



ATLANTIC FUTURE

ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES INTERVIEWS REPORT

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Perspectives from the UK (London)

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ABSTRACT

Interviews in London informed us about the stakeholders' perceptions in four thematic areas of the Atlantic Future project, which include: economy and finance, security, people and institutions, resources and environment. Main themes of focus were: changes over the past 20 years; drivers for change or continuity; prospective view of the changes and continuities in the region; actors and regional leaders (state or non-state level); relevance of the EU; perceptions on the evolution of the EU's role in the region over the past 20 years; and finally the convergence or divergence of norms within the Atlantic space. Based on the interview results in the UK, the paper reports that developments in the Atlantic have led to a proliferation of economic and non-economic initiatives amongst various Atlantic actors, both in the North and South. In the North, the North Atlantic community and the USA and EU is undergoing major changes in economic, security and political terms. Following the spectacular rise of Brazil and Africa, the focus has been gradually shifting from the EU and USA and new dynamics is evolving in the Atlantic space. However, a Pan Atlantic space is not really emerging but if the ongoing Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and USA were successful this could herald the beginning of a new Atlantic space. The EU is and continues to be an important player in the Atlantic, and is likely to play an influential role in the reconfiguration of the Atlantic space.

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1. Introduction

The *Atlantic Future* project recognises the progressive shift of international dynamics and developments in the transoceanic relations¹. Interviews in the UK were held to build on these findings and explore whether new initiatives are modifying the political landscape of the Atlantic. Our interview findings reveal that the EU and the USA both represent global actors that are involved in intense relations with third countries and the outside world, in particular the South. The relationship between the USA and EU and outside world has been growing on several dimensions and has evolved to include interaction on economic, political, diplomatic, and security-related aspects with emerging economies, such as Brazil in South America, and in Africa. This change in focus is gradually shifting the dynamics of North-South and South-South trade and overall relationship is evolving. Further, developments in the Atlantic are particularly interesting in light of the proliferation of economic and non-economic initiatives amongst various Atlantic actors, both in the north and south. In the north, the North Atlantic community and the USA and EU is undergoing major changes in economic, security and political terms. In economic terms, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations between the EU and USA represents an attempt to reinvigorate the decline of transatlantic trade after the financial crisis of 2008. Moreover, not only is there an important security NATO linkage, the region is becoming a strategic space in the field of energy. In addition, norms and values, which include political and social aspects as well as institutional setup, form an important part of the transatlantic relationship.

The interviews undertaken for *Atlantic Future* WP7, although geo-territorially defined, have produced a detailed analysis and understanding of Atlantic space perceptions in the EU on different levels of analysis - public opinion, stakeholders and academic opinion. Our main aim is to find an answer to whether a pan-Atlantic area is really emerging, and whether an epistemological community is being formed in the Atlantic space. Among other issues, the interviews were also used to inform us if there is a trend of convergence among already existing epistemological communities, as well as how these are formed and how they interact. The report is driven by the aim to depict how the Atlantic space, and in particular the EU and the US, is framed and understood by stakeholders in the UK by analysing the international agenda of the actors, i.e. businesses, business associations, academics, think tanks and policy makers in the wider Atlantic area. Thus, the interviews in the UK focus primarily on the perspectives of stakeholders in the UK that could potentially be impacted by the new dynamics in the Atlantic space and the changing policy agendas of the Atlantic powers, which include EU, USA, Africa and Latin America.

In the UK, all relevant information was collected through a rigorous one-to-one interview process and discussions reviewed to have the widest possible and precise representation of the opinions of actors, i.e. businesses, business associations, academics, think tanks and policy makers, interviewed. Interviews were carried out over a period of three months in the UK, though the main focus of interview activity was concentrated in London due to majority of stakeholders being based in the city. Interviews informed us about the stakeholders' perceptions in four thematic areas of the project, which include: economy and finance, security, people and institutions, resources and environment. Main themes that we focused on were: main changes over the past 20 years; main drivers for change or continuity; prospective view of the changes and continuities in the region; main actors and regional leaders (state or non-

¹ Anna Ayuso and Elina Viilup, "Introducción: Una Nueva Mirada Hacia el Atlántico," Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals, no. 102-103 (September 2013), 7.

state level); relevance of the EU; perceptions on the evolution of the EU's role in the region over the past 20 years; and finally the convergence or divergence of norms and values in the Atlantic space from the perspective of the interviewees. Questions posed to interviewees addressed the four overarching themes underlined above and the generic perceptions/findings were organised according to different themes in light of their distinguishing nature. Before moving on to the analysis, it is worth mentioning that, despite general findings of interviews, different informative levels and consistency could be observed. The same can be said with respect to the level of compatibility between the interviews results analysed.

