to the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and to the conflict in the east of Ukraine. These events prompted the EU and US to impose sanctions on Russia. What is more, the development of terrorism into territorial control beginning in Iraq and Syria and moving into sub-Saharan areas also affects the countries in the Atlantic Space. Terror in various European countries due to the terrorist attacks in 2015 and those that have taken place in Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon and Mali affect the Atlantic Space from different security angles. In particular, the attacks in Paris on the 13 November could mark a before and after on the international scene, above all following the activation of article 42.7 of the EU Treaty, referring to the aid and assistance of a member state facing armed aggression, activated for the first time by the EU Foreign Affairs Council. This will affect the Atlantic Space despite the non-invocation of NATO’s article 5, wherein an armed attack against one or various signatory states, whether in Europe or North America, shall be considered a direct attack on all. The incident in which Turkey – a NATO member – downed a Russian fighter-bomber in November this year gives us an idea of the proximity, commitment and risks in the Atlantic Space resulting from the conflict in Syria and the terrorist actions of the so-called Islamic State (IS).

In the economic field, many of the opportunities in the Atlantic Space relate to globalisation. The fragmentation of production and global value chains (GVC) occurs, largely, in the north of the Atlantic Space. Nevertheless, the levels reached by GVC in Latin American countries remain below those in Europe and Asia. Of course, Africa as a whole has much less developed global value chains. The incorporation of economies into GVC provides advantages such as technology transfer and stability in manufacturing exports with greater added value. However, to achieve these objectives, transport and logistical infrastructure is required. The technological revolution in transport is the result of the container revolution of the 1970s and the new information and
communication technologies developed at the end of the century. The advances in transport logistics, which are at the root of the fragmentation of production and GVC, are less developed in the southern Atlantic Basin than in the Asia-Pacific area. Despite these differences between the Pacific and Atlantic Basins, Asia and, above all, China is inserting itself into the Atlantic Space to provide itself with energy and food resources from both Africa and South America. Asia is present in the Atlantic, which is another sign of how globalisation affects the space. This is why the Atlantic can and should be a laboratory for globalisation in the relational and institutional field.

A significant factor exerting a negative influence on the economic development of the Atlantic Space relates to security. Guinea-Bissau and Haiti provide examples of the illicit trafficking trap into which fragile states fall. Likewise, terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Boko Haram benefit from the impossibility of territorial control by more powerful states such as Algeria and Nigeria and the weakness of states such as Mauritania and Niger. Piracy in coastal waters and ports (as opposed to the Indian Ocean high seas) is spreading and 25% of pirate attacks reported occur in the Gulf of Guinea. The low level of institutional and economic development and insufficient North-South coordination are the limitations faced by the Atlantic Space, despite some South-South initiatives such as the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), created in 1986 by a Brazilian initiative to promote regional cooperation and maintain peace and security in the region. Energy in the Atlantic Space, in turn, continues to present the duality of providing potential benefits because of its availability as well as real associated risks because of its impact on the environment. The exploitation of shale gas and the availability of oil in America and Africa pose equal risks to the Atlantic environment, regardless of whether energy prices fall and demand rises, or whether prices reach the last decade’s levels and the exploitation of the resources is incentivised.

The main challenge in the Atlantic Space that has become clear throughout the investigation is the need to establish overall governance in which the North has no primacy over the South. A large trade and investment area, exceeding that of the TTIP, which could be extended to environmental and security agreements would be a good start. Concluding the TTIP negotiations would be a positive development as would give the agreement greater scope by having other countries sign up to it, as set out in the European Commission’s Communication to the European Council and Parliament. The mentioned document, entitled “Trade for all”, proposes supplementing FTA with appropriate mechanisms to allow other interested countries to sign up, although the agreement of signatory parties is mandatory. The European Union, which has already used this approach in the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) and the agreement with Colombia and Peru in 2012 to which Peru signed up in 2014, should be more proactive in agreements involving South Atlantic countries. In the same document, the European Commission proposes advancing the issue of dispute settlement in a first stage that includes “modern provisions in bilateral agreements, putting stronger emphasis on the right of the state to regulate, something which was not sufficiently highlighted in the past. EU bilateral agreements will begin the transformation of the old investor-state dispute settlement into a public Investment Court System composed of a tribunal of first instance and an
appeal tribunal operating like traditional courts. The proposal’s scope is broad and long-lasting as “the Commission will engage with partners to build consensus for a fully-fledged, permanent International Investment Court”, an objective that, if achieved, would have global repercussions.

In conclusion, in analysing the challenges that the Atlantic Space presents, which are set out in this monograph, they are not much different, in general, from those posed to the rest of the world by globalisation. Nevertheless, their specificity in a complex space such as the Atlantic and the multiplicity of actors involved means new solutions must be found that are multilateral in nature and have a vision of the future, for both actors in the North and those in the South.

We would like to thank all the authors for their contributions to this monograph, as well as the thirteen members of the project consortium without whom we would not have been able to reach the culmination of the project.
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE ATLANTIC’S EVOLUTION

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Introduction

In the last two centuries, several key moments have defined the Atlantic Basin’s history that help us understand its present. This chapter endeavours to present a comprehensive overview of this evolution, pointing out key events that set up the historical links that still play a role in the Atlantic. In the first section, following a chronological approach, it shows how the American and the French Revolutions were milestones in the balance of power in this area. Since then, a division between Europe, the Americas and Africa has evolved beyond the common historical, cultural and linguistic ground that composes the Atlantic. The second section attempts to show how human flows, economic exchanges and energy resources in the Atlantic remain the chief common drivers shaping the division of the Atlantic, contributing, paradoxically, to an interdependent evolution of the basin even during periods of political separation. Finally, the third section focuses on the 20th century, which is marked by several attempts at rapprochement between the various sides of the Atlantic. Following the rise of the United States as hegemonic power, this process led to a greater closeness between both sides of the North Atlantic, yet failed to yield results due to the gradual emergence of new powers in the South Atlantic. The Atlantic is still a heterogeneous and divided region, mostly due to geopolitical and ideological factors. However, its multilateral tradition and the development of different regional integration schemes might help to foster cooperation between the various shores.
The role of historical links in the Atlantic

An overview of the balance of power in the Atlantic Space makes it clear that before us we have a deeply interconnected area that evolved from common historical ground. The concept of the Atlantic developed by Jacques Pirenne, identifying it as a “European sea”, controlled from the 16th to the 18th century by Portugal, Spain, England, France and the Netherlands, somehow still prevails (Pirenne 1948). However, it would be naïve to regard the Atlantic as a united, homogenous area. Within the Atlantic region, there are concrete elements of globalisation, with people, commodities, technologies of transportation and communication creating specific interdependence links between the four shores of the Atlantic Space.

Atlantic studies scholars generally acknowledge that the end of the early modern period in the late 18th century was a milestone for the space. Of course, defining end dates is a complex issue and historical processes can be protracted in time, but it appears clear that, after 1750, the colonial, cultural and economic ties between Africa, Europe and the Americas began to gradually change. In this sense, the American Revolution is seen as an “opening salvo” in the transformation of the Americas, which had repercussions in Europe and Africa during the long 19th century (Gabaccia 2004). Additionally, if the American Revolution can be considered a starting point for this transformation, the subsequent French Revolution (1789) definitely signals the decisive political rupture between America and Europe (Thornton 2012). Between 1811 and 1830, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil all became independent states. As the almost immediate proclamation of republics in the former Spanish colonies of America seem to show four decades after the American and French Revolutions, these political independences would not have been possible without the revolutions (Chasteen 2008; Elliott 2006; Costa 1999).

The influence of the American and French Revolutions on Latin America was twofold. On the one hand, the majority of the newly independent republics adopted the political and institutional system of the US (division of powers, strong federalism, phrasing of the constitutional texts), albeit always “adapted to local and social conditions” (Thornton 2012). However, ideologically, the egalitarian principle of the French revolution prevailed, as reflected in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which inspired the republican leaders in South America (Klooster 2009). As Donna Gabaccia puts it, in the wake of anti-colonial and republican evolutions, ideologies of nation-building also attempted to rewrite Atlantic cultural connections. The United States initially announced its intention of building a new American civilisation independent of Europe, while Latin American nations more often promised to refine European civilisation in a new environment (Gabaccia 2004).

The independence of the United States from the British Crown and the end of the Portuguese and Spanish empires marked the division between the old and the new worlds. In 1823, the US declared the Monroe Doctrine, consolidating the Western Hemisphere’s autonomy and striving to prevent any attempt at restoring European power in America (Marcos 2014). In the following decades, the separation be-
between the Americas and Europe was further established as part of the international status quo, assured by an informal alliance between the United States and Great Britain (Morgenthau 1962). In fact, the Great Rapprochement experienced in US-British relations in the final years of the 19th century enabled a convergence of interests between these two powers. The role of the US as the power responsible for American security was gradually recognised and, after the Spanish loss of Cuba in 1898, European possessions in the Americas became residual.

At the same time, in Atlantic Africa, the second half of the 19th century witnessed a new period of European imperial expansion. Triggered by the Industrial Revolution and a direct consequence of the growing competition between the European powers, the scramble for Africa changed the type of colonialism in practice until then. In search of new markets, filled with a sense of superiority granted by their control of technology and supported by the latest scientific developments, the Europeans embarked on a process of penetration and occupation of territories inside the continent. With the end of the slave trade, Africa quickly became the centre of dispute between European powers, who had not yet recovered from their colonial losses in the Americas, in a process that established many of the frontiers that currently divide the majority of African countries (Hobsbawm 1989; Simms 2013).

**Human flows, economic drivers and energy resources in the Atlantic**

Despite the many changes it has suffered over time, the Atlantic can still be seen as an interdependent area. The region’s history was shaped by a variety of coherent and constant elements that can be traced in several dimensions. After the end of formal European political dominance over the Americas, in terms of economic exchanges, free and unfree migratory tendencies and the circulation of ideas, the Atlantic was, during the whole 19th century, a highly interdependent area. Indeed, notwithstanding its formal independence, the American republics were dependent until the early 20th century on “European capital, European commerce and European influence” (Rothschild 2013). There was, in fact, a sense of community shared by the two shores of the Atlantic, in particular between Latin America and the European powers.

As Marcos, Sanches and Farrés (2015) have pointed out, one of the constant and more influential foundations of the Atlantic as a region was the free and forced migration movement from Africa and Europe to the Americas during the 19th and 20th centuries. Technology and communications, the development of the modern capital and economic system, new migrations, cultural exchanges and the end of the slave trade and slavery itself caused the Atlantic to change drastically over the 19th century, in terms of both transcontinental and transnational connections. The transition around the 1850s from sail to steam brought about an increase in mass migrations from Europe to the Americas, which by the end of the 19th century were connected by a particularly dense and secure transatlantic network of high-speed communications. Between 1820 and 1920, the world experienced explosive population growth that led migratory waves of European citizens to Canada, the US and Latin American countries.
This movement was also a response to the end of the slave trade which, between the 16th and 19th centuries, nurtured the Atlantic economic system. There is no doubt that the empires and the economies of the early Atlantic were built on the slave trade that connected Africa, Europe and the Americas. By the late 18th century, around 2.5 million black slaves were working on plantation complexes that produced valuable commodities such
as sugar, tobacco, coffee, cocoa, indigo and cotton in the Americas and Africa (Benjamin 2009). Due both to ideological and political issues – religious reasons and the impact of the Enlightenment, as well as the slave rebellion in Santo Domingo after the French Revolution – this system came to an end in the second half of the 19th century, with the emancipation of slaves in the United States between 1863 and 1865, Cuba in 1886 and Brazil in 1888. Still, the abolition of slavery in the Americas did not entail the end of slavery and forced labour in Africa, which was enforced by the imperial scramble for Africa in the late 19th century. In the Americas, if the collapse of slavery meant freedom for Africans and the African-Americans, it certainly did not put an end to racial discrimination. In other words, “freedom, however, did not often bring full independence, prosperity, justice or civil rights. In their different national homes, the former slaves and their progeny were generally desperately poor and occupied the bottom rung of society’s ladder” (ibid.).

![Figure 3. Overview of the slave trade out of Africa (1500-1900)](image)

Source: Eltis and Richardson 2010.

Nevertheless, the end of slavery and the massive new flows of Europeans to the Americas was a process with a political impact, as it indirectly unleashed the rapid industrialisation and conquest of the western United States by new free farmers. In the end, it was responsible for the rise of the US as a power at the beginning of the 20th century (Valladão 2015). On the other hand, this process was responsible for the growth of an Atlantic mobility that still prevails.
in this area, albeit in a different shape. The decolonisation process of the second half of the 20th century was responsible for this shift and led to the emergence of a new trend of mobility from African countries to their former European metropolises. At the same time Latin American workers looked to the US in search of better economic and social conditions. In the last twenty years, the liberalisation of trade and population flows in the North Atlantic has reinforced this South-North movement (Campos 2014). Closely connected to the human flows, the concentration of economic resources within the Atlantic Space can also be seen as a factor of unity and convergence. Generally accepted historical evidence clearly supports the idea that the Atlantic is an interdependent economic space where trade and investment have flourished to concentrate an unprecedented amount of wealth, particularly in the North Atlantic.

The economic transformation of the “long 19th century” was characterised by a growing process of dependence and interdependence between the various shores of the Atlantic. During this century, the old structure of the Atlantic exchanges prevailed: “European hunger for Latin American primary products was balanced by Latino craving for capital and industrial and luxury goods from Europe and, later on, from the United States” (Valladão 2015). This network of dependence...
was most poignantly shown in the dramatic effects of the Great Depression. As Mary Nolan puts it, “the depression destroyed the institutions, ideas, and networks that had structured transatlantic relations” (Nolan 2012). The immediate response to the crisis was a global rush to protectionism and a focussing on what was considered to be the national interest, despite the narrowness of its definition. The Euro-American disputes around issues such as reparations and war debts, the gold standard, and protectionism eventually “reshaped the transatlantic and global flows of goods, capital, and people” (ibid.).

Post-World War II economic growth allowed the reconstruction of US-western Europe interdependence, a process that was fostered by the development of a financial and economic system of agencies and agreements, following the Bretton Woods conference in July 1944. Pinpointing the inter-war period as the main root of the European crisis that ended up in the World War II, states began to build a new monetary system in which currencies were convertible and nations could mutually benefit from the increase in trade. The goal was to create an alternative to the financial system that had prevailed in the pre-war decades, which would be less rigid than the gold standard, increasingly reliable and more mutually sustaining than a floating-rate currency regime. Following these conversations, the International Monetary Fund was set up “to facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade”, and the proposal came up of an international trading organisation. Thus, in 1947, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (which in 1995 became the World Trade Organization) took shape. Its purpose was to establish an agreement on “tariffs and other concessions for contracting partners, as well as codes for trade practices and procedures for handling breaches and disputes” (Judt 2005).

Bretton Woods brought about deep changes in the global financial system, with consequences for the Atlantic Space. For the first time, there were unprecedented levels of external interference in national practices, while currencies became convertible to each other in order to foster international trade. At the same time, the dollar assumed the role of leading currency in terms of trade. For these reasons, “the post-war Bretton Woods system did not come about all at once” (Judt 2005). The Soviet Union stood outside this system and even countries like the United Kingdom and France only joined during the 1950s. It collapsed in the early 1970s, with the US dollar abandonment of the international monetary system erected in Bretton Woods, and was replaced by a liberalised floating-rate system that in a few years contributed to the devaluation of national currencies and to the increase of non-fuel commodities. This situation worsened as a consequence of the two oil shocks in the 1970s which introduced another element of uncertainty to the prosperous economies of the Western World. The growing competition from the newly industrialised countries of Asia, together with currency fluctuations and rising commodity prices, added to the stagnation of the developed economies of Europe and North America and led to increased unemployment rates (ibid.). These developments contributed to a profound change in global and Atlantic wealth distribution. Competition was the new motto in commercial terms, and this was accelerated with the end of the Cold War.
At the same time, in the South Atlantic, East-West confrontation forced Latin American and African countries to plead for financing and protection from western Europe, the US and USSR. This process was to some extent opposed by the emergence of economic “third-worldism”, which proposed a national industrialisation process whose last aim was to “cut, as much as possible, the links between centre and periphery” (Valladão 2015). Nevertheless, in the end, North-South Atlantic economic interdependence was not hindered. If, in the North, we have industrialised countries that very much favour the establishment of free trade agreements, in the South, there are economies that are extremely dependent on the exploitation of natural resources and commodities (Marcos 2015).

Resources and energy consumption have shaped the Atlantic Basin and are deeply connected to its economic evolution. Since the Industrial Revolution, mineral and fossil fuels have been crucial to the process of industrialisation and have had an impact on a larger process of transformation, which is connected to urbanisation and transportation all over the basin. Furthermore, new demands for resources fostered colonial expansion in order to gain access to strategic raw materials. Despite the fact that, during the Cold War, much of this competition moved...
eastward, making the Middle East, Central Asia and Russia the centre of gravity for energy supply, the last decades have been the stage for a revolution. Shale revolution in the North Atlantic and off-shore energy resources recently discovered in the South Atlantic have become game-changers for Atlantic trade, recovering part of its lost centrality and making it more attractive for the development of new transport connections, in particular with the Pacific (through an expanded Panama Canal and the Chinese commitment to fund a transcontinental railway from Peru to Brazil) (Isbell 2014).

*Including biofuels.*

**Source:** Created by CIDOB using data from *Energy Outlook 2035, British Petroleum (BP).*
The political and security patterns and factors that shaped Atlantic history in the 20th century

As we have attempted to show in the previous sections, human flows, economic drivers and energy resources allowed the creation of an increasingly interdependent – though not homogenous or united – Atlantic. This is all the more evident in terms of political patterns and factors: ever since the American and French Revolutions a separation has emerged between the four shores of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, the 20th century was marked by a constant search for transatlantic rapprochement, based on the vitality of multilateral approaches. In the end, this process is still an elusive quest, as the plurality of political behaviour in the Atlantic Space – with countries displaying varied foreign policy and normative orientations – is clearly shown (Alessandri 2015).

The period of transition in the Atlantic area begun by the World War i can be seen as an attempt to erode the dividing line created by the Monroe doctrine – responsible for the emergence of a pan-American cultural and political distinctiveness – between Europe and the Americas. French Prime Minister Georges Clémenceau aimed to establish an alliance between the United States, Great Britain and France, but US President Woodrow Wilson decided instead to promote the League of Nations. His goal was to arrange international relations in a whole new way, based on a notion of international community that mirrored the North American constitutional model. However, the Senate inhibited US participation in Wilson’s project and despite Brazil’s temporary membership (the country joined the North American intervention in the European war), the absence of the main American power in the League of Nations was deeply felt and contributed to the quick discrediting of the new intergovernmental organisation (Manela 2007; May, Rosecrance and Steiner 2010).

Additionally, what was probably the most remarkable consequence of Wilson’s proposals was its effect on the existing colonial empires, both
in Asia and in Africa. The President’s references to self-determination sparked the beginning of the decolonisation movement throughout the colonies. Though it would take until the second half of the 20th century to materialise, it sprang from the aftermath of World War I. Precisely because of this, Woodrow Wilson’s project was always regarded by the European colonial powers, particularly Great Britain and France (the two most important victorious allies), with suspicion. These countries were unwilling to discuss their colonial empires and policies during the peace talks – except for those directly related to the former German and Ottoman territories outside Europe (Manela 2007). Therefore, what might have been a chance to overcome the division in the Atlantic (by means of the establishment of a community bound by the League of Nations) turned out to be a missed opportunity, either due to the United States’ absence from the league or the unwillingness of the European powers to follow Wilson’s principles regarding the idea of self-determination. Nonetheless, Woodrow Wilson’s goal clearly shows that the United States was willing to cross the Atlantic and move closer to the European powers and to influence them, reversing the traditional flow in the Atlantic, in which the main political, economic and cultural influences usually went from Europe towards the Americas (Thompson 2010).

World War II and the Cold War led to a second tentative rapprochement between the various shores of the Atlantic. The hegemonic power of the US in the Atlantic Space was finally established and lasts until the present day. The Anglo-American war coalition, defined in the Atlantic Charter in mid-August 1941, persisted after the victory over Nazism and was later enlarged with the Washington Treaty and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 (Simms 2013). The Atlantic Pact marked the stepping forward of the United States as the country responsible for the unity of the Western democracies (Lundestad 2005). At the same time, the Rio de Janeiro Treaty consolidated collective security in the Western Hemisphere. Emerging as the hegemonic power in the Atlantic, the United States became the sponsor of Western unity and Atlantic division (Kaplan 2007).

The strategic competition between the United States and the Soviet Union was focussed on the East-West axis. In this dispute, the South Atlantic was of little relevance to the international balance of power during the Cold War*. However, the post-World War II period, and especially the 1956 Suez debacle, confirmed the relative decline of western Europe, including France and the United Kingdom. There were two consequences of this decline. In Europe, the speeding up of the European integration process, based on the reinforced Bonn-Paris axis, strongly supported by both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations in Washington (Sou Tou 1996). In the end, this process promoted the “reaffirmation of Europe’s distinctiveness”, when compared to the Americas and Africa (Alessandri 2015).

With regard to Africa, it allowed the emergence of an independent fourth shore of the Atlantic. This so-called Euro-African unity dissolved in a succession of independences that defined the end of the European overseas empires, as well as the projects for building a “third force” as an alternative to the United States and Soviet Union. In the space of ten years, independent states replaced the former colonies in Africa and, on its Atlantic front, added a set of new states in Morocco, Liberia and South Africa, which were im-

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1. As Ian Lesser puts it “the Cold War strongly reinforced this North Atlantic axis. (…) The Non-Aligned Movement notwithstanding, the importance of actors in the ‘global south’, where they mattered at all, was largely derivative of priorities and competitions centered elsewhere” (Lesser 2010).
mediate recognised as member-states by the United Nations. The political map of the African Atlantic was completed after the independence of Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau and Angola in 1974-1975, and, after the end of the Cold War, Namibia. At the end of this process, the political map of the Atlantic was finally defined as we know it today.

Figure 8. World map of the age of democratic regimes – years before 2007 since the (last) transition to a democratic regime

Source: Created by CIDOB adapting a map by Max Roser (http://ourworldindata.org/data/political-regimes/democratisation/), who uses data from Boix, Miller and Rosato 2012.

As for Latin America, on the other hand, the Cold War did not change the core nature of its relations with the United States. In fact, in Latin America, “the Cold War projection of US power was based on its existing strategic and economic predominance”, which dated back to the early 20th century. Institutionally, the grounds for assuring US control of Latin America were reshaped in the late-1940s with the signature of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) in 1947 (the first move of an alliance system established by the US worldwide during the Cold War of which NATO is the one that has endured) and the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS) the next year. From a geopolitical point of view, the goal was now to fight communism, and Washington officials “expected a particularly high degree of conformity to US policy preferences” (Coatsworth 2010).

In the 1950s, and particularly after the victorious Cuban Revolution of 1959, the United States’ strategy for Latin America was definitely set in a Cold War framework. The ideological element became a key factor in any intervention from Washington, overriding any other foreign policy goals the US might have concerning that region (Dominguez 1999). The
different solutions found included intense US engagement, either through
direct military intervention or by encouraging the countries’ armed forces
to stage coups (as, for instance, in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic
and Chile). On the other hand, there was always local resistance, as the
oppositions sought to distance them from the influence of the United
States (Coatsworth 2010).

The Atlantic in the face of a new international order

The end of the Cold War paved the way for new possibilities in the Atlan-
tic Space. Together, the decolonisation of Africa, the democratisation of
Latin America and of some areas of southern Africa, the fall of the Berlin
Wall and the emergence of major regional powers led to a new moment
in inter-Atlantic relations (Buzan and Weaver 2003; Lynch and Crawford
2011; Whitehead 2001). In this sense, the post-Cold War and, even more,
the post-9/11 developments led to a redefinition of the international
order, with diminishing global leadership by the United States, and the
emergence of new power in the Asia-Pacific region (China, India and Ja-
pan) and of some individual economies in the South Atlantic such as Brazil
and South Africa. Throughout this period, the North Atlantic continued
to benefit from the existence of a stable, stronger institutionalisation of
transatlantic relations, whereas in the South the emerging powers seemed
to adopt a strategy of greater autonomy.

Despite the North Atlantic losing its central position in international poli-
tics and the South Atlantic’s minor strategic relevance, the so-called third
wave of democratisation (Huntington 1991) created a new trend in the
interaction between the United States, Brazil and Latin America, in the
relations between the Americas and Europe, and even in the relationship
between the US, the European Union, Brazil and South Africa. In 2015,
the majority of the countries in the Atlantic Basin are either democracies
or partially free countries, though this does not mean that issues such as
democracy and human rights are not still challenged today in these regions
(Gratius 2015). Additionally, the participation of Latin America and Africa
in the Non-Aligned Movement caused those countries to remain “focused
on traditional principles such as sovereignty, non-intervention in the do-
mestic affairs of other states, and territorial integrity”, notwithstanding
South Atlantic multilateral experiments mostly shaped by the European
integration project. In other words, it is too early to view norms and values
as the unifying factor that might bring the Atlantic Basin countries closer
(Alessandri 2015).

The recognition of common interests on security issues, the increase of
economic exchanges and the growing relevance of the political and cultural
links in international relations should lead to a strengthening of strategic interactions in the Atlantic Space. In fact, even though political values and norms such as de-
mocracy and the openness of political systems are the result of increasing
economic development in the South Atlantic, the wider Atlantic is still a
heterogeneous political area. The emergence of new players, demanding
reform of the global governance institutions, is emphasising the pluralistic
nature of the Atlantic. Only interregional multilateral initiatives focused on
specific and defined priorities can prompt Atlantic actors to play a critical
role in regional and global efforts (ibid.).
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While the extent and nature of pan-Atlantic economic ties over the next decade will depend in part on security challenges, political pressures, environmental factors or unanticipated events within the Atlantic or Asian Hemispheres, most trend lines indicate that pan-Atlantic economic connections will continue to deepen in terms of energy links, trade in goods and services, investment and portfolio flows, and networks of innovation. Performance is likely to vary widely across countries and regions, however, and individuals, communities, countries and continents will be affected unevenly. This differential impact offers a prism through which we may identify elements of cooperation and competition, evolving dynamics between the Atlantic North and South, and centrifugal and centripetal forces in pan-Atlantic commercial interactions over the next decade and beyond.

Cooperation and competition: five key metrics

Energy

An Atlantic energy renaissance is setting the global pace for energy innovation and redrawing global maps of oil, gas and renewables as new players and technologies emerge, new conventional and unconventional sources come online, energy services boom, and opportunities appear all along the energy supply chain and across the entire Atlantic Space. This Atlantic energy renaissance is emanating from both the Atlantic North and the Atlantic South – not just from the United States, whose own energy revolution has been the most loudly trumpeted (Isbell 2014a and 2014b).

Three simultaneous energy “revolutions” of the Atlantic energy renaissance – shale, offshore, low carbon – are redrawing the global energy map. In the Atlantic North, the “shale revolution” is radiating out from an increasingly less import-dependent North America. In the Atlantic South, the deep-water offshore boom has embraced nearly all of Africa and most of Atlantic Latin America; the southern Atlantic could

1. Kishore Mahbubani’s assertion (Mahbubani 2008) that there is an “Asian Hemisphere” means by definition that there is also an Atlantic Hemisphere.

2. In the Atlantic Future project we use the term “Atlantic North” to encompass North America and Europe, and “Atlantic South” to encompass South and Central America and Africa. We do this to avoid geographical confusion, since parts of South and Central America and Africa are part of the North Atlantic Ocean littoral.
become a key new region for increases in global oil production, as well as the most critical regional supplier of oil at the margin to the Asian Hemisphere. The low carbon revolution has also unfolded primarily within the Atlantic Basin, where two-thirds of renewable energy generation now takes place and where a similar share of global installed renewable capacity is currently located. The continued growth of low carbon energy has been at least partially undermined by lower prices for fossil fuels and the recent boom in unconventional fossil fuels (i.e. shale), yet Europe in particular has been charting new ground and is likely to continue to set the global pace with regard to low-carbon energy innovation. Such innovation could have a particularly dramatic impact in Africa, which is still characterised by deep pockets of energy poverty. Africa has the lowest electrification rate of all the world’s regions – only 26% of households – leaving as many as 547 million people without access to electricity, nearly half of the world’s energy have-nots (Atlantic Basin Initiative 2014; IEA and World Bank 2015).

These shifts in global energy flows could herald a transformation from what could be called the “traditional Cold War” global energy map into a “newly emerging global energy flow map” of the 21st century. The bottom line is that seaborne oil and gas flows will increasingly reverse their overall net direction – from “Cold War East-to-West flows” to the new “21st century West-to-East flows” (Isbell 2014a). As a result, the Atlantic Basin (with the South Atlantic potentially playing a key role) will become the strategic hydrocarbons supplier-region at the margin for growing energy consumption in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Atlantic’s energy dawn is likely to continue despite falling global oil prices. In fact, the Atlantic energy renaissance has been the single most important factor behind the price drop on the supply side. While Saudi Arabia has helped to lower prices by drawing down spare capacity, most new discoveries in recent years – in addition to most of the increases in proven reserves and production levels – have come from the Atlantic Space. Second, this period of lower prices will not last forever, and will probably not last that long. Once prices rise again above 60 dollars per barrel, most Atlantic energy supply again becomes very relevant. Third, lower and softer prices, even over the short run, have set in motion new dynamics that are shifting the global energy map toward energy reform, removal of fossil fuel subsidies, improved regulatory policies, and better transnational energy cooperation, integration and governance. These factors favour Atlantic Basin energy supply (Richardson 2015; Atlantic Energy Forum 2015; Pelegry and Isbell 2015).

**Goods**

Merchandise trade among the four Atlantic continents accounts for half the global total, and more than doubled over the last decade. While the Atlantic’s share of global goods trade has declined, global goods trade itself has been growing considerably, so while the Atlantic may have a smaller piece of the pie, the pie itself has grown much larger. Moreover, countries like Brazil and Mexico have actually increased their share of world merchandise trade in the last four decades.