The structure of our paper is as follows: Section 1 introduces and presents the methodology employed for the paper. The remainder of the paper is structured around the themes of *Atlantic Future* project explored through 30 interviews.

Questions in section 2 discussed the main changes and new dynamics in the Atlantic in the four thematic areas over the past 20 years, which include: economy and finance, security, people and institutions, resources and environment.

Section 3 aimed to identify the main trends, changes or continuities, as well as risks, opportunities and challenges in the Atlantic space in each of the areas of study.

Interview questions in section 4 focussed on identifying if there is convergence or divergence in norms and values in the Atlantic space, and how these influence cooperation and governance institutions in this space. This section also seeks to provide information about the role played by main old and new actors.

Questions posed to interviewees in section 5 aimed at finding out whether the interviewees had a perception of an Atlantic space, the growing role of the EU in the Atlantic space and what the changing regional dynamics implied for EU's external policies. Basically this formed the basis of our analysis of generic perceptions of the UK community interviewed.

2. The South Atlantic on the Rise

2.1 Thematic area of Economy and Finance

Interviewees of this thematic area mentioned Africa and Latin America as the Atlantic regions that have most grown in importance over the last two decades. Interviewees of the 'economy and finance' issue area tended to link this increase in Africa's importance especially to the region's economic development and its high growth rates over the last 10 years. In more general terms they linked this with the rise of the development world and the economic crisis in the developed world (US, Europe). While stressing Africa's huge increase in importance, some interviewees however also reminded of the fact that despite its positive development the region remained "at the bottom of the international pecking-order" and had only "risen from a very low level". In terms of individual countries or sub-regions of Africa that had especially stood out, Nigeria (for its development of a rising middle class) and West Africa (for its newly discovered off-shore oil reserves) were mentioned.

As a second Atlantic region that had won more importance in the last two decades, Latin America was mentioned by many interviewees. Here, especially Brazil and to a minor degree Mexico (for their big markets and oil businesses) as well as rising second-tier states like Columbia or Peru (for their high economic growth) were mentioned explicitly. After a "long period of neglect" Great Britain had finally re-engaged with the region. As indicators of the growing importance of Latin America for Great Britain, the increase in ministerial visits and trade delegations was cited.

With regard to the United States, only few interviewees from trade and finance referred to a change in development. However, there was no clear position among the interviewees on whether the US had “relatively lost in importance due to the rise of the global South” or had “stayed constant in its importance for Great Britain” as it is “still the traditional focus of Great Britain’s business activities”. The interviewees expect that in the next 10 years TTIP will help the EU to expand its presence through regional integration patterns and symbolise governments’ willingness to open and integrate into the world economy.

The answers regarding the main actors influencing developments in the Atlantic tended to emphasize the same states that had been mentioned before for their economic importance (US, EU, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria). In addition, economic players and organizations like the G20, regional trade blocks like Mercosur and ECOWAS, regional development banks, as well as transatlantic oil, mining or shipping companies were mentioned. Interestingly, also actors from the security sphere like NATO were mentioned by interviewees from the thematic field of trade and finance as they see the provision of security as a basic precondition to foster economic growth and extend business activities across the Atlantic.

2.2 Thematic area of Security

Africa and Latin America were again mentioned as the Atlantic regions that had most grown in importance over the past 20 years. According to the interviewees, this development is reflected by an increase in trade and diplomatic staff in both regions (e.g. new embassies in Central America). Interestingly, the ‘South Atlantic’ was also referred to as a region that had significantly increased in importance. In the South Atlantic, Brazil was mentioned as ‘the power’ that had most gained importance due to its new outreach towards West Africa. Other security developments that were mentioned with reference to the South Atlantic were the Falkland issue and security challenges in and on the coast of West Africa. Interviewees agreed that even though Latin America and Africa had re-entered Britain’s international agenda, both regions were still of rather limited importance when compared to other regions like North America, Europe, or the Middle East.

Interestingly, interviewees from the security domain mentioned the US much more in their answers than interviewees from the other fields. While some of the interviewees saw a relative decline in importance for the US as it now “needs to act more multilateral and needs to share power with its partners” and has “lost influence in its former backyard Latin America and West Africa”, they predominantly saw the US still as the most important security actor and most important partner of Great Britain in this field. Yet, with regard to future developments, the majority of interviewees saw a continuing trend of “a development away from US-centred Atlantic relations.”