Atlantic trade is significant for each Atlantic continent. The signatory countries of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) export...
more to their Atlantic partners than to the rest of the world. The EU sells the United States nearly twice the goods it sells to China and nearly seven times what it sells to India. Latin American and Caribbean countries export more than twice as much to their Atlantic partners as to the rest of the world. Latin America exports 40% more to the eurozone than to China. Brazil is the single biggest exporter of agricultural products to the EU. And over half of Africa’s merchandise exports go to Atlantic destinations (Ruano 2015). These links are uneven, however. Most merchandise trade within the Atlantic Basin is conducted among developed regions, and the developing regions of the Atlantic Basin each have extremely concentrated trade relationships with their respective “northern partners” (North America and Europe), while trade with each other is marginal.

Atlantic trade patterns are being influenced by the rise of the Pacific, as trade between Atlantic and non-Atlantic markets has boomed and China in particular has become an important trading partner for all Atlantic continents. Booming Atlantic-Pacific sea trade is creating new port facilities throughout the Atlantic Basin, and melting ice in the Arctic Ocean is opening new, shorter shipping routes from East Asia to and from eastern North America and Europe (Ruano 2015; Atlantic Basin Initiative 2014; Kaplan 2012; Petterson 2014; Wilson 2013).

Figure 1. Current major maritime routes and potential new pathways for trade

Source: Created by CIDOB using data from Le Monde Diplomatique 2012; EIA 2014b; World Shipping Council n.d.
Money

The dynamic interaction between investment and trade distinguishes the pan-Atlantic economy from all others. Foreign investment and affiliate sales power pan-Atlantic commerce and provide millions of jobs. Affiliate sales on either side of the Atlantic are more than double comparable sales in the entire Asia-Pacific region. Much of this is driven by foreign direct investment (FDI) ties between the United States and Europe which, with combined annual sales exceeding four trillion dollars, dwarf any other bilateral trade or trade/investment relationship in the world. US companies will continue to be the most important source of investment and onshored jobs across the EU, and European companies will continue to be the most important source of investment and onshored jobs across the United States. These investments are likely to increase even further should the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) come into force (Hamilton and Quinlan 2015a and 2015b).

Figure 2. Foreign direct investment: inward (2012, billions of dollars)

* Includes the Caribbean.
** US, Canada, Mexico.
Source: Coordinated Direct Investment Survey (CDIS), International Monetary Fund.

European and North American companies are active investors throughout the Atlantic South. While US companies currently invest more in South and Central America than in Asia, over the next decade those investment levels are likely to become more balanced. EU companies already invest slightly more in Asia than in South and Central America, and the trend of favouring Asia is likely to continue. US investments in Africa seem unlikely to increase significantly from their current relatively low levels, in large part because North America’s own energy dynamics are turning attention away from Africa. EU investments in Africa are
likely to remain significant, but the more dynamic investors in Africa are likely to come from Asia unless the EU embarks on new commercial overtures to its southern neighbour. FDI ties between South and Central America and Africa are weak. Multinationals from the Atlantic South prefer to invest in major developed economies, primarily in the Atlantic North, although such investment is likely to remain marginal over the foreseeable future. Brazilian firms are the exception; they are investing billions in Africa’s resource-related industries to diversify their export markets and internationalise their production (ibid.).

The Atlantic economies are also connected in substantial, if uneven, ways with regard to portfolio flows and assets. As capital flows slowly revive and adapt following the 2008 global financial crisis, new patterns are developing. First, over the next decade Asia could emerge as the largest holder of portfolio assets in Africa. Currently, Asia and the EU are roughly equal as portfolio asset holders in Africa, each accounting for roughly three times greater assets than those held by North America in Africa. Yet Asian portfolio holdings in Africa are growing much faster than European holdings (Hamilton and Quinlan 2015a). Second, North America is likely to retain its role as the most significant external holder of portfolio assets in both Europe and South and Central America, even as its role as a holder of portfolio assets in Africa is likely to decline in relative importance. Third, the EU is likely to remain the largest holder of portfolio assets in North America. Fourth, portfolio flows across the Atlantic South are likely to move primarily from South and Central America to Africa. South and Central American portfolio assets in Africa have grown to about half the size of North American assets held in Africa.
Services

The Atlantic is home to the world’s major services economies, Atlantic economies are each other’s most important services markets, and Atlantic economies are poised to be major beneficiaries and drivers of the growth in global services.

Figure 4. World total services trade balance* (by region, billions of dollars)

* Includes intra-regional trade.

Figure 5. US services exports to the Atlantic Basin (by destination, 2012, in %)

* Includes the Caribbean.

Figure 6. EU services exports to the Atlantic Basin (by Destination, 2012, in %)

* US, Canada, Mexico. ** Includes the Caribbean.
The United States is the largest single country trader in services, while the EU is the largest trader in services across all world regions. Over half of US and EU services exports go to Atlantic Basin countries, and each is seeing an increasing share of its services trade conducted with South America and Africa. Moreover, the delivery of services by foreign affiliates – driven by pan-Atlantic investments – has exploded over the past decade and is far more significant than the services trade (Hamilton 2011).

Services are not just a North Atlantic story. Services are far more important to Atlantic economies such as Brazil, South Africa, Mexico and Colombia than to non-Atlantic economies such as Russia, India or China. Brazil’s expanding services industry contributes about two-thirds of its total GDP and employs about 70% of its labour force. Services account for more than 50% of GDP in Africa’s 36 non-resource-rich economies and for more than 40% of GDP – more than industry’s share – in the continent’s resource-rich economies (AfDB et al. 2014). As income per capita in Latin America and Africa grows, and as governments seek to diversify their economies away from commodity production, demand will grow for such services as health care, education, entertainment, insurance, telecommunications and finance. Moreover, services is a growing area of commercial activity among southern Atlantic countries, particularly in energy-related services, engineering and construction services, and education and managerial services (Dardush and Shaw 2012).

A related factor is the high and still-growing importance of services in global foreign direct investment flows. Services have come to dominate global foreign direct investment over the past decade and Europe is driving this process. Today, services represent nearly two-thirds of global FDI stock, up from a 49% share in 1990. Whereas services FDI used to be strongly related to trade and trade-supporting services for manufacturing multinationals, over the past decade more services FDI has been directed at such activities as hotels, restaurants and financial services. Electricity, water, telecommunications and other infrastructure-related activities have also been receiving more foreign direct investment. This trend is likely to continue, with particular focus on the Atlantic Hemisphere.

**Figure 7. US projected consumption and production of energy (1980-2040, 10^8 BTU)**

![Graph showing projected US consumption and production of energy from 1980 to 2040.](source: Created by CIDOB using data from EIA 2014a.)
Ideas

The economic prospects for countries and communities across the Atlantic Basin will be shaped not only by access to, and use of, tangible assets such as energy, labour and natural resources, but also intangible assets such as knowledge, information and innovation. Technological and scientific innovations are certain to spread — unevenly — across the Atlantic Basin. It is difficult to predict tomorrow’s innovations, but the nature of pan-Atlantic commercial connections are likely to be shaped by various on-the-horizon innovations, such as the Internet of Things, 3D printing, digitally-enabled mass collaboration, service robotics and bio- and human cognitive augmentation technologies (Huggins and Izushi 2009; Cohen and Levinthal 1990). These innovations, and many as yet unknown, could radically accelerate a range of enhanced efficiencies, streamline and alter supply chains, and help some key Atlantic economies cope with aging and shrinking populations. At the same time, such innovations are likely to convulse job markets, challenge educational and political systems, test prevailing regimes on privacy,
disrupt patterns of human mobility, and generate even greater divergence between knowledge-rich and knowledge-poor regions of the Atlantic Space (European Internet Foundation 2009).

**Winners and losers**

In sum, as economies continue to churn across each of the Atlantic continents, and as Asian countries play more of an Atlantic role, winners and losers will emerge both within and between countries, as most countries across the Atlantic Space find themselves challenged to reverse a common trend of growing inequality. Regions within countries will compete for inward investment and to situate themselves as innovation hubs and links in global value chains (GVC). A growing number of North American and European companies may either re-shore or near-shore their supply chains back to the Atlantic Hemisphere. Mexico and many African regions have considerable potential to integrate more closely into GVC, while South and Central American countries are likely to lag. Africa’s public and private leaders will remain challenged to use continuing growth to reduce poverty and create enough jobs to cope with the continent’s youth bulge and demographic explosion (Pereira da Costa 2014). African and South and Central American economies will continue to want to broaden the base of their economies and expand beyond commodity dependence. Inward investment can play a critical role in this regard, but for many host countries the challenge will be to avoid being locked into low value-added stages of GVC and to enhance positive employment and other spillovers from foreign investment in domestic economies. North American and European investors will encounter greater competition in that space from Asian competitors.

**Atlantic North and Atlantic South: convergence or divergence?**

Various shaping factors, and the interaction between them, offer potential to erase the invisible line separating the Atlantic North from the Atlantic South, while other factors are likely to reinforce or sharpen those divisions. New preferential trade arrangements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) are likely to reinforce cooperation between their members, while imposing more severe competitive pressures on non-members – most of which are in the Atlantic South – unless Atlantic North countries devise cooperative mechanisms through which countries can align themselves with those arrangements over time, and whether the US and EU cooperate to harmonise trade preferences for poor countries and align their own standards on rules of origin (Herfkens 2015; Amaoko, Hamilton and Herfkens 2013). On the other hand, new actors may appear on the scene, such as the South American multinational corporations known as multilatinas, which are not only investing within the Atlantic South but increasingly looking for returns on investments in the Atlantic North. Global energy needs will overall be a force for greater cooperation across the Atlantic Space to develop the Atlantic Hemisphere’s huge potential, although competition will continue to rage between companies and across different types of energy providers.
US economic ties to Africa, which had been dominated by energy imports, have shrivelled due to the US energy renaissance. It is unclear to what extent US economic interest in Africa may revive. More likely is greater engagement by Europe and Asia, followed by Brazil. However, US entities and some European countries like the Netherlands are likely to chart new horizons for development assistance, both through new types of public-private coalitions, as advanced by the US, and direct budget support of recipient countries, as piloted by the Dutch, even as “new” donors like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico step up their engagement, focusing primarily on exchange of good practice and knowledge transfer. There is also likely to be considerable interplay between centripetal and centrifugal forces within respective sub-regions and the Atlantic macro-region as a whole. As various shaping factors interact over the next decade, some communities and countries are likely to push for greater regional cooperation, while others are likely to be pulled away from deeper regional integration in favour of interregional cooperation.

North American and Central American countries, together with Colombia and South Africa, are likely to position themselves more prominently as “dual-basin” countries straddling two great oceans, and use that position to build interregional networks to strengthen their future in a hyperconnected world.

Europe is likely to remain distracted by its own internal challenges and by dangers accumulating along its eastern and southern peripheries, while the TTIP, the CETA, an upgraded EU-Mexico trade agreement and possible new arrangements with Japan and other Asian economies, as well as competition and cooperation with China, could reinforce a focus on the northern, rather than the southern hemisphere. Yet Africa’s promise – as well as its demographic and security challenges – is likely to be too great for Europeans to afford to ignore.

African countries are far more commercially connected with partners across the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean basins than they are to each other, and this is likely to remain the case over the coming decade and more. The question for Africa is whether the continent can complement its maritime-based commercial connections with greater intra-regional connections on the continent itself. Many African countries feel the pull of deeper economic ties with the Indian and Pacific Ocean countries, even as more raise concerns about new “colonial” patterns of economic exchange with their eastern partners. Yet as China’s economy decelerates into a new lower-growth model focused on structural changes at home, some African countries may not be able to count on China propelling their own growth.

Brazil, a quintessential Atlantic power, is likely, over the short- to medium-term, to be mired in domestic economic and political challenges that could reinforce its traditional stance as a power in the Atlantic South. Yet our analysis presents significant economic and political opportunities for Brazil within the Atlantic Space that could lead the country to adopt a more engaged stance as a rising pan-Atlantic power. Half of Brazil’s trade is intra-regional Atlantic Basin trade, while only one-third is intra-regional “continental trade” within the Western Hemisphere. Moreover, despite attention to the Pacific, absolute growth in Brazil’s
intra-basin Atlantic trade is still greater than its inter-basin trade with the Pacific. Inter-continental integration arrangements in South America have done far less to stimulate trade than more dynamic sea-based links (Isbell and Nolan Garcia 2015; Moreira et al. 2007; Kaltenthaler and Mora 2002).

**Recommendations**

Growing commercial connections across the Atlantic Hemisphere offer considerable potential. But they are challenged by a range of developments, from stalled multilateral and bi-regional trade negotiations, domestic protectionist challenges, trade-distorting measures and an absence of pan-Atlantic economic governance mechanisms. A decade from now, the Atlantic Hemisphere is still likely to be characterised by both extreme wealth and poverty. Nonetheless, significant opportunities exist for Atlantic actors to capitalise in particular on the Atlantic energy renaissance, on their growing commercial linkages and on changing models for development.

**The energy opportunity**

Revolutions in Atlantic shale, offshore and low carbon energy are transforming the global energy flow map and promise to shape the dynamics of both regional and global geopolitics. The shift to lower prices will not erase the Atlantic energy renaissance or reverse the historic shift of the centre of gravity for global energy supply to the Atlantic. Although some shale and offshore possibilities are only economic at 70 to 75 dollars per barrel, most Atlantic supply, including shale and offshore oil, is economic at prices around 40 to 50 dollars per barrel. With prices above 60 dollars a barrel – which is what we would expect over the medium and long term – most of the recent boom in Atlantic energy supply remains economically and strategically relevant (Richardson 2015; Atlantic Energy Forum 2015).

These price levels are soft enough to impose growing pressures for domestic energy reform in many Atlantic countries. More energy reform around the Atlantic Basin also makes transnational energy cooperation more feasible and practical to achieve and more promising to pursue. Lower prices make nationalist energy policies unsustainable as national revenues fall in producer countries. Consumption subsidies can no longer be maintained. Restricted access and stringent fiscal and operating conditions for international companies will need to be reassessed. Otherwise, national debt will mount, social commitments will languish, rising expectations will be betrayed, and production will stagnate or decline as investment needs remain unmet. In the absence of change in policy direction, national budgets will have to be slashed drastically, with all the associated risk of political and social instability and unrest. Fortunately, Mexico recently led the way with last year’s energy reform package. Atlantic partners such as Argentina and Nigeria may follow soon.

Furthermore, other unique features characteristic of the Atlantic world now make the basin a propitious space for pan-Atlantic energy cooperation. First, there is a balance between net importing and net exporting.
countries. This means that cooperatively designed agreements will naturally reflect the full slate of stakeholders. In addition, the Atlantic’s net exporters themselves are relatively well balanced between developed and developing countries. Moreover, the Atlantic Basin also dominates the energy trade (both in raw energy and derivatives) of Atlantic countries. Over two-thirds of all the energy trade of Atlantic Basin countries is intra-regional, or intra-Atlantic trade. No matter where one is in the Atlantic Basin, this is true. Every sub-region of the Atlantic Basin – Africa, South and Central America, North America and Europe – trades the large majority of its energy (both imports and exports, and raw material and final products) with other partners within the Atlantic Space. Finally, more than any other region of the world, the Atlantic Basin countries share common democratic values and rule-of-law principles. While such values and principles are not spread to the same degree throughout all the basin’s sub-regions, they are present and held in common, at least to some degree, more than in any other region of the world (Pelegry and Isbell 2015).

Furthermore, the advantages and potentials of pan-Atlantic energy cooperation are large. The Atlantic Basin is poised to become the new global reference hub for the trading and pricing of gas. In oil, the Atlantic has the potential to become the world’s regional swing producer at the margin. The Atlantic Basin has already become the world’s laboratory for market and technological developments during the energy production change. It could also become the world’s template for global biofuels cooperation and governance. Indeed, with sufficient cooperation and integrating collaboration, the Atlantic Basin could come to set global standards in all energy realms and sectors. To seize this opportunity, Atlantic actors will need to advance new mechanisms to facilitate broad cooperation. At this stage, most initiatives would profit from private-public participation. Consideration could be given to:

• An “Atlantic action alliance for low emissions energy access for all”. This mechanism would be designed to help eliminate energy poverty and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

• An Atlantic Basin low carbon board. This board would host an ongoing Atlantic dialogue to pursue the rollout of renewable energy technologies, particularly within the Southern Atlantic.

• An Atlantic Basin hydrocarbons board. This group would provide the space and the platform for a number of pan-Atlantic energy cooperation initiatives, particularly in the effort to spread best practices in industry with respect to shale and offshore energy and to lend policy and regulatory support to Atlantic countries.

• An Atlantic Basin biofuels initiative. This initiative could seek to coordinate and articulate biofuel standards for Atlantic Basin production and trade. Given that 85% of the global biofuels economy is located in the Atlantic Space, such an initiative would set world standards.

• An Atlantic Basin inter-sectoral energy board. This group could host a new dialogue between Atlantic Basin energy agents – private and public – who are typically at odds with each other in policy or market terms in the context of global energy discussions. This board could encourage dialogue between net exporters and net importers, between international private companies and state-owned energy companies, between agents in the upstream, midstream and downstream, and between traditional fossil fuel companies and the renewable energy and low carbon sector.

• An Atlantic charter for sustainable energy. This charter should strive to
promote freer, more fluid and more secure energy investment, production and trade within the Atlantic Basin.

A new commercial agenda

Growing commercial connections across the Atlantic Hemisphere offer considerable potential, but they are challenged by stalled multilateral and bi-regional trade negotiations, domestic protectionist challenges, trade-distorting measures and the absence of pan-Atlantic economic governance mechanisms. The Atlantic Hemisphere is still characterised by both extreme wealth and poverty. South Atlantic countries, many of which continue to struggle to diversify their economies, are concerned that new plurilateral initiatives could divert trade to their detriment.

Nonetheless, Atlantic actors have various inducements to greater commercial cooperation. Atlantic companies and countries are likely to lead global efforts at “blue growth” – harnessing the untapped potential of the ocean to create sustainable jobs and growth in areas such as blue energy, aquaculture, tourism, marine mineral resources and blue biotechnology (ECORYS et al. 2012). They share greater interest in ending trade-distorting agricultural subsidies and exempting humanitarian aid from food export controls, as recommended by the Group of Twenty (G-20). Such initiatives seem more realistic now than in the past because of the changing outlook for agriculture from chronic surpluses to increased demand. They also share common interest in devising standard operating principles by state-owned enterprises (Zoellick 2013). The Atlantic partners could also form the core of an international services agreement that offers reciprocal liberalisation to all economies willing to join, with flexibilities for low-income countries. For South Atlantic countries seeking to diversify their economies, the services trade is increasingly important in order to boost productivity and to lower the costs of critical infrastructure development.

Mechanisms to facilitate pan-Atlantic commercial cooperation are also worth considering. Across the far more diverse Asia-Pacific region, the Business Advisory Council of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum played an important role. Nascent efforts such as the newly formed Atlantic Business Forum and related initiatives offer potential platforms for private-public considerations of ways to reduce barriers to trade and investment and to promote the free flow of goods, services and capital among Atlantic economies. Consideration could be given to an Atlantic Investment Compact based on common principles to facilitate enhanced investment as an engine for growth throughout the Atlantic Space.

As the CETA between the EU and Canada advances, as US-EU negotiations for a TTIP proceed, and as the EU and Mexico engage in updating their own free trade agreement, the EU and Mercosur should accelerate efforts to conclude their long-standing negotiations, and leaders in the Americas should revive their goal of a “Free Trade Area of the Americas” (FTAA), in which barriers to trade and investment will be progressively eliminated. The Atlantic Business Forum could recommend how existing sub-regional and bilateral arrangements could be codified and aligned to enhance overall Atlantic and global economic cooperation.
The TTIP promises a boost to North Atlantic economies. But unless properly designed as part of an "open architecture", the partnership could hurt the trade prospects of other countries. US and EU leaders should declare publicly that the TTIP is indeed part of the open architecture of international trade, and outline future modalities for accession, association, or complementary economic agreements with other countries. The United States and the European Union have common interest in demonstrating that the TTIP is about trade creation, not trade diversion.

North American countries and the EU should also consider ways to harmonise their current hodgepodge of trade preference mechanisms for low-income African countries. Latin America could conceivably join in, offering the same market access, building on preferences already given by some countries in Latin America and on interests they have expressed within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to improve market access for poorer developing countries. Such efforts should harmonise country and product coverage as well as rules of origin of current preferential arrangements, taking the best and most effective provisions of each respective programme, making them compatible and updating the rules to the current trading environment (Amaoko, Hamilton and Herfkens 2013).

Exploring new models of human development

Since the turn of the millennium the international landscape for development aid has changed. Countries that were once poor have become economic powerhouses and started their own foreign aid programmes. Traditional donors in the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) have committed to changing their programmes based on lessons learned from accumulated evaluations of aid effectiveness. Unfortunately, implementation has lagged and the international aid architecture has not been updated. The Atlantic Space is uniquely poised to advance new models for human development, as it brings together the whole spectrum of development actors from traditional donors (which still make up three fourths of global development aid) to emerging powers and status quo middle-income countries, and less developed countries.

For aid to be effective, the most critical issue is that donors and recipients have a common understanding that donors do not develop countries. Developing countries develop themselves. Such an understanding leads to developing country ownership of the assistance programme without which no aid yields lasting results. Today, less than half of technical cooperation flows are consistent with national development strategies. Aid should be integrated into the recipient’s regular planning and budgetary systems and, where possible, donors must support developing countries with predictable multi-year funding for their home-grown programmes and transfer the management of aid to the partner government.

Re-emerging development partners are among the drivers of change in key trends in development cooperation, notably the pressures to depart from strict definitions of official development aid, more integrated approaches linking development policy to foreign policy, trade and investment, and rethinking the respective roles of the public and private sectors (Georg 2014; Mawdsley 2012). New donors like Brazil fully understand and respect the importance of ownership and sharing their own develop-
ment experiences with emphasis on the “how-to” aspects of implementing development projects and programmes creates a clear comparative advantage. Thus, a new aid architecture should arise: “new” donors should primarily focus on the transfer of knowledge, while “traditional” donors focus on continued transfer of financial resources to poor countries that need external concessional resources (Atlantic Basin Initiative 2014).

Triangular development efforts that include donors from the Atlantic North and Atlantic South offer particular promise. DAC donors or multilateral agencies work with so-called “pivotal” countries, such as Brazil or South Africa, on projects implemented in “partner” or recipient countries, like Angola and Cameroon. Northern contributions to triangular cooperation projects are generally financial while pivotal countries provide technical skills. Such projects assume that pivotal countries are better able to transfer technologies and make use of innovative approaches and localised knowledge based on shared experiences or geographical, cultural and socioeconomic similarities (Georg 2014; McEwan and Mawdsley 2012; Davies 2008; Abdenur 2007).

Additional steps are needed. OECD members should implement the commitments they made in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. All Atlantic partners need to implement the commitments they made in the Busan Partnership Agreement, participate actively in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and join the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Atlantic partners also have a shared interest in developing codes of conduct to promote transparency and accountability regarding natural resource management, and taking the lead in such next-generation development issues as investment and services, infrastructure, education, energy, the environment, efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change, business facilitation, and good governance (Zoellick 2013; Atlantic Basin Initiative 2014). The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is one example of how such efforts could develop, with Atlantic nations taking the lead.

Through these more dynamic and flexible arrangements, the Atlantic Basin can become an incubator for innovative approaches to development cooperation and a driver of development normative codes and practices and global discussions on development cooperation in ways that transcend North-South and South-South dichotomies (Georg 2014; Abdenur 2007; see also footnote number 3).

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“SYSTEMIC THREATS” AND “PATHOLOGICAL RISKS”: AN ATLANTIC ANSWER TO CONTEMPORARY SECURITY ISSUES

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Introduction

No man is an island. Neither is a basin. Security challenges, like many other aspects of human life, are more and more globalised. Distant events can have dire consequences, direct or indirect, for people living very far away. The security issues for the Atlantic Basin cannot be assessed without considering its situation on the global map of security problems, particularly vis-à-vis the present most confrontational mega-regions: Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

In order to avoid too broad a definition of “security”, encompassing every dysfunctional aspect of human relations, a distinction should be made between matters that could involve the use of force and other so-called “new” security questions – health, trade, environment, poverty, social inequality, immigration, tornados and most issues (but not all) that come under the label of “human security”. Certainly, if not well managed, these new dimensions can stir up tensions leading to security threats, even serious ones. But they are not security problems per se. “Securitising” every problem brings up two paradoxes. If everything is perceived as “security”, nothing is security: threats lose their specificity, ranking them becomes fuzzy, which breeds apathy and irresponsibility. The other pitfall is the temptation to use force to treat every man-made problem – and even every natural catastrophe – which in turn can encourage reckless attitudes and bring about dangerous self-fulfilling prophecies.

Therefore, it’s probably more reasonable to stick with a narrower definition of security and defence (S&D): issues that imply using instruments of coercion, be they armed forces, the police, or even civilian and political tools such as sanctions, embargos, diplomatic boycotts and so on. On that matter, a distinction can be made between “systemic threats” and “pathological risks”. The first are deep challenges that could presumably destroy the core foundations of the global rules that currently guarantee a more or less predictable world order. The second are aggressive social illnesses that derive from the very functioning of the world order itself, and from its dysfunctions and hiccups.
The “liberal order” great divide

The fact is that we now live in a networked planet, everyday more interdependent and interconnected. Each country, region and local group is engaged in this common world but has its own plights. Security situations can be highly diverse. In the Atlantic Space, Europeans don’t have the same perceptions, and don’t have to face the same menaces as, say, Latin Americans, Africans or North Americans. Geography matters, as well as political cultures and economic and social vulnerabilities. However, all together they are extremely dependent on the smooth functioning of today’s globalised economy and social interactions. What has been called the “liberal order” constitutes the main engine that boosted the “emergence” of many new “powers” (Valladão 2012). One just has to consult the final documents of the ten G-20 meetings – which gather 80% of the world’s GDP. They are truly a comprehensive catechism of the official articles of faith on the liberal rules of the game1, all dutifully signed by the representatives of each member country (along with the 70-year-old UN Charter, of course). Yet, nobody denies that global interactions go far beyond what national governments can control or influence.

At the beginning of this new century, the Atlantic societies and the international community as a whole have to face a new great divide. On one side are those who opt to defend the foundations of a global liberal order based on universal values and rules. That doesn’t mean a Pollyannic satisfaction with this common framework, as each of its supporters has their own ideas about how to improve it, and criticises many aspects and consequences of its implementation. On the other side are those who yearn for a return of traditional nation-states’ geopolitical power plays: a world made up of zones of influence around the most powerful players, where international laws are just temporary arrangements subject to balance of power logics. Vladimir Putin’s vision is the best current example of this 20th century nostalgia, while the Chinese leadership is still trying to play both cards simultaneously.

On the one hand are political systems that thrive on open societies – competitive representative politics regimes that promote free movement of people, ideas, goods, capital, information and innovations. On the other, political systems that, in order to survive, require closed societies under authoritarian control. With the former, there is a chance of keeping a more or less prosperous and free integrated global polity (with lots of inequalities and double standards). With the latter, the world would surely end up more fragmented, oppressive, poor and dangerous (with even deeper inequalities and “multi” standards). Many nuances exist in between those two choices, but in our interdependent world system, when the going gets really tough, everyone is compelled to take sides. Today, almost all security problems stem from the frictions that arise from these two contradictory Weltanschauungen.

The downgrading of the Chinese threat

During the first decade of the 21st century, only two “systemic threats” were considered top priorities for those most engaged in preserving the global liberal order: a latent unruly China rising and chaos in the Middle East. The Atlantic was not a calm lake, but its many security issues –

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1. See G-20 Leaders Declarations: https://g20.org/about-g20/past-summits/
most of them deriving from criminal activities – were not seen as directly threatening the fabric of the basic global rules.

The southern part of the Atlantic Basin lost its strategic importance as far back, at least, as the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. But no country in this part of the world could threaten, or even have a meaningful influence on the big powers’ geopolitical games of the 19th and 20th centuries. Sometimes, particularly in colonial Africa, a region could become a localised theatre of conflicts between European imperial powers and, later on, a circumscribed battlefield during the Cold War. But, as international state actors in their own right, they couldn’t pose any significant threat to the successive world “orders” of the last 150 years.

The North Atlantic was, instead, at the core of the main ideological confrontations of the 20th century between liberal democracies and totalitarian regimes – World War II and the bipolar nuclear stalemate between the West and the Soviet Union. However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the USSR, the northern part of the Atlantic was deemed a peaceful and prosperous region, where governments could reap the “dividends of peace”. So much so, that some could even theorise the “end of history”: “the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (Fukuyama 1989). Even the wake-up call given by the Balkan wars in the 1990s and their human rights tragedies was relatively swiftly managed – thanks to US intervention – and fast forgotten. Except for the spillovers of transnational criminality, the Atlantic looked like vanishing from the security radars.

For China, instead, the narrative was all about the prospect that the leadership in Beijing could be tempted to take advantage of seemingly never-ending economic success to build disproportionate and modern military capabilities, which would be used to assert its hegemony and domination over the Asia-Pacific region. The main concern was that China’s “peaceful rise” could metamorphose into an “old-fashioned” expansionist power, at least in its own self-defined local “sphere of influence”. Such an evolution would certainly feed growing tensions with the neighbours, increasing the risks of open armed conflicts – the dangerous naval incidents in the South China Sea are a case in point. A commandeering China would threaten the performance of the interlocked Asia-Pacific economies, endangering one of the main engines of global economy growth. A rising China playing by the established rules is good news for the present global order. The bad news would be an arrogant China bullying its neighbours and playing havoc with Asia-Pacific’s integrated economies.

This uncertainty about China’s path was at the heart of Obama’s now famous 2012 “pivot to Asia”, a sort of rebalancing away from America’s traditional Atlantic priorities (Clinton 2011). The idea was to strengthen the US military and economic presence in the region in order to encourage China to abide by the tenets of the global liberal order by upping the ante for possible aggressive military behaviour and, at the same time, reassuring neighbouring countries about any serious Chinese expansionist threat. As former US president Lyndon B. Johnson once joked about the FBI’s J. Edgar Hoover: “better have him inside the tent pissing out, than outside the tent pissing in”. This more affirmative American engagement and deterrence posture, which is clearly welcomed by Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and many South-East Asian states, was sup-

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posed to complement the routine mission of US deployments in the region, which is to guarantee two essential “common goods” for the world economy: freedom of navigation and overflight of international waters in the South and East China seas, and discouraging armed conflict between local powers.

But nearing the end of President Obama’s mandate, the situation has clearly evolved. Yes, China is no doubt trying to build an overwhelming regional military force, and has also been undertaking a few hazardous actions against its neighbours. But, nevertheless, the “middle empire’s” economic success is slowing down dramatically. The rest of the world is already speculating about “soft” and “hard” landings. The Chinese Communist Party leadership is signalling much greater concern about domestic stability, but there is still a danger that the government could seek antidotes in nationalistic campaigns that end up in foreign adventures – even unwanted ones. Miscalculations do happen. The difference now is that this potential threat to the global order would come from a position of weakness and retreat, not one of strength and expansion. Still risky, but more manageable, especially if there is time to build alternative economic circuits for Asia-Pacific growth that partly bypass China’s centrality. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a significant example. Hence, the “pivot to Asia” looks less urgent and didn’t really materialise. Instead of prioritising a permanent power build-up in the region, the US is in a position to go back to its more traditional pattern of a strong “anchor of regional security” and counterbalancing power – “a stabilizing force (...) that has allowed all the Asian miracles to occur over the last 70 years”, in the words of US Defense Secretary, Ashton Carter (Dyer 2015). This is more “business as usual” than “new strategy”.

This new downgrading of China is not, however, always good news for many Atlantic players, particularly in the southern part of the ocean. If Beijing’s military build-up is less a threat to the liberal order in which China thrives, its economic underperformance is having dire consequences for all commodity exporters. The Chinese market has become by far the world’s biggest consumer of basic primary products, which are the main source of revenue for Africans and South Americans alike. A less gluttonous China spells dramatic trouble for South Atlantic economies and it is already having strong negative impacts on these countries’ social policy successes of the last fifteen years. And that may have unsavoury consequences for the region’s security situation.

The Middle East: managing the mess

Middle East stability, particularly after the 9/11 terrorists attacks in New York and Washington, was considered the second big systemic threat. As a matter of fact, the menace had two names: oil and the risk of a regional nuclear arms race. Since the second half of the 20th century, Middle Eastern oil – particularly production from the Persian Gulf – is the energy life-blood of the world economy. A serious disruption of hydrocarbon production and transport in the region would have dire consequences for mature, emerging and poor countries alike. Keeping the oil flowing is crucial for the global economy’s survival. And this flow’s ultimate security guarantor, like it or not, is the US.
However, new developments in the energy field are deeply affecting the Middle East’s central role: the American shale gas revolution, the falling costs of renewable sources, the spectacular progress in energy savings and efficiency, the rise of “Atlantic oil” production, and last but not least the new “digital economy” and its ongoing industrial revolution, which is much less energy-hungry (Isbell 2014). The Gulf oil variable in the world energy equation is still paramount, but is becoming less “systemic” than before. As for the nuclear issue, the feared threat was an Iranian nuclear weapons breakout, which would launch a regional nuclear arms race. And that, in turn, would threaten security and political stability well beyond the region itself. The Iran nuclear deal framework, signed in April 2015, has postponed the day of reckoning on this matter of contention.

More predictability in managing the oil-and-nukes problem is bringing about a progressive downgrading of the Middle East from a “systemic” threat to the global liberal order – that had to be squarely faced and defeated – to the status of a more “pathological risk” – that has to be monitored and contained. This risk is of two types: Islamic terrorism with its spillover to adjacent regions (Europe, Africa, South Asia, southern Russia, etc.), and the eventual rise of a regional hegemon hostile to the global order. As the dominant power in the region, the United States seems to settle for more traditional local power balancing. The Obama administration, besides trying to contain the so-called Islamic State (Daesh) – at least in its territorial ambitions in Iraq and Syria (Obama 2015) – with a combination of aerial strikes and support for local militias, is taking a more hands-off attitude: let all the local belligerents (states and non-state entities) exhaust themselves in fighting each other, while ensuring no single power prevails against the others. It is a strategy that wants to avoid putting “boots on the ground” – a central tenet of the current US executive apparatus – and bets that, after exhaustion, some form of balanced ceasefire and power equilibrium will have room to emerge. This course of action is even more evident since the Russian intervention in Syria, where Moscow could well get bogged down and become just another local military player. “Keep managing the mess” and circumscribing all eventual fall-outs looks increasingly to be the favoured US strategy for dealing with this relatively downgraded Middle East threat.

Figure 1. ISIS inspired killings/kidnappings extend beyond the Middle East

Yet, the Paris November 13 terrorist attacks, claimed by the “Islamic State” group, have shown once again that what looks less “systemic” for some is much more so for others. For Atlantic European allies of the US, the terrorist threat could rip apart the whole fabric of Europe's integration process. Should the EU begin to fragment, that would not only seriously hamper any pan-Atlantic security perspectives, but also any Atlantic economic cooperation and integration. As a matter of fact, it could become a menace to the whole global order. Thus, Europe – this old Atlantic “cape of Asia” – would have the dubious privilege of being the first region in the 21st century to face the metamorphosis of a pathological risk (terrorism) into a systemic test.

The comeback of an Atlantic “systemic threat”: Europe

If the challenges posed by the chaos in the Middle East and the rise of China have become relatively less weighty, another very dangerous “systemic threat” has been growing in the last few years: the prospect of Europe's unravelling. Alongside the US, Europe is the other main pillar of the “liberal global order”. Without Europe there is no order based on open societies and economic, individual and political freedoms. On the one hand, the “old continent” is still grappling with the deep post-2008 economic crisis. On the other hand, it is confronted by a knot of internal centrifugal forces: secessionist, Quebec-style sovereigntist movements (Catalonia, Scotland and Flanders), anti-integration temptations (Grexit and Brexit), and nationalistic, anti-European and xenophobic parties gathering more steam from the sudden large inflows of refugees and immigrants and the surge of terrorist threats.

More ominous still, Europe clearly wasn’t ready to cope with an old and recurrent issue: the reappearance of a Russian threat. Less than three decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the European Union, built on the principle of deep integration and power sharing between member countries, has to face Vladimir Putin’s drive to foment political divisions between EU members in order to rebuild a Russian eastern European “zone of influence”, resurrecting the policy expedient of “buffer states”. The use of gas deliveries to intimidate the European states most dependent on Russian production, the establishment of Moscow-dominated separatist “grey” rebel territories carved out in neighbouring countries (Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova), and the military annexation of Crimea, constitute direct and serious threats to the international rule of law, reminiscent of the Cold War. No doubt, the EU institutional decision-making process is achingly cumbersome, but much stronger and resilient than its critics admit: the European response to Russia’s offensive has been rather assertive. But it is also true that the European integration process is in the middle of something looking more and more like a “perfect storm”. Thousands of desperate refugees and immigrants trying to cross the EU borders every day, and the now permanent alerts about terrorist attacks after the November shootings in Paris make the situation even more perilous. If anything is a “systemic” challenge, this is it.

Seen from the North Atlantic western seashore, the unavoidable “pivot” looks every day more like a “pivot to Europe” all over again – if reluctantly. The assessment of the Russian threat or of Near East Islamic terrorist
spillovers into Northern Africa and the Sahel (Boko Haram or the deadly puzzle of Libyan militias) is being looked at mainly through the lenses of their impact on Europe’s stability. Russia – and its inherent economic and demographic weaknesses – is not yet seen as a systemic threat per se, but one that has to be circumscribed and contained in order to protect the European construct – the same logic being applied to the whole mist of Islamic terrorist groups. For the time being, these two types of menace can still be categorised as “pathological risks”: they are more a consequence of Europe’s growing internal vulnerabilities and tensions and political plodding than proper “foreign” threats.

Actually, the “pivot to Europe” is already happening, slowly and in quite a thoughtful way: revitalisation of NATO with a new rapid reaction force; a network of command centres, as well as forward prepositioning and manoeuvres in Eastern Europe nearer the Russian borders; promotion of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to lock in the interdependence of North Atlantic economies and regulatory processes; intensification of bombing campaigns against Daesh in Syria and Iraq, as well as the upgrading of support and arms deliveries to Syrian anti-regime opposition groups; reinforcement of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM, headquartered in Stuttgart) and deployment of drones and small contingents of special forces to monitor and help in the fight against Boko Haram and other jihadist groups that threaten European interests and security, and are partly responsible for the new wave of migrants to the North; and encouragement and support for European energy independence vis-à-vis Russian gas. This accumulation of very diverse initiatives create a pattern of much more American involvement in the old continent, reversing nearly two decades of something akin to benign neglect. But this time around – particularly under the Obama administration – the US will not do all the heavy lifting for the Europeans. The old Cold War transatlantic mantra of “burden-sharing” will come back with a vengeance.

A born-again Atlantic alliance

As a matter of fact, with threats and risks gathering inside and at its external borders, Europe can no longer stave off a serious debate about its “hard power” and how to use it. For now, only France and Britain have some significant force projection capabilities and the will to act. However, that is not enough to confront the new security challenges and to assuage Washington’s calls for sharing the load. Nowhere is this question more sensitive than in Germany. How will this debate play out in German public opinion? Can Germany move from being a “pacifist”-minded country to a military power? And still avoid ripening into a bully? How will other EU member states react to more affirmative German military power, knowing that Germany is already – and by far – the central and strongest economic player in the EU? Ask the Greeks, Hungarians and even much bigger neighbours. But Germany is not alone. All the other member states, big and small, are now compelled to take a hard look at how to contribute – and with what means – to the continent’s security. Benign neglect is out; nobody can keep dodging its responsibilities.

This debate has become even more urgent due to the escalation of bloody terrorist threats inside EU territory. Europeans cannot settle anymore for simply “containing” the jihadist territorial expansionism in the
Middle East and its ideological inroads in Africa – implicitly delegating this task to France or Britain (and to the US Armed Forces). Scattered surveillance of radicalised European followers will not be enough either. When a pathological risk is in fact rapidly upgrading to an indirect strategic threat, “destroying” it takes precedence over “containment” (Hollande 2015). Much better coordination of European police forces and intelligence services, decisive improvements of common control instruments and procedures and stronger links with US security agencies are inevitable in order to confront home-grown and transnational jihadism. This means, like it or not, a step further in European integration and sharing of sovereignty at a moment when nationalist anti-European political movements are on the rise. But the alternative is grim: a lasting re-erection of national borders and the demise of the 1985 Schengen Agreement, which guarantees the free movement of persons inside a borderless Europe. Such a setback would simply demolish one of the two main pillars of the European integration process – the other being the euro, which is still threatened by the seven-year-old global economic crisis. Paradoxically, the whole argument about Europe’s S&D responsibilities, unavoidable for the sake of EU cohesiveness and security, could become the last straw that breaks the European construct.

Nolens volens, we are in for a much bigger and more taxing US presence in the old continent. Washington cannot ignore the fact that a European continent in turmoil would dangerously unravel the world’s main institutions, rules and values. The once creaky North Atlantic Alliance is fast becoming the central instrument for tackling the defence of the liberal order in the region once again. NATO’s Trident Juncture exercise, held in November 2015, was its biggest war game since 2002, and was also meant to send a clear message to Moscow. Yet we are still very far from a new Cold War: the bipolar world crumbled with the Berlin Wall. Paradoxically, Russia’s military intervention in Syria has facilitated the possibility of Western/Russian ad hoc cooperation – including each side’s regional allies – against the “Islamic State” group. This improbable rapprochement was sanctioned by a surprising unanimous vote of the UN Security Council calling on member states to take “all necessary measures” in order to “eradicate” Daesh’s “safe havens” in Syria and Iraq, and calling the Islamic terrorist group “a global and unprecedented threat to international peace and security” (UN Security Council 2015). But after the military annexation of Crimea by Russia, to guarantee North Atlantic security against conventional, “hybrid” or “new” threats has become a sine qua non condition – once again – for managing the global order’s economic and security challenges.

**Confronting Atlantic “pathological risks”**

Apart from a re-emerging “systemic threat” on its northern shores, the Atlantic – North, Central and South – will also play a crucial role in tackling the “pathological risks” arising from the functioning and dysfunctions of this same global liberal order: terrorism, transnational criminality (drugs and arms trafficking, piracy, immigrant smuggling), and soaring urban violence (Jacobson and Daurora 2014). To these may be added lingering local out-of-date border disputes, internal strife and the chaos of “failed” or “fragile” states (Faria 2014). These forms of
Security problems can seldom be “solved”, let alone “defeated”. The nearly half-century-old “war on drugs” bears witness to this harsh reality. For the time being, such situations can only be “managed” – at least until the present transition to a new economic, social and political model induced by the digital revolution is well advanced (Valladão 2014b). In the long term, only much more progress towards sustainable economic growth, better governance and accountable government, less inequality (social and regional) and efficient implementation of the rule of law can downgrade these risks to residual hazards. In the short and medium term, the central question is how to “contain” them.

Figure 2. Main intra-Atlantic drug flows and fragile states (2015)

Security containment measures have been implemented either by intermittent military interventions and/or strong police action and intelligence cooperation. The best recent examples are: France’s Serval operation in Mali; the bombing sorties against the “Islamic State” group in Syria and Iraq; small contingents of special forces deployed against Boko Haram or embedded with Syrian militias; naval interdiction against piracy off the Somali coast or the Gulf of Guinea; dissuasive traditional naval exercises (PANAMAX in the Caribbean, UNITAS in the South Atlantic, US/Europe/Africa “Saharan Express” on the North African coast, etc.); UN peacekeeping operations (MINUSTAH in Haiti, MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MINUSMA in Mali); the highly successful cooperation
between Spanish, Moroccan and Mauritanian military and police forces against immigrant smugglers rings, and the Plan Merida against drug traffickers in Central America. In fact, the Atlantic Basin has seen a growing build-up of discreet pluri- or bilateral common responses to transnational criminal networks and cooperation on internal conflict prevention, as well as an uptick in the domestic use of military forces in a constabulary role alongside traditional police deployments against urban or local violence (Kotsopoulos 2014).

Pathological risks are widespread throughout Latin America and West Africa. But the transnational crime and terrorist activities also encompass and threaten North America and Europe. South and North Atlantic riparian governments cannot afford to procrastinate. Better-organised security cooperation involving the whole basin is becoming a prerequisite to avoiding pathological risks becoming systemic threats (De Sousa 2014). The potential pitfall of a lack of common resolve is that it would certainly provoke unilateral interventions by big powers that possess the capabilities and the political will to do so – which would shatter prospects for the consensual approaches necessary to deal with these problems. But in any case, southern and central Atlantic states and societies will also have to cope with the fall-out of surging systemic threats in the northern Atlantic.

Building pan-Atlantic security

During the Cold War, many African and Latin American territories were reduced to the condition of battlegrounds for East-West arm-wrestling – most of the time with the complicity of local protagonists. The crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the worldwide adoption of market economy principles and the basic tenets of the liberal order opened up huge opportunities for the region to pursue strong economic growth and more open societies in a less constrained environment. Many Atlantic states in the region did benefit from the boom of the “happy globalisation” years at the beginning of the new century. Latin Americans and Africans – each according to their own assets and drawbacks – made great strides towards more economic success, social justice and open political systems. But the imbalances inherent in this rush to prosperity were always likely to worsen domestic security challenges. Disorderly urbanisation and widespread connectivity are key ingredients for growth and modernisation, but they also create big opportunities for criminal networks. Yet these pathological risks were able to be more or less contained within a national or regional ambit, sometimes with the support and cooperation of North Atlantic governments and UN peacekeeping forces. West Africa and Central Africa, in particular, have had to rely on these North Atlantic links in order to confront transnational crime, terrorism, piracy and, at times, internal political or ethnic clashes.

This relatively fragile Atlantic security-balancing act will certainly struggle to adjust to the huge impact of a new systemic threat centred on the northern part of the basin. Latin American and African authorities will be called on by their much more powerful North Atlantic neighbours to take sides and spend political, diplomatic and some “hard-power” capital to show their readiness to take
their share of the burden in the “systemic” confrontation. And they will also be required to contain their domestic and regional security threats in a much more capable and collective manner. No doubt Africa and Latin America’s room for manoeuvre is already shrinking due to this new pan-Atlantic security emergency. The southern Atlantic states are compelled to hasten the establishment of efficient regional security mechanisms and institutions if they want to keep some influence on the management of their own pathological risks. But, like it or not, such a path will depend on the will and capabilities of the region’s most powerful players.

The southern Atlantic’s most important and powerful protagonist is Brazil. There will be no efficient and strong security schemes in the region without Brazilian capabilities and political will. But Brazil has always been traditionally inward-looking and extremely mistrustful of any great power presence in the southern Atlantic Basin (Valladão 2014a). The Falklands/Malvinas War in 1982 was a wake-up call for the Brazilian authorities on Latin American defence vulnerabilities vis-à-vis strong “northern” military powers. The fact that Washington sided with London, bypassing the “hemispheric” 1947 Rio Treaty commitments – which state that an attack against one member is considered an attack against the others – further increased this climate of distrust. These misgivings materialised four years later with the Brazilian initiative that led to the creation, in 1986, of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), signed by all South Atlantic coastal states, establishing a regional nuclear-weapons-free zone with a clear intention of preventing the military presence of outside powers. However, in the last few years, Brasilia has been redefining its security vision and priorities. For the first time, a “National Strategy of Defense” was published in 2008 (Brazilian Ministry of Defense 2008), and the country’s armed forces have been collaborating with many regional and non-regional players, leading the UN peacekeeping troops in Haiti, participating in a naval coalition with North Atlantic forces to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and promoting naval exercises with India and South Africa (IBSAMAR) in the framework of the trilateral IBSA Dialogue Forum. It has also quietly developed stronger intelligence cooperation with the US and some European powers for monitoring and fighting drugs and arms trafficking, as well as maintaining its presence in UNITAS and PANAMAX manoeuvres.

The containment of pathological risks in the South Atlantic space, as well as the need to guarantee regional political and diplomatic cover when handling systemic threats, cannot be assured efficiently without diverse forms of pan-Atlantic security initiatives. The best way to have Brazil on board – as well as other important South Atlantic players – is to build these relationships on the basis of evolving issue-by-issue cooperation, including the needed contribution of the many regional organisations on both sides of the ocean – such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the South African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), and the Common Market of the South (Mercosur) (Kotsopoulos 2014). The answer is clearly not an extension of NATO to the South, nor a “SATO”, but a multilayered ad hoc Atlantic security cooperation network.
Who will do the “dirty work”?

Whatever its shape, an Atlantic security framework, designed as a mix of collaborative instruments for promoting and defending an open rules-based world, will have to face a very classical, old dilemma. Rules are powerless if they are not implemented. There is no law without police. Hence the crucial contention: who will take responsibility for enforcing international – or global – law? Who will do the job of policeman? At the end of World War II, the “law” became the UN Charter, and the US federal administration was the guarantor of last resort against those trying to subvert this ideal of universal rules-based international life, in spite of the ambiguity and tensions between defence of US national interests and of those of the so-called “international community”.

Today, rules have proliferated, encompassing most aspects of human relations. And after the fall of the communist bloc, most states and peoples in the planet adhered to the present universal creed. The rules-based organisation of our globalised world is much more complex than 70 years ago. But, like it or not, the United States – or better, US executive power – still remains the ultimate guarantor of the core foundations of this global order, although more and more reluctantly. Presently, America can and will lead unwieldy arrays of allies and clients into taking a stand – including the use of force – when its direct national interests are threatened and when the foundations of the global liberal order are in danger (Valladão 2006). Actually, for the US executive apparatus, there are systemic challenges that have to be dealt with whatever the circumstances: threats to the global communication and information network, to space and underwater assets and to maritime sea lanes and choke points, as well as local conflicts that could directly threaten the functioning of the global economy.

Clearly, that is not enough. True, these broad US concerns are shared by a majority of countries in the world, and most of them are quite happy to let the Americans do the “dirty work”, even if they don’t shout it from the rooftops. Nevertheless, most of today’s threats, even if they don’t have a systemic impact on the global liberal order, can have dangerous strategic consequences for single countries or regions. In general, they are symptoms of the global order ills. And these “pathological risks” for everybody can well become “systemic threats” to single countries or regions. For now and the foreseeable future, US executive power will not and cannot take care of (or even take a lead on) all these categories of danger. The painful experiences in the Middle East are still very much in everybody’s minds. Every time things get really rough, there is a clamour to send in Uncle Sam’s cavalry. But today, all the king’s horses and all the king’s men are getting weary of trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Presently, the best allies and clients can hope for is a helping hand in case one of these pathological risks looks like metamorphosing into a “systemic threat”. “Leading from behind” is the conceptual framework championed by the Obama administration, which means that those who are already in the front line have little choice but to try to deal with the problem themselves – at least at first. Thus, each Atlantic Basin significant power or regional organisation (not only the European Union) is compelled to take a much closer look at its own “hard power”
capabilities and the political will necessary for a legitimate use of force when needed, as well as seriously considering strengthening its regional security alliances and cooperation, which can supplement each one’s lack of means.

Is there any credible path for putting together a new global – and Atlantic – governance security structure that would take responsibility for managing the global liberal order? To provide a predictable and legitimate collective decision-making process that is more inclusive and efficient than the present international institutions under the UN umbrella? Questions that lead to an even thornier one: what is each society and government that needs to defend the global order ready to put on the table? The saying goes that “those who are not at the table are on the menu”, but one forgets that those who are seated also have to buy the goods, do the cooking and wash the dishes.

**Conclusion: “values” and “interests”**

Pan-Atlantic security cooperation networks could become key contributors to more collective global security governance for the main reason that a broad consensus exists throughout the Atlantic Basin about the sharing of and the willingness to promote “common values”. These “values”, which are enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in the G-20 meetings’ final documents, constitute the basic tenets of the global liberal order. Without some form of broad agreement on these political and ethical cornerstones there is no possible cooperation in the security and defence fields. Values function as an essential compass for forging a common vision about key global challenges and for defining and choosing a way forward.

However, the basic truth is that most putative members of a fledging Atlantic community agree that they agree on “values”, but they also agree that in many instances they disagree on how to implement those values. There are substantial differences and many diverse ways of ranking threatening events and situations, a diversity of perceptions that depend on geographical location, historical and political cultures, the size and availability of instruments of power, economic performance and so on. In the realm of defence and security challenges, when violence is involved and one has to decide to use force and act effectively, it is “interests” and power plays that take precedence. Innumerable situations in the world are permanent affronts to our values, but the decision to do something about it is taken only when there is a feeling that an issue represents a direct threat to perceived interests. Nobody risks strong political and diplomatic backlashes or goes to war, putting lives of citizens and kin in danger, purely for “values”.

No doubt, our sharing of fundamental values greatly facilitates the Atlantic dialogue on S&D. But that is clearly not enough for building meaningful security and defence cooperation agreements and engagements. An achievable Atlantic common security framework will have to go through many ad hoc bottom-up collaborative initiatives on specific issues where local shared interests are involved, and also many “variable geometry” diplomatic coalitions capable of taking at least a political stand against blatant “systemic threats” (Lété 2015). For the time being,
this multidimensional conversation should avoid big institutional projects or any ambition of turning up a consensual “grand strategy”. Accepting the fact that the geographical and geopolitical location of each member matters is paramount.

Most Atlantic states – and societies – agree on the necessity of maintaining an open rules-based international order, but each has its own priorities and its own understanding of its most important or threatening challenges. The way forward is to gradually transform these parallel visions into compatible perceptions instead of endlessly repeating that we share values – which we already take for granted, much more than in other parts of the planet. Yes, important regions of the Atlantic Basin are unfortunately doomed to become dangerous menaces to the security of our global world in the next decades. But the Atlantic – North and South – can also become the main laboratory of world security governance thanks to its unique, long historical experience of promoting the international rule of law and building an array of regional cooperation mechanisms and institutions. Provided its regional players – particularly the most powerful – are able to combine respect for diversity and their traditional drive for a world order where peace is based on a wilful acceptance of enforceable common rules. Renaissance astrologers were pleased to remind that Astra inclinant, non determinant: “Stars influence, they do not constrain”.

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In seeking to determine whether or not a pan-Atlantic space is a viable political, social and cultural concept many factors must be examined. Certainly trends and history exist that point toward the potential for greater convergence or divergence, as well as phenomena that could push in either direction depending on how they are acted upon. The question could also be posed in terms of whether or not there are interlinkages and affinities present around the Atlantic Space that point toward greater cooperation within the space, even if a pan-Atlantic concept per se does not gain traction. In political terms, the creation of pan-Atlantic international institutions or forums for dialogue are not beyond the realms of possibility. However, it seems unlikely that the societies of the four Atlantic continents will identify as “Atlantic peoples” or part of an “Atlantic world” in social and cultural terms, just as the creation of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum has not created a self-identifying group of “Pacific peoples”.

It is important to note that the modern era of communications and transportation is less constrained by geography and distance than ever before. As Emiliano Alessandri argues, “there are no physical borders today that make the Atlantic a truly separate entity, let alone a self-centred space” (Alessandri 2015). However, other factors are relevant, particularly historical ones. The path dependencies of interaction, common languages, intellectual heritage and other factors that are the result of the historical importance of geography and distance in determining patterns of trade, colonisation and human mobility could provide the basis for greater cooperation today (Ridout et al. 2015). There are, of course, many obstacles as well.

Primary actors: states and institutions

As in most parts of the world, states remain the primary political actors in the Atlantic Space. Some of the most influential are Canada, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Spain, Portugal, France and the United Kingdom, due to their current political and economic power, but also because of their historical linkages to other Atlantic players, which are often reflected in linguistic, social and cultural ties. Major cities
could continue to increase their roles in regional and global governance, especially in specific issue areas such as climate change, technology and innovation, which could alter patterns of interaction in the Atlantic Space. But states continue to be the dominant actors.

The regions of the Atlantic are amongst the world’s most highly integrated, as many supranational and regional institutions play important roles, with the European Union being the most relevant, especially as it continues to make efforts to unify its external actions under the EU banner. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is primarily a defensive military alliance, but it is also a political organisation that generates dense cooperation among North Atlantic countries. NATO’s closest southern counterpart would be the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), but this is more of a forum to discuss the management of the South Atlantic space than a military or political entity. Many regional organisations with political importance are first and foremost designed to be trading blocs, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the South African Development Community (SADC). The African Union (AU), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are among the most important regional political institutions aside from the EU. Furthermore, the Organization of American States (OAS) brings the countries of the Americas together. Whether primarily economic or political, these regional organisations are durable mechanisms for dialogue between countries. A number of these also pursue interregional goals. The EU is particularly adept at following regional strategies and has tended to interact directly with the African Union or Mercosur, for instance.

In addition to regional organisations and integration projects, a number of political, cultural and economic organisations link countries of the Atlantic. These can be loose constellations of countries which choose to cooperate on specific issues where interests align, such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) groupings. While the BRICS aims at redressing the current status quo with regard to global governance and pursues specific economic interests, the IBSA forum is framed as an alliance of developing democracies. Although the concept is not new, sustained economic growth in emerging economies and the subsequent increased reach of their development cooperation, at a time when North-South flows have slowed, has revived interest in South-South cooperation. Indeed, both the BRICS grouping and the IBSA forum are clear expressions of a renewed South-South cooperation to which South Atlantic countries contribute. These platforms have added to the web of relations linking Atlantic countries to one another and have contributed to the diversification of foreign relations for many countries of the global South.

North-South groupings also link countries in the Atlantic. The languages-based communities, whose member (and observer) states mainly belonged, formerly, to the Portuguese, British and French empires, serve a number of political, cultural and economic goals. The Commonwealth, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), and the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries (CPLP) remain important forums for cooperation among Atlantic countries. According to
Edalina Sanches, “the overwhelming majority of states in the Atlantic Basin (70%) belong to one of these three organizations. Some even belong to more than one organization; for instance, Ghana, Saint Lucia, and Dominica are members of the OIF and the Commonwealth. Others may only have loose linguistic or historical linkages (to say the least) to the organization to which they belong; for instance, Hungary, Latvia, and Romania are members of the OIF” (Sanches 2014). These organisations can serve as diplomatic and political tools, especially for countries that are less present on the global stage, whether because of size, historical context or economic weight. North-South political dialogue also takes the form of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, the CARIFORUM-EU Parliamentary Committee, or more cyclical high-level meetings such as the Ibero-American Summit, the US-Africa Leaders Summit, the Summit of the Americas, or the EU-Africa and the EU-CELAC summits. There are also civil society networks, cultural institutions, student exchanges and other structures linking countries of the Atlantic.

Structured interactions through states and institutions as well as less formal people-to-people contacts among open societies in the Atlantic Space could lead to mutual learning and adaptation. Those political, cultural or social practices that people find most appealing in other societies could draw them closer together through the power of attraction (or soft power). If people around the Atlantic Space approach interactions with open minds and the desire to understand each other, certain best practices and cultural norms could “rise to the top” while sub-optimal ones are voluntarily discarded as knowledge of better ideas spreads. It would be impossible to control or predict how these multi-directional idea flows might play out, but they could drive change.

The role of networks, mobility and language

Among the necessary conditions for idea transfer are interaction and verbal communication. In order for there to be a convergence of political, social or cultural norms and values, people have to be able to physically engage with each other in some way and to be able to talk to each other. Thus, the existence of transnational networks, trade routes, international summits, migration and common languages are crucial for convergence to occur. Though these factors can sometimes lead to friction and conflict if there is disagreement about deeply held beliefs or competition for resources, they also facilitate cooperation as people get to know each other, understand other perspectives and learn from each other.

The Atlantic Space benefits from a core of common languages that facilitates communication among its peoples: English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Other languages are present, but these four dominate. In addition to facilitating socialisation, business and political engagement, the presence of a common language can often mean a shared history and culture. Though the shared history may be a painful one of colonisation, there is nonetheless a history of engagement that creates a link. Indeed, strong societal and political links endure between countries like Brazil and Portugal or France and Senegal. Moreover, the literature and intellectual heritage associated with that language can also mean that there is a set of common reference points that generates affinity and mutual understanding.
Edalina Sanches argues in her study of the CPLP that, “organizations based upon a shared language and history are relevant and have potential to create soft power through language and beyond. In the linguistically-diverse Atlantic Basin, the existence of these organizations has provided a new opportunity not only for the management of the most spoken languages in the world – English, French, and Portuguese – but also to propagate political ideals that are valued in this space, namely democracy, peace, and human rights” (Sanches 2014). Of course, language is merely the vehicle through which these values are transferred, and they could just as easily spread hatred and violence. But a general belief in these ideals among the most powerful countries that speak these languages could help spread them to others who speak the same languages. Thus, the small group of common languages in the Atlantic Space could drive norm convergence in this space over time.