2.3 Thematic area of People and Institutions

In consensus with interviewees from the other issue areas, interviewees working in the field of people and institutions also saw Africa and Latin America as the regions that had most gained in importance over the last two decades. In this regard Nigeria was frequently mentioned as a player that had especially risen in importance in the given period of time. Interviewees saw Latin America’s rise in importance mainly as a result of the region’s good economic development and the business opportunities (especially in Brazil and Mexico) that have attracted attention by Great Britain and other powers. In contrast, Africa’s increased international visibility was linked both to positive developments (e.g. economic growth, increased ‘cultural power’) and negative ones (security challenges, diseases, drug trafficking).

Remarkably, North America and the US were not mentioned by the majority of interviewees. Only two interviewees mentioned that the US had “remained important” over the past 20 years, yet without specifying in which ways or why. With regard to future trends and developments, again, the majority of interviewees did not mention Great Britain’s arguably most important partner. Two interviewees that referred to the US in their answers were of different opinions, with one interviewee seeing a “reduction in US primacy” and a “more even distribution of global power” and one interviewee predicting that “North America will stay important”.

2.4 Thematic area of Resources and Environment

In contrast to answers of interviewees from the other thematic areas which strongly emphasized the rise of the South Atlantic regions Africa and Latin America, interviewees from the area of resources and environment stressed the importance of the North Atlantic regions North America and Europe. Particularly the US as energy exporter of growing importance (due to shale gas) was mentioned as one of the most striking developments in the sector over the past 20 years. The EU was commonly mentioned as a driving force in climate issues (“The EU has become and still is the main actor in climate issues”). Yet, with regard to possible future developments, there was no consensus on whether the US and the EU would “still dominate the agenda in the foreseeable future” or would lose some power to emerging economies like Brazil and Mexico that were seen as rising actors in the international climate debate. Remarkably, no African country was mentioned as having gained in importance or gaining clout in the future – despite the new oil findings on the West African coast. In climate affairs Africa was not accorded any relevance, with one interviewee stating that the continent was “falling a little of the climate agenda”.

3. Drivers of change in the Atlantic and the role of the EU

3.1 Thematic area of Economy and Finance

In terms of drivers of change in the Atlantic region there was no consensus on which of the given developments (growth of trade and investment flows; negotiations of FTAs; new transport routes; construction of new infrastructure) had been the most important for changes in economy and finance in the Atlantic space. However, all interviewees agreed that the above-mentioned factors were the main drivers of economic change in the Atlantic. The importance and ranking of these varied by interviewees. An issue often discussed was the negotiation of trade agreements and its necessity attributed to global supply chain linkages. One group of interviewees pointed to the economic boost that FTAs triggered by simplifying and opening up restrictive trade. Another more sceptical group of interviewees emphasized the difficulties associated with the negotiation of and adherence to the rules of such FTAs. They argued that trade agreements – although beneficial when really functioning – were “hard to archive in practice”. A great number of free trade agreements were theoretically “already in existence, but not working well”, especially with and in the South Atlantic. Depending on the development status of the participating countries and the specific framework agreed upon, FTAs could therefore have different effects on trade and investment, ranging from no effect at all (between developing countries) to the biggest impact factor (FTAs between developed countries).

An issue mentioned by almost all interviewees, especially with regard to trade and investment in the South Atlantic, was the construction of new infrastructure. Many interviewees stressed the fact that the often still poor infrastructure in the developing

countries in the South Atlantic would imply huge costs for business and investment and often impedes the effective deepening of trade relations.

With respect to the EU, interviewees agreed that due to its economic crisis, “the EU is less relevant than 20 years ago – but still relevant”. While acknowledging the importance of the EU, some interviewees explicitly referred to Great Britain’s critical view of the EU, stating that “The EU has remained important – even though Great Britain hoped it wasn’t” or stressing Great Britain’s “loud and independent voice in the EU”. When asked about a rating of the EU’s importance in the Atlantic space, the majority of interviewees confirmed the EU’s importance. Yet, they suggested differentiating the EU’s importance according to the specific Atlantic region (North America, Latin America, and Africa) and issue area (economy, security, human rights, development policy). There was consensus about the EU’s economic importance due to its market size, which was reflected in its attractive position in FTA negotiations and its power to impose effective economic sanctions on other states. Also the EU’s role in security along the African coast as well as in human rights affairs and development politics was mentioned. Power in these issue areas was, however, again linked by some interviewees to the EU’s economic power and attractiveness, which enabled the EU to exert pressure (e.g. conditions) on other regions (especially Africa and Latin America).

In order to boost the EU’s role in the Atlantic, one interviewee advised the EU to “spend more money” and to put more focus on inequality in its foreign relations with the Atlantic regions. Another interviewee, however, clearly expressed his/her scepticism about the EU as an effective international organization and raised doubts about the positive impact of a bigger role of the EU in the Atlantic.

3.2 Thematic area of Security

Regarding the main security challenges in the Atlantic regions, there was little consensus among the interviewees on which of the issues mentioned (illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, and humans; terrorism; maritime security; fragile states) would be the most important. The issue of fragile states was rated as very important by most of the interviewees as they saw it as “vector for other security threats such as illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, and humans; terrorism or maritime insecurity”. Overall, interviewees tended to stress the interconnectivity between the singular security challenges and rejected the idea of a hierarchy of the different factors.

There was great disagreement regarding the issue of maritime security, which some of the interviewees rated as one of the top security challenges in the Atlantic (“Undervalued! Keeping sea lanes open is very crucial”) while other interviewees stated that this issue didn’t really feature on their agenda, yet. One interviewee especially mentioned port security as one of the challenges to security and economic development in the Atlantic space. Regarding the issue of terrorism, there was also great divergence in opinions as some of the interviewees saw the issue very high on the security agenda, while others strongly argued that terrorism was mainly “a self-fulfilling prophecy” and was not an actual but rather a *perceived and partially self-constructed* threat to security.

With regard to the EU, half of the interviewees saw an increase in importance over the last 20 years. While the EU had had only low importance for Great Britain in the 1990s, the last 10 years had witnessed a rebound in terms of a growing political and economic importance of the EU. Due to the Ukraine crisis and the financial crisis, the EU especially rose on Great Britain’s security agenda over the last two years. Some interviewees mentioned that the EU had become a “political issue with high

importance” on the British agenda, referring to the political discussion in Great Britain on the question whether the country should drop out of the EU.

When rating the relevance of the EU’s role in the Atlantic, there was little consensus. While a slight majority perceived the EU’s role as relevant, some interviewees criticized the fact that it was no unitary actor and that there were too many divisions between the member states. Also, it was mentioned that the EU had only “few initiatives to tackle security challenges like organized crime, drug trafficking, and violence”. One interviewee emphasized that especially with regard to the EU’s most important security partner, the US, the relevance of the EU had to be seen with “a big question mark” as it had not acted as a reliable partner in the past.

All interviewees agreed that the EU’s importance differed according to the respective region and the issue area, seeing the EU’s greatest importance in the political and economic field (e.g. sanctions) and the least importance in the classical security domain. While most interviewees saw the EU as relevant in transatlantic relations (understood as classical North Atlantic relations), one interviewee especially stressed the EU’s special role in the greater Atlantic space due to its historic and cultural relations with all Atlantic regions.

3.3 Thematic area of People and Institutions

Regarding the main political and social changes and challenges in the region, all interviewees confirmed that the issues suggested by the questionnaire (state of democracy, respect for human rights, diplomatic exchanges, and migration trends) feature on their agenda. Some interviewees suggested that further issues like ‘terrorism’, ‘state of judiciary’, ‘corruption’, ‘unemployment’, ‘demography’ should be added to the list of main political and social challenges. On top of the agenda interviewees saw the issues of state of democracy and human rights - which some of them refused to separate from each other as they saw them strongly intertwined. On the other two issue areas of ‘diplomatic exchanges’ and ‘migration trends’ there was little consensus. Yet, most interviewees tended to see these issues as secondary to the issues of democracy and human rights. Most interviewees emphasized problematic social and political developments in the Atlantic regions, such as the undermining of democracy by populist forces or organized crime or the spread of corruption and crony capitalism.

When asked about the Atlantic region that had most gained in or lost importance in the past 20 years, the majority of interviewees from the thematic area of people and institutions did not make reference to the EU. Among those who did mention the EU, there was no consensus on whether it had won in importance and increased its foreign policy activities or had lost voice. With regard to future developments a rather negative view prevailed, with interviewees stating that “the EU is in danger of collapsing” and “at risk of losing importance” and referring to the EU as “an aging continent”. Yet, despite their rather negative view and their prediction of a loss of influence for the EU, most interviewees agreed that the EU would not completely lose relevance and would probably stay important for Great Britain.

Regarding the EU’s role in the Atlantic space, the majority of interviewees rated it as ‘relevant’, yet seeing differences in the different issue areas and regions. The area of trade was mentioned by a majority as the area where the EU was most powerful. Interviews also suggested that historical affinity through trade agreements (Lome, Cotonou and now EPA) were important drivers of the EU’s role in the region, unlike LA and CA. Brazil is becoming increasingly relevant as an emerging economy and is gaining from increasing investments from the EU. Further, EU’s current strategy is to

get trying links with countries in LA and CA, as also evident through the Strategic Partnership policy.