Human mobility also tends to spread idea transfer. People from one country bring their culture with them to their new country and teach it to the citizens of the destination country while also teaching friends and relatives in their origin country about the culture in their new home. Remittances and investment flows from diaspora communities to their origin countries also bring ideas with them for new business models based on what migrants have learned in their destination countries. Within the Atlantic Space, migration flows tend to be from the South Atlantic to the North Atlantic, with the United States and western Europe being the main destinations, but there has also been a spike in migration into South Africa in recent years (Pastor 2014).

Figure 1. Migratory flows between the South and North Atlantic (2005-2010)*

* The line is always closer to the origin of the flow. The original source offers an interactive visualization of this graph than can be navigated and provides access to the numbers behind these flows.

Source: Recreated by CIDOB from the original Sander et al. 2014.
Camila Pastor de Maria y Campos makes an important observation that “investment in the home country and in social networks there is indicative of a trend increasingly recognized by migration scholarship – the creation and cultivation of transnational social fields. What is crucial to the transnational analytic is the fact that migration has ceased to be a one-way trip, as often happened before the 1960s, and is increasingly characterized by the circulation of subjects rather than their settlement and incorporation in destination polities” (Pastor 2014). This circular flow of people, remittances, culture and ideas can help to reinforce existing linkages and create new networks.

Figure 2. The geographical scope of general NGO contacts*

* Entries are percentages of NGO that have “regular” contact with similar organisations in the rest of the world. Multiple responses were allowed. Source: Created by CIDOB using data from Adelle et al. 2014.

Of course, issue areas can generate networks too. In their examination of transnational environmental networks, Adelle et al. found that “NGOs inside the Atlantic Space had significantly more interaction with other NGOs inside of this area than outside” (Adelle et al. 2014). This could be the result of a greater emphasis on environmental concerns within the Atlantic Space, the ease of communicating with environmental NGO that speak the same language, mere coincidence, or other factors. Whatever the reason for this denser interaction, “the presence of transnational networks concentrated in the Atlantic Space offers one possible causal mechanism for the soft transfer (and ultimately convergence) of ideas, norms, and principles” (ibid.). Yet even if the conditions necessary for transfer are present, history and current events can push toward convergence or divergence.
Political values and modes of engagement

One of the main areas of divergence is related to sovereignty and foreign intervention, which is largely due to historical memories of colonialism, exploitative commercial relationships and support for coups by actors from the North Atlantic. These historical realities have generated mistrust in many South Atlantic countries toward North Atlantic countries. There is also a sense among many people in South Atlantic countries that development aid conditionalities from North Atlantic countries are overly prescriptive and are often not aligned with national priorities (Goerg 2014). This limits sovereign authority in recipient countries. Thus, the emphasis on the principles of non-intervention and self-determination is stronger in South Atlantic countries.

For example, though there is broad support for human rights in the Atlantic Space, disagreement about the appropriateness of military intervention in order to enforce the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is contentious. As Susanne Gratius notes, “some governments see humanitarian interventions under R2P as a pretext for imposing Western human rights and democratic norms” (Gratius 2014). Although more authoritarian countries in the Atlantic Space that abuse human rights oppose R2P for obvious reasons, the reticence to support interventions on the part of democratic countries such as Brazil and South Africa reflects scepticism of the utility of forcible regime change as well as potential ulterior motives behind humanitarian intervention. These views are partially conditioned by recent historical memories of significant interference in their domestic affairs by countries from the North Atlantic. This has led to divergent voting patterns at the UN as well as a focus on South-South cooperation, but Gratius still sees “great potential for conflict resolution in non-strategic, small countries inside the Atlantic that do not pose security threats to the basin” (ibid.). One potential area of convergence is around a greater emphasis at the UN Security Council on mediation of conflicts rather than immediately resorting to force, which is a priority for Brazil.

In the area of development cooperation, contradictions, hierarchies and the complexities of North-South and South-South cooperation come to light. The OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which brings together the world’s largest traditional aid donors, remains a central piece of the international aid architecture. Donor countries outside the DAC are becoming increasingly central to delivering aid to and forging partnerships with developing countries but have yet to upend the existing architecture. While certain Atlantic Space countries such as Brazil, South Africa and Venezuela, which feature among the re-emerging development partners, aim to alter the development cooperation status quo, the Atlantic Space also boasts a number of status quo developing countries. Indeed, a set of broad “peer groups” appear within the global South, ranging from rising powers and middle-income countries that are less reluctant to work within the framework of the DAC such as Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey, through to poorer and smaller countries (Goerg 2014). For recipient countries, greater coordination is generally viewed as beneficial but many are wary of increased cooperation.
between traditional donors and southern providers, such as Brazil and South Africa, because it could lead to reduced room to manoeuvre if competition among aid providers diminishes. Coordination among donors — as opposed to cooperation — does not entail planning and delivering aid jointly to achieve a common goal, but rather organising activities in a way that will not impede efforts by other actors and will lower the cost of the multiplicity of donors — such as duplication, waste and overwhelming local capacity. By sharing information on who is doing what, where, and when, efficiency gains through coordination could benefit all actors by transforming zero-sum dynamics into win-win situations. The Atlantic Space provides a particularly interesting arena within which to look at changes in development cooperation given the diversity of actors it brings together. While the line is often drawn between North and South, the Atlantic points to the need for more nuanced approaches, especially in light of an increasingly diverse global South within which interests do not always align. The gap in development between North and South as well as gaps within Atlantic Space countries could, however, present obstacles to alignment of interests.

The Atlantic Space showcases a number of historically fraught relations between countries and societies. Though these differences and lack of trust currently represent an obstacle to deeper cooperation, the proliferation of democracies in the South Atlantic since the late 1980s and the end of intense Cold War competition over spheres of influence present new opportunities as younger generations replace those with memories of outside domination. Indeed, Atlantic Future authors have identified the potential for convergence around democracy as a shared political system in the Atlantic (Gratius 2015; Alessandri 2015). Moreover, a shift in thinking by leaders in North Atlantic countries towards a more respectful mode of engagement with South Atlantic countries, seeking to understand different perspectives rather than to lecture and dictate predetermined preferences could help boost pan-Atlantic trust over time. Recent evidence of such a shift can be seen in the Americas, with US Secretary of State John Kerry’s declaration in November 2013 that “the era of the Monroe Doctrine is over” reflecting a desire in the United States to make a break with the past and focus on cooperating with Latin American countries as partners on a host of issues, rather than historical patterns of US interventionism that treated Latin America as its “backyard” (Kerry 2013). This same impetus can be seen in the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between the United States and Cuba in July 2015. The increasing “Latin Americanization” of US culture, ethnicity and politics through immigration and idea transfer could further shift the way the United States interacts with Latin America and vice versa. It remains to be seen if these shifts foreshadow greater trust and convergence within the Americas. While, as Kaye Whiteman argues, “Africa and Europe seem still not to have fully escaped from the burden of history” (Whiteman 2012), EU-Africa relations are changing fast and could be heading toward normalisation. EU member states like Germany, the United Kingdom and France have also started developing national strategies for engagement and cooperation with re-emerging development partners, ranging from high-level political dialogue to local projects.
Additionally, a new opportunity for convergence can be found in shifting views in the United States toward marijuana policy and drug eradication efforts. The handling of the “war on drugs” has long been a point of contention between the United States and Latin America, with much drug trafficking violence afflicting Latin America even though the United States is the primary consumption market. As eradication efforts become less intense and countries around the region – from Chile and Uruguay to the United States – experiment with normalising marijuana usage, the divergence of views on how to manage drug problems could give way to greater convergence and cooperation in the Americas (Neuman and Romero 2015). This would also bring their drug policies into closer alignment with the EU, which views drug use...
less as a criminal issue and more as a health issue, with a greater focus on helping rather than punishing users.

**Conclusion**

The Atlantic Space demonstrates significant potential for convergence in the political, social and cultural realms. It has the potential to drive development norms and practices and global discussions on development cooperation as well as breaking down the North-South and South-South dichotomies. At the policy level, the Atlantic Space brings together a wealth of expertise which, building on linguistic links, could be leveraged through more systematic dialogue and consultation. The oft-touted historical and cultural links across the space present both opportunities and challenges, which should be taken into account when engaging in cooperation. In addition to shared languages, the history of colonisation has, among other factors, impacted the development of institutions across the space, often leading to some degree of similarity in the formal set-up of these institutions. While existing links can facilitate cooperation, these often come with assumptions of a degree of closeness and a false sense of naturally aligned interests, methods and ways of communicating. Hierarchies, often linked to the space’s history, also remain present in the minds of policymakers, private sector actors and publics alike (Goerg 2014). Indeed, “a sustainable Atlantic Basin would require rebuilding Atlantic relations so that historical hierarchies and current economic gaps are transformed into economic ties that are satisfactory to all partners” (Pastor 2014). Convergence in the Atlantic Space is possible, and trust-building through repeated positive interactions could help foster alignment of interests. However, convergence is not a given and should not be mistaken for homogeneity. The Atlantic Space will continue to remain a diverse space.

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Introduction

The Atlantic Space is not merely an abstraction of international relations; it is a reality that is clearly evidenced by the high levels of interconnectivity in its physical, biological and chemical systems. This natural interdependence has provided the basis for inter-basin exchange and cooperation from the earliest times to the present day (Tedsen and Kraemer 2013). Unfettered access to the Atlantic’s environmental (and human) resources was essential to the historical rise of the Euro-Atlantic civilisation (Sachs 2009). This model of development created a North-South dynamic of resource exploitation whose traces are still visible in the Atlantic Space of the 21st century. A key indicator of this imbalance is poverty, as figure 1 clearly demonstrates. Whilst there are differences within countries, as an example, the 2011 poverty rate (living on less than 2 dollars a day) in the US stood at 2% whereas it was 80% in Burundi.

Figure 1. Poverty rates are highest in Africa and Asia (% of country’s population that was poor in 2011)*

* This map shows the proportion of people within a country that were poor in 2011. It is one of five maps showing the shares of population in each country that live at different income levels. The income groups are the follows: the poor who live on $2 or less daily, low income on $2.01-10, middle income on $10.01-20, upper-middle income on $20.01-50 and high income on more than $50; figures expressed in 2011 purchasing power parities in 2011 prices.

The modern day “Atlantic lifestyle” that has emerged from the Euro-Atlantic civilization has created patterns of production and consumption that have led to the overuse of natural resources, pollution of the environment and already locked-in effects of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change. These are challenges that are complex and mutually reinforcing. For example, industrial agricultural production aims to increase food supply, yet deforestation to clear land for high levels of production causes degradation of the soil and water systems on which future production depends. Climate change destroys critical carbon stocks which in turn puts additional stress on oceans already facing degradation and overexploitation. In this way, societal needs and human behaviour are eroding the capacity of ecosystems and climate systems to support life across the Atlantic. To analyse these interactions between society and the environment, this chapter takes a Driving Force-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) approach to evaluate environmental activity and resource use in the Atlantic Space (see figure 2) The chapter also highlights geopolitical dynamics in the region and the growing political and economic influence of southern Atlantic countries by drawing on examples of environmental cooperation and leadership in the context of emerging Atlantic polycentrism.
Environmental and biophysical context

The existence of an Atlantic Space is never more clearly evident than in the context of the marine and coastal environment. The Atlantic Ocean binds Europe, Africa and the Americas together at a fundamental level. Connections range from shared fish stocks and migratory species such as Atlantic bluefin tuna, leatherback turtles and the European eel, to global environmental commons (high seas and deep seabed), freshwater resources, river basins and transboundary movement of waters. Furthermore, the Atlantic Ocean provides essential ecosystem services to Atlantic coastal and inland populations including: provisioning services (e.g. dietary protein and raw materials); regulating services (e.g. coastal protection and water purification); cultural services (e.g. tourism and recreation), and supporting services (e.g. nutrient cycling).

The Atlantic Ocean is the central drainage site for large river systems such as the Congo and Amazon river basins, the latter carrying 16% of global runoff (Uitto and Duda 2002). These basins are the figurative “lungs” of the Atlantic, with forests that provide climate regulation, cooling through evapotranspiration and buffering of climate variability (Megevand 2013). South America’s Amazon contains roughly one third of the world’s remaining tropical rainforest and stores approximately 120 billion tonnes of carbon. Transpiration in the forest also has far-reaching effects on rainfall throughout the Atlantic Basin (Schwartzman 2013). The other “lung” of the Atlantic, the Congo Basin, is the world’s second largest contiguous block of tropical forest and covers 400 million hectares, storing an estimated 60 billion metric tonnes of carbon (Megevand 2013).

The southern Atlantic continents hold exceptional biological diversity. Latin America and the Caribbean account for some 33% of the world’s total mammals, 35% of its reptilian species, 41% of its birds and 50% of its amphibians (UNEP 2010a). Plant life is also biologically unique and there is growing acknowledgement that flora and fauna in this region hold a wealth of genetic resources (ibid.). Africa also has extraordinary biodiversity, with 34 of the world’s biodiversity hotspots on the continent (UNEP 2010b).

The Atlantic Basin is connected at a biophysical level by a range of atmospheric and climatic patterns. A large portion of climate variability in the Atlantic is associated with the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) that influences oceanic circulation and temperatures, wind patterns, weather and climate in the Atlantic. The Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC) – also referred to as the Gulf Stream system – further acts as a “thermohaline conveyor belt”, providing a critical net transfer of heat from the South to the North Atlantic (see figure 3). The AMOC produces cyclical variations in sea surface temperatures in the North Atlantic, affecting atmospheric circulation and causing climatic variations over northern Europe (Ward 2003).
Human environmental dynamics in the 21st century

Driving forces

Lifestyles and consumer behaviours in the Atlantic Space – as across the globe – are extremely diverse and depend on a myriad of factors, including culture, rural or urban location, income and the price of goods (de Mooij 2011). Nonetheless, historically, the rise of the Euro-Atlantic model of industrialisation, urbanisation, economic development and market globalisation can be seen to have had an important influence in shaping global lifestyle choices (Sachs 2009). One example of the globalisation of the Euro-Atlantic model is the spread of “western” dietary preferences (Frenk 2015). These preferences – that include a higher consumption of animal protein rather than the direct consumption of food crops – require increased resource loads to meet demands and put heavy strains on the environment (Godfray et al. 2010).

Indeed, the inherent problem with the globalisation of the Euro-Atlantic development model and associated “Atlantic lifestyle” is that it presupposes a way of life that exceeds the carrying capacity of our planetary system. As illustrated by figure 4, increased levels of human development in Atlantic states are strongly associated with greater (and unsustainable) ecological footprints. Wolfgang Sachs (2009) notes that: “the resources for democratising automobile society, high-rise housing, chemical agriculture, or a meat-based food system at a global scale would be too vast, too expensive, and too damaging for local ecosystems and the biosphere”. This development model has, by common consensus, also led to a rapid accumulation of GHG in the upper atmosphere and consequently to global warming (Woodgate 2010). Yet despite the impracticability of this lifestyle, Sachs (2009) remarks that it is “too late” – Southern aspirations have already been shaped by Euro-Atlantic patterns of production and consumption: “the imagination of the world is shaped by the Euro-Atlantic civilisation, yet the means for everyone in the world to live in such a civilisation are ever less available”. Thus,
while lifestyles and consumer preferences are locally and culturally specific (de Mooij 2011), the Euro-Atlantic development model and its systems of consumption and production continue to act as an important driving force for unsustainable resource use in the Atlantic Basin (see “The story of corn: systemic production and consumption” below).

Figure 4. Human Development Index in relation to ecological footprint (biocapacity in relation to human demand) per capita

Source: Created by CIDOB using data from UNDP (2011 HDI data), World Bank (2014 population data) and Happy Planet Index (2008 data).

The story of corn: systemic production and consumption

Underlying individual lifestyle choices and habits is an entrenched system of production designed to maximize output and dependent on a parallel maximization of consumption and demand. The story of corn and its influence on the US diet serves as an interesting example of how a system of production can develop to produce and shape a coordinated system of consumption that is of relative scale.

Following the World War I and the American depression, a series of policies were implemented to dramatically increase production which over time led to the transformation of family farm agriculture into business (agribusiness) (NFFC 2015). Hybrid varieties of corn were introduced and excessive chemical fertilizer applied resulting in unprecedented yields which actually led to chronic excess (NFFC 2015; Pollan 2009). In turn, surplus corn caused the price to be artificially low, leading the cost of corn to fall below the actual cost of production. Corporations controlling both sides of the supply chain (i.e. sale of seeds, grain traders, food processors) were able to benefit from their position and the low price of corn. Agribusiness in the US expanded and new products were developed to absorb this cheap surplus. Corn was remodeled into a variety of inexpensive, portable products that were marketed to the American public (Pollan 2009). The main developments were the production of high-fructose corn syrup and corn-fed livestock (i.e. poultry, beef, and pork) (Foley 2013). Both these corn “products” fundamentally transformed the American diet, with high-fructose corn syrup being used in an ever-increasing variety of processed food (and non-food) products (Pollan and Schlosser 2009).

Such systems of production came over time to be supported by similar commercial marketing and advertising campaigns to increase consumption further resulted in the sizing up of products, servings and food intake. For example, the supersizing method has taken the standard size for a bottle of Coca-Cola from 8 fluid ounces to 20 fluid ounces (Pollan 2009).

This example serves to illustrate the interdependency of consumption habits and the methods or systems of production that support or shape those habits. Today, the American industrial agriculture system is globalised with many of the American grain companies dominating the international grain market as well as influencing prices, product development and eating habits at home and abroad (NFCC 2015). In Brazil, trends that occurred half a century ago in the US are taking place with forested areas being cleared for growing soybeans, which in turn are being produced to feed the growing and lucrative cattle industry (Nepstad, Stöckler and Almeida 2006; Barona 2010).

Between 2000 and 2010, 10 million hectares of land were converted for soy production in Brazil and the country is now one of the largest producers accounting for some 30% of world production (Gerdes, Kaphengst and Davis 2014). The production of soy is accelerated by Brazil’s commodity exports and its burgeoning domestic cattle industry. Brazil is currently one of the top three producers of beef and has concurrently developed one of the highest per capita consumption rates of beef in the world (FAS/USDA 2015).
Pressures

Not least among the environmental pressures of the Atlantic lifestyle are the GHG emissions in sectors that contribute to the production and consumption needed to maintain it such as agriculture, industry and transport (Godfray et al. 2010). The countries that occupy the Atlantic Space emit just over 40% of global GHG emissions (US EIA 2015). Differences between North and South in levels of consumption and production are evident within the Atlantic Space: of total emissions in 2012, North America produced more than 19%, Europe 13%, Latin America 4%, and Africa 3.7% (ibid.). Nevertheless, future emissions trajectories depend on regional and national dynamics, development paradigms (towards an Atlantic lifestyle or otherwise) and the political will to transition away from a fossil fuel-heavy model of development towards renewables (Stefes and Kraemer 2015).

Deforestation takes place to produce timber for direct use in production, however the primary driver has been the expansion of cultivated land and pastures for agriculture (Knickel 2012). The dietary choices (i.e. greater consumption of animal-based proteins) associated with the Atlantic lifestyle can be seen through a comparison of land use. While North America and Europe devote only about 40% of their croplands to direct food production, Africa and Asia allocate typically over 80% of their cropland to food crops (Foley et al. 2011). Simply explained, this means that in order to sustain the Atlantic lifestyle diet a much larger surface area of land is necessary to produce both animal-based proteins and plant-based crops (Reijnders and Soret 2003; Wakarmiya 2011). 80% of all Amazonian deforestation has taken place in Brazil, driven primarily by trade and global consumption of Brazilian beef and soybeans (Malhi et al. 2008; Karstensen, Peters and Andrew 2013). Brazil has been responsible for an estimated 2.7 billion tonnes of CO₂, or 30% of carbon emissions associated with deforestation in the last decade, due to soybean production and cattle ranching. Deforestation rates in the Congo Basin have been relatively low compared to those observed in other tropical forests, in part due to tax receipts from oil and mineral industries (Angelsen and Rudel 2013). However, pressures are rising, such as increasing population density and demand for fuel wood and timber resources, and clearing of land for (largely small-scale) agriculture. Between 2000 and 2010, the world’s highest rates of tropical forest loss occurred in South America and Africa (UNEP 2012) (see figure 5).

The Atlantic was the first of the world’s oceans to be overfished and the north-west Atlantic was the site of a collapse in cod stocks in the 1970s, one of the most iconic tragedies of the commons*. Today stocks in most major fishing areas in the Atlantic are overexploited due to overfishing (UNEP 2006; Holthus, De la Gorce and De Saint Salvy 2012). Meanwhile, global consumption of fish continues to rise, driven by changing dietary preferences and population and economic growth. With wild fish catches stagnating or in decline, aquaculture aims to meet the demand and continued growth in its use is predicted. Like livestock, many aquaculture enterprises feed their fish on corn and soy products (Pollan 2009).

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1. The “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin 1968) refers to the failure of cooperative governance of a common resource by individuals guided only by self-interest leading to collapse of the resource.
States and impacts

Despite marked diversity in climatic and biophysical conditions, GHG emissions and climate change have created certain common patterns and vulnerabilities (Stefes et al. 2014). A significant percentage of the population of the Atlantic Basin lives in coastal zones, including a number of major cities and population clusters around sensitive river deltas such as the Congo. Climate change impacts pose direct threats to regional development, human security and well-being in these areas through widespread rising sea levels, coastal flooding and erosion, saltwater intrusion, ocean acidification, temperature and precipitation changes, species loss, degradation of ecosystems and their services (ibid.). Ice sheet melt is not only contributing to sea level rise in the Atlantic, recent observations support evidence of a weakening of the AMOC, one of the Atlantic’s critical systems, through significant freshening from increased ice sheet melt in Greenland causing associated surface cooling in the North Atlantic (Rahmstorf et al. 2015).

Healthy, functioning natural systems are necessary for any form of agriculture, which is essential to human food and security. At the same time, agriculture is one of the sectors that is most sensitive to climate change and associated temperature and precipitation variability. This is particularly the case for (wholly or partially) rain-fed agriculture (USAID 2013) and thus presents particular challenges for the southern Atlantic where reliance on precipitation for agriculture is greater; in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, it is estimated that agricultural losses will be the equivalent of 0.2% of regional GDP by 2100 (Calzadilla et al. 2010). Worsening natural drought conditions will likely be magnified by climatic variability and will be further impacted by the clearance of Amazonian forests which release moisture southward. Lower water levels
In addition to producing greenhouse gas emissions, anthropogenic pressures such as large scale deforestation and intensive farming systems lead to environmental impacts that have far-reaching consequences throughout the basin.

Also lead to reduced hydropower output which will have implications for energy production in countries reliant on this power source, such as Brazil.

In addition to producing greenhouse gas emissions, anthropogenic pressures lead to environmental impacts that have far-reaching consequences throughout the basin. Large-scale deforestation taking place for the expansion of agriculture is likely to reduce rainfall and impact regional circulation of atmospheric moisture, possibly pushing Amazonia into a permanently drier climate regime (Malhi et al. 2008). Intensive farming systems for industrial agriculture lead to greater levels of pollutants in the atmosphere and reductions in biodiversity through the growth of monocultures (Altieri 1998). Westhoek et al. (2011) estimate that 30% of human induced biodiversity loss is related to the production of livestock. As developing countries in the South are frequently dependent on these resources, they are subject to a disproportionately high degree of vulnerability to declines in biodiversity and ecosystem service provisioning (Tedsen and Kraemer 2013). Furthermore, rivers such as the Amazon and Congo become the conduits for land-based sources of pollution from run-off and nonpoint discharges, leading to hypoxia and algal blooms which affect freshwater quality, harming coastal and marine ecosystems as well as human health (Lau 2013; IOC/UNESCO et al. 2011; Ruckelshaus et al. 2008; UNEP 2006; Biswas 2004). In addition, street litter, food packaging and medical waste, which degrade increasingly scarce freshwater resources, are transported into the marine environment. Once in the Atlantic, these are added to ocean-based sources of pollution such as discarded fishing vessels or equipment, oil spills or lost cargo. The resulting marine litter ends up in the shared commons of the Atlantic Ocean where two large “garbage patches” with high concentrations of macro- and micro-plastics have been produced (Law 2010; Morét-Ferguson et al. 2010) (see figure 6). This marine litter is further washed up on the shores of countries around the basin, creating substantial environmental as well as socioeconomic problems. Added to this are the impacts of overfishing, which presents one of the greatest threats to marine biodiversity, the sustainability of marine resources and future food supplies (Lester et al. 2013; Barbier 2012; Billé, Druel and Rochette 2011; Gjerde and Breide 2003).

Figure 6. Global garbage gyres

Responses

In an attempt to manage some of these impacts and pressures, a fragmented constellation of cooperative initiatives has emerged in the Atlantic Space. Differing in their range and objectives, these initiatives include: overarching multilateral frameworks involving countries from all Atlantic continents; regional cooperative relationships (particularly for trans-boundary environmental management – e.g. marine resources, river basins); and flexible and specific bilateral relationships based on shared mutual interest or shared experience (e.g. socioeconomic development, historical and cultural ties or specific geophysical and biological features).

Most multilateral environmental governance frameworks tend to be global in scope (e.g. UNFCCC and REDD+) with relatively few examples of frameworks that are specific to the Atlantic. At this level, North-South dynamics continue to be visible, for example in agreements that combine development aid with environmental objectives such as climate change adaptation and mitigation. In these scenarios, northern Atlantic countries predominantly take on a funding role. Motivations for such funding are manifold, but can, in part, be in recognition of the climate justice agenda (see, for example, the Mary Robinson Foundation 2013) and the observation that the impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed and that some regions in the southern hemisphere are particularly vulnerable to socioeconomic impacts (Smit and Wandal 2006). Such North-South multilateral initiatives include EUROCLIMA, a cooperative programme between Latin America and the EU on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI), funded by UNDP through contributions from Italy and Norway. In some cases, cooperation can be based on historical, cultural and linguistic ties such as the Red Iberoamericana de Oficinas de Cambio Climático (RIOCC): a cooperative effort between Spain and Portugal and 21 Latin American countries. The acknowledgement of shared risk and particular climate change-related challenges has in some cases been the impetus for regional and South-South multilateral cooperation. The Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) is a regional reforestation project in Africa to address desertification and land degradation. CARIBSAVE is a cooperative effort between small island states in Latin America for risk management of climate-induced disasters and sea level rise. Private sector initiatives responding to development and climate change have also emerged at the regional level. For example, Coffee Under Pressure is an initiative funded privately by a US company, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, to improve resilience to climate change for coffee growers in Central America. The Atlantic Future project found that stakeholders in every Atlantic region positively responded to the creation of a specifically Atlantic network of sustainable cities to mirror similar initiatives such as the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (Drummond 2014).

Shared commons in the Atlantic Space such as fish stocks, seas and river basins that demand transnational governance often bring about multilateral and regional cooperation. There are currently 15 Regional Fishery Bodies (RFB) operating in the Atlantic. These include, for example, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic (COMHAFAT-ATLAFCO) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Depending on their
focus, RFB aim to conserve, manage and develop fisheries, and members and contracting parties include countries from both northern and southern hemispheres in many different constellations. UNEP's Regional Seas Programme aims to address ocean degradation and sustainable management and includes wide international participation and 13 programmes in the Wider Caribbean, Mediterranean, and Western Africa, most of which are accompanied by legally-binding regional seas conventions (e.g. the Cartagena Convention for the Caribbean and the Barcelona Convention for the Mediterranean). Studies from the Atlantic Future project suggest that potential willingness exists for an agreement on the protection of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) within and/or between basin countries, although it is less likely that such agreements would be legally binding (Drummond 2014). Support for the expansion of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) is strong within Atlantic states, even in the case that an agreement is legally binding (ibid.).

A recent example of Atlantic marine cooperation is the Sargasso Sea Declaration, which was signed between the governments of Bermuda, the Azores, Monaco, United Kingdom and the United States in March 2014, committing to the conservation of the Sargasso Sea – a vast patch of mid-Atlantic Ocean known for its unique floating seaweeds that harbour rich biodiversity.

Within the Atlantic Space a number of South-South partnerships exist, particularly around climate issues. The emerging partnerships between Brazil and a host of African countries – specifically those that are Portuguese speaking – on tropical agriculture and climate change serve as an example of these new, dynamic bilateral relationships. Brazil has engaged with several African countries, providing policy and technological support in tropical agriculture in an attempt to tackle low levels of productivity in sub-Saharan Africa (Shankland and Cabral 2013). Between 2003 and 2010, agriculture accounted for 22% of Brazil's technical cooperation with Africa (ibid.). Underlying Brazil's agricultural technical cooperation is a distinct focus on socioeconomic goals and rural development, including food and human security, poverty alleviation and improvement of agricultural productivity (ibid.). The biophysical similarities between Brazil's arid terrain and that of sub-Saharan Africa including soil, seed and geological pressures (e.g. rainfall) provide a strong basis for inter-basin cooperation in resource management.

Bilateral agreements that continue to demonstrate a North-South divide are those which relate to access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources. As noted above, there is a greater dependency in the South on biodiversity, where a higher level of genetic resources are concentrated, while traditionally, the biotechnological industry has been concentrated in developed countries in the North. While, at the international level, the Convention on Biological Diversity's Nagoya Protocol provides a legal framework for improved access and benefit sharing procedures for genetic resources with prior informed consent and mutually agreed upon terms, negotiations have stalled (Tedsen and Kraemer 2013). Bilateral trade agreements and dialogues have helped fill gaps in improving access and benefit sharing for genetic resources, such as bilateral agreements between the EU and Latin American countries and ongoing negotiations between the EU and Mercosur (Oberthür et al. 2011). On the other hand, agreements between developing and developed countries (in particular EU member states and the US) sometimes include provisions
that even exceed the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) demands regarding bio-prospecting (Biermann et al. 2009).

**Analysis and conclusions**

The Atlantic lifestyle is sustained by high levels of consumption and production and has become increasingly prevalent with growing industrialisation and urbanisation both in the Atlantic Space and beyond. However, and as highlighted by the “Story of Corn”, the existing production and consumption systems that support this type of lifestyle can be both inefficient and damaging to human and environmental health. The systems supporting this particular way of life have led to a wide range of pressures on land-based and aquatic ecosystems and the services they provide to the Atlantic population. Unfortunately, these pressures and impacts are intimately connected and as such, their mitigation is less than straightforward. Furthermore, path dependencies mean that northern countries are to a certain extent “locked-in” to a conventional model of fossil fuel-driven development, while at the same time, southern desires have already been shaped by Euro-Atlantic patterns of production and consumption (Sachs 2009). The key challenge now faced by the Atlantic to protect its environment and resources is to develop new solutions that transform production systems, consumption preferences and expectations of quality of life without jeopardising basic needs. For example, there is a need to increase agricultural productivity in the Atlantic Space, particularly in Latin America and Africa, whilst at the same time maintaining and preserving the significant biodiversity that exists in those continents’ extensive and undeveloped rainforests, grasslands and ecosystems.

In addition, while the Atlantic Basin is strongly connected at a biological, physical and chemical level, it is neither entirely self-contained nor a closed system. Players both inside and outside the basin influence and are affected by environmental challenges in the Atlantic Space. Actors from outside the basin consume resources, contribute to pollution and shape developments, including via trade, foreign direct investment and technology transfer. For example, in the case of marine resources, countries generally face domestic trade-offs between promoting sustainability and supporting coastal livelihoods, yet it is often exogenous factors – such as, for example, climate change impacts and illegal fishing – that most greatly impact marine ecosystems and economies in Atlantic coastal countries (Tedsen et al. 2014). In this way, many of the challenges faced by the Atlantic states are “wicked problems” that “defy resolution due to the enormous interdependencies, uncertainties, circularities, and conflicting stakeholders implicated by any effort to develop a solution” and in the case of climate change a “super wicked problem” due to the fact that “the longer it takes to address the problem, the harder it will be to do so” (Lazarus 2009).

Although certain initiatives show potential for intra-basin cooperation, the overarching green policy context in the Atlantic Space is not yet well advanced.
of marine resources, improving production in tropical agriculture). In the case of global commons such as fish stocks there is a very specific imperative to cooperate at a multilateral level. Bilateral and regional relationships exist to tackle a variety of challenges and there are important avenues of cooperation to be explored – such as Africa’s openness to green policy and Europe’s anticipated timeline as regards the transition towards a green economy, which scenario potentially opens up possibilities for North-South collaboration (Drummond 2014). Bilateral and regional agreements are by no means exclusively North-South but increasingly South-South and South-North as the South’s populations, power, and consumption rise (Lesser 2010). Indeed, increasing engagement from the South can bring new and innovative solutions for resource conservation and governance to the table as in the proposal to gather international funding for the protection of the Yasuni National Park in Ecuador (Martin and Scholz 2014).

Thus the outlook for the governance of the Atlantic environment and its resources is – as in the rest of the 21st century world – polycentric and diffuse. From this perspective, the way forward for resource management and environmental protection in the Atlantic is not self-evident. To address the key pressures and impacts described in this chapter would above all require an acceptance of the principle of “contraction and convergence” as proposed by Audrey Meyer: “a commitment from all players to achieve the common goal of material and energy consumption compatible with the demands of other countries, while remaining within the carrying capacity of the biosphere” (Sachs 2009). Indeed, this would suppose a re-evaluation of the fundamental premise of the Atlantic lifestyle whose cultural sway still resonates across both hemispheres.

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"A paradox lies at the heart of the Atlantic Basin’s energy future – it may be richer in seaborne fuel, but this will be oil, gas and coal that it should not burn" (Isbell 2014).

Introduction and context

In 2015, the world reached a critical inflection point in an accelerating, irreversible process of disruption and reconfiguration of its energy systems. The new “Age of Energy Transformation” is driven by technological innovation and new business models that are changing the relative costs of various energy supply options, heightened concerns over the dismal economics and risks of nuclear power, and the recognition that continued use of fossil energies will make the planet largely uninhabitable. Global overheating, ocean acidification and disruption of the marine web of life, desertification on land and loss of fertile soil, and loss of natural resilience as ecosystems become overstressed are dangers the world community needs to address. The growing possibility that human societies might one day no longer adapt and therefore perish is dawning on more leaders around the world. The origin of this present threat lies in the Atlantic Space, in the nations on the four continents around the Atlantic Ocean. Many of the solutions are found in the same space.

The outlook for energy industries has changed significantly with recent declines in the prices of coal, oil and gas. Up to the end of 2013, one could argue that an Atlantic fossil energy renaissance was underway: fossil energy extraction was on the increase and ongoing exploration reinforced the belief that production would keep expanding in the medium to long term. Having been a net importer of fossil energy, the Atlantic seemed set to become a net exporter. This was in part a result of fracking for oil and fossil methane in the US. It was also the outcome of technological advances and cost reductions in existing oil and gas extraction as well as the prospect of new development, such as offshore fields on the coasts of South America (Brazil) and Africa (Angola).

1. This chapter is loosely based on Isbell (2014). In view of shifts in energy prices, however, the overall conclusions of this chapter are different.
Since early 2014, doubts about the future of the fossil fuel industry have grown. Recent price levels have undermined the expectation of future profits from new exploration and field development, while also reducing the profitability of existing extraction. It appears likely that many of the new discoveries will not be developed, and that fossil energy extraction in the Atlantic Basin may not expand as hoped for. At the same time, there is a continued shift towards renewable energy supply, which erodes demand for fossil energy in the Atlantic and increasingly also in other world regions (Lovins 2015). This development may be called the “Global Green Energy Shift”, and it looks like frustrating the “Atlantic Energy Renaissance”.

In order to explore these dynamics and how they might shape the Atlantic energy landscape, this chapter first takes stock of the components of the Atlantic energy system and how they came to be. We find that all the world’s energy systems are Atlantic in their historical origin as well as their current economic profile. Among the different energy systems, fossil and nuclear energies are set to wane while renewable energies grow in importance in a process that will prove to be disruptive for the old energy industries. Although the outlook is somewhat uncertain, it is likely that the Atlantic will continue to dominate world energy systems.

The world’s energy system is Atlantic

Fossil fuels: coal, oil and gas

Atlantic energy systems are not fundamentally different from those elsewhere. In the Atlantic, the energy systems are older and more developed with significantly greater economic volumes and technological depth. Indeed, the global energy systems all have their technological origin and economic heart in the Atlantic, and were “exported” (in various ways) to other basins or regions. This is obvious in the case of fossil energies:

- While fossil energy sources have been known since antiquity, their large-scale industrial use was only developed in the past 200 years, starting on the eastern side of the Atlantic. Previously, wood had been the most important source of storable and transportable energy, not only in domestic heating and small trade activities such as blacksmithing but also in mining and industry.
- The invention of the steam engine by James Watt enabled the operation of much more powerful pumps than before, making it possible to dig deeper coal mines. Steam engines also increased demand for coal in many applications beyond the mines. The growth of the coal industry – deep-mined hard coal and surface-mined brown coal or lignite – is closely connected to the inventiveness of European and later American culture that emerged with the decline of religious and feudal powers. The development of capital markets within “liberal” political systems based on the rule of law and due process, and a judiciary operating without fear or favour, further propelled economic growth.
- The development of technologies for mining and coal use was and to an extent still is concentrated in the Atlantic. Shifts to the Pacific, such as with coal liquefaction moving from Germany to South Africa, then
to Australia and China, are a relatively recent phenomenon. The somewhat absurd concept of “clean coal”, used first in relation to liquefied coal and later for carbon capture and storage (CCS), is also an Atlantic invention.

• Oil and gas extraction and use grew to industrial scale in the Atlantic Basin. Although it is a global industry now, many of the leading businesses still have their origin, operational basis and legal headquarters around the Atlantic. The industry’s technology sector is essentially Atlantic. “Enhanced” oil and gas recovery technologies – notably improved computer modelling of underground geology, directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing of oil-and-gas-bearing rock (fracking) – all have their roots in the Atlantic.

• Today, the Atlantic holds a large share of the world’s unexploited fossil reserves, including 40% of oil, 20% of natural gas and roughly 40% of coal (BP 2015), and yet the future of the industry is not certain. Large profit margins (in the past) and subsidies have made it possible to access unconventional and difficult hydrocarbon reserves. New technologies have played a role, particularly in the North American shale revolution – shale gas is now over 35% of US gas production, up from 2% in 2000 – and the southern Atlantic “oil ring” with deep-water offshore oil rigs from Namibia and Morocco to Argentina and the Gulf of Mexico (Isbell 2014), but their further expansion is in doubt given current and projected oil prices.

• If the Atlantic currently accounts for less than half of global fossil fuel production, it currently still consumes more than half. With new oil and gas finds, notably off the shores of Brazil and Angola, some see rising shares in global production and a bright Atlantic future for fossil energy industries. Pipelines – built recently or being planned – and investment in seaborne transport of “liquefied natural gas” – compressed fossil methane, a powerful greenhouse gas contributing to global overheating – might add to intra-basin trade in oil and gas and derivative products.

This short historical sketch highlights the Atlantic Basin – North and, increasingly, South – as the birthplace and home of fossil energy systems in terms of development and mastery of technology, development of business models and economic weight, investment and control through ownership of technology, industry assets and underground reserves. Fossil energy has propelled the Atlantic nations to their present position, and has resulted in an enormous legacy – of costs and benefits – that is still being added to on the cost side. The processes of global overheating, ocean acidification, desertification and sea-level rise are now creating previously unknown stress on human civilisation, triggering or aggravating conflicts and even wars, and eroding the carrying capacity of ecosystems to the point that the Atlantic fossil fuel legacy is threatening the civilisation partly built on coal, oil and gas. The consequences on the Earth’s climate of deforestation and using fossil fuels were also first articulated in the Atlantic. The earliest may have been US Congressman George Perkins Marsh from Vermont in an 1847 lecture for the Agricultural Society of Rutland County. Better known are John Tyndall of Britain, who in 1860 demonstrated the infrared absorption capacity of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the main mechanism behind the greenhouse effect leading to global overheating that was then better explained in 1896 by Svante Arrhenius of Sweden.

2. For more information, see http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrvbib:FIELD%28NUMBER%28v02%29%29
Electricity is the “good” Atlantic, while …

The story of the electricity industry is similar. From Benjamin Franklin via Thomas Edison and Nicola Tesla to Werner von Siemens, all the main discoveries, inventions and innovations have taken place in Atlantic Space countries. The physical units in electrics and electronics are mostly named after Europeans. The globally dominant paradigm of the electric power industry, to “predict and provide” for demand, was born in the Atlantic Basin and is linked to the specific conditions of business and industry development “in the West”. The conceptual bases, economic thinking and legal traditions by which the electricity industry is governed around the world were all developed in the Atlantic nations. The export of governance frameworks for the power industry as an “enabler of progress” is one of the mechanisms through which the Atlantic countries have exported their civilisation, governance systems and lifestyles around the world.

… nuclear power is the “bad” Atlantic, but …

The Atlantic pedigree is most obvious in military and “civilian” nuclear technology. Nuclear science and technology were founded almost exclusively by Europeans, from the discovery of uranium by Martin Klaproth in 1789 to the understanding of radiation by Wilhelm Röntgen, Henri Becquerel, Paul Villard, Marie Skłodowska-Curie and Pierre Curie in the 1890s, and Albert Einstein’s theoretical insights first published in 1905. Building on insights from the early 20th Century, Otto Hahn, Fritz Strassmann, Niels Bohr, Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch developed scientific understanding and prepared the emergence of military weapons technology during World War II. Key figures in the ensuing transatlantic race to build atomic weapons were Francis Perrin, Werner Heisenberg and Rudolf Peierls on the European continent, where notably Germany abandoned serious attempts in 1942, and Otto Frisch, Rudolf Peierls, Philip Baxter and James Chadwick in Britain, before Robert Oppenheimer and others built atomic bombs in the Manhattan Project in the US on the American side, while the Soviet Union, led by Russia, also drawing on German science and scientists, developed their own weapons technology. Edward Teller later developed the more advanced and even more powerful and dangerous hydrogen bomb. The fallout from the technology happened mostly in Asia and the Pacific, from nuclear tests to the bombings of Hiroshima with a uranium bomb and Nagasaki with a plutonium bomb.

The scientific insights, materials and technology of nuclear weapons were used by Enrico Fermi and then others to build the first primitive “reactors” where nuclear chain reactions could be controlled, which is a much more complex undertaking than ensuring a one-off nuclear detonation. Nuclear reactor technology spread mainly from the US and Russia, which had a similar technology base, to other countries that now have nuclear reactors. The dream was to have nuclear power that was “too cheap to meter”, even though there were early warnings that this was a false hope. Rather than redeeming the evil horrors of nuclear weapons by providing limitless energy to the world, nuclear technology was found to be inherently risky and never became economically viable without subsidies and privileges.
Today, 9 of the top 11 nuclear power-producing countries are in the EU, and 10 are in the Atlantic Space. While there are non-Atlantic countries with significant nuclear power programmes, notably China and Japan (even though most reactors in Japan have been turned off since the catastrophic nuclear tragedy in Fukushima), the industry remains dominated by Atlantic nations. The unresolved legacy of nuclear waste from the industry is mostly Atlantic, but the fallout from accidents from nuclear power plants is also mostly shared between the Atlantic and the Pacific, with Kyshtym in Russia and Sellafield in Britain (1957), Three Mile Island in the US (1979), Chernobyl in the Ukraine (1986) and Fukushima in Japan (2011) being historical milestones in a long series of nuclear and radiation accidents and incidents.

The international regime governing nuclear weapons and energy technology is an Atlantic conception, and is enforced predominantly by Atlantic nations. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the statute of the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) establish conditions for access to nuclear technology and thus ensure its propagation throughout the world, a practice that carries a hefty security policy price. A series of conventions − the Paris Convention of 1960, with the 1963 Brussels Supplementary Convention, and the Vienna Convention of 1963 and subsequent instruments − limit cross-border liability for damages caused by nuclear accidents and thus protect the builders, owners, operators and host countries of nuclear power plants. This regime is heavily skewed towards favouring nuclear power generation at the expense of other energy technologies and public health and safety.

... on the way down and out, in the Atlantic and beyond

The dismal economics and concerns over plant safety, the waste legacy, international proliferation and the ensuing security policy price brought nuclear power into a downward trend worldwide, with it being phased out in a number of Atlantic countries and, in a haphazard way, perhaps also in Japan. Overall, the rate of new construction of nuclear power plants is insufficient, by a wide margin, to compensate the loss of nuclear power generation capacity from plant closures. Uprating plant capacity and lifetime extensions slow the decline somewhat but cannot break the accelerating erosion of recent years.

A majority of EU member states now either have no nuclear power, an explicitly stated and legally enshrined phase-out policy, or a de facto phase-out policy for economic reasons where there are no plans for new power plants to replace ageing ones slated for decommissioning in coming years. A small minority of member states are currently building new plants, all of the them beyond deadline and over budget, and all of them in need of subsidies to survive in a competitive market now increasingly dominated by renewable power generation in combination with existing and emerging energy storage technologies tied together in a smart electricity grid with bi-directional flow and signal-processing capacity becoming the norm.

There is residual interest in new nuclear power plants in some Atlantic countries, including South Africa, but with the technology being clearly not economically viable, any new construction must be assumed to be

The international regime governing nuclear weapons and energy technology is an Atlantic conception, and it is heavily skewed towards favouring nuclear power generation at the expense of other energy technologies and public health and safety.
motivated by military intentions to procure nuclear technology, materials and equipment, perhaps not to build nuclear weapons but at least to have the option available. Essentially, the role of nuclear power in the Atlantic energy systems is slowly ending, with no new nuclear technology emerging that would assuage concerns over cost, safety, waste and proliferation.

**Promise of transformation: the Atlantic’s renewable energy**

Developed and matured notably in the Atlantic, renewable energy technologies have recently become cost competitive in many geographies and situations. Having reached the cost parity point with (subsidised) fossil and nuclear energy and continuing on a downward cost trend, renewable energies are destined to displace fossil and nuclear energy. In fact, all future investment in new generation plants should go towards renewable energy technologies, for economic reasons alone.

Water wheels, windmills and the use of biomass, in the form of wood, for instance, are traditional forms of renewable energy as long as the principles of sustainable management and harvest are observed. Until coal was used as the first fossil energy, wood was the most important source of energy. The concepts of “sustainability” and “sustainable management” were developed in the Atlantic Space, in Saxony between the Elbe and the Weser river basins, with reference to forestry and the use of wood in mining. *Sylvicultura oeconomica*, the seminal work on forestry practices by Hans-Carl von Carlowitz (2013 [1713]) first spelled out the principles of sustainable management of natural resources, addressing the optimal management of forests and the rational use of forest products under threat of overexploitation. Mining was the main user of timber at the time – the one that threatened the health and long-term existence of Saxon forests. Wood was essential for structural work and as a source of energy in mining operations. If humanity had remained restricted to the use of wood as a fuel, the industrial expansion would either have been much slower, or would have ended for lack of fuel some time ago. The age of Atlantic domination would not have happened.

All the modern renewable energy technologies have their cradle in the Atlantic Space, even if Asian countries, notably Japan and China, played their role.

- Photovoltaic cells for the direct conversion of sunlight into electricity were developed in the US, survived and matured in Japan, before policy innovation in 1990 created a growing market in Germany. Today, the manufacturing base is partly in China, but the Atlantic Space still dominates installed photovoltaic capacity and new installation.
- Wind turbines – much advanced from the traditional windmills – are an important part of the renewable energy industry, both onshore and offshore. They were first deployed in large numbers in the US, notably in California, in the 1980s, in a regulatory framework that did not nurture the successful operation of the plants and continued improvement of technology. It then moved to Denmark and Germany before becoming a global industry. Again, the majority of installed capacity
and new investment today is (still) in the Atlantic, although India and China are increasing the weight of the industry in the Indian and Pacific basins.

• The most successful and efficient modern system of producing liquid biomass for the transport sector is the conversion of cane sugar to ethanol, a technology dominated by Brazil and increasingly applied, with Brazilian assistance, in Africa. The conversion of corn (maize) to ethanol, notably in the US, does not produce energy rents similar to the conversion of sugar cane to ethanol, but it is a sizeable business. The only significant bioenergy not dominated by the Atlantic is the controversial production of palm oil (in Asia and the Pacific Basin) for use as biodiesel (in the Atlantic Basin); it is controversial because of detrimental land-use changes triggered by the growth of the industry and the essentially unsustainable nature of production.

• Other renewable energies, from marine or ocean energy to geothermal energy, are still emerging. In general, they can be expected to be developed mainly in the Atlantic Basin, with the possible exception of geothermal energy, where the countries around the volcanic Pacific “Ring of Fire” may have an advantage.

The growth of renewable energies and the transformation of energy systems is enabled or facilitated by advances in information and communication technologies. Commonly known as “smart grid” technologies, they change the character of electricity grids, allow for electric cars to be plugged into the power grid with two-way communication so that the car batteries can provide grid stabilisation services, enable demand response to ensure the dynamic efficiency of the system as a whole (rather than of each component in isolation), and help create new and economically interesting links between electricity and gas distribution grids.

Some of the most promising technologies emerging in the Atlantic that would provide new options for energy storage, transport and conveyance are (various approaches in) the conversion of power-to-gas or power-to-liquid fuels or raw material feedstock for the chemical industry. The idea is simple. When there is insufficient demand, renewable wind or solar power, which fluctuate in their availability irrespective of demand, is used to split water (2 H₂O) into hydrogen (2 H₂) and oxygen (O₂). The H₂ is then combined with carbon from carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere or the off-gas from combustion processes to form first methane (CH₄) and then longer chains of alkanes and their derivatives. The products are gaseous and liquid fuels, which can be integrated into existing infrastructure that is a legacy of the fossil oil and gas industries. Power-to-gas and power-to-liquid technologies are expected to be cost competitive as soon as the penetration of renewable energies is such that there is “surplus” renewable power often and long enough to operate the conversion plants for thousands rather than hundreds of hours per year.

In conclusion, the old and partly dying energy systems in the world are Atlantic in origin and still dominated by the Atlantic, and the emerging energy technologies and system reconfigurations are also mainly developed in the Atlantic, but with a growing contribution from Asia.
nations, and they would do well to cooperate in their management. This applies to global overheating and other consequences of pollution with greenhouse gases (which also result in the acidification of the oceans) and the nuclear waste and the risk of nuclear accidents and atomic weapons being used as a consequence of decades of nuclear proliferation promoted mainly by the nations of the (North) Atlantic Space.

The status and trends of the Atlantic energy system

As a consequence of the high level of economic development in many Atlantic nations, the long-standing energy systems in the basin, and recent discoveries and developments, the Atlantic Basin in 2013 accounted for roughly:

- 40% of global proven oil reserves;
- 44% of daily global oil production, expected to rise to 47% by 2030;
- 67% of global “technically recoverable” shale and tight gas;
- 77% of global installed solar power capacity;
- 64% of global installed wind power capacity;
- 59% of global installed geothermal energy capacity;
- 75% of modern renewable energy production & consumption (excluding hydropower);
- 75% of investment in renewables (in 2006); the Atlantic is now falling behind Asia.

The extraction of shale oil and gas in the US has increased the competitiveness of that segment of the fossil fuel industry, at least for a while. The United States surpassed Russia as a producer of natural gas in 2009, and may yet overtake Saudi Arabia in the near future. Shale oil and gas alone contributed 283 billion dollars to US GDP in 2012. Shale oil and gas production is also driving the US petrochemical industry, in which 197 billion dollars has been invested as of 2014 (Batson 2015).

Figure 1. Crude exports in 2017 and growth over 2011-2017 for key trade routes (million barrels per day)*

* This map is without any prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Source: IEA 2012b.
Isbell (2014) describes the result as a shifting away from the “Great Crescent” – the Middle East, Central Asia and Russia – as the traditional centre of fossil fuel production towards the Atlantic Basin, which has been able not only to meet its own needs but also to become the dominant supplier to the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to shifting the world’s energy flow, the production of expensive tight oil – shale and deep-water – has outpaced demand. This supply and demand discrepancy contributed largely to the fall in energy prices and subsidies to the fossil fuel industry over 2014 (Berman 2015).

The expected future trade patterns and the degree of regional self-sufficiency particularly in the Americas are shown in the map represented in figure 1.

2013 vision: an Atlantic fossil energy renaissance

Based on data and trends until 2013, Isbell (2014) has described an emerging “Atlantic Energy Renaissance” in which Atlantic fossil fuel production increases and will continue to grow due to the technological ability to extract unconventional hydrocarbons such as shale gas and oil, and deep-water, offshore oil. Expanded fossil energy mining and extraction had already reduced the net fossil energy imports into the Atlantic Basin and would soon reverse the net trade and make the Atlantic an exporter into the Indian and Pacific regions. This (projected) shift in inter-basin energy flow presented opportunities for the fossil energy sector, while potentially undermining renewables by lowering fossil energy prices.

However, the renewable energy concentration in the Atlantic and maturity of the industry may also present opportunities, especially as the costs of renewable energy (and storage) technologies continue to decline by 15% to 25% a year. In view of the current and projected mid-term fossil energy prices, the Atlantic energy renaissance may not happen, as new production in the Atlantic cannot compete with lower-cost fields in Arabia and possibly also Iran. Overall, the changing economics of various competing energy technologies, and notably the decline in costs of renewable power and storage, indicate that future investment is more likely to flow into renewable energies than fossil energy.

2015 reality check: decline of fossil energy

The price of oil has halved since the beginning of 2014, which has also resulted in a halving of the oil drilling rigs in operation, as is illustrated by figure 2. The fossil fuel industry used to and currently still continues to reap most of the monetary benefits of the rising energy demand. Lower prices, however, erode the profitability of the sector, and stock market valuations for many of the larger companies and the sector as a whole have declined, in some cases by more than 90% since 2008. Conversely, the renewable energy sector keeps growing, albeit at a somewhat reduced pace, in spite of falling fossil prices. The Atlantic Space holds over 70% of global installed renewable energy capacity (Tedsen and Kraemer 2013).
The effect of falling oil prices on deep-water offshore drilling is unclear but may be significant given the large price tag of such projects. Estimates hold that if oil prices average between 50 and 70 dollars a barrel, the number of deep-water wells might increase by 32% (Jervis 2015; Shauk 2015). Production in the Gulf of Mexico alone was projected to increase 21% in 2015. Companies with deep-water wells in that area predict that the price would have to plummet to around 20 dollars per barrel before they begin to scale back production from existing wells (Jervis 2015). Drilling was proposed and may still take place off the coast of Morocco in order to harness oil reserves off the country’s Atlantic coast, while Norway planned to proceed with a deep-water project in the North Sea that by 2019 would produce 380,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day (Spencer Ogden 2015). Similar deep-water drilling prospects are also being explored off the coasts of Namibia and Argentina. All of these projects were conceived and commenced before the recent collapse in oil and gas prices, and it remains to be seen how many of them are brought to conclusion and make a profit while they extract fossil fuels.

The overall effect of the lower oil and gas prices can be gauged from figure 3. The lowest cost production is in Saudi Arabia, followed by other OPEC countries and Russia (on the left-hand side of the figure). The production that is supposed to underpin the Atlantic energy renaissance has much higher average costs and is thus on the right-hand side of the figure: Canadian oil sands, US shale, Brazilian pre-salt offshore oil and Mexican oil. If low oil and gas prices persist for some time, if the demand for fossil energies is in long-term decline because of energy efficiency gains and the rise of renewable energies, the higher cost production would cease to be brought to market: the Atlantic energy renaissance would not happen.

The underlying dynamics – namely policies promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy and storage to prevent accelerated global overheating, ocean acidification and sea-level rise, as well as growing pressure...
to cut back on perverse subsidies for fossil (and nuclear) energy – are projected to persist and support a shift towards a wider transition to renewables, particularly in the Atlantic Space, as the energy demands in developing countries in both Africa and Latin America continue to grow to 2020 and beyond (Tedsen et al. 2015).

Figure 3. Cost of oil production (country averages) and production levels (2014)

Source: Raval 2014.

The Atlantic green power shift

Spurred by growing concerns regarding the implications of global climate change, many governments have implemented mechanisms to promote the uptake of renewables. The European Union has achieved notable success in this regard, as 15% of energy demands were met by renewable sources in 2013 in line with the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive. Germany is well known for its transition to renewables with its implementation of the feed-in tariff (Laird and Stefes 2009; Stefes 2010; Kraemer 2009, 2011 and 2012). The feed-in tariff has also been introduced in many other countries across the Atlantic Space. The US relies largely on tax credits, subsidies, rebates and renewable portfolio standards (IEA 2012a; Tedsen and Kraemer 2013). Additionally, the Atlantic Space accounts for more than 50% of the world’s hydroelectricity generation, particularly in Norway, Latin America and the Caribbean (BP 2015). Sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of South Africa, has increasingly turned to hydropower, which now accounts for 60% of electricity generation in that region (Behrens 2011; Tedsen and Kraemer 2013).

Despite such strides to promote the renewable energy sector, economic path dependency and, until recently, large profits for the fossil fuel industry provide it with considerable advantages. Profit margins earned by the fossil fuel industry are due in large part to subsidies and privileges provided by central governments around the world. The International Energy Agency (IEA) (2015) estimates that in 2014 global fossil fuel subsidies amounted to more than 550 billion dollars. The IEA framework for estimating these figures intentionally leaves out externalities, including
taxpayer money to offset the environmental and health consequences of the fossil fuel industry, as well as tax breaks, loopholes and incentives. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has estimated that when accounting for such externalities, around 5 trillion dollars is provided in fossil fuel subsidies annually (Coady et al. 2015). By comparison, the renewable sector received only 120 billion dollars in 2014 (IEA 2015) and produces relatively few social or environmental costs.

Though the shifting energy flow resulting from increased fossil fuel production in the Atlantic Basin in recent years has called into question the rate of growth in the renewable sector of the energy industry, political momentum in the face of the climate crisis and improving economics point to the continued growth of renewable energy. Models of successful transitions to renewables already exist in the Atlantic Space, including Germany, Denmark and Spain. Outside Europe, solar energy is already competitive in the southern Atlantic and Isbell (2014) has described Africa’s potential to leapfrog fossil fuel-dependent development in favour of a more sustainable energy model through the provisions of the UN’s “Sustainable Energy for All” initiative. Maria van der Hoeven (2015), the executive director of the IEA, has also suggested that the recent drop in energy prices has created a critical juncture in which countries have the opportunity to abolish – or at least drastically decrease – fossil fuel subsidies without producing severe inflation. She also suggests depoliticising and improving the transparency of energy pricing. Low fossil energy prices thus provide an opportunity to accelerate the transition towards renewable energy.

In addition to the “green shift” from fossil to renewable energy and the decay of nuclear power in the Atlantic Basin, there is also a strong and accelerating drive for energy efficiency.

In addition to the “green shift” from fossil to renewable energy and the decay of nuclear power in the Atlantic Basin, there is also a strong and accelerating drive for energy efficiency. This relates to the efficiency of individual installations or equipment and whole energy systems with improvements in energy system management, which allow for demand response and flexibilities to enhance the dynamic efficiency of system behaviour over time. This shift from static efficiency of energy system components towards dynamically efficient behaviour of components within larger systems is the result of new IT technologies and the development of new business models that create value from flexibility by reducing needs for capacity. The resulting transformation of energy systems is beginning to move beyond the power grid to affect gas systems, heating patterns and the transport sector. The underlying technologies are shared globally, but have their origin and driving forces in large part in the Atlantic Basin. In all respects, the Atlantic Basin energy systems are still dominant, even if their weight may be shrinking, particularly in relation to East and South Asia.

Conclusion

The current pre-eminence of Atlantic nations in world affairs is largely due to their history of exploiting fossil energy, originally many millennia’s solar energy, stored in biological matter, and now extracted and burned within a few centuries. Compared to the importance of the fossil energy system, the nuclear power sector is a mere footnote. The summary outlook for the energy systems is:
Nuclear power and fossil energies are down, due to generally rising long-term costs, with companies in many cases heading for write-downs, economic abandonment or insolvency and possible government bailouts, while fracking for fossil methane provides a costly, short-term life extension for parts of the fossil energy infrastructure, underlining its path dependency.

Renewable energy is up across the board, but in some cases from a low base and at different speeds, with fast cost depression from new inventions, material discoveries as well as technological, business and policy learning curves, particularly in all types of solar energy and storage.

The roll-out of information and communication technology is accelerating within existing and new energy systems. This transformation is proving disruptive to the old, dirty, dangerous fossil and nuclear energy industries, which therefore resist change and use their economic and political clout as incumbents to slow or even derail the transformation towards clean, safe, sustainable energy systems.