Other issue areas of relevance mentioned included development cooperation and human rights. Some interviewees also mentioned the EU's "cultural power" in Africa and Latin America, where it is often regarded as a political and economic model and still enjoys great influence due to its former colonial presence. Overall, the EU was seen to have a positive influence, in that it has demonstrated that economic union is feasible and more so with its efficient functioning Single Market.

3.4 Thematic area of Resources and Environment

Regarding the main changes and challenges in the field of climate and energy, there was clear consensus among the interviewees that the transformation of the energy sector was the most important challenge for the future. Some interviewees stressed that this was particularly true with regard to the US and the EU, while for Latin America and Africa the issue of climate change had more importance. However, other interviewees pointed to the fact that emerging powers in the South Atlantic (i.e. Brazil with its relatively green energy pattern) had assumed more active roles in the field of climate and energy policy in the past years and in some aspects were leading the way for other developing countries. In general, developments in the field of renewable energy policies are directly related to the price of oil and the availability of affordable technology. With the current oil price at a historical low the transformation of the energy sector would therefore be slowed down as there was less pressure to develop alternatives to expensive fossil energy sources. With regard to future developments, one interviewee remarked that "eventually, those countries that use renewable energy without subsidies and develop cost-effective ways to substitute conventional energy through renewable sources will prevail". Another interviewee underlined the key function of the transformation of the energy sector for other developments in the field of resources and environment. Resource depletion or the impact of climate change, for instance, directly depended on whether or not countries successfully transformed their energy sector towards a more sustainable model. Interestingly, the issue of resource depletion was not seen among the top challenges, with one interviewee stating that in fact "more and more resources" were being discovered at the coast of Brazil, Mexico and other states. With regard to the EU's role in the Atlantic, the results of the interviews are a bit puzzling. Interestingly and somewhat paradoxically, only one of the interviewees rated the EU's role in the Atlantic as important – even though they had uniformly described the EU as one of the main actors in the field of energy and climate change in other questions. Instead, the majority rated the EU's role as remotely relevant, stating that the TTIP could "heavily affect the energy sector". Other comments referred to the EU as executing a positive role on climate issues but being in "a state of fatigue". Also given that the EU has been through a protracted period of financial crisis, this could impact on its ability and willingness to commit to additional resources into meeting its energy and climate change linked commitments.

4. Norm convergence between the Atlantic powers

Three main strands emerge. First, both the EU and USA have expressed their commitment to values and rule of law (i.e. international treaties, democracy, laws, and predictable rules based system which allows for functioning markets). The latter, i.e. rule of law, is evident through the presence and rules for an open market economy, which are fundamental norms shared by the EU and USA. This is not always the case in South America, Asia and Africa where the rule of law is evolving and still in a nascent stage.

Second, there are common norms between the USA and EU in that both countries recognise and implement ILO (on labour and human rights) and environmental agreements as well as have arrangements in place to contain global terrorism. The role of civil society is also well recognised. The role of civil society organisations though varies between countries, but by and large CSOs fed into policy making in the USA and EU, which is not often the case in other Atlantic space countries. Further, the USA has a policy of enforceable legal action in the event of the trading partner undercutting the labour requirement.

Third, the EU has demonstrated a 'normative aspiration' to export its preferred model of liberalisation, economic governance and multilateral regulation through trade agreements that constitute an integral dimension of external policy. The US has done this and at present is trying to assert its role in economic governance through trade agreements with Pacific countries, i.e. Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) for which talks are ongoing.

Regarding the issue of 'norms' and 'values', there is a trend towards convergence between the economic powers in the Atlantic, i.e. USA and EU. In the case of the EU, values have a symbolic significance for the EU and have been expressed through legal norms. These norms, whether derived from the Treaties or imported into the EU legal order, take a foundational or constitutional character. Values and norms constitute the EU identity and its projection as an international actor. Examples that elaborate that common 'values' and 'norms' on which the EU and USA converge are global security, economic issues, human rights, sustainable development. The US has similar values and norms especially on human rights issues and labour clauses. Mechanisms that both the EU and USA use include regular meetings between the US and EU to assess and develop transatlantic cooperation, as well as holding regular presidential summits. Recently, a new dimension has been reached in norms on security, and the threat of global terrorism has been tackled jointly by the EU and US, demonstrating the depth of European-American shared values and interests. Other main issues on which the EU and USA are working closely together to a common goal of values and norms to improve security of transatlantic air and sea transportation, including agreement on the transfer of passenger name records (PNR) data held by airlines to US Customs and Border Protection as well as the expansion of customs cooperation to cover container security. In the area of security, both share similar security values and norms that are up for regular consultation and cooperative military mechanisms exist through NATO. The USA and EU also use their assets to ensure transatlantic security and mutual decision-making is a key to their relationship. Finally, within the context of social values and norms, both the USA and EU have been pushing for recognition of human rights. The USA and EU include human rights clause in all trade and cooperation agreements with partner countries, and in particular EU agreements provide aid and preferential trade access, as well as regular political dialogue and conflict resolution. Further, the EU also emphasises on implementing sustainable policies, for example, implementing its obligations under the Kyoto Agreement.