Overall, the Atlantic Space is characterised by two competing energy systems (ignoring the moribund nuclear power sector):

One is a fossil energy industry using stocks of coal, oil and gas in the earth that was dominant in the past, has the economic breadth and depth to sustain momentum over a period of low prices and eroding profitability, and still enjoys significant subsidies and privileges, which may however be abolished as countries seek to reduce fiscal stress and slow climate change. It is doubtful that technology developments will allow the fossil fuel industry to maintain its current size in the Atlantic Space, especially as it competes with lower-cost producers elsewhere.

The other is a relatively young and dynamic renewable energy industry using environmental flow resources and biological resources and that is growing. This new industry has achieved cost competitiveness with new coal (and new nuclear) plants and is beginning to erode the profitability and ultimately viability of existing fossil and nuclear plants. The improved economic competitiveness is the result of a technology learning process and economies of scale as the industry has grown. The economic positions are projected to keep improving in the medium and perhaps also longer term. This renewable energy industry is poised to take over from the fossil fuel industry wherever new energy infrastructure is built, or where significant re-investment or expansions are needed.

These two industries will continue to co-exist, one declining and the other growing, with the speeds of decline and growth and their relative weight in various parts of the Atlantic Space determined as much by changes in fossil energy prices as in policies promoting one energy system or the other. In the long run, the continued decline in renewable energy costs gives those technologies the advantage and any fossil fuel-based Atlantic energy renaissance would only be temporary.

As the Atlantic Basin addresses its fossil and nuclear legacies and defines its low-carbon future, the resulting energy transformation has profound impact on the energy industry beyond the technologies employed. One impact stems from the distributed nature of renewable energy technol-
ogy, another from the fact that comparatively inexpensive energy-related equipment will be traded rather than comparatively expensive energy carriers, and a third from the prospect that the future energy system will be less expensive overall.

Renewable energy generation is by its nature distributed so that renewable power generation – mainly from wind, solar, hydro, geothermal and the oceans – or the harvesting of biogenic renewable fuels – in solid, liquid or gaseous form – can take place closer to the points of consumption, which reduces the need for grid or pipeline capacity. Emerging technologies in (renewable) power-to-gas and power-to-liquid, even if not yet economically viable, offer the prospect of additional energy storage options as well as providing hydrocarbon carbon molecules as raw-material feedstock for the chemical industry. In renewable energy, investments thus come in relatively small lots and are often within reach of individuals, families, communities and local savings associations, even in less developed countries.

In the past, the trade in fuels – coal, oil, gas and products such as diesel or kerosene – was an important part of the global energy industry. Control of technologies and critical infrastructure was important, but the turnover from trade in energy products dominated the sector economically. In the future, the international trade will be dominated by trade in energy-related equipment from solar panels, inverters and wind turbines to batteries and smart energy management systems. The trade in fossil energy products will diminish, and the trade in electricity and biogenic fuels will be more regional or national. Overall the trade volume of the energy industry is likely to decline. It is also likely that the total cost of the future energy system will be smaller per capita of population served, unit of GDP output, or kWh or joules produced. This is mainly a function of the dynamic system efficiency enabled by smart grid technologies, which will over time also affect the transport and heating sectors. The added “intelligence” will obviate the need for the massive overcapacity that characterises the old energy systems.

It is uncertain how exactly the disruptive transformation from the old fossil and nuclear energy systems to cheaper, cleaner and safer renewable energy systems with storage and smart grids will unfold, but the overall trend is reasonably clear, and whatever the detail, the Atlantic countries are most likely to dominate the future global energy systems through technical, financial, policy and regulatory innovation. They would do well to cooperate to speed up the transition and reduce its overall cost.

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The Atlantic Basin is a vast space marked by profound diversity and growing connections. Values such as democracy and the principles of market-based economics are broadly shared but coexist with very different political and cultural traditions across regions and countries. As in other global regions, power shifts and deepening interdependence have shaped the priorities of Atlantic countries and their mutual relations. Sustained growth rates across much of Latin America and Atlantic Africa together with diplomatic entrepreneurship from regional powers such as Brazil and South Africa have been central to the Atlantic story of the last 15 years. South-South cooperation has expanded, often more or less explicitly alternative to traditional patterns of assistance, or interference, from North Atlantic powers in the South. However, the distribution of power and levels of economic and human development across the Atlantic Basin remain very uneven. Growth in the South Atlantic has largely been due to the so-called commodity super-cycle driven by the rise of demand from Asia and China in particular, both of which are subsiding. While Asia’s economic presence in Latin America and notably Africa is growing fast, the EU and the US remain the largest economic partners for most other Atlantic countries and by far the biggest sources of both investment and development assistance. Emerging actors from the South practice a mixture of engagement and soft balancing vis-à-vis the US and Europe but deep geopolitical fault lines have not materialised. Partnership is the prevalent mode of interaction between Atlantic countries, even if the output of the cooperation between them is very uneven.

Multiple connections: many Atlantics

The Atlantic Basin looks very different depending on the dimension of interdependence in review. In trade terms, the EU and the US continue to play a pivotal role given the size and affluence of their markets and their position at the core of global value chains. When looking at investment flows and stocks, the preponderance of the two Atlantic economic superpowers is even more pronounced. Regarding energy, oil and gas reserves are concentrated in the Americas and parts of Atlantic Africa, the US is approaching energy self-sufficiency and Europe is importing
more oil and gas from the South Atlantic. When it comes to “dangerous connections”, namely transnational challenges such as illicit trafficking, criminal networks and piracy, the threats affect the entire Atlantic Basin in various ways but critically converge in West Africa and the Sahel.

Economic interdependence in terms of trade and investment has been increasing very significantly within the Atlantic since the turn of the century, alongside the sustained expansion of the economic presence of China and other Asian countries. Given the vast differences in the size of the respective economies and their levels of openness and diversification, however, the intensity of trade and investment flows vastly differs between the various Atlantic regions. Trade in goods between North America and Europe accounts for over 40% of the total across the Atlantic, followed by trade between the EU and Africa (21%) and between North and South and Central America (18%). While expanding rapidly, trade between South and Central America and Africa still represents only 2.3% of the total (Hamilton 2015).

The EU and the US rank among the top three merchandise trade partners with all major Atlantic economies. The EU is the largest partner for the US, Brazil, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa; the second largest for Canada, Argentina and Angola, and the third for Mexico. The US is the number one partner for the EU, Canada, Mexico and Venezuela; number two for Morocco and Nigeria, and number three for Brazil, Angola and South Africa. It is notable that China has rapidly climbed this ranking and features today as the largest merchandise trade partner for Angola; the second largest for the EU, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela and South Africa, and the third for Canada, the US, Argentina, Morocco and Nigeria (Grevi 2015).

The US is Latin America’s largest commercial partner by far, while the EU and China are, depending on the estimate, competing for second place. Between 2000 and 2013, EU trade with Latin America more than doubled and US trade with the region (excluding Mexico) almost tripled, while China-Latin America trade has grown by a factor of 24. Trade flows between Africa and the EU – its largest trading partner – tripled between 2000 and 2013, and those between Africa and China (its second largest partner) grew 18 times larger. During the same period, Africa’s trade with the US doubled and that with India increased by a factor of 20. These two countries’ exchanges with Africa in 2013 were at roughly the same level (ibid.).

The bilateral investment ties between Europe and the US are by far the deepest not only of those in the Atlantic but globally. The depth and scope of investment links are directly connected to the growth of the services economy in the North Atlantic and in the more advanced countries of the southern basin (Hamilton 2015). The EU accounts for 74% of total foreign direct investment (FDI) in the US and for about half of the FDI stock in both Africa and South and Central America. The EU also receives the vast majority of FDI from South and Central American countries outside their region and is the largest recipient of African FDI after Asia (Hamilton and Quinlan 2014). Conversely, Africa accounts for only 0.7% of US global FDI stock, and 0.8% of that of the EU (Sy 2014). FDI flows between South America and Africa remain very small relative to those between other Atlantic regions.
Energy resources in the Atlantic are concentrated in the Americas and parts of Atlantic Africa. The largest proven oil reserves are situated in (in decreasing size order): Venezuela, Canada, Nigeria, Brazil and Angola. Depending on the actual size of recoverable pre-salt oil reserves, Brazil could become an important oil producer and source of exports by the early 2020s. Having tapped into shale gas and unconventional oil reserves, in 2014 the US overtook both Saudi Arabia as the world’s largest oil producer and Russia as the largest producer of gas and is expected to reach energy self-sufficiency within a decade. The US has significantly scaled back oil imports from Atlantic Africa in the last five years and relies on countries in the Americas, notably Canada, Mexico and Venezuela, for energy supplies.
The EU is in a very different position from the US, as in 2013 it depended on imports for over half of its energy consumption and more particularly for 88.4% of its oil needs and 65.3% of its gas (Eurostat 2015). The EU relies heavily on Eurasia and the Middle East for oil and gas imports but has been differentiating its supply sources, including those in the Atlantic Basin. In 2012 Norway covered 11% of EU oil imports and 31% of its gas imports, while the share of EU oil imports from Africa jumped from 18% in 2006 to 23% in 2014 and that from the Americas grew from 3% to 5.4% over the same time span (Lété 2015). In 2014, Europe accounted for 45% of Nigeria’s oil exports and 20% of Angola’s.

Interdependence entails not only mutual benefits but also mutual vulnerabilities. Trade, investment and energy flows across parts of the Atlantic Basin are threatened by trans-national security challenges including organised crime thriving on illicit flows, piracy and terrorist networks. Besides, as interdependence requires viable national and international institutions to support it and enforce rules, state fragility or failure threaten not only local communities but also the stability and prosperity of neighbouring countries and beyond. This set of threats, in conjunction with low levels of economic and human development and other stress factors, poses a particular challenge to West Africa and the Sahel region.

Out of the 51 states that the OECD considers fragile, 12 are in the Atlantic Basin and all but one (Haiti) are in Africa. At the same time, countries like Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico struggle to contain extremely high levels of criminal violence which affect the authority of the state. Criminal networks profiting from drugs and particularly cocaine trafficking have taken deep roots in the Atlantic and sometimes co-opted local elites. Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Benin are considered important hubs for drug trafficking on the route from South America to Europe (ibid.). Piracy, oil theft and attacks on energy infrastructure are a scourge for the Gulf of Guinea, with about 600 pirate attacks between 2002 and 2012 severely affecting local economies and port activities. Corruption and illicit financial flows further divert resources and undermine governance and development, reportedly costing countries in sub-Saharan Africa 6% of GDP on average (Faria 2014).

Figure 3. Reported piracy attacks (2014)

Source: IMO 2014.
Principles, power and cooperation

A variety of agendas intersect in the Atlantic Basin. This heterogeneity is the by-product of different political experiences in the various Atlantic regions. The deep transatlantic relationship between the US and Europe is built on the political normative construct of “Atlanticism” which dates back to the World War II. Founded on the principles of political and economic liberalism, directed to countering existential threats to them by fascism and communism and encompassing the US and its allies in North America and Europe, Atlanticism has not found much support in the South Atlantic (Alessandri 2015). For a majority of countries there, the second part of the 20th century was dedicated to political and ideological emancipation from North Atlantic powers, whether in the form of Africa’s decolonisation process or the rejection of US interference in Latin American affairs. During the Cold War years most countries from the South Atlantic joined the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 group was set up to promote a “Southern” perspective on economic issues at UN level.

Different historical trajectories have resulted in distinct narratives and normative preferences across the Atlantic Basin, whether on development, trade or security issues. Suspicions and reservations about the role and interests of the US and Europe continue to linger in the South Atlantic. For example, in the post-Cold War era most countries there have contested liberal interventionism and the principle of responsibility to protect (or at least its implementation) as legitimising Western power politics (Gratius 2014). This position is directly connected with the outright defence of the principle of national sovereignty, perceived as an insurance against external interference or as a brake on the constraints that international law and organisations can impose on states. From this standpoint, the unique experience of regional integration undertaken in Europe, predicated on sharing sovereignty, is the exception to the rule within the Atlantic political landscape (and beyond). At the same time, however, original concepts and proposals have originated in the South to mitigate the principle of sovereignty, such as the clause of so-called “non-indifference” in the face of war crimes or crimes against humanity, included in the Constitutive Act of the African Union in 2000.

Figure 4. Freedom in the World Map 2015

Political and normative differences also emerge when looking at the nature of domestic regimes across the Atlantic. Democracy and human rights are broadly shared values. According to Freedom House, the Atlantic Basin includes 62 democracies, 12 hybrid regimes and 7 authoritarian regimes (Gratius 2015). This provides a platform for engagement but there are significant differences across Atlantic sub-regions. Democratic regimes are predominant in Europe (88% of the countries) and to a lesser extent the Americas (two-thirds of the countries there are considered democracies). However, the picture looks very different in Atlantic Africa, where only 20% of the countries are considered democracies, the others being divided between hybrid regimes and authoritarian ones.

Over and above the normative differences and affinities between Atlantic partners, the broader point is that if political ideology as such is unlikely to be a decisive engine of Atlantic convergence, neither does it represent a definitive barrier to cooperation. The proliferation of summits, dialogues and cooperative initiatives among Atlantic partners – North and South – suggests a degree of pragmatism on the part of most actors in the pursuit of respective interests. This points to both the opportunities and the limitations of cooperation in the Atlantic Basin.

The rise and stall of South-South cooperation?

The relaunching of a “Southern” agenda to address the challenges of South Atlantic regions has been an important trend in the Atlantic political space since the beginning of the 21st century. Regional mechanisms or institutions have been set up with the express aim of enabling regional actors to better address regional problems, as has been the case for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (2001), for the African Union (2002) and for the Union of South American Nations – Unasur (2008).

In parallel to that, South-South dialogue and cooperation has considerably expanded both at bilateral and at interregional levels, involving countries from Latin America and Africa as well as other rising powers. Large regional powers such as Brazil and South Africa have spearheaded many of these initiatives, performing a proactive role as milieu-shapers while at the same time advancing their prestige and pursuing their distinct interests. Under the Lula administration, Brazil in particular has positioned itself as the principal entrepreneur of South-South cooperation in the Atlantic, as a champion of South American regionalism, as a maritime power in the strategic South Atlantic area and as a soft counterweight to the US in South America.

In the realm of security, Brazil has promoted the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS) since the mid-1980s and sought to relaunch this framework in recent years, while expanding its remit beyond the focus on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to countering illicit trafficking and supporting maritime security. The ATLASUR naval exercises, which started in 1993, involve the navies from Argentina, Brazil, South Africa and Uruguay. Brazil has concluded eight defence cooperation agreements with countries in Atlantic Africa and worked with the navies of Namibia and Nigeria to develop their
capabilities. It has also engaged in efforts to reform the security sector in Guinea-Bissau, one of the principal hubs of drug trafficking in the Atlantic, both at the bilateral level and by chairing the UN Peacebuilding Commission proceedings concerning this country (Kotsopoulos 2014).

In the economic domain, under the leadership of Brazil and South Africa, the Common Market of the South (Mercosur) and the South African Development Community (SADC) concluded a preferential trade agreement in 2009 (Mattheis 2015). Brazilian companies have expanded their presence in Africa, notably in the mining and agricultural sectors. In 2011, Brazil accounted for 70% of trade between South America and Africa (Kotsopoulos 2014). Brazil boasts an extensive diplomatic network of 38 missions in Africa, which has more than doubled since 2002. Having established bilateral strategic partnerships with South Africa in 2007 and Angola in 2010, Brazil and Nigeria joined forces to organise the first Africa-South America summit of Abuja in 2006 – a meeting that was last held in 2013 and has generated little impact so far.

The much debated rise of South-South cooperation in the Atlantic does, however, require some qualification. For one, as noted above, economic links between South America and Africa have been expanding but pale in comparison to trade and investment flows between the North and South Atlantic. For another, on both the economic and political levels, South-South cooperation has been in large part driven by connections that stretch beyond the Atlantic between South America, Africa and Asia. Asia’s demand for natural resources has been the key factor behind the sustained growth rates of the South Atlantic regions. The participation of Brazil and South Africa in the BRICS (together with China, India and Russia) and IBSA (together with India) groupings has been critical to enhancing their diplomatic profile on the regional scale and beyond. At the same time, with Brazil engulfed in political crisis and facing (like some other South Atlantic economies) an economic slowdown, the prospects for South-South cooperation look uncertain.

**Partnerships in search of synergies**

South-South partnerships and exchanges are only one dimension of interdependence and one political narrative among others within the Atlantic Basin. The last decade has seen the parallel expansion of multi-level ties and cooperation between the North and South Atlantic, including the progressive reframing of the relationships between Europe, the US and southern countries in terms of equal partnership and joint initiatives, moving away from traditional North-driven initiatives.

The EU and the African Union (AU) adopted the joint Africa-EU strategy in 2007, based on the principles of joint ownership and responsibility. At the same time, the EU pursues dialogues with and provides assistance to African sub-regional organisations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the South African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) (Pirozzi and Godsäter 2015), alongside the conclusion of often contested Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and subsets of regional actors. Traditionally less focussed on the African continent beyond security and resource-related issues, the US has recently sought to establish relations
with Africa on a broader platform of engagement. The first annual US-AU High Level Dialogue was held in 2010, the US adopted a Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa in 2012 and 2014 saw the first summit between the US and African leaders. Meanwhile, US development assistance to Africa grew ninefold between 2000 and 2011, reaching 9 billion dollars (Kotsopoulos and Goerg 2015).

Europe’s partnerships with sub-regional organisations such as the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Mercosur have been instrumental to supporting development and regional cooperation in Latin America. In 2014, the EU adopted a strategy on citizens’ security in Central America and the Caribbean to help cope with high levels of violence there. However, relations between the EU and South America particularly suffer from political fatigue. Europe is absorbed by multiple crises in its southern and eastern neighbourhood, regional powers such as Brazil and Venezuela have sought to reshape Latin American regionalism away from relations with northern partners and protracted negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur have been so far inconclusive. On a region-to-region level, the EU-LAC summits held since 1999 were replaced in 2013 by summits between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) – following the launch of the latter framework in 2010. These large gatherings deliver little tangible output but are accompanied by various networks of non-state actors coming together from both regions and provide an umbrella for other dialogues between the EU and sub-regional organisations in Latin America (Ayuso and Gardini 2015).

The US relationship with Latin America has undergone a complex evolution over the last few years. Economic and political ties with Mexico (and other countries in Central America) have been steadily deepening while the US has lost clout in much of South America given the failure of the negotiations towards the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the antagonistic stance of the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the rise of Brazil’s regional influence and deepening economic links between the region and Asia. American military and development assistance to the region has steadily declined (Feinberg, Miller and Trinkunas 2015). However, the recent re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba and the sustained engagement of Brazil, alongside trade deals with Chile and Peru (who are also part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership) suggest an effort by the US to invest in partnerships or improved relationships with important countries there.

Partnership diplomacy has become an important feature of statecraft in the Atlantic Basin and well beyond. This is due both to the need to update and upgrade relations between rising powers from the South and East and Western powers, and to the recognition of the limits of interregional cooperation. On top of long-standing ties with the US and Canada, the EU has established so-called strategic partnerships in the Atlantic with Brazil and South Africa (2007) as well as Mexico (2010). Over the last 15 years, Brazil has established or deepened strategic partnerships with Angola, South Africa, Venezuela, the US, the EU and various European countries in the Atlantic Basin. Beyond NATO allies and relations with the EU, the US has deepened bilateral relations with Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa (Costa Vaz 2014; Hamilton 2014).
While channels of dialogue and cooperation across the Atlantic are multiplying, they often remain rather shallow and disconnected. There is also an unclear relationship between the bilateral partnerships formed between key Atlantic countries, the processes of regional cooperation in respective regions and the dialogues between regional organisations. Atlantic actors pursue engagement but different political cultures, narratives and incentives structures prove resilient. On this basis, concrete initiatives making a tangible difference in specific policy areas and bringing together state and non-state actors as well as regional structures, where relevant, may prove the most promising avenue for cooperation in the Atlantic Basin. Marine resource management and adapting to the impact of climate change may be suitable fields for cooperation (Tedsen et al. 2014; Stefes et al. 2014), as well as the management of other natural or man-made disasters.

In the field of security, and with a focus on the particularly fragile region of West Africa and the Sahel, Atlantic actors are already engaged through separate initiatives to counter illicit trafficking, piracy and terrorist groups while shoring up local states’ capacities. Having played an important role in supporting the nascent African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) through the African Peace Facility, the EU has fostered cooperation with ECOWAS and various regional platforms in the Sahel to target challenges specific to these regions. The EU has deployed three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions to support the reform of security forces in Mali and Niger and has launched programmes such as the Critical Maritime Routes in the Gulf of Guinea Programme (CRIMGO) and the Cocaine Route Programme to strengthen regional capacity, coordination and information sharing in countering piracy and organised crime. France carried out the Serval military intervention to block the insurgency in northern Mali in 2012 and launched the Barkhane counter-terrorism operation in the Sahel in 2014. Success in the implementation of the recently adopted EU Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020 and Sahel Action Plan 2015-2020 will largely depend on the level of cooperation between the EU, its own member states, regional actors and international partners. In the context of the African Partnership Station (a maritime security cooperation programme), the US has launched various annual naval exercises involving navies from the region but also Europe and, in the case of Obangame Express, Brazil. The latter country has contributed training and capacity building for African navies and has engaged in broader capacity building in Guinea-Bissau, as noted above (Kotsopoulos 2014).

There is scope for Atlantic partners to enhance mutual consultations on respective initiatives and further coordinate them, as well as to pool resources through joint efforts to counter transnational security challenges in partnership with countries in Atlantic Africa. Mutual engagement on respective development assistance priorities can also be an important dimension of future cooperation between Atlantic partners, as countries like Brazil and South Africa are set to play a larger role in this context too. As in the security field, focusing on specific initiatives and concrete objectives can help deliver added value, build trust and pave the way for engagement at a more political level.

Looking at future political and economic connections within the Atlantic Basin, the conclusion of an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment
Partnership (TTIP) agreement, currently being negotiated by the EU and the US, would prove a critical factor in various ways. The TTIP is a “new generation” agreement aiming to reduce both tariff and non-tariff barriers while boosting regulatory cooperation. For one, the conclusion of the TTIP would give its parties more clout in international economic rule-making given the size of their markets and their centrality to global value chains. Their position would be strengthened by the boost to transatlantic investment and services and by the concurrent new digital economy revolution, which rewards innovation (Hamilton and Pelkmans 2015; Valladão 2015). For another, the TTIP could have far-reaching implications for countries in the South Atlantic in terms of potential trade diversion and challenges to accessing US and European markets at a time when development models based on the export of commodities or on cheap labour will need reassessing. Factoring in the TTIP negotiations and the future proceedings of the interests and concerns of others in the Atlantic Basin and the openness of the future agreement to membership by other countries will be important variables in shaping the future of interdependence and power within the Atlantic Basin (Hamilton and Blockmans 2015; Thorstensen and Ferraz 2014; Herfkens 2014).

Conclusion

The so-called rise of the South and the economic and political travails of the US and Europe have been key factors in shaping interdependence, power and cooperation in the Atlantic Basin over the last decade or so. On the back of sustained growth rates, South Atlantic countries have asserted their pursuit of distinctive development models and of regional solutions to regional problems, alongside the deepening of economic and diplomatic ties between South America, Africa and Asia. China has quickly become an Atlantic economic power and its role as a development actor and security provider in Africa via, for example, larger contributions to UN peacekeeping there, is likely to grow. Meanwhile, the financial and economic crisis has carried serious reputational costs for Europe and the US, whose political and normative influence in the South Atlantic has always been contested.

At the same time, American and above all European investment remains essential to the prospects for growth and economic modernisation and diversification of South Atlantic economies whereas economic links between South America and Africa remain relatively tenuous despite their recent increase. A new generation of multi-level partnerships and dialogues based on the principles of equality and joint ownership has expanded diplomatic ties across the Atlantic Basin, even if some of these formats remain largely talking shops. The conclusion of the TTIP would help consolidate the EU-US partnership and the envisaged North Atlantic free trade area might exert a significant pull effect on South Atlantic partners.

In the absence of deep geopolitical fault-lines, common challenges related, for example, to state fragility, illicit trafficking and environmental sustainability can offer the basis for further consultation, coordination and cooperation between Atlantic countries and stakeholders. Cooperation within the Atlantic will likely take place in variable geometries depending on different issues and may well involve partners from beyond the Atlantic itself. Long-term trends point to further
shifts in relative power from the West to the rest and to the diffusion of power away from state actors, but this is not going to be a linear trend. Economic and political fortunes have been changing fast in recent years. The question is not so much who is rising and who is declining in the Atlantic Basin but whether the countries and regions there are well equipped to take advantage of the deepening connections and to manage domestic and transnational risks and vulnerabilities. The test for cooperation among Atlantic partners will be to help them gear up for that.

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Previous chapters of this book have pointed out that a combination of global challenges and factors such as the internationalisation of production, the improvement of communication technologies, increased human mobility, the risks of financial instability, the dangers of climate change and the transnationalisation of organised crime demand coordinated responses at different levels. And yet the institutions which should be able to provide such a global response are lacking. Even though the United Nations plays a leading role in the creation of a global agenda, in practice the world is fragmented into multiple spaces for dialogue and cooperation but also for competition (Goerg 2014). We are living in a multipolar world where complex interdependences, power shifts and the competition of ideas interact (Grevi 2009; Kupchan 2013; ESPAS 2015), and tensions are exacerbated by the problems of accommodating the emerging powers within the post-World War II traditional governance structures (Vaquer, Tarragona and Morillas 2015). In this scenario, the current framework of interregional relations in the Atlantic is also unequal and fragmented, challenging the idea of the Atlantic Space as a unit of study. Large asymmetries exist between the various regionalist processes, regional institutional structures differ and there are even disparities in the concept of “region”, as it is used in different geopolitical areas. Notwithstanding this, we can observe some convergence of trends in its translation into practice.

Among them, the growing role of non-state actors in international affairs (Khanna 2011; Cerny 2010) has translated into a variety of government-led initiatives that are directed to establishing close interregional links. The convergence of non-state actors’ input into international cooperation and the evolution of less institutionalised and more flexible forms of trans-governmental governance have paved the way for an expansion of trade and security agreements in fields such as development cooperation, culture,
science and social affairs. In these sectors, non-state actors play an important enabling role in fostering ties at the interregional level and beyond. By studying the trajectories of different regional and interregional initiatives and their scope we will analyse how the dynamics evolve and what the implications are for the future development of intermediate institutions for the governance of the Atlantic Space. The comprehensive assessment of regionalism and interregionalism allows for a better understanding of the complex network of Atlantic governance as well as of the convergences and divergences occurring in this space.

Mapping the variable geometry of regionalism and the rise of geopolitical spaces in the Atlantic

Regionalisms across the Atlantic Space

Most projects to form regions across national borders (i.e. regionalisms) in the Atlantic Space have evolved within continental boundaries. Territorial contingency and proximity have determined the shape of most projects, and only a few organisations have cut across the Atlantic Ocean.

Regionalism in Africa unfolds between pan-African ideals of uniting the continent in an anti-colonial legacy on one side and the role of the European Union (EU) as the main funder on the other side. Both the strong normative stance of exclusion and the influence of an external actor are unparalleled among the other regionalisms across the Atlantic. Most regionalisms have materialised in regional organisations with their own centralised but powerless bureaucracies. The African Union (AU) represents the continental framework that aims to coordinate the most relevant pan-African sub-regional projects, the Regional Economic Communities (REC). At the same time some imperial regional constructs such as the South Africa-dominated Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the French legacy of the African Financial Community (CFA) persist.

Regionalism in Latin America is chiefly characterised by a proliferation of regional organisations along internal political and economic rather than geographic divides. Regional projects thus accumulate and they represent a break-away from previous or competing projects. The recent Pacific Alliance represents liberal economic policies and an alignment with the United States of America (US), thus contrasting with the more structured Common Market of the South (Mercosur), while the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) is designed to foster regional hegemony at the expense of North American influence. Regional organisations tend to be shallow, with most policymaking concentrated in national ministries.

Regionalism in North America has been dominated by trade agreements and securitisation accompanied by little institutionalisation. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been the only major organisation founded and it has not faced internal competition. However, differentiation has occurred in terms of an antagonism between US-led pan-Americanism and a North-South divide of the Americas. NAFTA was
conceived as a core agreement to expand throughout the whole Western Hemisphere into a “Free Trade Area of the Americas” (FTAA), but it faced resistance in South America, thus limiting its outreach into parts of Central America.

Europe is home to the most sophisticated institutionalisation of regionalism in the Atlantic. Since overcoming the antagonism with the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) the EU has established itself as the dominant actor of integration on the continent. The EU is not only an exceptional regionalism due to its strong supranational elements but also in terms of being the only regional actor in the Atlantic that has developed a notable presence and influence in the other regions.

The evolution of contemporary regionalisms across the Atlantic Space – synchronisation and fragmentation

For most of the 20th century, regionalisms in the Atlantic Space have been chiefly shaped by domestic factors, albeit with reference to the external framework. The driving forces after World War II included the peace-building process in Europe under the aegis of the US, the quest for economic autonomy and favourable terms for trade in Latin America, and the attempts at convergence between the newly created states in post-colonial Africa. As a result, most regionalisms of the Cold War period were characterised by a focus on clearly confined projects, such as industrialisation policies, the pooling of resources or mediation between conflicting states. Although there was a recurrent exchange of ideas between regional projects, such as developmental regional policies from Latin America to Africa, most regionalisms maintained their inward-oriented outlook.

The end of the Cold War triggered the creation of new regionalisms across the Atlantic Space. Major projects that were to play a crucial role in shaping the regional configurations, such as NAFTA or Mercosur, were set up in the early 1990s. Other key regionalisms such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the EU emerged as new organisations, representing important changes from their predecessors – the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and the European Communities (EC). As opposed to the more inward-oriented previous regional projects, the emergence of this new generation of regionalisms was primarily influenced by three changes in the global order. Firstly, the liberal economic paradigm established itself as a dominant prescriptive guideline, thus paving the way for regionalism as a vehicle for free trade agreements (FTA). Secondly, the democratic political paradigm also established itself as a guiding principle, forming an understanding of regionalism as a framework to support and stabilise democratic transitions. Thirdly, the end of global bipolarity between the US and the Soviet Union offered new options for regions to be formed, while for Latin America and Africa the fear of marginalisation could be countered by region-building.