Shipping, energy, and agriculture too link the Atlantic regions. Some additional issues referred to by interviewees were convergence on norms such as commonality in religion and political values and rights, democratic structures, socio-democratic values and socio-economic issues, which are largely driven by former colonial ties in the case of EU. Many respondents noted a convergence in norms across the Atlantic space in comparison to Asia, which was viewed as 'separate' and 'different'. However, nuanced differences were noted with regards to inter-relationships within the Atlantic Space. As an example, Great Britain is perceived as much closer in terms of norms and values to the US. Norms are more common within the Atlantic countries, especially with the US and Canada, the British parts of Africa, and Belize in the Caribbean as there is a

common culture, language and history with those countries. At a social level, there is potential that values and norms of western cultures can be extended throughout the region, drawing upon the already existing high degree of commonality in cultural values could help foster the development of an Atlantic community. Others view it as a more 'natural' progression due to shared social and political norms and values in comparison to Asia-Pacific.

The interviews also touched upon the issue of divergence in norms and values. These were mainly from a political perspective, and lie in democracy, with Latin America being highlighted as having "at least electoral democracy", noting a similar approach on human rights and rights of individual freedom, for example freedom of the press. A division is prominent with regards to the Atlantic side and the Pacific side of Latin America, suggesting that the Atlantic side is more social-democratic in its approach, with the Pacific side being more oriented towards China. Due to a shared history, the Atlantic area has a collective colonial history which gives it common conceptions of democracy and governance. The Atlantic area also has a common law culture. "The Atlantic has a shared a history of Christianity as it was colonized by European powers. There are similarities in the legal systems. Also human rights and democracy issues are other challenged norms, mainly due to different levels of development of the Atlantic region. Disparities in Latin American indigenous countries, for example, Bolivia, Ecuador, give rise to nuanced, regional, culturally different values. The common norms are viewed as being most challenged in the South Atlantic, specifically security issues. In the South Atlantic, all the norms mentioned are not so much shared anymore. In some countries the democratic norms are being challenged, in particular free trade and open markets due to financial crisis. The UK still accepts the core values of the "Washington Consensus", but in Latin America and Africa those norms are not shared anymore.

With regards to economic governance norms and framework in the Atlantic, the negotiating model of EU's agreements with Latin America and Asian states suggests that the EU is possibly exporting its preferred regulatory model through a common external governance model. The extension of EU rules and practices beyond its borders has been captured by the "external governance" in literature that focuses on Europe's neighbourhood and on when third parties adopt its norms. External governance, as elaborated upon by academics interviewed for the project, explanations suggests that these typically assume that the EU extends its own norms, and often purposefully. One interviewee even suggested that the EU "may act more as a taker/transmitter of rules that have been elaborated in other international fora."

4.1 Interests and Incentives for Cooperation

This part focuses in general on the interest and incentives for cooperation as well as comments on regional and interregional cooperation initiatives, how the regional agenda is undergoing changes focussing on regional initiatives created (e.g. cooperation forums, regional institutions, trade treaties, etc.). We also examine whether this has led to changing regional alliances.

Respondents noted there was more cooperation than conflict in the Atlantic space, citing incentives as the idea of free trade and regulation of trade alongside self-interest and democracy as driving factors for cooperation, in particular, regulation of trade, with reference to TTIP, TPP, NAFTA and Mercosur. Despite feared domination of the US, a relationship within the Atlantic is considered as "safe". Cooperation with Latin America compared to Africa is viewed as relatively easy. Latin America is an easier "sell" than Africa, with Latin American markets, economic interests, political significance being viewed as being more attractive.

Interviews suggest that the EU is increasingly playing an important and relevant cooperative role in the Atlantic and the overall international arena, and leading the path of interregional initiatives through bilateral cooperation treaties. The general view was that the EU external policy interlinked with trade agenda is being increasingly employed as a means to increase its resonance at the international and regional level. Its role in North America has not been as much, and this the EU is now seeking to bolster through TTIP which is currently under negotiation and aims to bring the EU and USA together as a super economic power through the 'mega trade deal'. In Latin and Central America, the EU is growing in importance as evidenced through the recent FTAs and Association Agreements with the Latin and Central American countries. Also, the EU has renewed efforts to reopen talks on Mercosur, which will add to EU's role in that region. In particular, the EU is playing an increasingly relevant role in Mexico and Chile. In Africa, the EU is also playing an increasingly important role as evident through the 'Everything but Arms' and growing emphasis on bilateral trade liberalisation.

An important finding on interests in the Atlantic space was that the focus of American interests in the EU has been shifting from primarily security to include economic matters, after the financial crisis. This applied to the Latin and Central American countries too. In policy terms, the new 'interests' approach of the EU is aiming at systematically broadening and deepening relations among countries such as NATO members using economic motives that are fully committed to market-based economic systems. While USA and EU in the Atlantic region are at the core and agree on free-market norms, both these countries are and continue to push for liberalisation at the multilateral level under the WTO umbrella. But participation in FTAs has led countries to sign more than one agreement, regardless of that country's policies and practices. What is also interesting is that in light of Brazil and African nations growing economic power, there is some reconfiguration going on in the balance of power in the Atlantic space and these are acting as 'incentives' for the EU and US to rethink their 'interests' and reiterate their global partnership through TTIP.

Interviews also suggested that despite difference of interests between countries in the Atlantic space, i.e. domestic practices greatly affect international commerce, such as labour policy, competition policy, and regulation in noneconomic fields such as the environment. These are increasingly being tackled at regional forums and levels. Within the broad context of the US and EU, an interviewee suggested that "in institutional terms, the US and EU urgently need to develop a NATO-like forum for handling economic issues." But generally the interviewees felt that strategic direction and tactical coherence in a joint Atlantic forum is lacking at the Atlantic space level on these issues. The creation of a new Atlantic forum would ensure that common interest issues receive top-level political attention, and that not only do Washington and the European governments but also emerging actors of the Atlantic space develop cooperation mechanisms for non-economic issues. This will help to effectively maintain solidarity and aid problem-solving in the security field when interests of Atlantic space countries appear to be converging.

Commonly cited obstacles to cooperation were: regional diversity, security and environmental concerns, differences in language, transport systems, and corruption. The main obstacles to cooperation with Africa and Latin America are highlighted as administrative resource based, capacity, ways of doing business, weakness of political systems and judiciary systems, corruption and insecurity due to remaining strength of anti-Western/anti-Imperialist feelings. Problems in governance and the rise of insurgent groups and high degrees of violence pose general obstacles to investment in Latin America and Africa. Political changes and individual state priorities are viewed as creating obstacles to more cooperation. Regional diversity is also viewed as a prominent obstacle, particularly in the representation of different voices. Differences in

security interests and economic needs and the importance of climate change were also highlighted. Finally, a lack of an Atlantic vision is perceived to be held by Latin America and the US - "In LA there is no strategic Atlantic vision. The region in general is more focused inwards".

4.2 Regionalism and inter-regionalism Initiatives in the Atlantic

Interview results highlighted important regional and inter-regional cooperation. These include international organizations such as International Energy Agency (IEA), G7 and UNCCC are major drivers. Further, businesses such as Shell and BP are also major actors in the Atlantic region. Former institutions such as NATO and OECD feature prominently and are important alongside non-state actors. UN peacekeeping too has a role, alongside UN institutions such as UNDP, WB and IMF. International groupings such as Mercosur are viewed as less relevant though. FTAs are other important forms of cooperation. Prominent examples are ECOWAS, EU, NATO, Common Wealth, NGOs such as Gates Foundation, Clinton Foundation, Atlantic Council and institutional donors like UN, EU, WB, DFID, US Aid and diasporas.

Interviews also reveal that the EU is a model for regional integration and often considered as the "gold standard" of regional integration by countries and regions. Further, new regionalism in North (TTIP) and the South (in particular Africa through its multiple membership trade agreements) is radically reshaping the global political economy and leading to transformation of the North-South architecture. Of late, the EU though trade agreements has been promoting the development of genuine (intra-) regional economic and political cooperation. It has also led building of issue-related regimes, and the creation of joint institutions for consultation and decision making in its neighbourhood and beyond as well as in Africa and South America reiterated through Association agreements.

Another striking feature is the manner in which new regionalism is getting countries, especially Brazil, to playing a leading role in the North-South divide. Also regional groupings are altering and resulting in new actors emerging on the global scene in the Atlantic, leading to informal networks of cooperation between South countries, especially in Africa. Until now, the EU model has driven regionalism in the global South, but this may well change. Earlier there was broad recognition that preferential trade deals were the corner-stone of EU development policies, but this can no longer be sustained in an increasingly multilateral global trading environment. In fact the EU is employing regionalism through trade agreements to go beyond economic governance into new trade areas, such that partner countries also embrace political and institutional reform and social inclusion. In this manner, the EU is becoming an increasing regional actor in the Atlantic Space.