While there was a sense of synchrony in the Atlantic Space about the beginning of a new wave of regionalism after the Cold War, the subsequent evolution of the various projects has been characterised by fragmentation. Latin America and the Arab World have become arenas of contesting regionalisms and aspiring regional leaders. No clear pattern of regionalism has emerged, as both the underlying norms and the delineations are being
negotiated. Africa is still in a process of reconfiguration with several sub-regions that are constantly changing shape and outlook. Competition is less evident than in the Latin American case but the widespread phenomenon of overlapping membership and external funding has hampered a process of consolidation. By contrast, Europe and the North Atlantic have dominant, consolidated and expanding regionalisms. The EU and NATO have extended their reach far beyond their own region and face no internal competing project, except the possibility of a return to nationalism. North America has a consolidated project whose functional and territorial expansion has been stalled due to resistance in South America and a lack of institutional identity. The negotiations of trade agreements with the Asia-Pacific region and with Europe have not fostered a common position, thus further reducing the capacity of NAFTA to become a regional actor.

The spreading of region-building ideas across the Atlantic

Regionalisms in the Atlantic Space draw their set-ups and objectives from various sources of ideas. An important source is internal and stems from the accumulated experiences with region-building in the past, including failed attempts at integration and institutional memory. Many contemporary regional organisations can be traced back to previous projects, either as a continuation or a rupture. And yet, across the Atlantic, the main source of institutional elements as well as geographical expansion is the European Union. Many other projects such as the African Union (AU) or the Andean Community (CAN) make direct references to the EU and adapt elements of its modus operandi or at least of its symbolism, including regional parliaments and courts. The EU also functions as an anti-model when it is perceived as an undesired form of integration. NAFTA and Mercosur have rejected supranational logics and a centralised bureaucracy.

The main ideas for functional objectives chiefly stem from a liberal economic paradigm and the global institutions representing them, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). With few exceptions, such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), Atlantic regionalisms are generally designed to facilitate free trade and investment between their members and, in most cases, also with third parties through external agreements. Implementation, however, varies greatly between actual common markets such as the EU and SACU, on one side, and liberal schemes that primarily exist on paper as in most African REC, on the other. By contrast, the liberal idea of free movement of labour and of people is not readily taken up as an objective of regionalism and has only been implemented in a few projects such as the EU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The same is valid for common currencies, which are only found in the eurozone and the euro-dependent CFA Franc (Franc de la Communauté Financière d’Afrique), even if notable parts of Latin America and Africa are effectively dollarised.

The main sources of ideas to effectively define the boundaries of a region in the Atlantic Space have often been based on identity foundations. The influence of “pan-” movements is still relevant in contemporary regionalisms in Africa and Latin America, while the legal identity of the acquis communautaire has provided the foundation for the EU.
The Atlantic divide and the role of regional powers

The major division of regionalism in the Atlantic Space remains along the North-South axis. Several projects to bridge this gap, such as the FTAA or the Union for the Mediterranean have failed to generate integrative momentum. The Organisation of American States (OAS) has increasingly been challenged by the Unasur project, which is composed only of South American states and aims to monopolise regional security governance, and more recently by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), grouping 33 American states together without the US and Canada. While convergence has occurred between Western countries under NATO, the antagonism between projects in the Atlantic North and South has increased. Mercosur and NAFTA have further diverged and so have the two Atlantic Ocean-centred alliances – NATO and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS). Meanwhile, the EU’s trade negotiations with Mercosur or via Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) groupings have faced a rocky path. Countries with the potential to overcome the North-South divides, such as Mexico, Egypt and Turkey, have acted more as buffer states than as bridge states.

By contrast, the emergence of regional powers such as Brazil, South Africa and Nigeria is closely interwoven with their membership of regional projects. Regionalisms such as Mercosur, Unasur, SADC, ECOWAS and the AU have been instrumental to their leadership and their global visibility. These countries’ approaches to establishing appropriate regionalisms have not been uniform, ranging from stepping up as paymaster in order to establish hegemony to more tacit cooperative strategies. Even though the presence of a regional power has triggered opposition from smaller members, regions without clear leaders, such as Central Africa, have struggled even more to come up with active projects. However, as regional powers have increasingly been perceived as global powers, they have shifted more attention to forums such as the G-20 or the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). In combination with the recurrent volatility of their economies, this shifting interest makes it difficult to sustain their role as constant, active leaders, given the fact that they have generally been opposed to autonomous or even supranational regional bodies.

Interregional dynamics across the shores of the Atlantic

Interregional relations in the Atlantic Space reflect the above-described extremely diverse experiences and approaches to regional cooperation. Traditionally, the study of interregionalism has been focused on the relationship between formally constituted regional blocs. Nevertheless, interregionalism includes a variety of political interactions, formal institutional relations, material transactions and cultural exchanges between the parties (Garzón 2015). Hänggi proposed classifying three types of interregional relations. The first is the traditional or pure interregionalism, i.e. relations between regional institutionalised groupings. A second category is (intergovernmental) transregionalism, where states participate in interregional relations but in an individual capacity. Finally, hybrid regionalism includes relations between regional groupings and single powers, e.g.
Alongside these categories, we can introduce a wider notion that emerged in the 1970s as an attempt to overcome the state-centred approach, including the analysis of the sprawling links and initiatives in transnational civil society and business (Keohane and Nye 1974). Alongside the expansion of people-to-people contacts, transnational networks have become a common feature of international governance (Keohane and Nye 1974; Slaughter 2004).

This multidimensional model of interregionalism, which is characterised by the coexistence of multilevel diplomacy and institutional structures, is known as “complex interregionalism” (Hardacre and Smith 2009). This concept, created to explain the paradigm of relations between the EU and other regions can also be used to analyse the interregional relations across the Atlantic. In this chapter we will review the state of interregional relations and assess the connections between governmental and other platforms in different policy areas.

Drawing the new interregional dynamics in the Atlantic Space

The growing trans-regionalisation of the interdependencies (Valladão 2015) enhanced the emergence of a large number of interregional initiatives in the Atlantic that no longer respond to the traditional North-North and North-South patterns. Interregionalism appears as an intermediate response to the current global governance institutions being challenged from several fronts: some argue that traditional institutions are ineffective because they are prone to blockage by diverse actors and factors (Hale, Held and Young 2013); others question the bias towards maintaining the status quo that favours the traditional powers as the main obstacle to better cooperation (Amorim 2010). Out of these divergent positions, two trends converge: traditional powers promote initiatives

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Figure 1. Selected regional integration organizations

Source: Atlas of the World, Wikimedia Commons; organizations’ websites.
that aim to maintain their influence by adapting to new forms of multilateralism, while emerging powers promote contesting partnership initiatives meant to increase their autonomy and diversify interdependencies. These two strategies are shaping the transformation of interregional initiatives and are supporting the resurgence of South-South cooperation led by regional powers such as Brazil, South Africa and other middle-income countries (Goerg 2014).

The new South-South interregional forums and “strategic partnerships” have promoted the establishment of more or less institutionalised cooperation mechanisms and networks of public and private actors and have further resulted in triangular North-South-South cooperation. The heterogeneity of actors involved, from super-powers to the least developed countries, including traditional powers, emerging and middle-income countries, makes the Atlantic a hotbed for innovative initiatives. These are not only the result of “top-down” approaches, but also integrate diverse consultation mechanisms with social partners, parliamentarians and a large number of actors (Gardini and Ayuso 2015).

The interest in interregionalism has been reflected in the increasing number of high-level summits, surrounded by parallel meetings, at different governmental levels and in various civil society forums. Although their proliferation has been criticised because of the lack of tangible results (Whitehead and Baraona de Brito 2005; Malamud and Gardini 2015), summits remain a fundamental instrument for political impetus. Another significant trend in current interregionalism is the interplay between the multiple overlapping regionalist initiatives of different nature (Malamud and Gardini 2015; Grabendorff 2013). Economic integration initiatives are subsumed in other bodies of political integration, which leads to multiple memberships by states. This results in overlapping instruments of interregional cooperation, makes stable partners difficult to identify and weakens regional identities. This plethora of regional...
actors makes it difficult for the EU to design interregional strategies (Grabendorff 2013). This has been less problematic for other actors, such as the US or Brazil, which have more flexible regional approaches and are more likely to prioritise bilateral relations.

Multidimensional interregional Atlantic spaces: a tentative approach

This section offers a non-exhaustive approach to different interregional cooperation levels based on the four previously defined categories: pure interregionalism; intergovernmental regionalism; hybrid interregionalism and transnational networks in the case studies analysed by the Atlantic Future project.

North Atlantic interregionalism

Interregional relations in the North Atlantic do not fit the definitions of pure interregionalism. Alcaro and Reilly (2015) argue that interregional relations in this space evolve in two dimensions: state-to-region contacts (hybrid regionalism) and bi-continental intergovernmental relations (intergovernmental transregionalism). The former would be exemplified by the bilateral strategic partnerships between the EU and the United States and Canada, and the high-profile trade negotiations currently underway on an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US or the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) that has already been signed between Canada and the EU.

In the second category, the main path is characterised by relations within NATO. Alcaro and Reilly (ibid.) argue that the North Atlantic exists as the Western region rather than an interregional space. These
authors say that the North Atlantic Space is not seen as a security issue by policymakers and security expert communities in the EU or the US and that the economies of the US and EU are deeply mutually penetrated. They also point out that the decision-making in the space is still sovereign on both sides of the North Atlantic but the leader-followers dynamic between the US and its EU allies often results in the appearance of joint decision-making. A strong interrelationship exists between public and private operators, with some institutionalised channels such as the EU-US Transatlantic Economic Council. Cooperation between the EU and the US is taken forward via constant dialogue at various levels, from the annual summits between the EU and US leaders to technical work at expert levels. This people-to-people contact contributes to the establishment of relatively homogeneous epistemic communities.

**EU-sub-Saharan Africa interregionalism**

Although the EU’s focus on promoting regional integration in Africa stems from the 1990s, the first attempts date back to the 1960s (Garelli 2012). Pirozzi and Godsäter (2015) found that the EU has greatly influenced regionalism in Africa through education and support. The EU has promoted pure interregionalism, e.g. by funding and supporting capacity building of the AU in the field of peace and security (African Peace Facility Training). The EU-Africa partnership framework was established at the first Africa-EU summit in Cairo in 2000. The EU also provides funding and capacity building for the SADC, the East African Community (EAC) and ECOWAS. The focus of the support and capacity building was primarily to promote economic integration, but a considerable part of the funds have been allocated to security issues through, for example, ECOWAS.

Other forms of comprehensive interregionalism, such as the relations between the EU and the ACP countries with the Cotonou Agreement and the European Development Fund (EDF), can be classified in the category of intergovernmental transregionalism. The relationship between the African Peace Security Council (PSC), composed of five sub-regional institutions, with the European PSC can be placed in the same category. On the other hand, hybrid regionalism is present within the EU-South Africa partnership and the bilateral relations of the EU member states with African regional organisations.

The role of non-state actors has progressively grown. An example is civil society participation in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), the main framework of continent-to-continent interaction between the EU and the AU since 2007 (Pirozzi and Godsäter 2015). The JAES determines that it “should be co-owned by European and African non-institutional actors” and functions as a “permanent platform for information, participation and mobilisation of a broad spectrum of civil society actors” (EU and AU 2007). Other examples are: the Europe Africa Policy Research Network, the EU-Africa Economic and Social Stakeholders’ Network, and the Africa-EU Intercontinental Civil Society Forum. These are valuable settings for information-sharing and policy coordination but they suffer from high turnover of participants and a lack of predictable resources (Pirozzi and Godsäter 2015).

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2. For more information, see http://www.state.gov/p/eur/it/eu/tec/. Retrieved November 24, 2015.
EU-Latin America interregionalism

Historically, the interregional dynamics in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have been propelled by the EU and have essentially reflected its priorities and vision, including incentives and specific policies that favour deeper regional integration. The EU has established several sub-regional mechanisms of political dialogue, economic relations and development cooperation due to the variety of sub-regional integration schemes in LAC. The EU has developed a pure interregionalist relationship with Mercosur, the Andean Community (CAN), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In the early 21st century, a third generation of LAC regionalism emerged (Sanahuja 2013; Malamud 2010) and drew a complex map of overlapping regional institutions to which the EU agenda was forced to adapt. The creation of CELAC in 2011 provided an institutional framework for working with all LAC countries and to an extent overcame regional complexities and sub-regional fragmentation (Schäfer 2013). So, the pre-existing EU-Rio Group Dialogue and EU-LAC summits have changed from intergovernmental transregionalism to a kind of pure interregionalism. But, institutional asymmetries and overlapping regional initiatives, such as the recently created Unasur and Pacific Alliance, mean a balanced relationship is still difficult.

Also supported by the EU, civil society has been more directly involved in interregional mechanisms than in LAC regional cooperation schemes (Gardini and Ayuso 2015). One example of this is the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), which was created in 2006 to enhance the democratic dimension of the bi-regional strategic association. Another is the creation in 2010 of an EU-LAC knowledge area by promoting networks of science, research, innovation and technology as a key priority. Alongside this, it was decided to establish the EU-LAC Foundation to engage the business, academic and social sectors and civil society representatives from both regions in order to improve mutual understanding, create platforms for dialogue and proposals and support interregional networks. These transnational networks are now the most dynamic drivers of EU-LAC interregional relations and a path for convergence between homologous communities.

Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa

Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa had rarely been a priority for each other. However, in the last two decades, there have been increasing political efforts to strengthen ties on a region-to-region basis (Mattheis 2015). This has been facilitated by the emergence of regional projects following a similar logic, more specifically, the SADC and Mercosur. Between these two organisations, we find pure interregionalism initiated thanks to the rapprochement between Brazil and South Africa. Both countries shared the idea of exploring possibilities for mutual agreements and the negotiations were then transformed into a Mercosur-SACU issue. When the WTO Doha Round stalled, the South-South negotiations became a priority and a preferential trade agreement was agreed and signed in 2004 but not ratified. A new agreement was signed in 2008, not pushed for in response to a demand from economic actors but rather as a political instrument for South-South cooperation.

For more information, see http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/eurolat/menu_en.htm
(Nutenko 2006). For both groupings it was the first agreement to be signed with another regional bloc.

The Africa-South America Summit (ASA) initiated in 2006 represents intergovernmental transregionalism between the countries of both regions as a whole. It was preceded by the Brazil-Africa Forum, a form of hybrid interregionalism. However, after several meetings the interest in this format seems to have dropped, as the last summits have been postponed and the number of participants has decreased due to the rise of similar competing events (Mattheis 2015). Another example of this category is the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZOPACAS) created in 1986 to establish the South Atlantic as a demilitarised space free of foreign military bases, internal aggression and nuclear weapons. Brazil promoted the initiative with the aim of excluding the traditional powers from the South Atlantic (Gamba-Stonehouse 1989). With the end of the Cold War, priorities shifted to ecological issues, organised crime and maritime security. However, due to its weak institutionalisation, ZOPACAS is dependent on other actors to implement the agenda. Civil society ties play a marginal role in the dominant forms of interregionalism; some of the longer-standing connections, such as those between trade unions or more recently through social forums, have not produced a counter-project to the state-led forms of interregionalism (Mattheis 2015).

**Latin America and North Africa**

Despite the lack of priority given by each to other regions, relations and exchange have grown constantly over the last 10-12 years, in parallel to a progressive institutionalisation of high-level political dialogue. The starting point can be identified in December 2003, when the Brazilian president was invited to visit the Arab League headquarters, where he expressed his intention to create permanent interregional dialogue. The first South America-Arab Countries (ASPA) summit was in Brasilia in July 2005, with the attendance of representatives of all countries from both Unasur and the Arab League and officials from the Andean Community (CAN), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). Hence, it can be conceptualised as closer to intergovernmental transregionalism than a form of pure regionalism. In parallel, other sectoral encounters have been made in the fields of environmental and health cooperation.

Civil society was engaged in the creation of ASPA’s Businessmen Forum, with more than 600 participants from the private sector. It was strengthened with the creation of the Council on Arab World Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (CARLAC) in 2012 to enhance the relations between both regions and consolidate links through the participation and inclusion of private actors. Two Arab-Latin America relation centres were created in each region to involve companies, civil society, governments, media and the academic world in key issues. The observer status of sub-regional organisations at ASPA summits has led to the negotiation of free trade agreements (FTA) between Mercosur and Arab countries. FTA were signed with Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, along with framework agreements with Morocco, Jordan, Syria and Tunisia, introducing hybrid interregionalism to the relationship. The rapprochement...
contributed to the diversification of trade links consolidating regional actorness and greater autonomy of the actors involved, but the current political destabilisation affecting the Arab world has left the bi-regional relationship on standby.

North America and Africa

Given the lack of North American regional organisations engaged in trans-continental relationships, the United States and Canada have developed their relations with sub-Saharan Africa on a separate hybrid interregional basis, but with increasing importance over the past decade (Kotsopoulos and Goerg 2015). In 2006, the US opened its diplomatic mission to the AU, but it was only in 2010, when the annual US-AU High-Level Meeting was launched, that the partnership was formalised. In 2012, US strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa, and therefore its engagement with African partners, was centred around four main pillars: strengthening democratic institutions; spurring economic growth, trade and investment; advancing peace and security, and promoting development. However, the US mission lacks the resources to propose and implement continent-wide strategies and programming. Cooperation with Africa’s Regional Economic Communities is not a US strategic goal but is presented as a horizontal approach under the “Spur Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment” and “Advance Peace and Security” pillars (White House 2012). In recent years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has given a more prominent role to regional organisations in its strategic planning, considering that regional integration will further economic development and stability in Africa, as well as attempting to better integrate USAID and the State Department while more effectively harnessing American resources and cooperating with allies. USAID signed an Assistance Agreement for Comprehensive Regional Development with the EAC and development cooperation agreements with the ECOWAS Commission. However, USAID seems to first identify issues and policy areas and then find the appropriate partners in line with the project-based approach of the organisation (Kotsopoulos and Goerg 2015).

Canada’s relationship with Africa has been more focused on development assistance than on trade or investment (Black 2004). Traditionally, Canada’s multilateral relations with Africa were channelled through the Commonwealth, the UN and the Francophonie, though this has changed in recent years. Canadian multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding targets a wide range of organisations, but the vast majority goes to global institutions, rather than regional organisations. However, one area of Canadian ODA programming where substantial funds do go towards regional entities is under the category of International Financial Institution (IFI) support, such as the African Development Bank. The former has become an important conduit for Canadian funding aimed at larger regional initiatives such as the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). In 2015 there is only one direct funding agreement between the AU and Canada focussing on support for institutions, capacity building and communication of the AU Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. Canada also supports the AU’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).
Assessing the EU’s normative power in promoting regional integration in the Atlantic

The EU has been perceived as the world’s most advanced regional integration project, and indeed it sees itself as a governance model for other countries and regions in the world. Exporting regionalism abroad and promoting interregional relations constitute an important element of the EU’s foreign policy identity and are at the centre of its soft power (Smith 2008; Soler i Lecha and Viilup 2014). Regionalist models can be diffused around the world through regional competition, teaching and support, and conditionality, according to the three categories identified by Hurrell (2007), to which Pirozzi and Godsäter later added partnership (2015).

The European integration project’s own success story in achieving lasting peace, stability and prosperity has been the backbone of its normative power and fundamental to its capacity to inspire regional integration beyond its borders. The EU’s achievements in economic integration have served, if not as models, then at least as catalysts for numerous other attempts at regional cooperation across the world (Isbell and Nolan García 2015). The EU seeks to “actively promote the development of (intra) regional economic and political cooperation, the building of issue-related regimes, and the creation of joint institutions for consultation and decision-making in its neighbourhood and beyond” (Börzel and Risse 2009). The EU’s approach is based on the conviction that regionalism constitutes not only the best means to ensure security, stability and prosperity in the EU itself but also beyond its borders (Börzel and Risse 2009; Magen 2006). This approach is not only about preserving the EU’s trade power but also diffusing the ideas, principles and practices that it considers its own (Damro 2010; Manners 2009). In addition, the EU is also heavily involved in supporting regional intergovernmental organisations, which coincides with the element of teaching proposed by Hurrell’s typology.

Although still a work in process, the creation of EU strategic partnerships with emerging countries and regions is part of the EU’s way to reposition itself in the international arena. In the Atlantic Space, the EU has five bilateral strategic partnerships (with the United States, Canada, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa) and two regional strategic partnerships, with the AU and the CELAC. A strategic partnership should contribute to stability and good governance. In Latin America the bilateral strategy with Brazil and Mexico competes with the bi-regional strategy and sub-regional strategies that run with different patterns depending on each regional process. For its part, the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy has the objective of raising the relationship to the level of “partnership among equals” but there is still a gap between the ambition and the concrete results achieved (Pirozzi and Godsäter 2015).

A number of factors and challenges are currently affecting the EU’s capacity to inspire and promote its ideas, values and practices. It is facing a multifaceted crisis at home (institutional, economic and political) as well as serious challenges on its external borders. The more the EU’s own model is perceived to be in trouble in terms of integration, legitimacy and effectiveness, its capacity to promote regionalism and interregional relations is undermined.
Although the 2008 economic and financial crisis originated outside the EU, its effects have been particularly severe on the EU’s economy and have also brought to the light serious structural defects in the European construction. On the one hand, the power and decision-making has shifted from Brussels-based communitarian institutions to national capitals and big member states (particularly Berlin, as Germany has emerged as the regional hegemon). On the other hand, the economic and financial crisis has brought about unprecedented integration – particularly among the member states participating in the eurozone – which even seems to be leading towards a kind of a federalised union (Viilup 2012). EU member states are far from sharing a single view of how far the integration should be left to proceed. The UK has gone as far as initiating the renegotiation of the terms of its membership and is set to hold a referendum on whether it should remain within the bloc. Fuelled by the widespread perception that the EU and public institutions failed to deliver for the public good during the crisis, public distrust of these bodies has increasingly put the legitimacy of EU-level decision-making at risk.

The EU is also failing to effectively address serious challenges on is external borders (instability in North Africa, war in Ukraine, the migration crisis resulting from instability in its neighbourhood). Krastev and Leonard (2014) write that since the occupation of Crimea in March 2014, the Europeans have had to admit that the post-Cold War European order has dissolved. The 13 November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks caused fear and insecurity throughout the EU. It is feared that the massacre will further disrupt European integration, liberalisation and democracy. The enlargement policy has been the most successful tool of the EU’s transformative power. The current freezing of the enlargement of the European Union for the foreseeable future by the Juncker Commission will certainly serve to undermine the EU’s power to inspire change (Soler i Lecha and Viilup 2014). There is no shortage of examples of how the decline of the EU’s model has affected EU attempts to export regionalism and foster interregionalism. The EU’s major democratisation and stabilisation project for its neighbourhood – the European Neighbourhood Policy – is on the rocks. So are other, major region-to-region links such an FTA with Mercosur and economic partnerships with the APC countries. In addition, sluggish progress is being made in the negotiations of the biggest economic integration project in the Atlantic – the TTIP with the US.

**Closing remarks**

Atlantic geopolitics is currently dominated by pluralism rather than unity. Emerging economies and groups of states in the South Atlantic are developing strategies that challenge the traditional Western powers and new regional and interregional initiatives of varied nature and composition proliferate. Established North-South cooperation maintains an important place in this reconfiguration but contestation has become an equally defining element. At the same time, much of this contestation has exhibited a volatile character that depends chiefly on the financial and ideational investment of regional leaders and on the perception of a common external other. As stimulus for change, common identity and functional demand are weaker than a shared adversary or competitor, and so, when it relies on these factors, the reshaping of the Atlantic’s regional order is limited.

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4. For more information, see http://www.gmfus.org/blog/2015/11/16/after-paris-western-unity-ever-more-difficult-ever-more-essential
Its institutionalised forms of regional and interregional projects may have limitations, but the experiences in the Atlantic Space provide case studies that mean it can be considered a laboratory of multilateralism at global level. The Atlantic Space can be observed as a global geopolitical space that provides useful experiences for regional and global governance at large (Alessandri 2015). Firstly, positive integration factors such as identity, ideology, transfers and entanglement have provided a more durable basis for region-building than external actors, be they funders or perceived opponents. Secondly, regions are constantly in flux, expanding or contracting, both in their membership and in their objectives. Geographical boundaries increasingly succumb to political, economic or social ideas of desired cohesion. Thirdly, interregionalism often tends to be highly asymmetrical due the high variety of regional institutionalisation, actorness and outreach. As a consequence, the linkages tend to be driven unilaterally and can produce structures of dependence and mimicry.

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“Like everything metaphysical, the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language”

(Wittgenstein 2001 [1953]).

When speaking about transatlantic relations, what first comes to mind is the link between the United States of America and Europe. After the Cold War, links between the two regions were forged to the point that it is difficult to envisage a space that includes not only the North Atlantic, but also Africa and South and Central America. As seen in other chapters of this monograph, the Atlantic Future project has identified the links and interdependencies that glue these regions together. Almost 500 stakeholders across the wider Atlantic were interviewed during the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015 to furnish the project with a preliminary insight into their imaginarium. Stakeholders were able to identify commonalities across the region and the threats that unite or divide us. The majority were sceptical about the existence of an Atlantic Space. However, while it seems that stakeholders are not ready yet to accept the Atlantic Space as a reality, the idea was not dismissed, and many perceived its potential.

To complement the interview reports, published to present the results of the interviews on a regional basis, this chapter focuses on two particular questions that interviewees were asked: Do you believe that a pan-Atlantic space or “Atlantic Rim” could be formed? If not, under what circumstances do you think this pan-Atlantic space could take shape? A total of 488 stakeholders were interviewed from the public (160), private (83), academia (126), media (60) and civil society (59) sectors, all of them with a professional background related to transatlantic issues. Interviews were carried out in 25 countries of the Atlantic Space: Angola, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, France, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, South Africa, United States, United Kingdom, and Venezuela. In addition, interviews were conducted at the

1. The interview reports can be accessed at the Atlantic Future project website, under the series “Perspectives from African countries”, “Perspectives from Europe”, “Perspectives from International Organizations” and “Perspectives from the Americas”: http://www.atlanticfuture.eu/contents/search/results
headquarters of international organizations in Geneva, Washington D.C. and New York. Around 20 interviewees were selected in each country – with the exception of Brussels and London, where 40 interviews were conducted. For the public sector, diplomats, heads of units and divisions, and directors and representatives at supra-national organizations were selected. For the private sector, managers of companies, multinationals, chambers of commerce and professional organizations were chosen. For academia, professors and researchers were selected. For the media, analysts, editors and heads of international affairs sections were included in the selection. Finally, from the civil society sector, associations and non-governmental institutions and activities were consulted as well.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and by telematic means in those cases where security constrictions, such as the Ebola outbreak and the security situation in West Africa, made it advisable. The interviews were conducted following a standardized questionnaire that consisted of three sections dedicated to: regional dynamics, economics, security, environment, social and political challenges, convergence and/or divergence of norms and interests, regional and interregional relations, and a final question about the possible emergence of a pan-Atlantic space.

The responses were transcribed, codified and analysed using Nvivo qualitative analysis software. Hence, for the purpose of limiting the scope of the paper and acknowledging that 488 interviewees cannot provide an accurate picture of what stakeholders around the Atlantic might believe, this chapter aims to provide the reader with an initial examination of their thoughts and opinions regarding the configuration of the Atlantic as a geopolitical and autonomous space, the obstacles to it, and what would be needed for this space to emerge in the future.
The Atlantic Space: an attractive idea whose time has not yet come

Most stakeholders reacted with scepticism when asked about the emergence of an Atlantic Space. However, they showed different degrees of scepticism: while some were adamant that it would never emerge, others saw its potential. After analysing the interviews by profile and by region, it can be concluded that, firstly, there is a convergence of views regarding the reasons for the emergence or not of this Atlantic Space. And, secondly, the main differences are found on a regional level rather than according to the different profiles, which reflects how approaches to the Atlantic region are built based on different needs and interests. 18 out of 25 countries were generally sceptical about the emergence of a pan-Atlantic space: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom and Venezuela. This was also the general perception among representatives of international organizations in Geneva, Washington D.C., and New York. However, interviewees from Angola, Cape Verde, Colombia, Honduras and Portugal were more inclined to consider the emergence of this space possible, based on their strategic positions and economic interests. Interviewees from the United States shared a positive view regarding the emergence of an Atlantic Space but recognized that many challenges and obstacles still need to be overcome, for instance: the current level of fragmentation in the region, the distrust between North and South and differences among the four regions of the Atlantic. Finally, the case of Morocco deserves special mention because, while the country has developed and is investing in an Atlantic strategy, some of those interviewed confessed that they were looking more to Europe and the Mediterranean than towards the Atlantic.

When considering the profile of the interviewees, there seems to be a consensus amongst most of them about the main factors making possible or inhibiting the emergence of this space. Those that considered the existence of this Atlantic Space possible argued that it could be beneficial for Africa and for South and Central America. Interviewees from all sectors saw in the realms of economics, security and environmental policies the potential to build collaborative relationships amongst the regions. And some of those surveyed from the public and private sectors in Africa even believed that the emergence of this space would be the result of a natural process. Furthermore, all of the profiles mentioned the existence of this Atlantic relationship between United States and Europe. However, one interviewee from the academic sector in South America added that this configuration would “call for a process of regional reconstruction”. Additionally, interviewees from all the regions pointed out the existence of regional forums or partnerships as a first step for the integration of the Atlantic region. They mentioned that these forums could be a driver of unity in the region. Some interviewees, however, argued that this would depend on how open these frameworks are to third-party countries.

In contrast, those who did not consider the emergence of this Atlantic Space viable cited as the main reason the existence of different levels of development among the regions. Some agreed that it is better to focus on the local or regional level in order to solve local or regional problems, and others thought it was important to prioritise bilateral relations as the best way to move forward. Regarding the potential signing of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), interviewees from People across all the sectors believed that Brazil, South Africa, the European Union and the United States do not have any interest in this Atlantic idea. According to them, most of the Atlantic countries consider Asian markets to be more attractive.
all the profiles, and particularly those from Africa, Europe, and South and Central America, mentioned that this agreement would thwart any prospects for Atlantic integration because it would only benefit the northern powers. Some interviewees added that populist ideologies in South America could fuel anti-imperialistic feelings in some countries, which could hinder regional integration. Finally, noteworthy was that people across all the sectors believed that Brazil, South Africa, Europe (the European Union) and the United States do not have any interest in this Atlantic idea. According to them, most of the Atlantic countries consider Asian markets to be more attractive.