Also the role of organisations involved with trade facilitation and promotion are growing, examples of such actors are BCCI, LCCI and CBI. Interviews identified that main regional actors were state and non-state actors, including civil society groups and NGOs that were steadily increasing in influence. Finally, institutions such as the OECD and IMF have been and continue to be important. The role that these actors play depends on which issues need addressing. Examples provided were financial banks and mutual recognition of financial sector policies in which the private sector has a predominant role to play.

5. Conclusions

Based on interview findings we comment on firstly, the perceptions on whether a pan-Atlantic Space is really emerging; and secondly, what is the EU's role in the region and what could the regional dynamics mean for the EU's external policies.

Discussions with interviewees revealed that a Pan Atlantic space is not really emerging. One interviewee expressed the opinion 'great idea but not realistic'. On the contrary, results suggest that regional groupings are emerging. For instance in North America, the USA wants to strengthen the North American link with Canada, as explicitly expressed through NAFTA. The EU is also working on strengthening its links with the region. There was no clear indication that the EU could play a formative role in the future and might be just limited to being as a regional power. It was perceived that the EU is not very attractive anymore and that its relative importance is declining. There is no natural link that connects the Atlantic region and space. In addition, US, Africa and Latin America are looking to China, not to the EU entirely.

What does TTIP could mean for the Atlantic space? Some commented that: 'if successful, TTIP could be the beginning of a new Atlantic space'. This applies especially in terms of economic governance and that this cooperation could eventually be implemented deeply at different levels, even in energy should the issue of new trade issues be sorted out between the EU and US. The general view was that TTIP could be 'gold standard' agreement, and could be a means to unite the Atlantic space economically and institutionally such that Brazil (and eventually countries in Africa) could join the agreement leading to a wider and form an inclusive economic Atlantic Space. Were TTIP talks to succeed, this could well be the template for regional convergence blueprint that could address fundamental regulatory issues and be a model of regulatory equivalence in the Atlantic space. This could be a few decades away. Doubts were also expressed as to whether the Atlantic Space could drive development. This is because Africa and Latin and Central American countries are not as well integrated into the global economy so no 'Factory Atlantic' seems plausible in the near future. Final thoughts of the interviewees on how the North-South Atlantic divide can be addressed reveal that there is an urgent need to initiate policies (economic and non-economic) to integrate Africa, Latin and Central America within the Atlantic space. This form of regionalism could set the tone for integrating countries at different levels of development.

Finally, the EU is an important player in the Atlantic, mainly due to its external policy and all the more now with numerous FTAs in Asia and involvement in TTIP negotiations. The role of the EU as a relevant actor also stems from political, historical, economic and social considerations. The EU is noted as relevant with consideration to trade, principally due to its role in establishing FTA's and is growing in importance with regards to security policy. In North America and Latin America the EU is perceived as relevant in trade and investment and in West Africa the EU is relevant in trade and aid. The EU is also noted for cooperation surrounding development assistance, governance and human rights. It is a model to aspire to in terms of education, health, political system; migration. The EU is perceived as a leader in Atlantic policies with regards to fishery policies, security cooperation, democracy and human rights. In Central America, the EU is very relevant with regard to human rights protection. It is also noted for its role in promoting corporate social responsibility, thus shaping business environments in the countries in the long term. In economic terms, "as a market the EU is very relevant" with regards to FTAs and as a trading partner as it has an important post-colonial presence in Africa and Latin America. Thus in the short term, the EU and USA clearly demonstrate affinity to create an Atlantic space through a possible trade coalition through TTIP that shares a common economic commitment between partners. In the

longer term, the economic aim might well change and both the countries would be keen to foster greater cooperation on security, energy, climate change and other issues.

To conclude, it is perceived by interviewees that the EU is likely to play an influential role in the reconfiguration of region through its external policy, and this is evident as trade has been woven into the fabric of EU foreign policy. The EU has been playing a role at the WTO level and also in setting norms on global issues such as trade governance, which is winning the EU the title of 'norm setter' and 'normative power'. The EU is also increasingly playing a growing role vis-à-vis the outside world following a process of internal consolidation of its own institutions and economic governance structures as well as developments in the EU neighbourhood. This is evidenced by institutional changes introduced by the recent treaty reforms, as a result of which the EU has gained power exponentially, while showing greater activism within the sphere of trade as an important facet of external relations policy.