The “ifs of the Atlantic equation”

As mentioned before, there were varying degrees of scepticism or acceptance among the interviewees when asked about the emergence of this Atlantic Space. Many of them thought the emergence of the Atlantic Space was a possibility only if certain conditions were in place.

The heterogeneity of the Atlantic

Stakeholders identified the different levels of development (economic, social and political), instability (institutional and in terms of security), regional fragmentation and ideological differences in Africa and South and Central America, as the main reasons for the absence of a wider Atlantic Space.

About interests and geostrategic vision

Interviewees pointed out the different interests driving the national and geostrategic positions of Atlantic countries. A representative from the public sector in Europe described the political and strategic interests of the main Atlantic actors as follows: “the most Atlantic countries are Spain, France, Great Britain, and the United States. Central America is not focusing on the Atlantic (they are turning their backs on the Atlantic), for Brazil the north and south of the Atlantic are equally important, while Argentina and Uruguay are more focused on the south of the Atlantic”. The interviewee added that “Mexico functions as a bridge between the Pacific and the Atlantic, while in Africa there is a less Atlantic-centred vision”. According to interviewees, for Africa and South and Central America the question is how to achieve economic growth and open their economies to the global market while trying to reinforce their political and social structure and face their security challenges. Stakeholders from these regions and of all the profiles also thought that investing in South-South cooperation is key, considering the potential and the common needs that these regions have.
Regarding North America, representatives from the private sector in Europe were of the opinion that the “pan-Atlantic idea would only take off if American businesses had an interest or stood to gain from it”. The European academic sector saw the shift by the United States from the Atlantic to Asia as a major obstacle. Interviewees from Poland saw this shift as particularly worrisome due to security concerns, in light of Russian hostility and instability within the European sphere (Hörst and Piatkiewicz 2015). Along this line, interviewees from Europe and North America highlighted that the shift to Asia was central to the Obama administration, but emphasized that this could change in 2016, with the presidential elections coming up. In the words of a public representative from Europe: “under a new Unites States President, a new rapprochement towards the Atlantic may happen, which would result in boosting a pan-Atlantic space”. This opinion contrasted with those of public and private representatives who saw the negotiation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) as “the core of an Atlantic community” and “as the way to counter-balance China’s presence in the region and global trade”.

With regard to Europe, interviewees made reference to the crisis that the European Union has been experiencing since 2008. In particular, those surveyed from Europe, North America and international organizations believed that the European Union is going through an inward-looking period, focused on its internal institutional and economic crisis. However, the tension with Russia, the Ukrainian conflict, and the refugee crisis are forcing the EU to look outwards again. Nevertheless, almost all of those polled indicated that one of the most important problems facing the European Union is the lack of a European identity and a common voice on foreign policy among its member states. Public representatives added that United Kingdom’s departure would cause great instability.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, in the view of the majority of interviewees, of all profiles and from all regions, the potential emergence of a pan-Atlantic space would depend on the capacity of Atlantic countries to align their national interests with those of other actors, to move away from isolationist positions, and to recognize other states as potential partners helping them to overcome risks and generate opportunities.

The relevance of bilateral relations

On a regional level, interviewees from all profiles and the four regions mentioned the different levels of regional integration that the continents have experienced in recent years. According to them, there has been a proliferation of regional organizations based on trade and security agreements, such as the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM), the Ibero-American Summit, the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), just to name a few. These regional and inter-regional forums were mentioned as an example of Atlantic cooperation and the seed from which an Atlantic Space could emerge. Nevertheless, those surveyed thought that regional conflicts, political ideologies and economic interests had in some cases undermined the efficiency of such multilateral frameworks. Therefore, some indicated that bilateral relations work more efficiently in the Atlantic. As a private sector representative
from Europe mentioned, “if a pan-Atlantic space develops, we risk having a format like BRICS, where the exercise is purely theoretical and it struggles to put any initiatives forward, due to internal divisions”. An interviewee from the private sector in North America even added that a wider pan-Atlantic forum would be only a “show” that adds more confusion to the networks that have been already created. According to this person: “it is more important that the regions strengthen themselves before looking for a greater relationship with other regions”. Hence, according to the responses, an Atlantic Space could only emerge if the regional frameworks in place were unblocked, fair treatment was secured for all four regions, and new frameworks ensured the participation of all sectors of society.

Existing relations in the Atlantic Space

Some of those surveyed understood the Atlantic Space as the relationship between the United States and Europe, one institutionalized through different forums, such as NATO, and that is currently boosted through the negotiation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). When interviewees where asked about the expansion of the concept of the Atlantic Space to include the southern Atlantic, respondents from all the profiles said that including South and Central America could be considered, due to triangular relations that are already in place on an issue-by-issue basis. However, people from North America, South and Central America, and Europe, generally viewed the inclusion of Africa in a possible pan-Atlantic configuration as problematic, at least until instability is overcome in Africa.

External powers in the Atlantic

Interviewees from all the regions and profiles referred in one way or another to the role external factors play in the construction of a wider pan-Atlantic area. On a positive side, many respondents agreed on the influence that Asia and, in particular, China, has for the Atlantic countries as an attractive source of growth and economic development. For example, an interviewee from the civil society sector in Europe mentioned that “the Atlantic is the past, the Pacific is the future” while one from the private sector in Africa asserted that “Asia has offered more benefits in terms of visible and identifiable inputs: infrastructure and technology”, and added that “Asian countries bring the latest technologies, as opposed to Europe’s practice of producing outdated and obsolete things”. Furthermore, most of the interviewees stated that one cannot talk about the construction of a pan-Atlantic alliance while neglecting the important role that Asian countries play in the Atlantic region. As a representative of the European public sector mentioned “we need to learn how to relate to Asia”. However, some respondents from the public sector (South America and Europe) perceived this Asian presence as a risk and added that we could speak about the possible creation of an Atlantic Space as a counterweight to the role of Asia in the global economy.

Respondents from Europe and North America, in particular, mentioned the threat that Russian hostilities, the Ukraine crisis, and the rise of reli-
gious radicalism (Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State [IS]) could entail as drivers or as disruptive variables for the construction of the Atlantic region. In this regard, worthy of mention is how European and North American interviewees from the academic sector believed – in line with a more realistic approach to international relations – that, in order for this Atlantic Space to succeed, the main actors in the region would have to identify a common threat. As a respondent from the academic sector in North America stated, “to bring such a pan-Atlantic space into being, there would need to be a perception of a growing threat from other regions, like China, for example, and that we need to do more together to defend ourselves against this ‘threat’”. Consequently, in the interviewees’ opinion, the role of China, competition between the three world powers (China, Europe and the United States) over “who owns Africa” and the current Russian hostilities in Europe and the Middle East could be drivers for collaborative relations in the Atlantic. According to them, the pan-Atlantic foundation will be determined depending on how the Atlantic powers manage their interactions with these external factors.

The obstacles for an Atlantic integration

During the fieldwork stakeholders were asked about the obstacles to the emergence of a wider Atlantic Space. An analysis of their responses shows that there is general agreement on the main challenges it faces. A majority of the interviewees viewed the lack of infrastructure in the South Atlantic, geographical distances, the language differences, access to funding in the South Atlantic, restrictions on the mobility of persons and goods in the North Atlantic, a lack of technology and a business-friendly environment in the South, divergent values among the regions, political instability in the South, and the spread of corruption all over the Atlantic, as the main impediments to more collaborative relations in the region. Additionally, respondents viewed the rise of nationalistic political parties in the North Atlantic, left-wing populist parties with anti-imperialistic views in the South, and anti-Islamic sentiment in the North, as a hurdle to future forms of collaboration.

It is also worth mentioning that some respondents from North, South and Central America considered the lack of political will an obstacle for the countries of the Atlantic to push forward with this Atlantic initiative. According to them, countries like Brazil, Argentina and South Africa are more focused on fostering a South Atlantic community, moving away from North-South dependency. They also pointed out the disenchantment that the southern countries exhibit with the role of the European Union on a global level, the inward-looking process in which the European Union is immersed, and the United States’ lack of action in Africa and in the Atlantic in general. On a more general level, all the respondents from Africa, Europe and South America coincided in identifying the lack of knowledge that the regions have about each other, especially with regard to the North’s ignorance of the southern countries, and South America’s ignorance of Africa. As a matter of fact, the most pressing issue for the construction of a pan-Atlantic space is the North-South divide, which was a constant in all the interviews.

Interviewees across all the profiles and regions agreed that, in economic terms, the excess of bureaucracy, corruption and the lack of a
business-friendly environment in Africa, South and Central America, together with protectionist measures and the quality standards imposed by the European Union (in the case of Africa, North, South and Central America) hampered the possible emergence of an Atlantic market. Furthermore, almost all the Interviewees shared the impression that there is a degree of mistrust from the South towards the North Atlantic, based on the colonial past and the North’s position of dominance. Interviewees from Africa and South and Central America added the different views between the North and the South in terms of: the use of the force, surveillance programmes, and the responsibility to protect, among others. A representative from the public sector in Africa added that: “African regions are not left to govern each other alone without external interference. For instance, whenever an institution is established in Africa, outside powers attempt to immediately control their functioning. That was the case with the African Union, the fight between the US and China for Africa, and the position of France in Western African organizations. For all intents and purposes, France does not allow its former colonies to actually become independent”.

Finally, for some interviewees, particularly representatives of international organizations, the idea of fostering regional integration through the creation of regional organizations and forums is an idea that prospered during the 1990s, but which no longer fits in today’s global world. For these respondents, challenges today are of a global nature and, therefore, there is a need for global solutions and participation by all kinds of actors, from state to non-state entities (multinationals, civil society, unions, cities, individuals, etc.). Therefore, in the view of the interviewees it is a good theoretical exercise to think about the Atlantic in these terms, but it is not constructive to fragment the regions between oceans when issues that transcend regional frontiers are of the utmost importance to regional configurations. As mentioned by an interviewee from the private sector in South America: “It is the complementarity of investment resources and development potential, such as that seen between Brazil and Mozambique, that is the key factor to building cooperation, rather than geographical considerations”.

So, what will it take to establish a pan-Atlantic region?

Nobody doubts the links among North Atlantic countries nowadays. On the contrary, when speaking about a wider Atlantic Space, much resistance is encountered. Different levels of development, and mistrust among the regions (South towards North) are obstacles for the Atlantic configuration. However, the results of the interviews show that there is common ground upon which a pan-Atlantic space could be built on an issue-to-issue basis and lead, in the long run, to a regional reconfiguration. In particular, interviewees from all the profiles and regions insisted on the importance of economic opportunities, security concerns, energy resources and environmental considerations to each particular region on the Atlantic, and on the need for interregional cooperation in these areas.

In the case of economics, interviewees matching all the profiles and from all the regions believed that trade is the key to a pan-Atlantic configura-
tion. Trade agreements, investment, portfolio flows, services, intra- and inter-regional connectivity, the insertion of Atlantic countries into the global value chains, technological development and fair treatment between the four regions are among the areas and conditions for pan-Atlantic integration. Moreover, in the area of energy and shale, offshore and low-carbon developments taking place in the Atlantic are opening up a new era in the Atlantic. Some of the stakeholders noted the importance of these discoveries and new production, and what they could entail for the reconfiguration of the global energy market should the Atlantic have the capacity to become the East's energy supplier.

Regarding security in the Atlantic, many interviewees from all the regions referred to the consequences that the actions of non-state actors have, as they erode stability, not only in the Atlantic but globally. The trafficking of people, arms and drugs are some of the most pressing issues that connect the four regions of the Atlantic. Moreover, their relationships to transnational terrorist cells are challenging the traditional security realm of state and transnational organizations. Likewise, maritime delimitation and the protection of maritime routes have become a source of concern and security measures, given the need to protect these global routes from the threat of piracy – especially in the Gulf of Guinea. From a human security approach, poverty, food and energy security are becoming increasingly demanding issues that would require an Atlantic answer.

Finally, most of the interviewees from Europe and South, Central and North America considered it necessary to start dealing with climate change considerations. Some of them recognized the importance that the European Union has had through policy development in this area. In the case of resource depletion, interviewees corresponding to all the profiles and from all the regions coincided in the opinion that this issue requires an Atlantic answer. It is to be noted that many respondents referred to fishing depletion.

In all of these areas, interviewees identified states such as South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Brazil, the United States and the European Union as the main actors to lead change or support the idea of pan-Atlantic regional configuration. Stakeholders featuring all the profiles and from all the regions also recognized the relevance of non-state actors. For them, multinationals, cities, local governments, individuals and terrorist organizations will have an enormous impact on decision-making.

The Atlantic regions have historically been characterized by their high level of interdependence. Commerce, migration flows, shared norms and values, languages and culture are only a few of the assets shared by these regions. While the idea of a wider Atlantic is not obvious, there are numerous opportunities for cooperation in the areas of the economy, security and environment that can be taken as starting points to align national and regional interests for the construction of an Atlantic Space.

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The Atlantic Ocean was central to history over a period of five centuries. Multiple links were created that still survive today, but in constant evolution. The European colonization of the Americas and Africa represented a dramatic transformation in the societies and territories of three continents. Over the course of the centuries, structural changes occurred in the relationships across the Atlantic following domination, but also cooperation patterns, both East-West and North-South, and also according to diagonal or triangular schemes. However, the Atlantic Ocean has not been considered an integrated space as a whole. Rather, a fragmented view of the Atlantic Space in various areas of influence has prevailed. Given the increasingly interpolar nature of the global order (Grevi 2009), the Atlantic Space works as a subsystem in the Global Order, composed of different regions interacting and making up different geopolitical spaces, in the North and the South, or diagonally.

Not only the Atlantic, but the world is fragmented into multiple spaces, with respect to dialogue and cooperation, but also to competition. These tensions are augmented by the difficulties involved in accommodating the emerging powers in the traditional governance structures that emerged from World War II. However, the interaction between the different shores of the Atlantic evolves, adapting to the prevailing trends in the restructuring of the international system, and a variety of rules and ideas spread through a multiplicity of actors that go beyond the traditional powers (Hurrell 2007). Therefore, the Atlantic Future project, funded by the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission, is intended to provide a fresh look at the relationships and interactions across the Atlantic in order to identify changes and continuities, as well as major expected perspectives.

The dominant growth dynamics in the last decade, especially in economic terms, but also according to other parameters, such as population, were located in the Pacific, with China as a major player in Asia. The Atlantic has been seen as a shrinking space that reflects the decline of the West, eclipsed by the emerging powers. The focus of the Obama administration on strengthening its position in the Pacific and decreas-
The focus of the Obama administration on the Pacific, the stagnation of the European integration process, and the mismanagement of the financial crisis have contributed to the idea of the North Atlantic’s decline. Nevertheless, other trends contribute to enhancing transatlantic relations. The idea was not to study the Atlantic as a space separated from the rest of the world, but rather the opposite: to analyse the Atlantic as a laboratory of globalization to provide other regions of the world with useful lessons learned.

The Atlantic matters

Although the Atlantic Space’s golden era as the main engine of globalization is over, it continues to be an essential part of the global picture (Vaquer, Tarragona and Morillas 2015). It is still relevant enough to merit attention to what is going on in order to understand the main trends and drivers behind the world’s growing interdependence. The Atlantic Future project described the main connections across the Atlantic, how they have been changing over time, and what implications these connections have for the EU and its major partners (Hamilton et al. 2015). As explained in former chapters, some main trends can be highlighted:

- The new key position for the Atlantic in global energy markets is supported by the shift in demand to emerging Asia-Pacific markets, as well as structural declines in energy demand within the Atlantic Space (Isbell 2014). The shale revolution, advances in petroleum technology and exploration, as well as the movement towards low-carbon economies present new opportunities, interdependencies and perspectives for all Atlantic actors, but particularly for the EU, to diversify its energy resources.
- Merchandise trade among the four Atlantic continents more than doubled over the last decade and accounts for more than half of all trade in the world. While the Atlantic’s share of global trade in goods has declined, in absolute figures it has actually been growing. The main drivers of trade and financial cooperation in the Atlantic Space...
continue to be levels of economic development and pre-existing relations, especially between developed economies, and between European countries and former colonies. However, the presence of new actors from emerging states also creates new incentives for economic cooperation, while growing GDP, lower trade barriers, the entry into the world economy of former centrally-planned command economies, as well as the BRICS and NIC (Newly Industrialized Countries), and the operations of multinational companies, have all created incentives for increased trade. On the supply side, a decline in transportation costs brought about by technological changes affecting ships and aircraft, along with increased investment in seaports and airports, as well as the development of hub and spoke networks, has generated an increase in trade (Barron et al. 2014).

• Atlantic economies are each other’s most important service markets, and they are poised to be major beneficiaries and drivers of the growth in global services. The US is the largest single country trader in services, while over half of US and EU service exports go to Atlantic Basin countries, and each is seeing an increasing share of its trade in services conducted with South America and Africa (Hamilton and Quinlan 2015). Services are increasingly important to South Atlantic economies such as Brazil, South Africa, Mexico and Colombia. As governments seek to diversify their economies away from commodity production, demand will grow for services such as health care, education, entertainment, tourism, insurance, telecommunications and finance.

• Investment among Atlantic economies is also denser than anywhere else in the world. Foreign investment provides millions of jobs and affiliate sales within the Atlantic more than double sales in the entire Asia Pacific region. Foreign direct investment (FDI) ties between the US and EU are the main driver, and affiliate sales, not trade, are the primary means by which European and American companies deliver goods and services to consumers across the ocean (ibid.). European and North American companies are also active investors in the Atlantic South. US companies invest more in South and Central America than in Asia, even if those investment levels are likely to become more balanced (Hamilton et al. 2015). EU investments in Africa are likely to remain significant, but the more dynamic investors in Africa are likely to come from Asia. FDI ties between South and Central America and Africa are weak, but Brazilian companies are investing in Africa to diversify their export markets and internationalize their production (Pereira da Costa 2014).

• The Atlantic Basin has been considered a relatively peaceful zone in military terms in recent decades. However, non-traditional security concerns are growing. The major global conflict issues will be driven by challenges such as weapons proliferation, instability caused by failing states, humanitarian crises, piracy and organized crime. The Atlantic Basin features some of the world’s main routes for drug trafficking (Jacobson and Daurora 2014). The availability of drugs and arms is very significant in the Americas, but drug cartels are also carrying out illegal activities in some West African countries. The Gulf of Guinea is emerging as a hotspot for pirate attacks in the Atlantic. Trafficking in arms, drugs, people and money are common challenges in the Atlantic Space, posing important risks but also presenting opportunities for increased international cooperation. Combating drug trafficking and organized crime has been and remains a key issue for interregional cooperation.
The Atlantic can be seen as a subspace for joint governance to achieve effective multilateralism for the global order, and as an area of opportunities to meet the challenges coming in the 21st century.

- The environmental challenges faced by countries in the Atlantic Space are mutually reinforcing: climate change mitigation, food security, wildlife trafficking and biodiversity loss are challenges for the Atlantic Ocean itself and for the countries in the Atlantic Space. While these problems are not unique to the Atlantic, they have a marked impact on the different regions (Stefes et al. 2014). Atlantic biophysical systems have a significant capacity to mitigate the impact of industrial activity on the climate at the regional and global levels. The Atlantic serves a unique function as the locus of the planet's thermohaline system reducing extremes in the planet's climate. Any change to this pattern could have untold effects all across the globe, and there are indications that change is already underway (Hamilton et al. 2015).

The abovementioned trends, including the fragmentation and transnationalization of production, trade and investment, increased economic interdependence, energy dependency, climate change and environmental risks, all lead to common challenges. But governance structures to deal with them are still underdeveloped. The Atlantic Space offers a good illustration both of the need for transnational approaches to regional and global issues and of the complexity of creating the governance structure needed to effectively address them across the North-South divide.

### Governance challenges in the Atlantic

Dynamics of regional integration and transnational relations coexist in the Atlantic with multiple trends that entail both opportunities and challenges. The decline of the West, the rise of the rest, the global shift of power and the increased levels of interdependence have transformed the global balance of power, but have not yet been reflected in a new system of multipolar governance. The Atlantic is a space where we can observe the gaps and obstacles for the global governance of interdependencies and common assets in a shared way. It is also a space were we can analyse how the changing relative figures and balances in terms of demography, economics, security, energy and resources impact traditional North-North and North-South relations and the emergence of South-South and new triangular relationships between two or three regions in the area.

The Atlantic can be seen as a subspace for joint governance to achieve effective multilateralism for the global order, and as an area of opportunities to meet the challenges coming in the 21st century, including those in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda. The Atlantic Future project devoted special attention to studying the evolution of regionalism and interregionalism in the Atlantic Space, maintaining a pluralistic vision of how the experiences in the different regions under construction have evolved. As mentioned above, the world is fragmented into multiple spaces for dialogue and cooperation, but also for competition, and the Atlantic is no exception. These tensions are amplified by difficulties accommodating the emerging powers in traditional governance structures. The intra-regional and inter-regional relations in the Atlantic are embedded in a multipolar context in which complex interdependences and the competition of ideas interact (Garzón 2015). The current framework of interregional relations in the Atlantic...
is limited by several obstacles, among them: the acute asymmetries that exist between the various regionalist processes in Europe, the Americas and Africa; their different regional institutional structures, which make interaction difficult, and the existence of overlapping regional institutions competing with different leaderships. There are also disparities in the meaning of the concept of region used in different geopolitical areas, which creates new subspaces and ideological borders. For example, some authors consider NATO a region (Alcaro and Really 2015), rather than an inter-relationship based on shared values and common interests. However, there are also regions that are fragmented into overlapping subareas, such as in South America with the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), the Andean Community (CAN) and the Union of South American Nations (Unasur). All this makes regional comparisons difficult, but we can observe also some convergence in trends.

By studying the different regional and interregional initiatives, we analysed how the dynamics evolve and what the implications were for the future development of the governance of the Atlantic Space, using the three types of interregionalism categories proposed by Hänggi (2000): pure interregionalism between regional institutional groupings; transregionalism, in which states participate in grouping interregional relations, but in an individual capacity, and hybrid regionalism, including relations between regional groupings and single powers. But we added a new category: transgovernmental networks, including the links and initiatives of transnational civil society and business contacts, empowered by new information and communication technologies.

The convergence of non-state actors’ contributions to international cooperation and the evolution of less institutionalised and more flexible forms of transgovernmental governance have paved the way for public-private partnerships (PPP) in fields like development cooperation, culture, science and social affairs. In these sectors, non-state actors play an important role in fostering ties at the interregional level. Another emerging trend is the proliferation of South-South interregional forums through the establishment of more or less institutionalized cooperation mechanisms that impact North-South relations, leading to triangular North-South-South cooperation. The multiple, overlapping interregional initiatives of different natures, such as economic integration initiatives and other political cooperation bodies, lead to multiple memberships of the states in different entities, and overlapping instruments of interregional cooperation that make it difficult to identify stable partners and the consolidation of regional identities. This plethora of subregional actors hamper the EU’s designing of its interregional strategies, while accentuating asymmetries with partners. This is less problematic for other actors (like the US, Brazil and South Africa) that have more flexible regional approaches and assign priority to bilateral relations.

We can say that Atlantic geopolitics are currently dominated by heterogeneity rather than uniformity, as emerging economies and groups of states in the South Atlantic develop competing strategies vis-a-vis the West traditional powers, and new regional and interregional initiatives of different natures and configurations proliferate. But, as Bentley (1999) pointed out years ago, the study of transoceanic relations allows for a more complex and realistic vision of the historical process of engagement, exchange, the aggregation of ideas and the fusion of cultures,
The Atlantic is, in many regards, where globalisation as we know it started, and it is a useful unit of analysis upon which to model solutions that could contribute to enhanced global governance.

Prospects for the EU in the Atlantic Future

The main and equally important trends in the current global context, increasing multipolarity and interdependency, promise to continue to be relevant in the future. The effects of globalisation across the entire planet make it urgent to find effective governance structures and practices that can provide and protect global and regional common assets. Although the idea of a cohesive Atlantic Space has yet to emerge, there could be some impetus for it to develop in the years to come. A thorough understanding of obstacles and drivers for cooperation provides an opportunity for the EU to adapt its external policies to the possible new scenarios (Ayuso and Viilup 2015). Growing interdependence is the greatest driver for cooperation in the Atlantic. Due to the existence of a greater number of actors, with diverse interests and capabilities, the task of building an Atlantic agenda may start, firstly, with identifying common interests for the protection and construction of regional and global assets. Secondly, it would involve identifying common challenges in terms of global and regional risks. The identification of critical factors and actors shaping change in the Atlantic should address three main dimensions: prospects for cooperation or competition within the Atlantic Space, the evolution of regulatory convergence or divergence across the Atlantic, and the emergence of centripetal or centrifugal forces within the regions in this space (Grevi 2015).

Significant obstacles to cooperation still exist. One of the most pivotal obstacles to further Atlantic cooperation is political will. The fact that the Atlantic as a space per se does not yet occupy a core position in the foreign policy agendas of most countries in the Atlantic represents a barrier to cooperative action. For many leaders, the idea of an Atlantic Space is still quite controversial, on the basis of existing differences. Divergences in political institutions and cultural diversity make it difficult to conclude that there is a shared Atlantic identity around the basin. At the same time, interviews over the course of the project reveal that many stakeholders do believe in the rise of a shared Atlantic vision of the world in the future, one which could be based on the common values, interests, threats, challenges and opportunities uniting the four Atlantic regions (see De Castro and Tarragona in this monograph). Moreover, when compared to the Pacific, the Atlantic remains a space in which a certain convergence of norms and values exists (on the basis of shared languages, a common colonial past and religious beliefs), along with shared interests. However, a common pan-Atlantic agenda is still more a wish than a fact. Although democracy is the prevalent form of government across the Atlantic, major regional variations exist, including authoritarian regimes, mainly in Africa. Socio-economic challenges also
differ considerably among Atlantic countries. Social inequalities within countries have been growing in recent years, in both advanced and developing countries. Beyond states, the influence of multinational companies, NGO, social networks, subnational entities and migrant communities is poised to grow. Therefore, future convergence in the Atlantic Basin cannot be planned top-down, but needs to be built on the priorities of societal actors, from the bottom up (Gratius 2015).

Of all the many environmental challenges faced by the entire Atlantic Space, climate change may be said to be the most far-reaching and consequential. Atlantic Basin countries feature marked diversity in climatic and biophysical conditions, and a wide range of experienced or expected climate change impacts. Obstacles to cooperation on environmental and climate issues include providing sustained, sufficient levels of funding, as well as moving from building capacity and knowledge to the implementation of concrete measures. Cooperative frameworks that balance top-down governance with experiences and knowledge from bottom-up initiatives may be able to take advantage of both the flexibility and adaptive nature of small- and medium-scale organizations with the resources available from global institutions.

Atlantic global energy flows will become increasingly dense. This Atlantic energy renaissance is beginning to challenge the long-held assumption that the global centre of gravity for energy supply would remain in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia. Future political developments, such as instability and conflicts, may obstruct investment and partnerships in the exploitation and trade of new Atlantic energy resources. As a driver, the offshore revolution has presented southern Atlantic countries with an opportunity to attempt to transform projected increases in hydrocarbon revenue into the longed-for authentic seeds of both sustainable development and the low-carbon revolution. New players and technologies have emerged that are already notably altering both the Atlantic Space and global energy maps, as new conventional and unconventional fossil fuel sources and renewable energies come online, and as opportunities for pan-Atlantic energy cooperation begin to emerge.

Deeper economic connections across the Atlantic depend strongly on favourable growth perspectives for the US economy and the medium-term growth prospects for parts of Africa and Latin America. African societies, however, are still very poor, and their exports, like those of most Latin American countries, are dominated by raw materials whose prices are decreasing. Trends suggest that the US will continue to be the most important investor in Latin America, but will be less present in Africa due to the slackening of the commodities super cycle (Gratius et al. 2015). The dynamic interaction between trade and investment is and will likely continue to be a distinctive feature of the pan-Atlantic economy (Hamilton 2015). The main drivers for trade and financial cooperation are the levels of economic development and pre-existing relations, especially between European countries and former colonies. The presence of new actors from emerging states creates new incentives for economic cooperation. The main obstacles to trade and financial cooperation are governance and institutional problems, and commercial risks (e.g. price fluctuations in commodities and oil). Government responses, regime change, and potential disinvestment could have a huge effect on the development of economies in the South Atlantic.
The main pattern observed in terms of security in the Atlantic is related to threats to human security and resource control. Illicit activities, such as piracy, terrorism, and illegal trafficking of drugs, weapons, human beings and wildlife are clear non-conventional risks in the Atlantic. The Atlantic features some of the main routes for illicit trafficking in the world. Organized crime interests and resources are creating an “economy of violence” that threatens the governability of certain states in Latin America, while in Africa concerns over terrorism have grown. The risk is higher in states with weak institutions and high political instability. There exists North-South political and historical divergence in perspectives on security and global governance. Although there may not yet be a tangible shift in military terms, existing regional dynamics and bilateral partnerships are supporting the proliferation of South-South links, and provide us with evidence of a changing security landscape. An increasing number of southern Atlantic countries are providing aid and participating in security operations. New political spaces and opportunities are created for southern Atlantic actors to develop their own frameworks of South-South dialogue and cooperation, with a view to addressing common challenges through security structures such as the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), but also by engaging with South-South groupings like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and IBSA (Dialogue Forum India, Brazil, South Africa) (Ayuso and Viilup 2015).

Against this complex backdrop, cooperation in the Atlantic Space will probably take place à la carte, including different formats and geometries, rather than on the basis of a clear institutional design encompassing all or most of the countries in this space (Gratius 2015). The EU, as a multilevel governance organisation, is particularly affected by the aforementioned transformations, and is being forced to consider either managing its decline gracefully or resolving to elevate its status as a global actor functioning as a normative power. First of all, the EU must be able to resolve its own contradictions and internal crises. If this is achieved, the EU can exercise leadership in building consensus to meet the political and economic challenges in the coming decades. The objective should be to find new forms of relationships that overcome the traditional North-South divide and contribute to a more balanced governance of interdependencies and regional commons. If the variety of actors involved in the Atlantic could agree to common strategies to face these challenges, the Atlantic could become a pioneer in more effective global governance. The Atlantic Space could become a laboratory for innovative approaches to cooperation and regulatory convergence, preparing the region to face the developmental challenges of the 21st century.

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